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journal or publication title	東洋美学と東洋的思惟を問う：植民地帝国下の葛藤するアジア像
volume	38
page range	135-163
year	2011-03-31
URL	http://doi.org/10.15055/00002426

Modern Chinese Intellectuals and the 1935 London International Exhibition of Chinese Art: The Reactions of Cai Yuanpei and The *China Critic* Group[1]

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This paper aims at exploring how modern Chinese intellectuals, such as Sun Ke (孫科 1891–1973), the founder of Sun Yat-sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education 中山教育文化基金会, Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培 1868–1940) and those in *The China Critic* Group, reacted to the 1935–1936 International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London.[2] I highlight the literary activities of Lin Yutang (林語堂 1895–1976), John C. H. Wu (呉経熊 1899–1986), and Wen Yuan-ning (温源寧 1899–1984) following the "Manchuria Incident" 満州事変. These writers supported Sun and Cai by founding *T'ien Hsia* (1935–1941), a monthly academic journal published in English. The journal sought to promote better understanding between China and the outside world by interpreting Chinese culture to foreigners and foreign

1 This paper is revised based on a section in my Japanese dissertation tentatively entitled "Lin Yutang's Image of China," being submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Tokyo University in 2011, and was first presented at the International Symposium "Questioning Oriental Aesthetics and Thinking: Conflicting Visions of 'Asia' under the Colonial Empires," held by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, Japan (November 9, 2010). I am very grateful for the valuable advice and criticism from Professor Itō Noriya, Department of Comparative Literature and Culture of Tokyo University and Professor Oki Yasushi, the Institute of Oriental Culture of Tokyo University. I would also like to thank Professor Inaga Shigemi, who not only gave me such a precious opportunity to share my ongoing research with eminent scholars from all over the world, but also offered detailed, insightful advice before and after my presentation. I am also deeply indebted to the following American researchers from different academic backgrounds: Timothy Goddard, Kristopher Kersey, Jason Steuber, and Wayne Dawson, who reviewed my manuscript at each stage and gave me invaluable advice on how to write an academic English paper and how to improve it. And also many thanks to my younger brother and cousins who try their best to encourage and support me economically and spiritually to overcome this difficult time. My deepest gratitude goes to my parents, who have been far away, but nevertheless placed a great deal of trust in me and quietly supported me by relieving me of many necessary family responsibilities and chores. I wish someday that I could write a book based on this dissertation and dedicate it to them for their unconditional love for me.

2 *The China Critic* (1928–1946) is a weekly English-language magazine, founded in Shanghai in the late 1920s by a very small, Western-educated group of Chinese intellectuals. The magazine existed for nearly twenty years, and, while its editors and contributors changed frequently, its core members remained the same. These members were Wen Yuan-ning, Lin Yutang, John C. H. Wu, and T. K. Chuan (全増嘏 1896–1976), all of whom had profound knowledge of both Chinese and Western culture. They were later joined by a playwright, Yao Hsin-nung (姚莘農 1904–1985). These five men formed the editorial board of *T'ien Hsia* while continuing to serve as key contributors to *The China Critic*. Despite the fact that all of them came from different educational and political backgrounds, their aim of using English as a medium to promote a better understanding between China and the outside world was the same. The term "*The China Critic* Group" is my own; by using it to describe the literary activities of these writers, I emphasize their common cultural perspectives and goals.

cultures to the Chinese.

To begin with this paper, I will briefly summarize the London Exhibition as a major cultural event in twentieth-century China and demonstrate the cultural conflicts represented in the exhibition. Next, I will analyze Westerners' valuations of traditional Chinese culture by examining treatises and press reports published in the major British media. After that, I will move on to discuss the reactions of modern Chinese intellectuals by reading the above Chinese writers' literary and cultural discourses. In the last part of this paper, I will reveal the process of how Lin Yutang initially emerged as a cultural mediator by contributing numerous articles to Chinese and English language magazines before and after the "Manchuria Incident", and then taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the London Exhibition, made his debut successfully to the English reading public with his *My Country and My People* (New York, John Day) in 1935.

I. The London International Exhibition of Chinese Art (1935/36)

After the collapse of the Qing Dynasty 清 (1644–1911), the former imperial art collection that had been hidden behind the high walls of the Forbidden City for many centuries was exposed to the outside world and caught the attention of a worldwide audience. Of the many precious art pieces that were circulating in the international art market, some found their way to Japan and the West. With the establishment of the Palace Museum in 1925, foreign art collectors became more familiar with China's national treasures. At the end of 1932, some British collectors, led by Sir Percival David (1892–1964), an aristocratic banker as well as an Oriental art admirer, proposed to hold a comprehensive exhibition of Chinese art in London. Formal negotiations with the Chinese Government started in 1934. After a long discussion, China's Ministry of Education in charge of national cultural events decided to take part in the international exhibition. The Chinese government attached great importance to the London Exhibition and held high expectations that it would show foreigners the greatness of the Chinese nation and gain support for its war against Japan, continuing since the 1931 Japanese occupation of Manchuria.

The Exhibition was held at Burlington House, Piccadilly, the Royal Academy of Arts in London, from 28 November 1935 to 7 March 1936. During the exhibition, over 780 national treasures sent by the Chinese Government were on display along with an additional 1, 294 pieces from more than 240 collections in various countries. Magnificent bronze, jade, ceramics, paintings, sculptures and other objects—the likes of which few Westerners had ever seen—were drawn from the Palace Museum, the National Museum, the Academia Sinica, the Henan Museum and the Anhui Provincial Library. The exhibition provided a powerful stimulus to the study of Chinese art and revolutionized the art historical studies of Chinese artifacts. For China, it was a tremendous public relations success.[3] Chinese art enjoyed favorable press for the duration of

3 Based on Jason Steuber's survey, the London Exhibition was extremely well received and attended, attracting a total of 401,768 visitors. A total of 108, 914 exhibition catalogues were sold, as well as 3, 486 illustrated supplements, 2, 196 exhibition handbooks and 336 copies of *The Royal Society of Arts Journals*. With one in four visitors buying publications, knowledge of the exhibition soon spread, both at home and abroad. The publication of well over one hundred journal articles written in Chinese, English, French, German, and Japanese during the exhibition period highlights its comprehensive impact on Chinese art

the exhibition, as numerous treatises and reports were published by the major British media, all praising the uniqueness and universality of Chinese art and civilization. Chief among the many positive effects of the exhibition was a boom in the publication of books in English concerning about Chinese art, literature, and history. Chinese culture also received greater academic attention. The literary activities of Laurence Binyon (1869–1943), Arthur Waley (1889–1966) and Leigh Ashton (1897–1983) were the best examples of such writings, symbolizing the significant efforts made by Western intellectuals to understand Chinese culture and civilization in the 1930s.

However, if one carefully reads the works published during the exhibition, it becomes clear that at this point in the 1930s, there were still marked limitations to the Western Oriental scholars' interpretations and there were likewise misunderstandings reflected in the British educated-public's attitudes toward traditional Chinese art and culture. These issues played a crucial role as catalysts for the creation of *The China Critic* Group intellectuals. This paper addresses the English-language literary activities of the Group's members, namely Lin Yutang, John C. H. Wu and Wen Yuan-ning, who also played significant roles in interpreting Chinese culture to the outside world during the 1930s.

II. Cultural Conflicts in the London Exhibition's Practice[4]

1. From Men of Letters' Studios to Public Exhibition Spaces

The London Exhibition was arranged on a chronological sequence and cultural basis, not on categorical sequence as done in the preliminary exhibition in Shanghai, 1935, which meant that the British Committee exhibited Chinese calligraphy and paintings with other crafts in the same place.[5] Their aim was to show Westerners how the entire Chinese art history progressed into the present day. In a sense, the

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studies. 20th century Chinese art history and archaeology pioneers were therefore enabled for the very first time to systematically begin integrating scholarship on a worldwide scale based on the exhibition's content information and images of collected artworks and newly excavated materials. See Jason Steuber, "The Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House, London, 1935-36," *The Burlington Magazine*, August 2006, p. 528; "Contexts, Narratives and Canons: The 1935–1936 International Exhibition of Chinese Art," *Arts of Asia*, May–June 2007, p. 126.

4 In analyzing the cultural conflicts represented in the London Exhibition and the historical and cultural backgrounds of the British academic and the educated-public's attitudes toward Oriental art and culture, this paper is inspired by the framework of Jie Hong's argument. See Jie Hong 節泓, "The First Expedition—The 1935 International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London" (第一次遠征——1935年中国芸術国際展覧会在倫敦), *Chinese Calligraphy and Painting* 中国書画, No. 6, 2004, pp. 99–104.

5 The chronological sequence blurred the boundary between art by literary men and crafts by craftsmen, which has never occurred in the Chinese pictorial art exhibition history before 1911. In the Shanghai Preliminary Exhibition, 1935, the Chinese Organizing Committee took a progressive step by exhibiting calligraphy and paintings with ceramics, bronzes and miscellaneous arts, but still had not broken the grand rule by mixing different types of arts within the same place. The Chinese side holds the solid concept that calligraphy and painting were the most important genres of Chinese art; that the crafts of the Ming and the Qing periods were not considered as high in art historical value as pictorial arts. As for the different exhibition style between the Shanghai Preliminary Exhibition and the London Exhibition, see Guo Hui, "New Categories, New History: 'The Preliminary Exhibition of Chinese Art' in Shanghai, 1935," in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence: The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress in the History of Art, The University of Melbourne, 13–18 January 2008*, ed. Professor Jaynie Anderson President of CIHA, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2009, pp. 859–60.

Organizing Committee intended to give the Western visitors a message that there were many periods and many kinds of arts in which China had reached the height of perfection. However, there were arguments both for and against this exhibition practice within the British intellectual sphere; showing different ways of understanding Chinese pictorial art.[6] For example, some art critics admired that the style of the exhibition itself was exactly like art.[7] Sir Leigh Ashton, who was in charge of the exhibition procedures (he and Sir Percival David were Vice-Chairman, Director and Chairman of the Hanging Committee), was extremely proud of the exhibition practice as expressed in his comments: "Not only is the exhibition well organized as a whole, but groups of exhibits are organized internally, so that the effect is as intelligible as it is enchanting from a decorative point of view. Never have the rooms of the Royal Academy looked more dignified, and the whole thing is a striking object-lesson in the advantage of single control."[8] This probably was true for those decorative objects such as ceramics, jades and textiles, but it was disaster for planar artworks.

W. W. Winkworth (1901–1977), an art critic as well as an active member involved in the London Exhibition, sent an article to *The Burlington Magazine*, and he criticized the inappropriate treatment of Chinese pictorial art at Burlington House. According to his opinion, the masterpiece by Wang Meng (王蒙 1308–1385) was placed too high to be enjoyed, and far too high for its inscriptions to be studied. It is a work which must be seen in detail, as its whole beauty depends on the homogeneity achieved, through a maze of complicated and detailed forms, by the absolutely consistent quality of the brush-work, which is in the "hemp-fibre" style.[9] From this point he satirically noted that because many of the pictures been placed so high, that people might need a telescope to see them; and that most people have received the impression that for some reason these paintings are not taken seriously, or are regarded as hardly worth showing at Burlington House.[10] In the end, Winkworth concluded that "foreign students of Chinese painting are likely

6 It is amazing that there were no criticism either from Dr. F. T. Cheng (鄭天錫 1884–1970), the Special Commissioner of the Chinese Government sent to the London Exhibition or from the Chinese language media back in the homeland, only Zhuang Yan, who was sent by the Palace Museum as a secretary accompanying objects to London for helping the exhibition procedures with the staffs from the Royal Academy, mentioned in his memoirs that the exhibition style of the calligraphy and painting was bad. See F. T. Cheng, *East and West: Episodes in a Sixty Years' Journey*, London and New York: Hutchinson & Co., (Publishers) Ltd., 1951, p. 156; Zhuang Yan 莊厳, 山堂清話 *Shantang Qinghua*, Taipei: Guoli Gugong Buwuyuan, 1970, pp. 163–64.

7 "The Royal Academy: Chinese Art Exhibition," *Museum*, Vol. 35, 1936, p. 372.

8 "The Art of China: A Revelation of Form and Colour," *The Times*, 28 November 1935, p. 15. However, later Ashton reflected that "it is quite clear that some steps must be taken to put the *apparatus criticus* of Chinese painting in better order, and that more rational methods approximating to European *stilritik* must be adopted or the present treatment of the questions of authenticity and attribution will never progress farther." See Leigh Ashton, "Some Notes on the Chinese Exhibition," *The Burlington Magazine*, February 1936, p. 86.

9 It can be assumed that Winkworth didn't have such kind of professional knowledge about Chinese painting, as indicated in the sub-title of his article, he had wrote it in collaboration with Chiang Yee (蒋彝 1903–1977), a poet, calligrapher and painter who taught Chinese language at London University, who not only gave an exhibition of his calligraphy and landscape painting in London, but also published a guidebook: *The Chinese Eyes An Introduction to Its Aesthetic and Technique* (1935, London) during the exhibition period, whose aim is to deepen the understanding of Chinese art. See "IV—The Paintings," By W. W. Winkworth, in collaboration with Chiang Yee, *The Burlington Magazine*, January 1936, pp. 30–35.

10 Ibid., p. 30, p. 35.

to feel that everything has been sacrificed to decorative effect;"[11] and "it is disappointing to find twelve-fold lacquer screens and huge thrones, which are of comparatively small historical or artistic interest, occupying vast areas while paintings are skied."[12]

Viewed from the pictures taken during the Exhibition, it was probably not exactly true that those lacquer screens and huge thrones took up larger spaces as Winkworth criticized. It was only because there were so many exhibits drawn from museums and private collections all over the world that quite a number of Chinese calligraphy and paintings had to be placed in such high places that the audience was unable to appreciate these artworks from a near distance. With regard to this issue, another art critic also expressed the same opinion, stated that "we have to pay for our greed by finding many of the paintings hung so high that they are almost invisible and a Chinese picture to be fully apprehended should be examined close to and in detail."[13]

It was true that due to the limitation of space, there was no choice but to put planar artworks together with three-dimensional crafts such as ceramics, bronzes and textiles, which was very effective in having shown the audience about the entire Chinese art history based upon "object-lesson" as the Organizing Committee had expected (see Fig. 1, Fig. 2). But this kind of exhibition practice, which blurred the boundary between art created by literary men and crafts by craftsmen, was completely against traditional Chinese connoisseurship of pictorial art. In traditional Chinese society, literary artists paid much more attention to how to harmonize pictorial art with their daily living spaces such as the main hall and the studio in their house. Wen Zhengheng (文震亨 1595–1645), an accomplished calligrapher and painter in the Late Ming Dynasty, wrote a famous guidebook about "the Art of Living" (*wenrenquwei* 文人趣味) of the cultured class. In this book called *Zhangwuzhi* 長物志, [14] he asserted:

> 懸画宜高。斎中僅可置一軸於上。若懸両壁及左右対列最俗。長画可掛高壁。不可用挨画竹曲掛。画桌可置奇石。或時花盆景之属。忌置朱紅漆等器。堂中宜掛大幅横披。斎中宜小景花鳥。若単条扇面方掛屏之類。倶不雅觀。
>
> (Paintings should be suspended high on the wall, and in one's library there should be exposed only one scroll at the time. To hang scrolls on two walls facing each other or hanging scrolls in pairs is a most vulgar custom. One long hanging scroll should be suspended on the wall of a high room; one should not cover such a wall with a number of scrolls hung close together like bam-

11 Ibid., p. 35.

12 Ibid.

13 Mary Chamot, "The Chinese Exhibition," *Contemporary Review*, No. 841, 1936, p. 66.

14 This is the most complete work on all objects of daily life familiar to the cultured scholars. It was compiled by Wen Zhengheng. Since the author belonged to one of the leading literary families of Changzhou 長州, now called Suzhou 蘇州)—the Wen clan that produced such famous artists as the head of the family, Wen Zhengming (文徵明 1470–1559), his sons Wen Peng (文彭 1497–1573), Wen Jia (文嘉 1501–1583), Wen Tai (文台 1470–1559), his grandson Wen Yuanshan (文元善 1582–1627), and his great-grandsons Wen Zhengmeng (文震孟 1574–1636) and Wen Zhengheng. Belonging to such a family, Wen Zhengheng was in an ideal position to gather materials on his subject and to write this book.

Fig. 1 Courtesy of the Royal Academy of Arts, London

boo stems. But a rare stone should be placed on the drawing table, or at times some kind of flower or bonsai tree. Garish objects like red lacquer work should be avoided. In the main hall of the house should be hung a large horizontal scroll, while in one's library there should be one smaller landscape painting, or a picture of birds and flowers. If one hangs there narrow single pictures, mounted fans, square miniature pictures, sets of scrolls etc., then all such will give one's studio a vulgar appearance).[15]

When examining the London Exhibition's practice depended on Wen Zhengheng's assertion, it was obvious that the British Organizing Committee lacked basic knowledge about Chinese pictorial art in showing that not only did they separate calligraphy from paintings, but also fixed each of these artworks with a frame (see Fig. 1, 2), hung up high on the walls, which completely killed the visual beauty of one of the important traditional Chinese painting styles—*guafu* 掛幅 (hanging scroll).[16] Moreover, the British side exhibited together several hand scrolls and screens which were irrelevant to each other either in subject, in design or even in size. In the traditional Chinese connoisseurship of pictorial art, the cultured class seldom put more than one scroll incompatible in subject, style and size in the same space. This kind of sense of aesthetics in appreciating scrolls even could be observed from the following passage quoted from *Kao Pan Yushi* 考槃余事, one of the refined guidebooks about "the Art of Living" compiled by Tu Long (屠隆 1542–1605), a literary man who lived in the Late Ming Dynasty:

> 高斎精室、宜掛単条。若対軸即少雅致。況四五軸乎。且高人之画，適興偶作数筆。人即宝伝，何能有対乎。今人以孤軸為嫌，不足与言画矣。
>
> (In a spacious library or a refined studio there should be displayed only one scroll. A pair of scrolls

15 English translation based on R. H. Van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art As Viewed by the Connoisseur: Notes on the Means and Methods of Traditional Chinese Connoisseurship of Pictorial Art, based Upon A Study of the Art of Mounting Scrolls in China and Japan*, Roma: Istituto Italiano Oriente, 1958, p. 25.

16 Based on R. H. Van Gulik's survey, certain Chinese painting styles such as *Guafu* 掛幅 and *Shoujuan* 手巻, used to be expressed in Japanese terms; *Guafu* was described as *Kakemono* 懸物 and *Shoujuan* as *Makimono* 巻物. H. Van Gulik found it difficult to understand why Western scholars often used Japanese terms to describe Chinese scrolls, as he noted that both *Kakemono* and *Makimono* could be found in English dictionaries. This supports the concept that early Western studies of Chinese art were mainly based on Japanese information and sources—a situation that now belong to the past. I will address this issue later with regard to discussing Wen Yuanning's comments about Japanese scholars' contributions to Binyon's understanding of Oriental art and culture. See R. H. Van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art As Viewed by the Connoisseur*, p. XXVIII.

will lessen the elegant atmosphere, not to speak of four or five. Moreover, highminded artists painted only when inspired, therefore their works are treasured during succeeding generations. How could such paintings be adequately paired? The present-day people do not like single scrolls. With such persons one cannot talk about painting).[17]

Fig. 2 Courtesy of the Royal Academy of Arts, London

2. Cultural Conflicts in the Connoisseurship of Pictorial Art: From Elite Artist to the General Public

If the exhibition of Western painting was a relatively permanent practice, the leisured class in the past tended to show their pictorial art in temporary periods regarding different seasons and different gatherings. Since the materials used in calligraphy and paintings like paper and silk, were frail, and easily damaged by careless treatment, the cultured class had to expend much time and energy to take care of their family treasures in different situations. These practices are evident in the following paragraph abstracted from one of the oldest guidebooks about "the Art of Living"—*Dong Tian Qinglu Ji* 洞天清録集, written by Zhao Xihu 趙希鵠, a member of the Song Imperial Family.

> 択画之名筆，一室止可三四軸，觀玩三五日，別易名筆，則諸軸皆見風日，決不蒸湿。又輪次掛之，則不令惹塵埃。時易一二家，則看之不厭。
>
> (Having selected some paintings by famous artists you should not suspend more than three or four in one room. After having enjoyed these to the full, every three or four days you should change them for other good pictures. In such a way you will (in course of time) see all your scrolls and they will never suffer damage by draughts or sunrays. Moreover, if you thus display them in turns they will not get soiled, and by continually changing the works by one or two masters you will never tire of them). [18]

While from a practical perspective, because the Chinese literary men exerted themselves to take care of calligraphy and paintings in such a delicate way that in the end they built up an intimate relationship with artworks. For them, therefore, these artworks were not merely interior decoration of their studio and living room, but also became an indispensable part of their daily life routine and necessities. For that matter, Chinese painting is quite different from Western portrait painting and landscape painting, which are intended

17 English translation quoted from the above R. H. Van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, p. 25.

18 English translation quoted from *Chinese Pictorial Art As Viewed by the Connoisseur*, p. 3.

to memorialize an ancestor, to record historical facts or to depict natural scene in a more accurate manner. The Chinese painting has a poetic atmosphere, which leaves much more space to the viewers' imagination, and invites them to enter into a fantasy world created by visual image, poetry and inscriptions. The Chinese term *Bawan* 把玩 describes the guiding sensibility in the traditional Chinese connoisseurship of pictorial art.[19] Its meaning is precisely described in Sir Percival David's lecture given at the Royal Academy during the exhibition period. Out of his rich personal life experience serving as British Council in a beautiful and cultured city like Hangzhou 杭州 at the turn of twentieth century, Sir David vividly accounted how the Chinese leisured class showed their family treasures to a few bosom friends in a leisurely manner. He wrote:

> Each object is brought out from storage, carefully removed from its silk-lined box or wrapper, passed round to the small admiring assembly of connoisseurs, who handle it fondly and lovingly, and then as carefully and as lovingly it is put away before the next object is brought out.[20]

Reading the above description, it can be easily imagined that *bawan* is a sense of touching an artwork gently in the company of familiar acquaintances, thus creating an extremely intimate atmosphere of connoisseurship of Chinese art, which is completely opposite to the Western way of appreciation of paintings hung up in public spaces like churches and galleries, which actually prevented the viewers from appreciating the artistry at an intimate distance.

While from an aesthetic perspective, this style of appreciation originated from the literary qualities of Chinese paintings, such as a poetry, brush-work, inscriptions and seals by authors, as well as their visual qualities. It also had a deep relationship with the traditional lifestyle of the cultured class, who spent leisure time by assembling together to compose a poem, criticizing each other's artworks, and appreciating antiques in a sophisticated garden. Images of these literary men gathering were vividly painted in artworks such as [The] *Five Scholars of the Tang Dynasty* 唐五学士図 by Liu Songnian (劉松年 1190–1230), *Antiquates under the Shade of the Elecococa* 桐蔭博古図 by Cui Zizhong (崔子忠 ?–1644), sent from The Palace Museum to the London Exhibition. The tradition of *bawan* could be traced back to the times of the Lanting Gathering 蘭亭集会[21] recorded by Wang Xizi (王義之 303–361) down to the literary men gathering of the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties who had left numerous essays (*Xiaoping* 小品) describing their ideal life, some of which were "rediscovered" and republished during the 1930s in the nostalgic longing for tradition Chinese cultures created by the leisured class.

19 By using this Chinese term to illustrate the different connoisseurships of pictorial art between East and West, I am inspired by the following thesis, Li Xianting 栗憲庭, "Exhibition Style and Innovation in Chinese Ink painting," (展示形式与中国水墨画的革新) in *What Important is not Art* 重要的不是芸術, Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 2000, pp. 38–42; Jie Hong 節泓, "The First Expedition—The 1935 International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London," p. 102.

20 Sir Percival David, Bt., "The Chinese Exhibition," *The Burlington Magazine,* December 1935, p. 113.

21 This gathering was described in his famous calligraphy: Preface to Lanting 蘭亭序, which is regarded as a canon even today for the beginners to practice Chinese calligraphy.

Sir Percival David was extremely familiar with and fascinated by this traditional connoisseurship of Chinese pictorial art created by the literary men based on their leisure lifestyle, and yet also was deeply aware that there was no possibility to practice it in Britain in spite of the current international-scale exhibition of Chinese art held at marvelous place like Burlington House. The sense that he was a bit of unsatisfied with the exhibition was revealed in his lecture below:

> It has long been recognized that Chinese objects of art do not lend themselves to exhibition *en masse*[…]. Moreover, the true Chinese collector rarely shows his treasures. If they are shown at all, they are shown only to privileged and knowledgeable guests. The occasion is always one of ceremony[…]. It is impossible otherwise to appreciate to the full the rather precious atmosphere of these works of art, or the technical ingenuities which are concealed in their production. The amenities of Burlington House as a venue for an art exhibition are unrivalled in this country."[22]

Except the reasons that I listed in the above, there were other obstacles why Chinese calligraphy and paintings were not exhibited in the proper way at Burlington House, which hindered the educated British public's understanding and appreciation of Chinese art.[23] To reveal these obstacles, more examination should be directed to the receptive history of Chinese pictorial art within the Western context, and to the British stereotypical outlook toward them, showed in cultural attitudes passed down from the eighteenth century to the 1930s.

22 Sir Percival David, Bt., "The Chinese Exhibition," p. 113.

23 In regarding the selected paintings and bronzes, Arthur Waley, for example, contributed an article to *Time and Tide* during the exhibition, criticizing that "the bronzes sent by the Chinese authorities are a very mixed lot, and the attributions bear no relation to modern archaeological knowledge;" and "no series of masterpiece by painters of the first rank." He concluded in the end that "the pictures, indeed, came to near to being a fiasco." Yashiro Yukio (矢代幸雄 1890–1975) and Wen Yuan-ning also hold the same opinions with Waley's. See Arthur Waley, "The Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House," *Time and Tide*, 30 November, 1935, p. 1736; Wen Yuan-ning, "Editorial Commentary," *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, August 1935, p. 9; Yashiro Yukio, "Connoisseurship in Chinese Painting," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 13 December, 1935, p. 264. As matter of fact, in the earlier stages of selecting exhibits to be sent to London, there were disagreements between the British Organizing Committee and their Chinese counterparts. The British side demanded Buddhist sculptures, while the Chinese Government was extremely puzzled by the request. For one reason, the Chinese hold a solid concept that the Buddhist sculptures were pieces made by craftsman, thus was not considered as the mainstream of Chinese art. Acknowledging that there was no hope to obtain any sculptures from China, the British went to C. T. Loo (芦芹斎 1880–1957) and Yamanaka Sadajiro (山中定次郎 1865–1936) for assistance. As for the preliminary negotiations regarding selections, there are many stories that need to be explored, which I would like to open for my further studies. See Wang shih-chieh 王世傑, *A Report about the Present Planning and Preparation for the International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London* 倫敦中国芸術国際展覧会籌划近況報告, 1935; *The Diary of Dr. Wang Shih-chieh, Vol., May 1933–December 1938* 王世傑日記：手稿本 (民國22年5月–民國27年12月), Taipei: The Institute of Modern History of the Academia Sinica 中央研究院近代史研究所, 1990; Shi Chongpeng 施翀鵬, "Preface to *Account of Appreciation Chinese Masterpieces* 中国名画觀摩記, Shanghai: The Commercial Press Ltd., 1936, pp. 1–2; Jeannette Shambaugh Elliott and David Shambaugh, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005, pp. 81–82.

III. China in Britain

1. Decorative Object or Fine Art?

The basic difference between Chinese painting and Western painting derived from the different process of painting and the different thought patterns behind it, which directly influenced the commensurability of Chinese painting and Western appreciation. Upon close examination of the London Exhibition, one can recognize many obstacles for the incongruous exhibition of Chinese art in the Western context.

Firstly, the stereotypical British conceptions about Chinese art was one of the main obstacles to a full appreciation of traditional Chinese pictorial art. This deep-rooted prejudice can be seen in an article entitled "Decorative objects" published in *The Times*, 17 December, 1935. The anonymous author stated that, "Though the distinction between "fine" and "decorative" art is not so clear at the exhibition of Chinese Art as it has been until lately in European art, it is convenient to regard everything in the exhibition except paintings and sculpture as decorative objects. As matter of fact most of them had more than a decorative intention, and were associated with ritual and ceremony—which puts our modern ornamental pottery on the Chinese model in a somewhat questionable light."[24] The English term "china" is enough to indicate how low Chinese art's position in world art history was at the beginning of the twentieth century. Compared with Chinese calligraphy and paintings, magnificent Chinese crafts with beautiful colour, dainty, and exotic designs might have a stronger visual appeal than pictorial art, and thus more easily caught Westerner's attention during the exhibition. The day before the Exhibition, in the press held by the Royal Academy, Sir Williams Llewellyn (1858–1941), the president of the Academy, outlined the general scope and character of the exhibition. He paid a warm tribute to the Chinese Government for their generous cooperation, and also spoke with enthusiasm of the work of the executive committee. "For most people," he said, "Chinese art meant Ming porcelain; this exhibition would show them that there were other periods and other kinds of art in which China had reached the height of perfection."[25] His comments about the upcoming Chinese art exhibition showed his great expectations for raising British consciousness of Chinese art, and in the meanwhile, cast light on the educated British public's vague awareness of Chinese art and culture as a whole in the mid-1930s.

Indeed, except paintings and sculpture, the British media regarded all Chinese arts as "decorative objects." Epitomized by lovely and dainty porcelain tea sets and colourful wallpaper, these "decorative objects" had crossed the sea a long time ago, entering into British houses and becoming familiar necessities in the British people's daily life. The British were so fascinated that finally by this remarkable decorativeness they cultivated a so-called "Oriental aesthetic sensibility" 東洋の美 two centuries ago. The word "decorativeness" 装飾性 does not mean that the British appreciated Chinese crafts out of their deep research and intellectual understanding. Rather, I use this word to suggest that because of its lack of authenticity and solemnity as a fine art defined by the Western standard, the function of decorativeness of Chinese art is

24 "The Chinese Art Exhibition: Decorative Objects," *The Times*, 17 December 1935, p. 12.

25 "Sir W. Llewellyn on Chinese Art: Scope of London Exhibition," *The Times*, 23 November 1935, p. 11.

much more important simply as being pleasant-looking in the Westerners' eyes.[26] One of good examples to illustrate what the British audience in the 1930s thought about Chinese art was the report published in *The Illustrated London News* about the exhibits lent by the Chinese Government. From 30 November 1935, two days after the Exhibition opened, the Newspaper devoted 39 pages to introduce the exhibits with pictures which stressed the striking decorativeness of the Chinese art. The items included carvings in red lacquer, textiles, porcelains, ceramics, jades, bronzes and paintings, but Chinese calligraphy was not included in the list. Seeing these pictures of cabinets, tapestries, pagodas with Oriental designs and colours, one can't help but being reminded of *chinoiserie* in eighteenth century Europe.

On the other hand, Frank Davis (1897–1956), an art columnist belonged to this newspaper, wrote a treatise in which he criticized the British public's prejudiced conceptions about Chinese art and the people who created it, asserting that the Chinese art, especially painting, should be appreciated with "right eyes" like those Renaissance Italian paintings exhibited earlier at the same Burlington House. One can read between his lines to see how he regarded Chinese pictorial art as an art defined from the Western perspective:

> I VENTURE to make two prophecies about this superb and exhilarating show. The first is that it will prove a more popular attraction than any of its predecessors, not excepting the immensely popular Italian. The second is that it will finally dissipate the barbarous heresy, inherited by us from our eighteenth-century ancestors, that the Chinese were a quaint people whose normal mode of artistic expression was merely curious and odd, and not to be taken seriously by the people of the West[…]. Two sections alone should be sufficient to convince the average visitor that he is confronted with an art which can rise to monumental grandeur and still contain within itself every possible civilized grace.[27]

Compared to Western art, traditional Chinese painting has an intimate relationship with calligraphy, poetry and the philosophy of life constituted of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (Zen), which formed a harmonious unit as a composite art within the traditional context. In addition to this cultural background, the visual image represented in Chinese painting also is totally different from the Western conventional habit of appreciation of pictorial art. When the British discovered that for the Chinese, calligraphy and painting are the main stream of art, that reminded of them how little they know about the field, in contrast to their

26 R. L. Hobson (1872–1941) also revealed the British general public's vague conception about Chinese art in the 1930s, by saying that "the average Westerner will be more attracted by the ceramics which are easier to understand and which make a more direct appeal with their bright colours and pleasing shapes. Moreover, the general public associates the name of China more closely with porcelain than with any other article except perhaps silk and tea." See "The Exhibition of Chinese Art: I—THE CERAMICS." *The Burlington Magazine*, January 1936, p. 3.

27 Frank Davis, "II. The Royal Academy Exhibition of Chinese Art: being a Page for Collectors," *The Illustrated London News*, 30 November 1935, p. 986.

rich knowledge about porcelain, ceramics and jade.[28] In other words, they were informed that Chinese calligraphy and painting, especially literary painting, was not as easily and directly understood as the lovely willow-pattern design painted on the surface of blue-and-white teacup. In front of masterpieces by Huang Gongwang (黄公望 1296–1355), Guo Xi (郭熙 1023–1085), Xia Gui (夏圭 ?–?), and Ma Yuan (馬遠, ?–?) their "Oriental aesthetic sensibility" that endured in the British mind for many centuries began to shake from the base.

However, in the mid-1930s, there were a few outstanding Oriental scholars like Laurence Binyon and Arthur Waley who understood and claimed that the main stream of Chinese art is calligraphy and painting, not decorative porcelain or ceramics.[29] For example, in his introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition published by the Royal Academy, Binyon praised that, "If we had inquired, we should have found out that, for the Chinese, painting is the supreme art; and Chinese painting has a far longer tradition than of any European country. For more than sixteen centuries there has been nourished on thought and religion, has expressed a philosophy of life."[30] From this statement, we could imagine that the London Exhibition was an extreme important turning point for changing the stereotypical British conception of Chinese art as decorative objects to fine art, although as the first time-exhibits, Chinese calligraphy may have fostered an image of China as a remote, ancient, and mysterious Oriental empire in the minds of the British audience in the 1930s.

28 Basil Gray, "The Chinese Exhibition: Painting and Calligraphy;" R. L. Hobson, "The Chinese Exhibition at Burlington House," *Apollo*, November 1935, p. 313; December 1935, p. 312.

29 Binyon and Waley are regarded as the most talented, distinguished Oriental scholars in twentieth-century Britain. However, belonging to the older generation of Orientalists who were not competent in both of Chinese and Japanese languages, Binyon's understanding was very much dependent on Japanese resources, and naturally his sense of Oriental art and culture was strongly coloured by Japanese scholars' interpretations. Waley, on the other hand, as a younger Oriental scholar who had not only mastered both Oriental languages, but also built broader friendships with eminent Chinese and Japanese scholars such as Xu Zhimu (徐志摩 1897–1931), Hu Shi (胡適 1891–1962), Chen Yange (陳寅恪 1890–1969), and Yashiro Yukio, all of whom left an indelible effect on his intellectual formation and his attitude toward Oriental art and culture. Based upon on this fact, it can be assumed that there were marked differences between Binyon and Waley's understandings and interpretations about Chinese art. However, during the London Exhibition, Waley did not play as central a role as Binyon, but he should be considered as one of the true connoisseurs of Chinese pictorial art due to his profound scholarship and excellent accomplishments in the research and the translation of Oriental classical art and literature from the 1910s to the mid-twentieth century. Today, as we read his article published at *The Time and Tide*, we have to admit the validity of his criticism that the paintings lent from the Palace Museum were not masterpieces. Waley's confession of disappointment with the Exhibition was extremely understandable. Since there is no space in this paper to demonstrate this issue in a detailed way, I prefer to leave it to be addressed in the future. See Arthur Waley, "The Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House," p. 1736; "Our Debt to China," *Asiatic Review*, July1940, pp. 554–57; John Trevor Hatcher, "Anglo-Japanese Friendship: Yashiro Yukio, Laurence Binyon and Arthur Waley," *Fukuoka University Review of Literature & Humanities* 福岡大学人文論叢, 23(4), March1992, pp. 997–1022; Katō Akō 加藤阿幸, "Xu Zhimu and Arthur Waley" (徐志摩とアーサー・ウェイリー), *DongYing Qiu Suo* 東瀛求索, No. 8, August 1996, pp. 235–60.

30 Laurence Binyon, Introduction to *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art*, 1935–6, London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1935, p. xiii.

2. Chinese Pictorial Art in the Western Context History

Different ways of creating and different aesthetic sensibilities were two of the main causes that led to the educated British public's misconceptions about Chinese pictorial art. This difference is represented in a two-fold manner technically and historically. In the first place, the technical way of painting between Occident and Orient is obviously different. In Chinese art, calligraphy and painting shared an intimate relationship with each other for a long tradition, and artists' personalities and scholarship are permeated through their works, too. All of these factors formed an indispensable standard in judging whether a work is good or not. In the West, painting and writing are unrelated, and artists' personalities and scholarship were never considered as a standard by which to judge their works. The following preface attached to the catalogue published by the Chinese government in 1935 was very clear to point out the different artistic standards between Occident and Orient:

> Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting both have a history of great antiquity. They are moreover distinguished by the existence between them of a peculiar close affinity[…]. Characterized as they are by this very special relationship in their parallel existence, Chinese calligraphy and painting would seem to deserve a position of first importance in the realm of art.
> Primarily both Chinese calligraphy and painting serve as media of the revelation of the spirit of man and have always exercised great influence upon each other. Nobility of character and profundity of learning find expression in Chinese paintings and writings, which, with an adequate technique of their own, are essentially different from the simple reproductions of concrete substances.”[31]

An article published in *The China Critic* went further to interpret this difference not only as a way of creating an art piece, but also as a different outlook of life by expressing in the statement that “In Chinese calligraphy is embodied the whole Chinese philosophy of life: the cultivation of strength through the softness of manners[…]. In softness is strength; in humbleness is nobility; such is the Chinese outlook of life.”[32]

In regard to this very Chinese definition about calligraphy and painting, the Western conception is quite different. In the West, writing words or texts 字/文 never developed into an art form that was greatly appreciated and worshiped by the cultured class like it was in traditional China. Thus, if the British audience had felt perplexed and puzzled when they faced a handwritten foreign language—classical Chinese, it was impossible for them to penetrate and appreciate the Chinese calligraphy combined with poetic mood as a medium for literary men to express their sentiments in traditional Chinese society; likewise, their understanding of Chinese painting to the full was questionable. However, Sir Percival David was one of few

31 *The Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Government Exhibits for the International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London* 倫敦中国芸術国際展覧会籌備委員会編輯『参加倫敦中国芸術国際展覧会出品図説』, Shanghai: The Commercial Press, Ltd., 1935, p. 5.

32 “A National Art,” *The China Critic*, 2 May 1935, p. 104.

British connoisseurs who was deeply aware of this decisively difference as expressed in his opening lecture given at the Royal Academy:

> The Chinese are essentially a literary nation, and literary traditions have played a predominant part in the development of Chinese art. Calligraphy itself is accounted a fine art, indeed it is the greatest of all the arts of China. To us writing is merely a convenience; to the Chinese it is almost a religious cult. For them the old Western maxim, *litera scripta manet*, has a spiritual significance. The written word is esteemed in China for its permanency as well as for its inherent beauty and vitality. The great calligraphers of China have been great men, great in statesmanship, in philosophy, in religion, in poetry and in scholarship. They were honoured above all men; their script was treasured and carefully imitated; their lines were remembered and repeated long after the Imperial edict was forgotten.[33]

Secondly, viewed from the historical perspective, except a series of shows of Chinese and Japanese arts held in major European countries and cities before and after the First World War, and followed by the publications of the catalogues in English, French and German related to these exhibitions,[34] the introductions and interpretations of Chinese painting and its theory also started at the same period by a few prominent Japanese scholars such as Taki Seichi (滝精一 1878–1945) in *The Kokka* (1905–1918, the English version of 国華) and S. Tajima (田島志一 1869–?) with Shimbi Shoin 審美書院.[35] Particularly after the monumental publications of 20 volumes' *Selected Relics of Japanese Art* 真美大観 (1899–1908) with marvelous pictures and texts written in both Japanese and English, under Tajima's editorship published from Nippon Bukkyō Shimbi Kyōkai 日本仏教真美協会, the Western Oriental art scholars and the general audience were intrigued by these two East Asian countries' arts and became more and more familiar with Chinese paintings, too.[36] Indeed, the Chinese pictorial art was received reluctantly in the West, as pointed out by

33 Sir Percival David, Bt. "The Chinese Exhibition," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 6 December 1935, p. 115.

34 As for details about the exhibitions held in European countries and cities before 1930s, and the catalogues published in major European languages, see Jason Steuber, "The Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House, London, 1935–36," pp. 530-31.

35 As a chief editor and major contributor of *The Kokka,* Taki published a number of articles in the magazine; later he collected a few essays and compiled them into a book, published in London in 1910. In one of these essays, he demonstrated the qualities of the Chinese artists' love of nature and its influence on Chinese landscape painting, which obviously exerted a favorable influence on Binyon's outlook of Oriental art. See Taki Seichi, "Chinese Landscape Painting: Love of Nature and Its Influence on Chinese Landscape Painting," in *Three Essays on Oriental Painting,* London: B. Quaritch, 1910, pp. 31–38.

36 However, based on my current survey, there are few reproductions of calligraphy either by Chinese artists or by Japanese artists that appeared at *The Kokka* or at the *Selected Relics of Japanese Art*; no attention was paid to calligraphy theory before the twentieth century. Although Binyon mentioned the later published 15 volumes of the "Selected Masterpieces from the Fine Arts of the Far East" 東洋美術大観 (1908–1918, Shimbi Shoin), I think due to the language barrier, the influence of these volumes was only limited to a very small circle of Oriental art scholars in the West. See Baron Riuichi Kuki 九鬼隆一and Ernest F. Fenollosa, Preface to *Selected Relics of Japanese Art*; S. Tajima, Editorial Notes, Vol. I, Kyoto: Nippon Bukkyō Shimbi Kyōkai, 1899; Laurence Binyon, Preface to *Painting in the Far East: An Introduction to the History of Pictorial Art in Asia, Especially China and Japan*, London: Edward Arnold, 1908, pp. vi–vii, pp. ix–x; Idem, Preface to the *Painting in the Far East* (second edition),

Wen Yuan-ning: "when Chinese paintings came to be better known in the West, they were seen through Japanese eyes, so to speak; for Japanese paintings were known to the West long before Chinese paintings."[37]

Compared with the early reception of Chinese painting to the Western audience, calligraphy came to be known at a much later period. Although the collection of Chinese calligraphy began in the West in the early twentieth century, when Sir Aurel Stein (1862–1943) and Paul Pelliot (1878–1945) acquired more than 10, 000 sutra scrolls and a few rare Tang Dynasty rubbings at Dunhuang 敦煌. Their collections were brought back to the British Museum in London and the Bibliothéque National in Paris, respectively. However, these writings were collected and appreciated as archaeological materials, not as artworks.[38] As matter of fact, according to the opinion of Professor Lothar Ledderose (1942–), it was the first time in the London Exhibition that Chinese calligraphy was exhibited, some of which included the precious pieces of the famous "Four Masters of the Song Dynasty," namely Cai Rang (蔡襄 1012–1067), Mi Fu (米芾 1051–1107), Su Shi (蘇軾 1036–1101), and Huang Tingjian (黄庭堅 1045–1105).[39] In addition, Western Oriental scholars were well informed of Chinese art theory through Arthur Waley and Taki Seichi's translations published in *The Burlington Magazine* and *The Kokka* at the turn of the twentieth century,[40] but it was not until in 1935 when some important art theory texts concerned with calligraphy were translated into English and introduced to the West,[41] that they began to grasp a much clearer image of intimate relationship between Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting, which could be found in the treatises of Laurence Binyon, H. L. Hobson, Basil Gray (1904–1989) and Leigh Ashton, which appeared at this time,[42] although their authentic

London: E. Arnold, 1913, pp. vii–viii, p. xii.

37 Wen Yuan-ning 温源寧, *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, December 1935, p. 596.

38 Shen C.Y. Fu 傅申, Preface to *Masterpieces of Chinese Calligraphy in American and Eupore* 欧米収蔵中国法書名蹟集, edited by Nakata Yujiro 中田勇次郎 and Shen C.Y. Fu 傅申, Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1981, p. i.

39 Professor Ledderose of Heidelberg University, Germany, mentioned it in his lecture given at an annual meeting held by the Chinese Calligraphy Theory Research Association 書論研究会 in the autumn of 1981. Considering that he is the first Westerner who obtained his doctrinal degree concentrating on Chinese calligraphy, his comments are very authentic. See Lothar Ledderose, "A Survey of the History of Chinese Calligraphy in Europe and America"("欧米における中国書道史の研究"), translated by Yoshihara Hironobu 吉原宏伸, *Calligraphy Theory* 書論, No. 19, Special Issue: Zhang Lianqing 張廉卿, Autumn 1981, p. 122.

40 Based on my current survey, compared with the detailed and vivid introductions and interpretations about Japanese and Chinese paintings, there was a few articles which aimed to introduce and interpret Chinese calligraphy and its theory that appeared in *The Kokka*. See *Catalogue of The Kokka: A Monthly Journal of Oriental Art, From No.1 to No. 148* (Oct. 1889–Sep. 1902), Tokyo: Kokka Company, 1913.

41 Based on my current survey, publications which aimed to introduce and interpret Chinese calligraphy and its theory in English all appeared during or after the London Exhibition. See "On the Fine Art of Chinese Calligraphy" by Sun Kuo-t'ing of the T'ang Dynasty, translated by Sun Ta-yu 孫大雨; Lin Yutang, "The Aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy;" John Hazedel Levis, "Phonology and Calligraphy in Chinese Art," *T'ien Hsia* Monthly, September 1935, pp. 192-207; December 1935, pp. 495-507; November 1937, pp. 437–50; *Chinese Calligraphy*, edited and translated by Toda Kenji and Lucy Driscoll, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1935; Chiang Yee, *Chinese Calligraphy: An Introduction to Its Aesthetic and Technique*, London: Methuen & Company, Ltd., 1938; *The Spirit of the Brush*, edited and translated by Shio Sakanishi, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938.

42 See Laurence Binyon, "Chinese Painting," *Asia*, November 1935, p. 666; "Chinese Painters," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 14 February 1936, p. 369; Leigh Ashton, "A Westerner and the Chinese Exhibition;" Basil Gray, "Chinese Art Exhibition:

knowledge in this field were quite suspect from the way that they had separated calligraphy from paintings in the exhibition as I mentioned in the above. Therefore if Western Oriental art scholars still held a vague conception about Chinese calligraphy and its connection with Chinese painting, it is easily conceivable how during the exhibition the general British audience were so bewildered by the method of *xieyi* 写意 applied in Chinese painting, for *xieyi* is largely generated from the brush-work of Chinese calligraphy.[43]

3. *Xieyi* 写意 and *Xieshi* 写実

Xieyi is a key concept of Chinese pictorial art theory distinguished from *xieshi* 写実 (realism) based on science in the West. Literally, *xieyi* meant "depicting mind" in Chinese art theory, through techniques such as outlining a subject with brief, rather than detailed and descriptive lines. In general, it means the practice of such art using such techniques. But most frequently, *xieyi* is widely used to denote a creative principle, emphasizing the author's subjectivity.[44] So when the British audience came across *xieyi* for the first time through masterpieces by Guo Xi, Ma Yuan, and Xia Gui, they were confounded by their divergence from realist techniques. A few art critics and Oriental scholars, on the other hand, began to reflect on the deficiencies in Western painting by comparing the Chinese *xieyi* with the Western *xieshi*, for they thought that *xieyi* in the Chinese pictorial art was not the method to catch the real object through human eyes' observation, but is a "mirror" reflecting the artists' mind or spirituality upon a careful observation and study of real landscapes, namely, an artistic mental picture of nature in front of his eyes through mediation and imagination. For this reason, Western art critics came to the point that based on *xieyi*, the Chinese painting might give the viewers more space of imagination than Western painting. Moreover, a few critics even criticized Western art for being bound too tightly by science; as a result, it had lost vigor and imagination to create something new. For example, George Sheringham (1884–1937), a painter and stage designer, claimed that the current Western art was so bound by the logic of science that it caused art to largely deviate from real human life, and he praised the Chinese harmonious relationship with the universe and with real life represented in their art, by highly valuing the Chinese art as a civilization, which he expressed as follows:

Painting and Calligraphy;" H. L. Hobson, "The Chinese Exhibition at Burlington House," *Apollo*, Vol. 22, 1935, p. 275; p. 312; pp. 313–17.

43 One good example that shows that even Western Oriental art scholars who were familiar with realistic representation were still puzzled by *xieyi*, is Basil Gray's explanation of Huang Gongwang's *Fu Chun Mountains* 富春山居図 (The Palace Museum of Beijing). He describes it as "the gaunt skeleton of the mountains, accentuated by the thin covering of earth and the scanty fringe of trees." The account obviously showed his misunderstanding of this painting. Considering that, at this point, Gray had just entered into the British Museum as a curator, he was still in the process of learning, and his misunderstanding could be excusable. See Basil Gray, "Chinese Art Exhibition: Painting and Calligraphy," p. 315.

44 *Xieyi* was first proposed by late Tang artist and critic Zhang Zao (張璪 ?–?) and further developed by Su Shi 蘇軾 in the Northern Sung period. See He Jing 何菁, "Discovering Realism in Chinese Landscape Painting: Shasei 写生 and Okakura Kakuzo's 1893 Journey to China," in *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts in the 21st Century: Reconsidering the Future from an International Perspective* (International Symposium held by International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto, November 8–12 2005), edited by Inaga Shigemi and Patricia Fister, Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2007, p. 119n47; Chen Zhongzhe 陳中浙, *Yi Chao Zhiru Rulai Di: Dong Qichangshuhuazhong de Chanyi* 一超直入如来地——董其昌書画中的禅意, Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2008, pp. 89–123.

> For the Chinese, civilization is *art*: for them art is so much the expression of the national spirit that one might define it as the national will wherever there is any education; and their veneration for tradition trains the artists away from that craving for erratic individual expression which is such an essential and fascinating characteristic in modern Western art. The Chinese insistence on meaning, tradition and ceremonial enables art to enter every detail of their lives, to an extent that it is almost impossible for the English to appreciate or understand: it is indeed the very structure of their civilization. Exquisite attention to beauty of detail has characterized the daily pursuits of the educated Chinese for thousands of years; as can be seen by their houses, furniture, utensils, ceramics, bronzes, books, carpets, embroideries and clothes; and the elaborate paraphernalia of their ceremonials, religious and civil. Whereas, with us, science has put a fence round art, as it were, keeping it out of the lives of the people.[45]

In addition to Sheringham, Binyon and Ashton, who played central roles in the London Exhibition, appreciated *xieyi*, too, which revealed Chinese artists' reconciliation with nature and their harmonious relationship with life, and conveyed their aesthetic sense and their philosophy of life. Both of them claimed that this cultural background was a key factor why Western and Eastern artists chose different subjects as motifs of their art. In other words, this was the main obstacle that prevented the Westerners from appreciating Chinese painting to the fullest.

4. Different Philosophies of Life Represented in Occidental and Oriental Arts—Discourses Narrated by Laurence Binyon and Leigh Ashton

Contrary to Western artists who regarded figure painting or sculpture as the mainstream of arts, Chinese artists worshiped nature, taking mountains, plants, and animals as the subject of their paintings. This different attitude toward art and its subject manifested in the Exhibition provided an impetus for Oriental art scholars in the West to reflect on the philosophical motivations behind Chinese landscape painting. For example, in his article on the characteristics of Chinese painting published in *Apollo*, Ashton asserted that Chinese artists showed their philosophy of life by putting human figures among mountains, trees and waterfalls in their landscape paintings, which showed that Chinese artists regarded human being as a small part of the cosmos, not the center of the universe.[46]

Laurence Binyon, one of the most distinguished Oriental art scholars in 1930s England, shared the same concept with Ashton in his numerous lectures and in his landmark book, *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (London, 1935) published during the exhibition. Having been working as a chief at the Sub-Department of Oriental prints and drawings at the British Museum for over 20 years, Binyon brought this experienced

45 George Sheringham, "An Appreciation of Chinese Art," *The Studio*, No. 111, 1936, p. 5.

46 Leigh Ashton, "A Westerner and the Chinese Exhibition," p. 275.

background into his lectures and his books, showing in it the unique Chinese artistic tradition, its relation to the art of China as a whole, and to that of the world. One of his key lectures given at the Royal Academy has shown exactly the same idea as Ashton's. Binyon admitted that, "Chinese painting has its marked limitations. It does not deal in tragic passion,"[47] but soon he turns to a more complimentary tone, claiming that "whatever its deficiencies, it has something in its mental atmosphere that—to me at least—is precious and exhilarating. In its flowing out from human preoccupations into all forms of sentient life, in its happy companionship with Nature, in its fine perception of beautiful relations, it speaks of something that is above our fashions and our theories, it speaks of the greatest and the most difficult of all the arts—the art of living."[48] In reference to the characteristics of Chinese art, as indicated by the above Oriental scholars, *The Times* also published an article entitled "Chinese Art: Complementary to European, A Revelation to Britain," the author stated that the Chinese art, which brought a revelation to Britain, should be considered as a complementary to the whole of European art by saying:

> Its tradition was the longest, its influence the widest. Chinese art might be said to be the complement of the art of Europe. That was a great part of its charm and value to us. It was not just another art: it was the expression of another philosophy of life. It opens windows for our minds. We were brought to see things from a fresh angle, and to discover that there were things which we ourselves had not discovered. We did not need to depreciate the West in order to appreciate the East; but Chinese art, which might stand as the chief representative of the art of Asia, refreshed and enlarged our conception of what art was and of its relation to life.[49]

By reading the above arguments and comments by different scholars with different cultural backgrounds published either in the major newspapers such as *The Times*, or in the key academic journals, like *The Burlington Magazine*, I bring about one of my conclusions. Namely, that the British intellectual class's value and appreciation toward Chinese art both in the professional field and in the ordinary reading public during the 1930s should be regarded as generally positive; however, one should not overlook that there were strong prejudices and misconceptions about Chinese art and culture and Chinese people behind the above comments which were generated from the British cultural tradition traced back to the eighteenth century,

47 Laurence Binyon, "Chinese Painters," p. 379. The same concept also could be found in Roger Fry (1866–1934)' s "Chinese Art" published at *The Burlington Magazine*, which indicated that Binyon's interpretation about Chinese painting was influenced by Fry's outlook of Chinese art. See Roger Fry, "Chinese Art," in *Chinese Art: An Introductory Review of Painting, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes, Sculpture, Jade, Etc.*, edited by Roger Fry, Bernard Rackham, Laurence Binyon, W. Perceval Yetts, A. F. Kendrick, Osvald Sirén, W. W. Winkworth, London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1925, p. 4.

48. Ibid., p. 379. Binyon's interpretation about Chinese literary artists' philosophy of life and its application in their artworks and their lifestyle are more systematically representated in his book, *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art,* which I raised in my Japanese thesis. See Han Rega 範麗雅, "Laurence Binyon, Arthur Waley and the London International Exhibition of Chinese Art," *Studies of Comparative Literature*, Society of Comparative Literature University of Tokyo, No. 94, January 2010, pp. 99–101.

49 "Chinese Art: Complementary to European, A Revelation to Britain," *The Times*, 3 December 1935, p. 19.

the period of *chinoiserie*, which could be observed from the term of "decorative objects" applied to describe the Chinese art. Nevertheless, Oriental art scholars like Binyon, and Ashton began to understand and appreciate the Chinese art based on its unique way of "*xieyi*." They all agreed with that through "*xieyi,*" the Chinese artists expressed their outlook of life: companionship with Nature by putting human being into a small part of the cosmos, not the center of it.

With respect to the Western intellectuals' applauded and yet ambiguous attitudes toward Chinese culture and civilization, how did modern Chinese intellectuals react to them?

IV. How Modern Chinese Intellectuals Reacted to the International London Exhibition

As a key participant during the International London Exhibition, there were some complicated historical and cultural factors that the Republic Government had to assuage, such as the strong opposition from the domestic intellectual sphere regarding China's willingness to cooperate with the British Government by lending over 700 pieces of national treasures from the Palace Museum to the exhibition in spite of the concurrent crisis due to Japanese invasion in the Manchuria area.

First of all, in the books published in the West from the nineteenth century, China has been depicted as an undeveloped nation and stagnant civilization, not like major European countries that had achieved high levels of science and technology through the Industrial Revolution in the middle of the nineteenth century. This almost became a common consciousness for Westerners interpreting China and Chinese art and culture as well as a good excuse for foreign powers to come to China for gaining concessions after the Opium War. On other hand, the Europeans has been fond of Chinese things such as porcelain, ceramics, lacquer, etc for centuries, and acknowledged the universality of Chinese art which had exercised a favorable influence on the art, culture and social life of Europe. However, from their viewpoint, Chinese art and culture, after all, are regarded as a "timeless, primitive culture," as 'curious objects' enough worth collecting but just not as an art.

For China, after the "Manchuria Incident", there was an increasingly urgent need to re-interpret and redefine Chinese culture and art in the global context. Thus, for the Republic Government, there was nothing else more important than to elevate Chinese art to the same status as Western art. The cultural policy aiming to promote Chinese culture to the international society that the Republic Government had practiced was clearly seen in Sun Ke, Cai Yuanpei and their supporters' cross-cultural activities by founding Chinese branches of the International Pen Club, the International Culture Cooperation, and a monthly English magazine, *T'ien Hsia*.

1. London Exhibition: Cai Yuanpei's and Lin Yutang' s Cultural Activities

Lin and Cai both shared the same experiences while studying in Leipzig, Germany in the 1920s and their friendship was further deepened first by working together for the Association of China Legal Rights at

the beginning of 1931, then in the Academia Sinica. At the time, Lin worked as the head of the international publications exchange office, while his daily obligation was acting as a foreign language secretary for Cai Yuanpei. From the latter part of 1928 to August of 1936, Cai flung himself into exposing the Chinese culture known to the outside world. The organizations such as Academia Sinica, the Sun Yat-sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education,[50] the Council of the Palace Museum, the Chinese branches of the International Pen Club and the International Culture Cooperation were the centres from which Cai poured out energy and time to start up and open the "windows" of cross-cultural activities for the government in the 1930s. These organizations were also deeply involved in preparing for the Modern Chinese Art Exhibition in Berlin in 1934[51] and the International London Exhibition in 1935.

With the "Manchuria Incident" as a turning point, Cai brought all the intelligent power both from inside and outside of the government in order to publicize Chinese culture to the international society. In this process of publicizing, Lin Yutang, being as a foreign language secretary, played a crucial role in helping Cai to communicate with the Western public intellectuals, such as Gilbert Murry (1866–1957), Paul Pelliot, and Henri Bonnet (1888–1978) among others.[52] From these interactions between Lin and Cai, it can be assumed that Lin was very familiar with the cultural policy launched by the government toward the outside world at the beginning of the 1930s, and had a clear awareness of how the upcoming London Exhibition would bring a powerful influence of traditional Chinese culture to the Western reading public. Lin's awareness could be found in his numerous bilingual articles published in Chinese and English language magazines during the exhibition period. In these articles, the tone of Lin's interpretation of traditional Chinese art and culture which were coloured by Confucianism and Taoism had somehow subtly changed, from strongly condemnatory to amiable. For that matter, in what follows I want to discuss that some of Lin's Chinese and English essays that were resonant with what Binyon and Ashton manifested above. Moreover, not only did Lin have an expectation to promote the British educated-public's understanding of the Chinese art and culture, but also his idea was shared by the other core members of *The China Critic* Group, such as Wen Yuan-ning and John C. H. Wu with whom he founded *T'ien Hsia* in the mid-1930s. However, they

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50 *T'ien Hsia* was the mouthpiece of this organization. It seems that Sun Ke, the head of the Legislative Yuan in the 1930s, founded this organization, but as a matter of fact, it was Cai Yuanpei who was in charge of all practical business.

51 As for the detailed information about this exhibition, see my Japanese thesis, "Laurence Binyon, Arthur Waley and the London International Exhibition of Chinese Art," (「ロンドンにおける中国芸術国際展覧会」と英国知識人の中国伝統文化理解 —— ローレンス・ビニヨンとアーサー・ウェイリーを中心に——), p. 96.

52 Murry and Bonnet were the literature professors of Oxford and of La Sorbonne as well as active leaders of the International Culture Cooperation, whose aim was to promote the cultural cooperation among nations and to bring peace to the world. Murry also was a regular contributor to *T'ien Hsia*. As the professor at the Collège de France and the editor of *T'oung Pao*, Pelliot was frequently visiting the Academia Sinica at this time. His purpose was to obtain some first-hand information about the current excavation of Anyang 安陽, which could be inferred later from his lecture given at the Royal Academy during the exhibition period. Moreover, because of his accomplishment in Oriental study and his language competence, Pelliot was chosen as a key member of the Selection Team by the British Organizing Committee led by Sir Percival David; the team came to Shanghai to select exhibits sent to London in 1932. See Paul Pelliot, "The Royal Tombs of An-Yang," in *Studies in Chinese Art and Some Indian Influences*. edited by J. Hackin, Osvald Sirén, Langdon Warner, Paul Pelliot, London: The India Society, 1937, pp. 51–60; Jeannette Shambaugh Elliott and David Shambaugh, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures*, pp. 81–82.

started their English literary activities far earlier in *The China Critic*.

2. The Publication of *T'ien Hsia* and the International London Exhibition

The China Critic is a weekly English-language magazine, founded in Shanghai in the late 1920s by small, Western-educated group of Chinese intellectuals. The magazine existed for nearly twenty years. The editors and contributors changed frequently, but the involvement of its core members remained the same. These were Wen Yuan-ning, a Cambridge graduate and an English literature professor at Beijing University, who acted as chief-editor for the magazine; Lin Yutang, a literary critic; John C. H. Wu, a law professor at Dong Wu University; and T. K. Chuan, a philosophy professor of Beijing University, all of whom had profound knowledge of both Chinese and Western cultures. They were later joined by a playwright, Yao Hsin-nung 姚莘農. The five men also formed the editorial board of *T'ien Hsia*, the mouthpiece of the Sun Yat-sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education. They also served as key contributors of *The China Critic*, too.[53] Sun Ke elaborated on the purpose of the publication of *T'ien Hsia* and the founding of the Institute in the Foreword published in *T'ien Hsia*. He claimed that: "Now, there is one activity of the League of Nations which has not been given the prominence it deserves—the work of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation. We think so much of the political and economic function of the League that we are apt to forget its cultural function, but it is a function which, we are sure, will increase in importance with time. No real political and economic understanding can exist, unless it is based upon a cultural understanding."[54] Thus, the Institute with *The China Critic* and *T'ien Hsia* under its supervision as a unit acted as an extremely important organ for the Republic Government to publicize Chinese culture to the international society. Naturally, Wen and Lin who were on the editorial board of these two magazines took the stand on the government side, which could be discovered from their treatises and book reviews published in the above magazines during the preparation sessions for the London Exhibition.

In these articles, both Wen and Lin emphasized the "commonness" between Chinese culture and Western culture, rather than the "difference" represented in a word "curios" which usually tended to be interpreted as "exotic" tinted with racial prejudice and contempt. However, as a matter of course, dependent on their Western-educated backgrounds, they know the two were fundamentally different; the point was, how to interpret "the Chinese mind" to the Western reading public, for from this term ("curios"), the West

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53 According to Shen Shuang's 沈双 latest book, *The China Critic*'s founding might have come directly from the Nationalist government. In fact, several members of *The China Critic*'s editorial board also held important positions in the government around the time of the founding of the magazine. Some worked in the Legislative Yuan headed by Sun Ke, who frequently wrote for *The China Critic*, especially in the first few issues. Several years after *The China Critic* was founded, Sun Ke became the director of the Sun Yat-sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education, which launched translation projects related to traditional and modern Chinese cultures. Even though this cultural institution was founded later than *The China Critic*, it is possible that the magazine's funding sources was connected with this organization. See Shen Shuang, *Cosmopolitan Publics: Anglophone Print Culture in Semi-Colonial Shanghai*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2009, p. 33.

54 Sun Fo 孫科, *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, August 1935, pp. 4–5.

had concluded that the Chinese and their art were totally unimaginative. In other words, at the beginning of the 1930s, as Chinese art and culture with their long history were forced to confront Western art, the times needed new types of Chinese intellectuals who were capable of interpreting Chinese culture and civilization from a global viewpoint. In the 1930s, these new types of intellectuals were the contributors who belonged to *The China Critic* Group, of whom, Wen Yuan-ning, John C. H. Wu, and Lin Yutang were most prominent. All of them had studied in Britain and America, had a good command of English, were well acquainted with both cultures, and used English as a medium to cross freely between the boundaries of Eastern and Western cultures. It was these literary figures who perfectly matched the exigencies of the era.

3. *The China Critic* Group: The Cases of Wen Yuan-ning and John C. H. Wu

When the Preliminary London Exhibition was held in Shanghai from 8 April to 1 May 1935, *The China Critic* set up a special issue for interpreting Chinese art and culture to the English reading public within and without the homeland. The contributors including Florence Ayscough Wheelock (1878–1942) who later highly valued Lin Yutang's *My Country and My People* and his other English works, among which, Wen Yuang-ning's treaties on traditional Chinese literary painting conveyed the message echoed with the statements made by Binyon and Ashton that I have highlighted already. In this article, Wen interpreted the "space" 余白 represented in paintings by Gao Kegong (高克恭 1248–1310) and Qiu Ying (仇英 1470–1559) as an unique artistic and aesthetic method applied in the Chinese painting, which originally generated from the concept of "Do Nothing" 無為 of Taoism. In order to explain the Chinese outlook of the universe in which the main idea is the harmonious relationship between Man and the Nature, Wen raised *Natives of Lung Shu Suburb* 龍宿山荘図 by Dong Yuang (董源 ?–?) as an example to illustrate his point in the following:

> The supreme virtue of Chinese painting is unquestionably its fine sense for nature. Everything, including man, finds its proper place in a beautiful harmony. Whereas in Western painting, man is glorified at the expense of everything else, in Chinese painting he forms only a small part of the whole; but it is a part which satisfies, because the whole of which he forms but a part is so desirably beautiful. In Tung Yuan's *Natives of Lung Shu Suburb*, for instance, who that sees that picture does not ache, if only for a while, to be one of the tiny figures in white, who are immortalised forever in that scroll? Sublimity, harmony, beauty—they are all there in that picture.[55]

From the above paragraph, it was noted that Wen's purpose in this treatise was to express an idea to place Chinese art in same position as Greek Sculptures and Italian Renaissance paintings through the London Exhibition. Likewise, the same manifestation was shown in his editorial note to *T'ien Hsia* of its December 1935 issue which was the special one devoted to the London Exhibition.

55 Wen Yuan-ning 温源寧, "Chinese Painting," *The China Critic*, 2 May 1935, p. 110.

> We learn that the Burlington House Exhibition of Chinese Art is proving to be a great success. One of the results of the Exhibition, we hope, will be the elimination of the word "curios" from the minds of Europeans when they talk of Chinese art. The word in itself is harmless enough and has its use as a description of the nick-nacks that travelers pick up at bazaars in Hongkong and Shanghai on their round-the-world trip. But when applied to paintings by Ma Yuan, Chao Meng-fu, Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and Shih T'ao, or Shang and Chou bronzes, it is about as appropriate as to include under it the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci and Cézanne, or the examples of Greek sculpture at the British Museum. What we deprecate is the mentality of the person who indiscriminately uses the word "curios": it indicates a lazy and frivolous mind which prefers darkness to light. When confronted with anything it is not accustomed to, it puts on blinkers in order not to see. Such a blinker is the term "curios."[56]

Here, Wen expresses a wish that, for the Westerners, the London Exhibition shouldn't be finished as a "social affair" that talked about Chinese crafts, or as a place to collect and appreciate the so-called "Chinese things". Rather, it should be a turning point "to create an atmosphere of intelligent curiosity about Chinese art."[57] "If the Exhibition is going to do more than that, it must also stimulate serious study of Chinese art not only among practicing artists, but also among the educated English public."[58] With these kind of wishes and expectations in their minds, *The China Critic* Group's intellectuals particularly gazed with deep interest and anxiety on Binyon and Waley's literary activities during the Exhibition. For example, Wen contributed numerous book reviews to *T'ien Hsia*, positively evaluated the books and the catalogues published in England around 1935, of which, his review about Binyon's *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art*, is worth mentioning in this paper. For in it, Wen esteemed Binyon's contribution highly for deepening the British educated-public's understanding of Chinese art and culture by giving lectures and publishing books before and after the Exhibition. Wen wrote:

> In the past when Europeans talked of Asian art, they meant Persian and Indian art, but not Chinese art. Europe first came into contact with Chinese art through porcelains, lacquers, jades and such like things. The term "curios" which was used to describe Chinese *objects d'art* well depicts the sort of attitude with which the West approached Chinese art. What struck Europeans in Chinese art not many decades ago was the bizarre element in it: they prized it for its quaintness, its dainty elegance, its "museum" qualities. This is because they never came into contact with the best examples of the highest form of Chinese art—Chinese painting. Indeed, even when Chinese paintings came to be

56 Wen Yuan-ning 温源寧, "Editorial Comments," *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, December 1935, pp. 492–93.

57 Ibid., p. 493.

58 Ibid.

> better known in the West, they were seen through Japanese eyes, so to speak; for Japanese paintings were known to the West long before Chinese paintings. It is only recently that this wrong approach to Chinese art has been corrected. One of the persons who has done more than anyone else to bring about a more correct appreciation of Chinese art is Mr. Binyon. Gradually from being a mere curiosity, Chinese art, more especially Chinese painting, has been given its rightful place in Asian art.[59]

Contrary to Wen's literary activity in stressing the exhibits showed in the London Exhibition, John C. H. Wu, being an translator himself, focused more on Waley in spite of the latter who was not the central figure involved in the exhibition, yet supported the event behind the scenes by his excellent translations and research in Chinese art, classic poetry, Confucian and Taoist scriptural works. In a series of articles regarding English translations of Chinese classic poetry, Wu not only quoted many Waley's translations from his *One Hundred and Seventy Poems* (1918, London) and *The Book of Songs* 詩経 (1937, London), but also regarded him as "the best translator of Chinese poems;" he particularly held Waley's translations of Bai Juyi (白居易 772–846)'s poems in high esteem.[60] Likewise, in a book review published at *T'ien Hsia*, Wu applauded the accomplishment of Waley's translation of *The Tao Te Ch'ing* 道徳経 (1934, London):

> The author is one of those rare spirits in the West who have an inborn predilection for things Chinese. His translations of Chinese poems have won for him a high place among sinologues, and not a low one among modern English poets. As Louis Untermeyer, in whose Anthology of *Modern British Poetry* are included some of Waley's translations, has justly observed, "Waley is no mere competent adapter, but a poet in his own right." One may, indeed, find a little flaw, here and there, due either to the intrinsic difficulties of the Chinese language or to a more or less excusable oversight; but on the whole no one has done a better job, for no one is more akin in spirit to the poets of old China.[61]

In comparison with the writings of other *China Critic* Group members such as Wen Yuan-ning and John C. H. Wu, Lin Yutang's achievements were especially noteworthy. Not only did he work actively during the Exhibition period by contributing numerous articles discussing Chinese culture and its influence to the West to both Chinese and English magazines, but also he wrote some thirty works on this subject in English after moving to the U.S. in 1936. His works covered essays, novels, short stories, drama, art theory, and

59 Wen Yuan-ning 温源寧, p. 596. Here Wen only emphasized one side (the negative influence) of Japanese scholars' interpretations of Chinese literary pictorial art to the West far earlier than Chinese themselves. But he overlooked that including Chinese calligraphy and painting, what Japanese scholars such as Okakura Kakuzō (岡倉覚三 1863–1913) and Taki Seichi had contributed to the British intellectuals' understanding of Oriental art and culture by their English works at the turn of twentieth century. Since there is no space in this paper to argue this issue in a detailed way, I prefer to leave it to be addressed in the future.

60 John C. H. Wu 呉経熊, "The Four Seasons of T'ang Poetry," *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, April 1938, pp. 344–52; May 1938, p. 468; August 1938, p. 66; November 1938, pp. 366, 368, 372–75, 377, 379–83, 390; February 1939, pp. 156–57, 160.

61 John C. H. Wu 呉経熊, *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, September 1935, p. 225.

translations from the Chinese classics, and Lin was widely received in America and Europe as a prominent interpreter of Chinese classical and modern culture. Stimulated by the literary activities of his intellectual comrades, Lin took advantage of the opportunity presented by the London Exhibition and made his début to the Western reading public with *My Country and My People*.[62]

4. Lin's Bilingual Literary Activity during the London Exhibition

•Discourse about Chinese Art and Culture in Chinese: The Spirit of Chinese Culture

Before and after the London Exhibition, Lin Yutang published many articles discussing Chinese art and culture and its influence on the West. Two of the most important texts manifesting Lin's cultural perspective are the Chinese version of his speech given at Oxford University during his short stay in England in the spring of 1932; the other is an article published at *Yuzhou Feng* 宇宙風 (1935–1947) in 1936, directly addressed to the Exhibition.

In a preface to the Chinese version of his speech entitled "The Spirit of Chinese Culture" (which was originally published in *The China Critic*), Lin recorded his encounter with some British Oriental art admirers like George Eumorphopulus (1863–1939), who later became an important member involved in the London Exhibition with Sir Percival David, and described an aspect of how nostalgic longing for traditional Chinese culture and art increased among the European intellectuals after the First World War through a series of Asian art exhibitions held in major European countries and cities. Lin wrote:

> 東方文明、東方芸術、東方哲学，本有極優異之点，故欧州学者，竟有对中国文化引起浪漫的崇拜，而於中国美術尤甚。一般学者於玩摩中国書画古玩之余，对中国芸術愛好之誠，或与欧西学者之思恋希臘文明同等。余在倫敦参観Eumorphopulus私人収蔵中国磁器，見一座定竃観音，亦神為之蕩。中国之観音与西洋之瑪姐娜 (聖母) 同為一種宗教芸術之中心対象，同為一民族芸術想像力之結晶。然平心而論，観音姿勢之妍麗，態度之安祥，神情之嫻雅，色沢之可愛，私人認為在西洋之上最名貴瑪姐娜之上。吾知縦令吾生為欧人，対中国画中人物，亦必発生思恋。

62 *The China Critic* published an editorial note on 16 January 1936, indicating that the connection between the London Exhibition and the publication of Lin's book, showing that "IN his speech at the Sino-British Cultural Association, Sir Alexander Cadogan aptly pointed out that 1935 was a "China Year" in England. There was the first of all the successful performances of "Lady Precious Stream," skillfully adapted to the Western stage by Mr. S.I. Hsiung. Then came the Burlington House Exhibition of Chinese art, which has won the admiration of Londoners and has aroused the latter's interest in the culture of China. A good many books, dealing not only with Chinese art in particular, but also with Chinese culture and civilization in general, have also recently been published in England. Noteworthy among them are Mr. Fitzerald's scholarly treatise on Chinese history, and a symposium on various aspects of Chinese art by such eminent authorities and critics as Laurence Binyon, Ashton and Hobson[….]. Then we might mention also the warm reception given by the people of the United States to Dr. Lin Yutang's book, *My Country and My People*. We learn with gratification that in the opinion of American booksellers, no other book written about China since the publication of Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth* has enjoyed such a wide circulation as Dr. Lin's masterpiece.]. See "A "China Year" In America," *The China Critic*, 16 January 1936, pp. 51-52.

(Oriental civilization, art and philosophy have excellent qualities, and for this reason they have aroused the romantic admiration of European scholars for Chinese culture, particularly Chinese art. Generally, Western scholars admire and are fond of Chinese calligraphy, paintings and antiques to the same extent that they admire Greek cilivilization. When I stayed in London, I visited the Chinese ceramics collection of Eumorphopulus. I was so fascinated by a statue of the goddess of Guanyin made in Ding Yao that I concluded that the Chinese Guanyin and the Western Madonna (St. Mary) are the centers of religions art of each nation and the crystallization of its people's imaginations. Honestly speaking, however, from the graceful pose, the elegant and gentle manner, and the lovely color, I would prefer to say that the statue of the Chinese Guanyin is better than the Western St. Mary. If I had been born as an European, I would definitely admire the figures of Chinese paintings as well).[63]

In an article entitled "Artistic Imperialism," Lin analyzed the cultural influence of the Burlington House Exhibition from two perspectives by focusing the national treasures loaned from the Palace Museum. According to his analysis, the first is a practical one: Chinese things such as tea-sets with their shell-like delicacy and lovely designs, exported in the period of the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties, that had so unobtrusively entered into English daily life in the eighteenth century, now again became the British upper-middle class's favorite objects through the Exhibition. Lin stated positively that this boom might not directly lead to the English educated-public's intellectual understanding of Chinese art, but would play an extremely important role in strengthening the sentimental bond between the Chinese people and the British people. Lin's intention was to emphasize the aesthetic side by stressing the cultural influence of Chinese art in Europe. He quoted the content of Binyon's lecture given at the Royal Academy, in which the latter demonstrated the different outlook of nature between Eastern and Western artists.

実在文化接触貴在互相吸輸以注。賓孃氏Laurence Binyon (前倫敦博物院美術専家) 近在倫敦講演，談及此次展覧及中国美術之精神，語頗中肯。（中略）「依我的意見，中国美術之可貴，是他由生活——由平民的生活直接開放出来。」「中国人的心靈 "The Chinese mind" 悠遊於自然万類之中；無論我們持什么美術学説，都不能不承認，美術之在中国成為普通人養性怡情之具，甚於在任何其他民族；這美術是寓於人生之内，而非附於人生之外的」。

(Indeed, the most important thing in cross-cultural communication is to learn and to absorb what is the best from each other's cultures. Laurence Binyon [the former Oriental art authority of the British Museum], recently gave a lecture at London. Referring to the spirit of the London Exhibition of Chinese art, his tone was quite positive[…]. "In my opinion, the importance of Chinese art is its in-

63 LinYutang 林語堂, "The Spirit of Chinese Culture" (中国文化之精神), *Shenbao Monthly* 申報月刊, 15 July 1935. [My translation]

spiration from life—directly from life of the ordinary people;" "Since 'The Chinese mind' resided in nature and universe, we have to admit that for Chinese, art is a more important tool to cultivate their inner tranquility than it is for any other race. For art in China is within life, not outside of it.")[64]

Here, Lin directly raised Binyon's concept and interpretation about Chinese art, showing his same concern with it.

•Discourse about Chinese Art and Culture in English: "What is the Chinese Mind?"

Considering Chinese calligraphy was little known in the West in the 1930s, Lin published a number of English articles dealing with this topic. For example, in an article entitled "The Aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy", he discussed the aesthetics of calligraphy, and surmised that the artistic inspiration of calligraphy that constitutes the base of all the Chinese arts is originally from Nature. To prove his point, Lin began with pointing out the difference in writing: "it seems therefore that the spirit of Western art is more sensual, more passionate, more full of the artists' own ego, while the spirit of Chinese art is more chaste, more restrained, and more in harmony with nature;"[65]and after that he brought the discussion by examining the relationship between art and life with the historical context of traditional Chinese culture. He writes:

> The basic inspiration for this art, as for all arts, is nature. In this exhaustive search for all theoretically possible types of rhythm and structural form in the history of Chinese calligraphy, practically all organic forms and all movements of living objects that are found in nature have been incorporated or assimilated, becoming prototypes for the different "styles." In particular, the beauty of organic rhythm in plant and animal forms has been the chief source of inspiration.[66]

Here, Lin claimed that the calligraphy is one of the most unique Chinese arts based on Taoistic aesthetic sensibility: everything in Nature has inspiration. He emphasized that the calligraphy has provided the Chinese people with a basic aesthetic, and it is through it that the Chinese have learned their basic notions of line and form. It is therefore impossible to talk about Chinese art without understanding Chinese calligraphy and its artistic inspiration. This perspective accords with Sir David and Binyon's views on Chinese calligraphy as I discussed above.

Reviewing Lin's English essays related to discussions of Chinese art and culture before his move to the U.S. in 1936, probably the best one was an essay published in *Asia* (1917–1946) in December 1934. At this time, Lin just finished his book *My Country and My People*, a book that Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973)

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64 LinYutang 林語堂, "Artistic Imperialism" (芸術的帝国主義), *Yuzhongfeng* 宇宙風, No. 11, 16 February 1936. p. 519. [My translation]

65 Lin Yutang 林語堂, "The Aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy," p. 496.

66 Ibid., pp. 495–96.

encouraged him to write and promised to publish in the U.S. when they met in Shanghai before the London Exhibition.[67] Lin's discourse on Chinese art and culture in this essay, therefore, should be considered as a key part of the completed book. It echoes his viewpoints expressed in *My Country and My People*.

In this piece, Lin made great efforts to interpret "the Chinese Mind" which has been so mysterious to Westerners. Based on Lin's explanation, "the Chinese Mind" is a cultural spirit strongly coloured by Confucianism and Taoism that gave rise to the great Chinese arts such as poetry, calligraphy, and painting. In the following paragraph, Lin describes its influence on the outlook of life held by men of letters in ancient China:

> AN understanding of life was and always has been the Chinese ideal of character, and from that understanding are derived other qualities, like love of nature, indifference, "old roguery"—which is pure Taoism—pacifism, contentment, all of which may be summed up in the word "mellowness." Strength of character is really strength of the mind, according to the Confucianists, and, if any conclusion were to be drawn from a study of the Chinese character, it would doubtless be that of the supremacy of the Chinese mind over material surroundings. The imagination, contemplating sorrow and poverty, turns sorrow and poverty into beauty, as we see clearly in Tu Fu's poetry.[68]

Lin emphasizes that "the Chinese mind" prevented the development of science and technology in modern China, but on the other hand, it coloured the philosophy of life of the Chinese literary artists, from which they nourished artistic inspiration to create beautiful poetry, calligraphy, and painting with the full use of human imagination. Lin concludes that "the Chinese mind" was misunderstood by Westerners for several centuries, showing how Westerners considered the Chinese as a quaint people and their normal mode of artistic expression was merely curious and odd, thus not to be taken seriously by Westerners. Lin asserted that it should be corrected now, because "the Chinese mind" constitutes the resources that has given the Chinese people's wisdom, strength and imagination to create the most beautiful art and civilization in the world.

Conclusion

In the opening chapter of *My Country and My People*, with regard to the Western misconception of Chinese civilization as a timeless primitive one, Lin argues that "the Chinese, as a people, avoided the dangers of civic deterioration by a natural distrust of civilization and by keeping close to primitive habits of life;"[69] "It was a civilization in love with primitivism itself and was not quite ready to say good-by to it."[67] On

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67 I explored the whole process of their meeting and literary exchange through *The China Critic*, which brought in the publication of *My Country and My People* in my Japanese thesis published in 2008. See Han Rega 範麗雅, "Lin Yutang and Pearl S. Buck: An Examination of Their Literary Exchange in *The China Critic, Studies of Comparative Literature* 比較文学研究, Society of Comparative Literature University of Tokyo, No. 88, October 2008, pp. 102–123.

68 Lin Yutang, "Qualities of the Chinese Mind," *Asia*, December 1934, p. 728.

69 Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People*, New York: John Day, 1935, p. 39.

these grounds, Lin links the Chinese love of primitive lifestyle with the creation of Chinese art and literature, stating that "What seems still more important is the fact that the ruling class not only came from the country but also returned to the country, as the rural mode of life was always regarded as the ideal. This rural ideal in art, philosophy and life, so deeply imbedded in the Chinese general consciousness, must account in a large measure for the racial health today. Did the creators of the Chinese pattern of life do more wisely than they knew in maintaining a level between civilization and the primitive habits of living? Was it their sound instinct which guided them to choose the agricultural civilization, to hate mechanical ingenuity and love the simple ways of life, to invent the comforts of life without being enslaved by them, and to preach from generation to generation in their poetry, painting and literature the "return to the farm"?"[70] Lin raised this question in *My Country and My People* and gave a half answer in the chapter nine of the book, but he was not satisfied with that. So Lin decided to give full accounts of "the Art of Living" of the "ruling class=cultured class" by translating their essays, family letters, diaries and memoirs constituted into his next bestseller, *The Importance of Living* (New York, 1937), and finally represented how "the Art of Living" was "exhibited" in the upper-class Chinese families through his panoramic novel, *Moment in Peking* (New York, 1939).

70 Ibid., p. 39.