FENG ZIKAI: A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY, 1898-1975

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF
THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

By
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February, 1989
I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work.
Abstract

The central thesis of this work is that while through his innovative art work, translation activities and interest in education Feng Zikai appeared to be typical of young May Fourth intellectuals, his temperament, which led him to idealize childhood and embrace Buddhism, along with the influence of his mentors, Li Shutong, Ma Yifu and Xia Mianzun, led him to identify with aspects of traditional Chinese culture that set him apart from the majority of his fellows, some of whom found his religious propensity unacceptable.

This work makes a study of the elements of Feng's aesthetic vision, its development during the years up to 1949 and its relationship to traditional and contemporary Chinese cultural values. As an writer and artist Feng aligned himself with the proponents of the casual essay in the 1930s and through his work advocated self-expression. He increasingly withdrew from the outside world and retired to his hometown in the early 1930s to write, translate and paint.

Although the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance led him to confront the world once more, he maintained an attitude informed by both his Buddhist and Confucian thinking. This led him into conflict with some of his contemporaries. The major theme of his thought and work, despite occasional diversions into bellicosity during the war, was that if only man could maintain or cultivate his artistic heart (or sympathetic heart) would there be hope for the future of China as a nation and for her culture.

This study examines Feng Zikai's career and work up to 1949.
Acknowledgements

During the two years I was attached to the Humanities Research Institute of Kyoto University, Professor Takeuchi Minoru and Fang Jisheng, a friend of Zhou Zuoren, encouraged my interest in Feng Zikai and his relationship with a number of other writers of the 1920s and 1930s. I am grateful in particular to Mr Fang for introducing me to the fascinating magazine *Luotuocao*, and its unwritten history.

Huang Miaozì, the Peking-based calligrapher and art historian, himself a *manhua* artist in the 1930s, was trusting enough to allow me to take his private collection of books written and translated by Feng Zikai before 1949 to Japan in 1982 for photocopying. This material formed the basis of my early research on Feng's work.

My teacher Pierre Ryckmans supported my proposal to make a detailed study of Feng's life and work while other friends and scholars remained sceptical of such a venture.

Lo Wai-luen (Xiao Si, or Ming Tsuen in her role as a writer on Feng) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong allowed me to sift through and copy her extensive collection of materials on Feng Zikai, providing me with a large amount of obscure but illuminating literature. Chen Xing, the energetic scholar from Hangzhou and the editor of *Yangliu*, an unofficial Chinese journal devoted to the study of Feng Zikai, has been the greatest single source of information, material and encouragement over the last four years. This work would be far poorer without his generous and unstinting support. Feng's daughter Feng Yi yin has given me a number of books which have been of great help, in particular Feng Zikai's extraordinary correspondence with the Venerable Guangqia. Her brother, Feng Huazhan, has been a willing correspondent as have Chen Fengxiong, Chen Shizeng's son, and Xia Zongyu of the *People's Daily*.

My supervisors, Pierre Ryckmans and W.J.F. Jenner, have been generous with both their time and their knowledge. Professor Jenner in particular offered many practical suggestions on how I should go about organizing the mass of material I had collected. I am also grateful to Lo Hui-min and Qian Zhongshu for their comments on my work. Mary Farquhar read the chapters on the *manhua* and the "Cult of the Child" in draft form and provided many useful suggestions and comments.
Karima Fumitoshi of the Chinese Department of Tokyo University helped me obtain Japanese materials and kept an eye out for recent publications of Takehisa Yumeji's work, as well as sending me a beautifully reproduced and bound set of *Yumeji gashū* for my reference. Shun'ichi Ikeda of the Japan Centre of the Australian National University was always ready to advise me on the romanization of obscure Japanese names, and Hannah Yiu allowed me unlimited use of her collection of Yumeji's essays and poetry.

Y.S. Chan, Susan Prentice, Li Lung-wah, H.C. Li and Huang Yuhang of the Asian Studies Collection of the Menzies Library, the Australian National University, have been generous and painstaking in helping me locate bibliographical material. Li Zhiliang and Wang Anhui of the International Exchange Unit of the National Library of China made my library search in Peking during the summer of 1988 surprisingly easy and successful.

I would also like to thank Warren Sun of the Department of Far Eastern History, A.N.U., for his helpful comments on Zhang Taiyan and Buddhism; Hu Xiaowei of the Chinese Literature Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who spent a steamy Saturday helping me locate some of Feng's post-1949 publications in Peking; and, Yang Mu (C.H. Wang) for his interest in my work. Ouyang Jianghe of the Modern Literature Research Institute of the Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences led me into the Sichuan Provincial Library to cajole a number of Feng Zikai's wartime publications out of the hands of the library's Party custodians for a hurried morning of hand copying. Barbara George and Pam Wesley-Smith of the Faculty of Asian Studies, A.N.U., gave me their kind assistance; and Dr Zhang Zebo painstakingly copied out the Chinese glossary, for which I am grateful.

Last but not least, I thank Linda Jaivin, my wife, who has shown such a generous and constant interest in Feng Zikai, our house guest for the last two and a-half years.
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This is a study of the life and work of Feng Zikai (1898-1975). While Yu Dafu, a contemporary of Feng's, in the mid-1930s evaluated his essay style as being suffused with a "clear elegance and mystery which at its most subtle is far superior even to his painting", and despite having produced a steady stream of essays up to 1949, Feng Zikai has come to be thought of predominantly as an artist, and due to his particular style of painting, the manhua, as a cartoonist. It is a categorisation that was further formalized in Mainland China after 1949 when he was redefined by the requirements of the State as a children's cartoonist, and this is how he was seen until even quite recently. Up to the early 1980s his work was either overlooked in Mainland China, or seen through the distorting glass of Marxist-Leninist literary historians. In Taiwan, on the other hand, because Feng chose to remain on the Mainland after 1949, he was shunned.

In Taiwan, in 1982-1983, Yang Mu published a three-volume selection of Feng's essays which he introduced with a eulogistic essay of his own. In this Yang, a well-regarded essayist in his own right, provides one of the most sympathetic and thoughtful appreciations of Feng's work. Unfortunately, he has attempted no deeper analysis. As for foreign-language works, the German scholar Christoph Harbsmeier has produced an attractive volume of Feng's paintings -- The Cartoonist Feng Zikai: Social Realism with a Buddhist Face -- with a commentary and a readable biographical review. However, even the title of this work, the characterization of Feng's art as being "social realist", is further evidence of the tendency to push Feng into a convenient ideological category. While praiseworthy as an accessible and sympathetic

2 Lin Fei, one of Peking's vaunted experts on the history of the Chinese essay, comments in his Zhongguo xiandai sanwen shigao, Peking: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981, pp. 93-94, that Feng was a simplistic escapist who in the last resort found solace in Buddhist nihilism. For another early post-Cultural Revolution view of Feng with a similar bias, see Wang Xiyan's "An Energetic Sower -- Remembering Feng Zikai" (Xinqinde bozhongzhe -- ji Feng Zikai), Wangshi yu aizi, edited by Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1979, pp. 359-366, quoted in Appendix I.
pioneering work in English on the artist, Harbsmeier's work is flawed by his superficial appreciation of Feng's writings and their place in the larger context of 20th Century Chinese literary and artistic debates. For example, Harbsmeier summarizes Feng's relationship to the past in the following way, "Feng Zikai was an unrepentant outsider in the great Chinese tradition. He revolted against this tradition. He broke out of it, because he found it elitist, esoteric, morally irrelevant and philosophically sterile." As we shall see below, this was far from the case. While academic papers and shorter scholastic theses on Feng's work have been produced, I believe there is a need for a more thorough attempt to analyze and understand the spirit and significance of Feng Zikai's life and work to date. This is an attempt to fill that gap.

Feng is more properly seen as one of the intriguing and prolific "self-expressionist" writers of the 1920s and 1930s. This loosely-connected group consisted of a range of figures such as the older essayists Zhou Zuoren and Xia Mianzun, as well as younger writers including Lin Yutang, Fei Ming, Yu Pingbo and Zhu Ziqing. Although sometimes linked by close personal friendships or professional interests, in some cases they shared nothing more than a similar artistic sensibility, or a sense of community which developed because the wrote for the same magazines. The work of these men, in particular their essays (xiaopinwen), constitutes what Zhou and Lin, the most active practitioners of this type of writing, saw as a continuation of an "alternative tradition" of Chinese writing.

Feng Zikai was one of a number of essayist painters during the Republican period whose numbers also include Sun Fuxi (1894-1966), Ye Lingfeng (1904-1989), and others. See The Cartoonist Feng Zikai: Social Realism with a Buddhist Face, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984, p. 9.

In March 1985, Teresa Chi-Ching Sun, a scholar resident in California, U.S.A., presented a paper entitled "A Comparative Study of Two Artists, Feng Zi-Kai and Norman Rockwell" at the Thirty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies; and in 1986, the American-based scholar Hung Shuen-shuen submitted an M.A. thesis at Michigan State University entitled Feng Tzu-k'ai: His Art and Works, fifty-seven pages in length.

Chen Jingzhi is one of the earliest writers to publish a study of the lives and work of Zhou Zuoren, Zhu Ziqing, Yu Pingbo, Lin Yutang and Feng Zikai in one volume. See Zaoqi xinsanwende zhongyao zuojia, Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1980, in particular pages 123-50 for his remarks on Feng Zikai. It is significant that this early work on Feng was produced by a Taiwanese writer.

Bonnie S. McDougall, The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China, 1919-1925, Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1971, p. 264, in commenting on questions of theory and literary polemic in the 1920s also links Zhou and Feng's names. "The combination of political activism and sentimental idealism in the ideology of the early writers naturally led them into fervent proselytizing...The small [sic] intimate essays of Zhou Zuoren and Feng Zikai can be seen as a reaction to this empty theorizing."


Sun features in histories of 20th Century Chinese literature as an important editor in the 1920s. He also painted both in oils and in the style of Chinese guohua. However, little of his artistic work is now extant. See Maruyama Noboru et al, Chūgoku gendai bungaku jiten, Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan,


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However, he was not an active participant in the main art movements or salons of that period. This alone led him to be regarded as a marginal figure in his own day. Feng was a prolific painter, illustrator, essayist and translator who only in the 1980s has gained some of the recognition his achievements warrant. To date, however, although numerous essays, articles and even semi-scholastic studies of various aspects of Feng's life and work have been published in Mainland China, none have attempted to judge his achievement in the context of his relationship with China's artistic, religious and literary tradition or to identify his place in his generation of May Fourth writers and intellectuals. Indeed, even in the major English and recent Chinese works on 20th Century Chinese art, few though they are, Feng has been ignored, or given only summary coverage.

Throughout his life Feng presented his friends, contemporaries and admirers with something of an enigma. In age and social background he was typical of the young and active generation of the May Fourth era. In the 1920s he joined the idealistic teachers and writers who established such progressive schools as the Chunhui High School in Shangyu, Zhejiang, and the Li Da Academy in Shanghai. He was active as a translator of much-needed foreign texts on art and music, a member and enthusiastic supporter of the Literature Research Society (Wenxue yanjiuhui), and the illustrator of a number of popular translations and text-books, including Lin Yutang's best-selling English primer. His artistic work, in particular that of the late 1920s and the 1930s, gave many people the impression that he was a "fellow-traveller" of the left-wing activists and committed intelligentsia. Yet when his work -- either essays or paintings -- revealed that his sympathies lay with man in general rather than men as members of one particular class, or when it became clear that much of his

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9 Guo Moruo acted as something of a patron for Ye in the 1920s and had him design the cover of the Creation Society's fortnightly magazine Hongshui for which he also did illustrations. As we will see below, Hongshui published the first written attack on Feng Zikai's early work. Ye remained in the leftist camp until 1931 and, after a fleeting interest in the Russian avant-garde, he turned to realist woodblock art for inspiration.

10 A native of Hangzhou, Ni Yide (1902-1970). However, he was not an active participant in the main art movements or salons of that period. This alone led him to be regarded as a marginal figure in his own day. Feng was a prolific painter, illustrator, essayist and translator who only in the 1980s has gained some of the recognition his achievements warrant. To date, however, although numerous essays, articles and even semi-scholastic studies of various aspects of Feng's life and work have been published in Mainland China, none have attempted to judge his achievement in the context of his relationship with China's artistic, religious and literary tradition or to identify his place in his generation of May Fourth writers and intellectuals. Indeed, even in the major English and recent Chinese works on 20th Century Chinese art, few though they are, Feng has been ignored, or given only summary coverage.


12 See Kao, Chinese Respose to the West in Art, pp. 186-87, where Feng's work -- an example of what Kao calls "the cartoon medium" -- is referred to merely in terms of "proletarian art"; also A. C. Scott, Literature and the Arts in Twentieth Century China, London: Allen & Unwin, 1985, pp. 103-104; Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi, pp. 178-79.
writing and painting was rooted in a philosophy of self-expression, he was attacked. A number of writers -- Rou Shi, Hu Feng, and Cao Juren being the most prominent -- criticised him bitterly when his activities diverged from what they considered was their common political cause. Certainly, Feng was a member of the same generation -- Rou Shi and Cao Juren were his contemporaries at high-school -- his opposition to economic exploitation and imperialism did not lead him to a thorough-going rejection of traditionalism. This perplexed his ideologically committed peers. In this thesis we will see what critics said and why Feng was incapable of meeting their expectations.

In their work on May Fourth intellectuals, both Lin Yü-sheng and Vera Schwarz have commented at length on the roles of different generations of intellectuals -- the teachers and the students, and one of the most important issues in the study of Feng Zikai's life and art is his relationship with his teachers. This study will show that Feng Zikai, while a member of the May Fourth generation and sharing in many of its salient features, acted in a way different from many of his contemporaries. While it is beyond the scope of the present work to analyse the reasons for the actions of Feng's circle of friends, a study of Feng's life, his teachers, and professional career will reveal the reasons for his own nonconformity -- his exile from the times.

For all of Feng Zikai's work -- painting, writing or translating -- that could be identified with the aims of an increasingly politicized intelligentsia in the Republican era, there was an equal amount that was in contradiction with those aims. There is little evidence that Feng felt there to be a conflict between the two, or that he even recognized that there was a clear distinction between the romantic, otherworldly aspect

13 See A Chinese Look at Literature, pp. 32-33, 36, 116, where Pollard points out that although Zhou Zuoren was not exactly opposed to left-wing thinking, he was dubious of the role ideology could play in literature. On page 116 he notes that Zhou "was never able to swallow whole as Lin Yutang did, the philosophy of 'expressionism', which meant self-projection, to the detriment of concerns which drew men together." As we will see, this comment is also pertinent in the study of Feng's own relationship with "expressionism".

14 Lin Yü-sheng, The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitradiationalism in the May Fourth Era, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, p. 55, writes: ...the first and second generations of the Chinese intelligentsia were decisively molded by a deep-seated, traditional Chinese predisposition, a monistic and intellectualistic mode of thinking. When the cultural-intellectualistic approach, with its monistic character, was pushed to its extreme by the pressure of sociopolitical realities in China after 1911, it evolved into an intellectualistic-holistic mode of thinking, by which the May Fourth iconoclasts perceived the Chinese tradition as an organismic totality to be rejected in toto. Since this totality was regarded as being organismically shaped by its fundamental ideas, the form that the May Fourth iconoclasm took was totalistic cultural iconoclasm. Also Vera Schwarz, From Renaissance to Revolution: An Internal History of the May Fourth Movement and the Birth of the Chinese Intelligentsia, Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1978, pp. 21-24, 29-56. Schwarz makes much of the generational difference between teachers and students of the May Fourth period, including in her study comments on both Yu Pingbo and Zhu Ziqing. Feng Zikai, as we will see, tends to confound such categorization.
of his work, and his endeavours as an educator and socially conscious, although not politically oriented, artist. The leftist camp found it increasingly difficult to treat him as anything more than a minor and misguided figure, while his sympathies for the average man, the impoverished farmer and his Buddhist attitude of equanimity when surveying the chaos of his environment -- not to mention the fact that he regularly published in leftist journals or the individualistic magazines of Lin Yutang and Tao Kangde -- made it impossible for more conservative figures to claim him as one of their own. Caught between the left and the right, neither a progressive nor a reactionary, and artistically both a traditionalist and a reformer, Feng was perhaps only capable of being classified as a "third type of man" (sanzhongren). Even now he does not fit in comfortably with conventional Chinese classifications of culture.\footnote{15}

This thesis, being both a biographical and critical study of Feng Zikai's life and work from 1898 to 1949, attempts to discuss biographical details of Feng's life in a roughly chronological order while introducing the major artistic themes of his work in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Where appropriate, the aesthetic and religious or philosophical elements of Feng Zikai's world view are extrapolated from this material and discussed within the historical context and in relation to the artist's contemporaries. While the content and context of Feng Zikai's work can be presented and analyzed, the quality or tone (quwei) of his essays is best demonstrated at length in translation. It is for this reason that I quote frequently and at length from Feng's writings. To incorporate all of this material into the text of this thesis would make it of unmanageable proportions, therefore relevant corroborative passages are generally relegated to footnotes. A broad selection of his graphics -- and the work of other artists when relevant -- as they pertain to the text are presented at the end of the thesis.

Chapter One deals with Feng's upbringing and youth in the Zhejiang township of Shimenwan, thereby setting the scene for his artistic and literary development. It discusses his relationship with his parents, his high school career at one of the most progressive educational institutions in the province, his friendships, and the crucial influence of the teachers Li Shutong and Xia Mianzun. Chapter Two looks at his early career as a teacher in Shanghai and his short period of study in Japan where he was exposed to the work of Takehisa Yumeji. Chapter Three introduces Feng's earliest creative work, his period as a teacher with Xia Mianzun and a number

\footnote{Feng was not a participant in Hu Qiuyuan and Su Wen's 1932 debate with members of the League of Leftist Writers over "the third type of man". He did, however, evince qualities in his work that would suggest a natural affinity with Hu's hypothetical group of writers, those men and women who were neither entirely independent of class consciousness nor Party writers who were bound to a revolutionary ideology. The major articles in the debate surrounding "the independence of literature and art" can be found in Wenyi yiyou lumbianji, edited by Su Wen, Shanghai: Xiandai shuju, 1933. See also Amitendranath Tagore, Literary Debates in Modern China, 1918-1937, Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1968, pp. 128-41; C. T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971, pp. 126-28.}
of other cultural figures at the Chunhui High School in Zhejiang. This is followed by Feng being "discovered" by the editorial entrepreneur Zheng Zhenduo who published his *manhua*. Included here is a history of the *manhua* in China and Japan.

This thesis deals also with a number of aspects of Feng Zikai's aesthetic view and attempts to identify both their modern and classical origins. Nonetheless, the personal, aesthetic and spiritual dimension of an artist like Feng cannot be studied easily in isolation. Chapters Four, Five, Seven and Eight take as their themes the four major periods of artistic creation Feng Zikai himself delineated in his work: paintings inspired by lines of poetry, sketches of children, urban and country scenes, and landscape painting. In each of these chapters, which cover roughly the period from 1922 to 1949, questions such as painting, poetry, *quwei* and traditional culture; children and the childlike heart within the May Fourth cult of the child; Feng's reactions to teaching, urban life and his retirement from active life in the 1930s; and, finally, his appreciation of questions related to traditional art theory, science and art reform are dealt with. Chapter Six is concerned with Feng's relationship with his religious mentors Dharma Master Hongyi (Li Shutong) and the Confucian philosopher Ma Yifu, his conversion to Buddhism and his Buddhist paintings. "On the Eve", an epilogue, outlines Feng's life from the end of the Anti-Japanese War to the eve of the Communist victory in 1949. A concluding chapter reviews the arguments of the thesis and sums up Feng Zikai's achievement and importance.

Two appendices have been included: the first deals with Feng's life under communism from 1949 up to the time of his death in 1975. Although I cover Feng's post-1949 activities at some length in Appendix I, during the years I have spent collecting material for this work I have found that many of the details of Feng's latter years are still unclear. While most of the essays Feng published in the 1950s and 1960s have been reprinted, it is still necessary to rely on members of his family for details of his activities. Not surprisingly, the immediate inheritors of Feng Zikai's legacy often find it in their best interests to suppress some possibly embarrassing facts or to interpret Feng's latter years to their advantage. The considerable correspondence Feng enjoyed with the monk Guangqia has been in the whole preserved and a selected volume of these letters were published privately in 1979, providing us with a remarkable insight into the artist's life in Mao's China. Even in this volume, however, there are glaring omissions. Similarly, to date only one page of Feng's Cultural Revolution "diary", or rather his "ideological reports" (*sixiang huibao*) written for the Red Guards, has been released by his family; furthermore, only seventeen of a collection of thirty-two essays Feng Zikai secretly wrote in 1972 have been published

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16 For this division, see Feng Zikai's 1949 essay "My *manhua*" (*Wode manhua*) in *Yuanyuantang suibiji* (hereafter referred to as *Suibiji*), Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1983, p. 310.
to date. For these reasons alone, I feel incapable of making anything more than the most cursory review of the years from 1949 to 1975. It is certain that the reassessment of Feng Zikai and his work that is continuing apace in China will make it possible to fill many of these lacunae over the following years. Another reason for hesitating to discuss these years at length in this work is that the fate of Feng's friends and former colleagues also requires detailed study, and much of the material related to this is still unavailable or only gradually coming to light. Presumably, time and patience will solve overcome these difficulties.

Appendix II deals with the development over the past decade of what I choose to call the "Feng Zikai industry" in Mainland China. In recent years this industry has brought both Taiwan and Hong Kong within its compass. Here suffice it to say that due to the continuing restrictions on the study of Feng Zikai in the Mainland -- more self-imposed than enforced by any State authority -- this "industry" has as yet failed to make a thorough-going analysis of Feng or to evaluate his work independent of Marxist-Leninist dogma. There have, however, been indications that this may be possible in the future.17

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17 One case in point is the work of the Shanghai Feng scholar Yin Qi. She has commented on the disturbing tendency among "well-intentioned people" to argue that Feng had abandoned the "pessimistic" Buddhist religious thinking that had marked his maturity in favour of a more "engagé" attitude after 1949. "Religion was an intrinsic part of the creative spirit of Feng Zikai the writer," she says. "Any artificial attempt to hid this [aspect of his life] out of consideration for a taboo will only turn Feng Zikai into something other than he was." See "A Preliminary Study of Feng Zikai's Essays" (Feng Zikai sanwen chutan), Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan, 1983: 4, reproduced in Yangliu, No. 2, 1984: 10.
Abbreviations

Chunhui jiniance: Chunhui zhongxue liushi zhounian xiaoqing jiniance
CPC: Communist Party of China
Jiniance: Ma Yifu xiansheng jiniance
Nianbiao: Feng Zikai xiansheng nianbiao
Nianpu: Hongyi dashi nianpu
PPCC: [Chinese] People's Political Consultative Conference
Shuxinxuan: Feng Zikai zhi Guangqia fashi shuxinxuan
Suibiji: Yuanyuantang suibiji
Xia zhuangji: Shangyu wenshi ziliao: Jinian Xia Mianzun zhuangji
Xiaoqing jiniance: Hangzhou diyi zhongxue xiaoqing qishiwu zhounian jiniance
Zhuan: Feng Zikai zhuan
Chapter 1:
The Rigours of Learning, Feng Zikai's Early Artistic Education

1: 1 Introduction

The following chapter is a study of Feng Zikai's years of schooling both in China as a primary and high school student.

The aim of this review of Feng's education is to present some of the major influences on Feng as a youth which helped determine both his artistic interests and painting style in his later years. I have chosen to narrate the progress of Feng's life from his childhood up to his late teens as the most suitable format through which to draw out the more important elements of his interests and artistic development.

Much of the information that deals with Feng's early years and experiences at schools in both his hometown of Shimenwan, Zhejiang, and at Hangzhou is to be found in his essays, which were written years, sometimes decades, after the events that they describe. Of course, it is impossible to determine which elements of Feng's reminiscences were recast in a fashion that suited the artist's self-image and personality at the time of writing. Nonetheless, there is a marked consistency in both the style and content of his essays and paintings dating from the early 1920s right up to 1949. The various corroborative material available tends to support the picture the artist presents of himself -- and certainly vindicates the following attempt to observe and study the more salient aspects of Feng's artistic maturation.

1: 2 In Shimenwan

Feng Zikai\(^1\) was born in Shimenwan, Chongde County in northern Zhejiang

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\(^1\) Feng's "milk name" was Ciyu (Benevolent Jade) and his given name was Run (as in moist, sleek) which was changed by his primary school teacher to Ren (Benevolence) for reasons of simplicity and its cognitive relation to the character "Ci". Also the pronunciation of Run and Ren was similar in the local dialect. Thus at the time he went to Hangzhou his name was Feng Ren. This was changed in 1915 when he was eighteen by his Chinese teacher Shan Bu'an who was particularly fond of Feng. Shan reasoned that apart from the single character Ren, Feng required a double-character hao. He chose Zikai because it was in keeping with the meaning of his "milk name". See "Discussing my
Province in 1898. The name Feng was rare in the district and it was only after studying the family genealogy with a distant relative that Feng Zikai learned his branch of the family had moved to Jiaxing from Tangqi in Jinhua County south-west Zhejiang around the time of the fall of the Ming Dynasty (1644).

Shimenwan, literally the "the bend in the river at the Stone Gate", was said to date from the Spring and Autumn period when a stone gate was erected to mark the border between the states of Wu and Yue. The township was situated on a curve of the Grand Canal as it turned towards the north, and Feng's family lived in a house next to a rivulet that ran into the canal only some one hundred metres away. It was one of the towns in the intricate system of waterways of one of the most prosperous areas of China's (CPC) policy of rural reform, these have been disbanded. Previously (from 1433), Tongxiang counties respectively. Due to a taboo of the Qing emperor Taizu's Chongde reign, Chongde County was renamed Shimen County and Shimenwan was renamed Shiwan Township from the early Qing Dynasty. Thus Shimenwan is also known as Shiwan and Yuqi. In 1914, the county was renamed Chongde. Feng Zikai always referred to his home town as Shimenwan, Chongde County. This information is taken from the official "Overview of Shimen District" (Shimenzhen gaikuang), which has been hanging in the rebuilt Yuanyuan Hall in Shimen since 1985, and Zhejiang fenxian jianzhi, compiled by Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1983, p. 23; and Feng Zikai xiansheng tongxiang xianzhi, compiled during the Guangxu reign (1875-1908) and quoted in "Overview of Shimen District"; also Shimenwan, an Inspiration for Poetry and Painting" (Shi I huaye Shimenwan), Donghai, 1983: 5, p. 72, it is reported that a street near the border of the states of Wu and Yue.

2 Shimenwan has, since 1950, been renamed Shimen Township (Shimenzhen) and placed under the administration of Tongxiang County, which in November 1958 incorporated the neighbouring Chongde County. Chongde was renamed Chongfu Township. From 1958 to 1980, this enlarged Tongxiang County contained twenty-nine People's Communes. Following the Communist Party of China's (CPC) policy of rural reform, these have been disbanded. Previously (from 1433), Shimenwan was divided into two administrative sections, Shimen and Yuqi, under Chongde and Tongxiang counties respectively. Due to a taboo of the Qing emperor Taizu's Chongde reign, Chongde County was renamed Shimen County and Shimenwan was renamed Shiwan Township from the early Qing Dynasty. Thus Shimenwan is also known as Shiwan and Yuqi. In 1914, the country was renamed Chongde. Feng Zikai always referred to his home town as Shimenwan, Chongde County. This information is taken from the official "Overview of Shimen District" (Shimenzhen gaikuang), which has been hanging in the rebuilt Yuanyuan Hall in Shimen since 1985, and Zhejiang fenxian jianzhi, compiled by Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe (internal distribution), 1984, pp. 829-30.

3 See "Conversations at Tonglu" (Tonglu fuxuan), one of the long essays Feng wrote to record his family's flight from the invading Japanese in 1937, reprinted in Suibiji, p. 246. Feng happened to meet a relative, Feng Huien, when he was studying in Japan in 1920, and probably surprised that they shared the same, relatively rare surname, they made a study of the family records. Huien told him that there was a village of a few hundred families which born the name Feng in Tangqi, all of whom worked the land. Feng Zikai always imagined his distant native home as being like the Peach Blossom Spring described by Tao Yuanming. After the Japanese invasion when he was forced to flee Shimenwan with his family, Feng thought he might go to Tangqi, but he had been out of contact with Huien for some time, and felt as somebody who "wasn't used to work, and [who] couldn't differentiate between the five grains" (siti bu qin, wagu bu fen), he would not be particularly welcome in the village. (p. 247.) In fact, Tangqi had been devastated by the Taiping Rebellion in the last century and the local agricultural economy had not recovered fully by Feng's day. Even Feng Huien abandoned the district to live in Shanghai. See Mary Backus Rankin, Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986, p. 57; R. Keith Schoppa, Chinese Elites and Political Change: Zhejiang Province in the Early Twentieth Century, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982, pp. 112, 121-22, 124-25, 153.

4 This information is taken from the Tongxiang xianzhi compiled during the Guangxu reign (1875-1908) and quoted in "Overview of Shimen District"; also Zhejiang fenxian jianzhi, p. 829. Feng Zikai corroborates this story on the origin of the name of the town in his 1972 memoir "Four Pillars" (Sixuan zhu), Suibiji, p. 489. See also Zhan, p. 2. In an essay about Shimenwan in the 1980s, see Ding Fan's "Shimenwan, an Inspiration for Poetry and Painting" (Shi I huaye Shimenwan), Donghai, 1983: 5, p. 72, it is reported that a street in the town named Shileixiang, literally "Alley of Piled Stones", marks the place of the ancient stone gate between Wu and Yue.

5 See Feng's 1939 essay "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall" (Ci Yuanyuantang), Suibiji, pp. 225, 227-28.
Located in the province's major silk-producing district, from the Ming Dynasty on Shimenwan had become a key collection centre for raw silk, and Feng would be surprised when he learned in later life that people from other parts of China thought of silk clothing as a luxury.

The town was said to have been totally destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion which also resulted in a massive loss of population and severe economic dislocation. Following this Feng's family set up a dye shop (ranfangdian) although the business never proved to be a success. Feng's father, Feng Huang (zi Huquan), took little interest in the family business, spending his time preparing for the civil service exams in Hangzhou. During the Qing the region produced among the largest number of jinshi degree holders in the empire. In the mid-Qing, Shimen itself had produced an artist of great repute, Fang Xun (1736-1799), to whom Feng Zikai referred to with pride later in life. After three attempts Feng Huang finally passed the provincial examination in 1902 at the age of thirty-seven becoming a juren. His mother died.

6 In "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", pp. 225-27, Feng gives an almost lyrical description of the area, lavishing detail on the pleasure of travelling to other towns or the provincial capital Hangzhou by boat. "My home town," he wrote shortly after Shimenwan had been occupied by the Japanese, "was a land of peace and happiness!" (p. 226.)

7 Sericulture had been developed in the region since the time of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1126). See Rankin, Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China, pp. 62-63.

8 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 227.

9 See Schoppa, Chinese Elites and Political Change, pp. 51, 161 where it is noted that Jiaxing (including Shimenwan) lost 67.7% of its population during the rebellion; Rankin, Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China, pp. 55-56; and Ping-ti Ho, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911, New York: Science Editions Press, 1964, p. 304.

10 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 228-29; Zhuan, pp. 2-3.

11 Rankin, Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China, p. 313; Ping-ti Ho, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China, pp. 246-47.

12 See "On the Reform of Chinese Painting" (Huihua gailiang lun), Sisiang yu shidai yuekan, No. 8, 1941, p. 42. Fang Xun was an outstanding painter, calligrapher and poet, author of an interesting treatise on art entitled Shanjinju hualun, in which during an age of increased artistic conformism he revealed a streak on individualism. See Zheng Zhuolu, Shanjinju hualun, Peking: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1962. Other and more recent prominent figures from this area of Zhejiang include the Communist novelist Mao Dun (Shen Yanbing, 1896-1981), his brother Shen Zemin (1900-1933), a writer and Communist activist, both from Wu Township near Shimenwan. The writer and editor Kong Lingjing (1904-1972) and his sister Kong Dezhi, Mao Dun's wife, were also born in Wu Township. Zhang Qinqiu (1904-1968), a woman born in Shimenwan, went on to join the Red Army, take part in the Long March and become a vice-minister of the Ministry of Textile Industry in the People's Republic up to the time she was murdered in the Cultural Revolution. Jin Zhonghua (1907-1968), a reporter, international relations expert for the CPC, and one time vice-mayor of Shanghai. Also an array of revolutionary martyrs such as Chi Gengxiang (1905-1928) of Shimenwan, Zhan Xingmin (1908-1930) and Zhong Yuanping (1915-1942); as well as the soccer star Dai Lingjing (1906-1968). See Tongxiang wentsi ziliao: Tongxiangxian xianzai mingren shiliao (internal distribution), edited by Wu Shan et al, of the Tongxiang County People's Political Consultative Congress (PPCC), December, 1985. It is interesting to note that the entries in this book are arranged according to the status, revolutionary or otherwise, of the entries. Thus, Mao Dun, his brother, the Red Army warrior Zhang Qinqiu and the vice-mayor Jin Zhonghua come before the famous non-Communist Feng Zikai; however, Feng precedes the short-lived Party martyrs, Kong Lingjing, the soccer star and Zhang Taiyan's wife. 13 Feng Huang had been taking the exams since he was twenty-six. See Zhuang, p. 7.
shortly after and during his period of mourning the *keju* system was abolished in 1905. With no hope of taking the *jinshi* examinations in Peking, Feng Huang began tutoring at home where his chief pupil was his only son.

Feng Zikai was the first and only son born in the family, and he had six sisters. He was doted on by his parents and began his formal education with his father in 1903 at the age of six, his first lessons being to memorize the traditional primer the *Three Character Classic* (*Sanzijing*), after which he moved on to the Song anthology *Poems of a Thousand Poets* (*Qianjiashi*). The edition of the anthology that was used had woodblock illustrations on each page accompanying the poems. At first Feng had no idea that the figure and elephant in the illustration on the first page represented the tale of "Da Shun Ploughing the Fields", for he was being far more attracted to the crude picture at the top of the page than the lines of poetry below. After his lessons that day he borrowed some pigments from the dyeing business his family ran and did his best to colour the picture in. Not surprisingly, the colours soaked through the thin paper of the pages and when this was discovered the next day by the teacher, his father, Feng was severely reprimanded. Still this did not deter him in the slightest, and that night with the approval and support of his mother he continued his task using the remaining dyes to work on the illustrations. Hongying, the young servant girl who was his nurse and childhood confidant, acted as a solitary but appreciative audience.

His father was unimpressed by the boy's attempts at "painting" and so it was fortunate that he did not miss a certain volume from his book collection. It was a collection of figure drawings that had been put out for sunning one day and was spirited away by the young Feng to become the object for his first exercises in tracing figures. Feng must have been just under ten at the time, and it was shortly before his father's death. He recalls the book being the figure-painting section of the *Mustard

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14 *Zhuan*, pp. 7-8.
15 Throughout this thesis Feng's age is in *sui*, based on Pan Wenyan's *Nianbiao*, thus making him one year at birth, and so on.
16 Feng, "The Story of my Childhood" (Jiang wo ziji ershide gushi), *Sing-tao jih-pao*, 23 June, 1948, from which much of the information about Feng's youth is derived. Also *Zhuan*, p. 8; and *Nianbiao*, p. 2. The full title of the *Qianjiashi* is *Fenmen zuanlei Tang-Song shixian qianjia shixuan* edited by Liu Kezhuang of the Southern Song. The book is also known as *Houcun qianjiashi* after Liu's *hao*, Houcun. The poems, mostly by Tang writers, are divided into fourteen sections on the seasons, weather, flowers, bamboo, astronomy, geography, and so on.
17 "Recollections of Learning to Paint" (Xuehua huiyi), in *Suibiji*, p. 80; and see Christoph Harbsmeier, *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, p. 15. On page 14 of his book, Harbsmeier reproduces the first page from a recent reprint of a cheap illustrated edition of the *Huitu qianjiashi zhushi*, Changchun: Changchun guji shudian, 1982, p. 1. In *Zhuan*, p. 12, the authors are unable to refer to the edition used to instruct Feng and admit the possibility that the pictures and poems in it were unrelated.
18 Feng's recollections of his father, which are scattered in a number of essays, are filled with a sense of guilt that he was never able to fulfill his role as a filial son because of his father's early demise. See in particular "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", *Suibiji*, pp. 228-29; also the 1972 essays, "Wine Games" (Jiuling) and "Qingming" in *Suibiji*, pp. 456-57 & 475-76 respectively.
*Seed Garden Painting Manual (Jieziyuan huapu)*, one of the most important and popular art primers used in China since the 18th Century. Feng was enthralled by the pictures in the book, and his earliest "drawing" was that of a woodblock illustration of Liu Liuzhou (the Tang poet Liu Zongyuan, 773-819) which he traced with a brush and then coloured in.¹⁹ Feng describes the picture of Liu Zongyuan as being one in which the poet, dressed in long flowing robes, was holding his outstretched arms up in the air while looking skyward and laughing.²⁰ Although the illustration was presumably meant to depict Liu's unfettered personality, Feng recalled that the reason why it caught his attention at the time was that it looked just like his father yawning. It was an image which he would use later in his own work.²¹

Thus, like so many children of middle class families in old China, Feng had his first contact with pictorial art by looking through a finely-crafted illustrated book.²² Encouraged by the support he received from his mother, and the praise of the accountant in the family shop who was respectfully referred to by everyone as "a portrait painter" (*hua rongxiang*),²³ Feng continued with the manual, and by the time he had reached his early teens he had traced and coloured in all of the figures in the book. His hobby had also come to the attention of the other members of the

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²⁰ "Recollections of Learning to Paint", p. 81. Feng also discusses his painting of the *Jieziyuan huapu* in the essay "Learning to Paint" (*Wode xuehua*), *Yishu quwei*, Hong Kong: Gangqing chubanshe, 1979, pp. 66-67; as well as in the essay "Food for the Eyes" (*Shijuede liangshi*), *Yishu zhi*, Shanghai: Renjian shuwu, 1936, p. 79; *Zhan*, p. 15; and, Harbsmeier, *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, p. 15. Despite the evidence in Feng's own writings, however, as there is no portrait of Liu Liuzhou in the *Jieziyuan huapu* nor of any figure fitting the description Feng gives in "Recollections of Learning to Paint", it is possible that he has confused this book with a popular volume of illustrated biographies, the Qing artist Shangguan Zhou's famous *Wanshuotang huazhuan* in which there is, indeed, a portrait of Liu Zongyuan in the posture described by Feng. See *Wanshuotang huazhuan*, Peking: Zhongguo shudian, 1984, Part II, illustration 20.

²¹ "Recollections of Learning to Paint", ibid. Some thirty years later in 1944, Feng did a picture of a KMT soldier with a sword attached to his belt looking skywards with his arms outstretched. It is strongly reminiscent of the illustration of Liu Liuzhou that he had traced as a child. The title of the painting is a line of poetry "Looking heavenward with head raised [I] let out a long sigh" (*tai wang yan yang tian chang xiao*). The features of the soldier are in the minimalist style that Feng preferred: he has a mouth and the hint of a nose but no eyes. This is the first picture in his post-war collection *Jieyu manhua*, Shanghai: Wanye shudian, 1947, p. 1.

²² The engravings in such books were often of a very high technical and aesthetic quality, although the work of the artisans who produced the books was decried by scholarly artists as mere craftsmanship. See Pierre Ryckmans, *The Life and Work of Su Renshan: Rebel, Painter and Madman 1814-1849* translated from the French by Angharad Pimpaneau, Paris- Hong Kong: Centre de Publication de l'U.E.R. Extrême-Orient - Asie du Sud-Est de l'Université de Paris, 1970, pp. 35-36. Pan Tianshou, a high school acquaintance of Feng's who went on to become one of the most important latter-day "literati painters" in China, similarly first became acquainted with pictorial art as a child reading illustrated editions of the classical novels *Sanguo yanyi* and *Shuihu Zhuan*.

²³ "Learning to Paint", p. 67. The accountant was an amateur practitioner of the traditional style of portraiture (*chuan shen*) and he later attempted to interest Feng in his hobby.
household, and his "works" were sought after and used as kitchen dieties (zaojun pusa) as well as for bedroom decorations. Made sorely aware of the limitations of his own dilettante's approach to painting in his high school days, in later years Feng was to see little value in the use of such manuals and he was critical of their place in the Chinese artistic tradition. When writing about the Jieziyuan huapu in 1935, he commented that manuals were extremely detrimental when employed by serious students of art as an aid to learning to paint, especially as most of the editions of the book published at the time were of dubious quality. "I am of the opinion that such lithographic reproductions of the Jieziyuan huapu are more lowly than all of those things decried for their vulgarity, for they are nothing more than the adjuncts of artisans." Having himself spent many laborious years learning to paint ultimately only to abandon the realistic style of painting he had been taught in high school in favour of the manhua-sketch, however, he later was delighted to rediscover the joys of leafing through these manuals and he gradually came to appreciate that the delicate and simple lines of their illustrations could convey something of the essential nature of the objects they represented and were not entirely dissimilar to what he was aiming at in his own manhua. In fact, in his painting of both figures and landscapes (in particular background scenes) in the 1930s and 1949s Feng revealed that far from eschewing the influence of the Jieziyuan huapu, his style was largely derived from it.

At the age of nine, shortly after his father's death in 1906 at the age of forty-three, Feng was sent to another local tutorial school to study The Analects (Lunyu) and Mencius (Mengzi). In 1910 this school, the Shimenwan Tutorial School (Shimenwan sishu), was renamed as the West Brook Primary School (Xixi xiaoxuetang) after a stream near the school house. Feng, an outstanding pupil, was the best student in the first graduating class. Although the grounding he received in the Four Books (Sishu) at the school provided a basis for much of his future writing and thought, quotations from Mengzi in particular appearing in many of his essays, as a student he would often abandon the task of memorizing passages of texts to play with a simple toy modelling kit he had bought for making clay figures and objects. He had been so enthralled by the clay figurines when he first saw them on sale in the town

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24 "Recollections of Learning to Paint", ibid.
27 Zhuan, pp. 9-10; Nianbiao, p. 2.
28 Zhuan, ibid.; Nianbiao, p. 3. The school was subsequently renamed Number Three Primary, Shimen, Chongde County (Chongde xianli Shimen disan xiaoxue).
market that he collected enough money to buy the whole stock of the hawker who owned the stall. Still not satisfied, he set about acquiring his own toy kit and then modelled and painted a collection of figures and objects for himself. These first works of art included such things as Buddhist statues, the God of War (Guandi), the God of Learning (Wenchang), the hero of the novel Journey to the West (Xiyouji), Sun Wukong, animals, pagodas and even memorial arches (paifang). Although repeatedly upbraided by both his teacher and mother for neglecting his studies, this was his most enjoyable pastime. Years later he reasoned that it was the fact that he could produce different objects according to his own whims rather than having to be satisfied with toys of a fixed and immutable shape that attracted him most to the modelling kit. Among his earliest paintings we find a picture of a little boy sitting at a table playing with a collection of figurines -- what appears to be a dog, a kitchen god and some bear-like animal dressed in clothes -- entitled "First Friends" (Zuichude pengyou). [1: 3] Window shopping at the toy stores in Shanghai twenty years later he would bemoan the fact that so few modern, industrially-produced toys could provide the same pleasure and rich variety of his simple moulding set. Yet what really sparked his interest in both calligraphy and painting were the lanterns displayed at the Lantern Festival in Shimenwan.

Unlike most other districts, Shimenwan held a Lantern Festival quite irregularly, only once every few years or even decades. Indeed, writing at the age of thirty-seven, Feng could recall that the festival had only been held three times in his hometown during his lifetime. One of these occasions was in his childhood and his family brought out a large lantern ready for display from storage. It was an old "coloured umbrella" (caisan), as the lanterns were called locally, made by his father and aunt in their youth. Adorned with pictures and calligraphy cut into the large paper strips stuck to its sides, this large hexagonal lantern was, according to Feng, popularly regarded as the finest in the town. He spent little time during that first festival looking at the other lanterns that decorated the streets, however, as he remained at home busily working on his own. Although the lantern was not finished in time to take part in the

30 This picture is not readily found in Feng's better known collections. It was, however, reproduced in the Hong Kong student journal Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao, No. 1109, 19 October, 1973, illustrating an article by Yin Hui, "New Discoveries of Old Works by Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai jiuzhude xinfaxian). Yin Hui says that this particular picture is from a forgotten volume of Feng's paintings, Ertong shenghuo manhua, published by the Ertong shuju, presumably in Shanghai, with a preface by Feng dated August, 1931. In 1936, Feng did a similar picture of objects on a table -- a vase full of flowers, inkpot, pen, paper, a watch, tea cup and teapot, all of which had faces. The painting was entitled "The Poet's Desk" (Shiren de amou). See Yuzhoufeng, No. 14, 1 April, 1936, p. 96.
32 "Food for the Eyes", p. 78; Zhuan, p. 17; Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 16. Harbsmeier states that the festival was held every five years.
festivities, "it was", he wrote, "the first time I derived a real sense of satisfaction from creating something 'artistic'. Hanging it up inside after the festival we took considerable pleasure in studying it, comparing it [with others we had seen] and commenting on it. Of course, it could hardly match the genius of that other lantern [in our house], but by working on our own lantern we had shared in a sense of artistic creation, and it fired my desire to learn calligraphy and painting."

Painting became an obsession, and while others of his generation would write of the need to keep their reading of the popular novels Dream of the Red Chamber (Hongloumeng) and The Romance of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguo yanyi) a secret, Feng had to act like a covert opium smoker when it came to pursuing his hobby of painting. While his teacher was away drinking tea in the afternoons, Feng would do traced sketches for his classmates, receiving various knickknacks in payment. But eventually his secret was revealed when two of his classmates were caught by the teacher fighting over one of his drawings. Instead of confiscating his painting things, the teacher spent some time studying Feng's work and surprised him the following day by asking him to reproduce an enlarged portrait of Confucius for the classroom, a portrait in front of which the assembled class had to pay obeisance every day. From then on he was known to his classmates by the nickname "The Painter" (huajia). He used a device which he obtained with great difficulty from outside Shimenwan to do enlarged outlines of the pictures he was given to copy, and he so impressed the accountant artist in the family shop, that he gave Feng the traditional advice that one should be sparing in the use of ink (despite the fact that Feng was using charcoal pencils), and further attempted to instruct him in the rudiments of Chinese portrait painting. Although he was now being requested to do portraits of the dead for

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33 "Food for the Eyes", ibid; Zhuan, ibid.
34 After copying the illustrations in the Jieziyuan huapu he went on in primary school to work through A Pencil Copying Book (Qianbihua linben) and A Watercolour Copying Book (Shuicaihua linben), both published by Commercial Press. See "Food for the Eyes", pp. 79-80. The authors of Zhuan state that exercises from Qianbihua linben were set by Feng's first high school art teacher (p. 24), although Feng states in the essay "Food for the Eyes" that he worked through the book in primary school. However, in an earlier essay, "Speaking of the Past" (Jiuhua), written in 1931 and published in the monthly Zhongxuesheng, 1931: 6, pp. 159-65, Feng says before Li Shutong took over his class, they had been using the Commercial Press pencil and watercolour tracing books (p. 163). Again, in the essay "Learning to Paint" (p. 69), written in 1932, he comments that he started working on Qianbihua linben in high school. See also Feng's 1972 essay "Eyebrows" (Mei), Suibiji, pp. 450-51, in which he mentions using an English book entitled Figure Drawing when he began studying Western art.
35 "Recollections of Learning to Paint", pp. 81-82; Zhuan, p. 16.
36 "Recollections of Learning to Paint", p. 84.
37 "Learning to Paint", p. 67-68.
38 "Learning to Paint", p. 68. This style of portrait painting (rongxiang) was basically untouched by developments in portraiture following the introduction of Western techniques in the late-19th Century which led to the rise of the so-called "Shanghai School" (Shanghaipaz), and equally showed no influence of the mid-Qing Fujian artist Zeng Jing's semi-Western style of portraits.
family friends, his next professional engagement was to paint a dragon on a measure of yellow cloth -- China's national symbol in the late-Qing -- for a school flag.39 Even after he left home at the age of seventeen to go to school in Hangzhou, his talents as a portrait painter were often sought after during term breaks and holidays.40

1: 3 Bohao and Hangzhou

In 1914 at the age of seventeen, Feng Zikai left Shimenwan to attend secondary school in Hangzhou. Like the parents of many of his contemporaries, Feng's mother had been hopeful that the *keju* imperial examinations would be restored, and she kept his father's examination paraphenalia in readiness for that day.41 In the meantime, as Feng was the only son of a large family, she encouraged him to consider his schooling carefully. When Feng was accepted by both the Zhejiang Number One Provincial Teachers' College as well as the First Grade School of Commerce (having come first place in the entrance exam), his mother discouraged him from a commercial education: she was of the opinion that the family business had no real future and that social opinion was generally too much against people engaged in commerce.42 Instead, she decided it would be best for him to accept a place on the teacher's training college in Hangzhou. She reasoned that as the new-style schools (*xuetang*) were springing up everywhere, Feng was sure to find employment as a teacher after graduation, preferably close to home, if not in Shimenwan itself. Another important consideration in light of the family's stretched finances at the time was that the school did not require students to pay miscellaneous school fees.43

He complied with his mother's wishes obediently and went to board in the Zhejiang Provincial Number One Teachers' College (*Zhejiang shengli diyi shifan xuexiao*), the campus of which had been built on the site of the old provincial

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39 Ibid.
40 "Recollections of Learning to Paint", p. 85. At the end of this essay, Feng comments that he received his last request for a "death portrait" from an old woman in 1932, some eighteen years after he first left home; and in "Learning to Paint", written in 1932, he mentions the same incident providing details such as the fact that the request came from a distant relative who remembered him as a child with a penchant for copying and enlarging photographic portraits of friends and relatives (p. 65).
41 Feng deals with this period, his mother's choice of school on his behalf and so on, at length in his essay "Speaking of the Past", pp. 159-62.
42 See "Feng Zikai's Mother" (Feng Zikaidi muqin), by Qian Qing in *Tongxiang wenyi* (internal distribution), September 1985, No. 25, pp. 10-13, the local county journal of Feng's birthplace. This special issue of *Tongxiang wenyi* was published to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Feng's death. Qian Qing is a graduate of the Zhenhua Girl's School established by Feng's elder sister Feng Yun in the family house. The Zhejiang Provincial Number One Teachers' College was, in Qian's view, a stepping-stone to further studies at university (p. 12). Kong Dezhi, Mao Dun's future wife was also a graduate of Feng Yun's school (p. 11), as was the future woman Red Army member Zhang Qinqiu, see *Tongxiang wenshi ziliao*, p. 35.
43 "Speaking of the Past", pp. 159-162.
examination halls where his father had been tested for his official degree over a decade before.  

When later commenting on his "choice" of schools Feng was quite frank about the crucial decision:

At the time I was simply an ignorant and immature primary school student. I have absolutely no ambitions, nor any idea of the road I should take. I was a loyal bondservant to habit and tradition; in school I became an industrious and obedient machine.... My mother discussed [the choice of school] with my teacher and he said the Teachers' College was best, so I ended up at the Teachers' College....

He found it difficult to adjust to the communal life-style of the school, but meekly put up with the numerous restrictions imposed by the school. The school was organized along "progressive" lines by the principal Jing Hengyi (1877-1939), and it attracted many talented and devoted teachers, including, for a time, Lu Xun.  Students of all four years would be put in the same home room which was, according to the school, for the purpose of "establishing friendships and discussing their studies together". Although the progressive aspects of the school's system included a

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44 Zhuan, pp. 7, 19. The Zhejiang Provincial Number One Teachers' College is now Hangzhou Number One Middle School. Although a number of the original buildings have survived the ravages of time, the main auditorium and dormitories were razed in an accidental blaze at the end of 1985. For details of the school's history, see Hangzhou diyi zhongxue: xiaoqing qishiwu zhourian jiniance (referred to hereafter as Xiaoqing jiniance), Hangzhou: Hangzhou diyi zhongxue, 1983, pp. 231-38. According to this source, Jing Hengyi, the school principal, personally picked his students, and he is quoted as having said he never accepted students on the basis of recommendations. "The quality of the school depends on the quality of its students," he declared. Xiaoqing jiniance, pp. 5-6.

45 "The Death of Bohao" (Bohao zhi si), an essay written in 1929, see Suibiji, pp. 36-37.

46 See "Reminiscences of Dormitory Life" (Jisushe shenghuode huiyi), Zhongxuenxue, 1931: 4, pp. 143-52. It was a period which he remembered as both "pathetic and fearful", the trials of which only rare friends like Bohao, a boy who later committed suicide, could appreciate. See "The Death of Bohao", Suibiji, pp. 35-43. The literary historian Cao Juren was a classmate of Feng's at the college, although he seems to have little trouble to adjusting to the environment. See Cao's autobiography, Wo yu wode shijie, serialized in Xinwenxue shiliao, 1981: 1, pp. 76-78.

47 Jing was, like his friend Xia Mianzun (see below and Chapter Three), born in Shangyu, Zhejiang. After graduating in physics from a university in Tokyo he returned to China to teach. He was, according to Xiaoqing jiniance, pp. 231, 234, the principal of the school from 1912-1920, although he had been working there from 1908. He was discharged for supporting student demonstrations during the May Fourth period. See also Wusi yundong zai Zhejiang, edited by the Zhejiang Provincial Party School Party History Teaching and Research Group, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1979, pp. 32-34, where it state that Jing held his position from 1912 to 1919.

48 Xiaoqing jiniance, p. 232. Lu Xun, who joined the school in 1909 at the age of twenty-eight, doubled as a biology teacher and a translator for members of the Japanese staff of the school. He left in 1910 after getting involved in a dispute involving the school's conservative director. The school attracted other literary talents, including Zhu Ziqing who taught there from 1920-1923, Ye Shengtao (October 1921-February 1922) and Yu Pingbo (1920-1922). (Xiaoqing jiniance, p. 10.) The educationalists Chen Wangdao and Liu Dabai also taught there at the time of the May Fourth Movement.

49 "The Death of Bohao", p. 35.
considerable emphasis on moral and artistic education, the atmosphere of the place was strict and austere. For Feng, however, one consolation for all this was that among the students who enrolled in the same year as Feng was a slightly older fellow by the name of Yang Bohao from Yuyao in Zhejiang.

Bohao, as his classmates called him, had an extraordinarily independent character. He was scornful of school regulations commenting often that they were treated little better than criminals: there was a fixed hour for lights out and a rule that they had to be locked in their dormitories at night. He was equally disdainful of the classes of the less interesting teachers, and he became notorious as the only boy who would refuse to attend certain classes without even attempting to feign illness. He would prefer to sit by himself and read the *Zhaoming Anthology* (*Zhaoming Wenxuan*), or volumes of classical history.

Feng Zikai found himself attracted to this abrasive and haughty character. When Bohao upbraided him for going along passively with his mother and teacher's decision to send him to the college his earlier smugness at having coming third in the entrance exams vanished. "You should have a mind of your own," he berated Feng. "You're just being dishonest with yourself." "It really came as something of a shock to have it put like that," Feng said. "He made me wake up to myself: he was right, I had been dishonest. But he also made me feel how pitiful my timidity [in regards his mother?] was, and, moreover, that my pride in my academic results was shameless." They became fast friends in their first year and enjoyed many excursions on and around the West Lake together. It was Bohao who introduced Feng to the idea of searching out spots around the lake which were unknown and therefore not frequented by visitors. Bohao's method of discovering such places was simple: he would place two coppers on a boulder in the open and if they were untouched when they returned the following week then it was indeed a place where the two boys could "make the heaven and earth our shelter".

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50 *Xiaoqing jiniance*, pp. 4-6. Being progressive in terms of the school's curriculum did not mean that the school authorities were lax disciplinarians. The school rules prohibited students from talking or making any noise during study hours, meals or after lights out. The students were in charge of keeping the school grounds clean and in tending an orchard and vegetable garden. The school song, written by Xia Mianzun with music by Li Shutong (see below) was full of uplifting sentiments such as "the need is to cultivate the spirit, morality will nourish our hearts and bodies", as well as a great emphasis on producing "new citizens" (*xinmin*), presumably according to the Liang Qichao mould.

51 "The Death of Bohao", p. 37. Feng recalls that once Bohao had said to him that, "We're human beings, not a flock of chicken or ducks. They have no right to let us out of our coop only in the morning and lock us up again at night."


53 "The Death of Bohao", p. 37.

54 Ibid.

55 *yi tiandi wei shila*, see "The Death of Bohao", p. 39. This quotation is from a story about Liu Ling taken from Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo xinyu*.
As Feng wrote:

Although I was still an ignorant and mediocre primary student at the time, completely lacking in any originality, there was something very special about him, a fresh and unique air about the way he moved and spoke, not to mention his finely honed sense of taste, that made everything he did attract me. Without knowing it, I became an admirer and follower of his.\(^{56}\)

Yang Bohao's personality left a lasting impression on Feng, the moving essay he wrote on his school day friend's sudden death from illness in 1929 being a testimony to their relationship. This was the first influence of what Leo Lee would term the "romantic temper" on Feng Zikai. Bohao's refusal to accept convention, constant flouting of the school's numerous regulations and the bemused indifference with which he responded to the lectures of his enraged teacher's quickly earned him the reputation of being "insane" (shenjingbing).\(^{57}\) The atmosphere of the school proved to be too much for him and Bohao quit before the second year. "There was no trace of Bohao in the school any more. The teachers had one less nuisance to worry about, my classmates had been deprived of a butt for their jokes, but for me the whole school seemed quieter than before: I had lost a close friend. Although I continued to pass my days in fear and submission, nervous and timid as before, from then on I too became increasingly dissatisfied with the school, annoyed by classmates, and bored with student life."\(^{58}\)

1: 4 Li Shutong and Art Classes

In terms of the education he was receiving at the college, however, Feng was satisfied with his general courses in the first two years and consistently achieved the highest grades in his class. However, in his third year he was instructed in music and art by a new teacher, Li Shutong (1880-1941).\(^{59}\) Not only did this have an immediate

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56 Ibid.
57 "The Death of Bohao", p. 40-41. At times Bohao's strangeness even provoked Feng to think that he might be mentally ill.
58 "The Death of Bohao", p. 41. At the end of his essay Feng repeats these sentiments reflecting on what Bohao's death meant to him. "There is no trace of Bohao in the world any more. One less nuisance for nature to worry about, humanity has been deprived of a butt for its jokes, and the whole world seems to be quieter than before: I have lost a close friend. Although I continued to pass my days in fear and submission, nervous and timid as before, now I feel increasingly dissatisfied with the world, annoyed by my fellow man, and bored with life."
59 Li had gone to work at the school at Jing Hengyi's invitation. Jing, something of an artist in his own right, had started a department in painting and handicraft in 1912. See Wu Mengfei, "Scattered Reminiscences of Art Education at the Time of the May Fourth Movement" (Wusi yundong qianhoude meishu jiaoyu huiyi pinanduan), Meishu yanjiu, 1959: 5, p. 44; Kao, China's Response to the West in
effect on his academic results, Li's influence would change the entire course of his education, and, indeed, his life. While Feng's relationship with Li as an art teacher is discussed below, Li's personal influence as a religious mentor in Feng's life will be studied in Chapter Six.

As the school was primarily aimed at training teachers, Feng was obliged in his third year to take classes in education and practical teaching, while being forced to drastically reduce the number of hours spent on his other work. Neither of these new courses held the slightest attraction for him, and, in fact, they threatened to divert his attention from his real interests. Burdened by the new and overtly practical emphasis of his school work, Feng felt increasingly frustrated in his hopes to pursue any of the avenues for further education he now felt lay open before him: to become a scholar of the classics after the style of the language teacher Xia Mianzun (1886-1946) whom he so admired; to go on to university to study science; or, to read foreign languages at a missionary school. "In the end it was the school that ruled my life and I only wished I could flee." Feng recalled over a decade later. "I entered a long period of disquiet

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Art, p. 76.

60 Feng's first language teacher at the college was Shan Bu'an, the man who gave him his literary style, "Zikai". See note 1 above. However, even before he began his instruction under Shan, Feng had published four short essays in a magazine called Shaonian zazhi. The magazine, founded in 1911, carried the pieces in the February issue of 1914, months before Feng started at the college. The first of these signed Feng Ren is entitled "The Hunter" (Lieren), and is a tale of a hunter who fails to capture either a deer or a rabbit due to his greed. In it Feng, a youth of sixteen, affects the tone of a wise old man, concluding the one hundred and twenty-five character composition with a few words of sage advice, "Feng Ren says: When the heart gives birth to greed then defeat is hard to avoid. My advice to all young people is that they do not emulate that hunter who [due to greed] lost his game." These essays only came to light in 1987, "The Hunter" having been reprinted in Yangliu, No. 16, December 1987, p. 1. Yangliu is a magazine edited and published privately by the Feng Zikai Research Society (Feng Zikai yanjiuhui), discussed in Appendix II. The other three essays appeared in the March and June issues of the journal during 1988. The news of this discovery was revealed by Zhusi in an article entitled "Feng Zikai's First Works" (Feng Zikaide chuntiuyou), published in the Shehui kexuebao, Shanghai, October 22, 1987.

61 "Speaking of the Past", p. 162. Feng remained friendly with Xia after his graduation, and eventually they became colleagues and even collaborator, Feng doing illustrations for a translation by Xia. In a reminiscence of his relationship with Xia written upon the latter's death in 1946, Feng commented that if Li Shutong, his stern music and painting teacher, taught in the fashion of a "strict father", then Xia Mianzun, the language teacher popularly known to the students as "Xia the Papaya" (Xia Mugu) -- presumably a reference to the shape of his head, was like a "loving mother" to his pupils. Feng records one example of Xia's progressive teaching methods. Although still only on the eve of the May Fourth Movement, Xia abandoned the set style of literary composition used to train students in writing the classical language and asked them to write an autobiography instead. They were to tell the truth and avoid empty classical references. Despite the fact that a number of students rebelled at what they called "unlettered crudity", it was a generally popular move. See "In Memory of Mr Xia Mianzun", (Dao Xia Mianzun xiansheng), Suibiji, pp. 293-94. Xia was also in charge of discipline in the dormitories, not a popular role for any teacher to play. Whereas Feng found Xia strict but kind and thoughtful, Cao Juren, later a friend of Xia's, never forgot that he confiscated his copy of The Water Margin (Shuihuzhuan ) "for no reason whatsoever". See Wo yu wode shijie, p. 81. On page 83 he comments that most of the students feared and hated Xia, taking out all of their dissatisfaction with the school on him. More will be said of Feng's relationship with Xia in Chapter Three.
and unhappiness.\textsuperscript{62} It was at this critical juncture in the artist's life that Li Shutong began instructing his art class.\textsuperscript{63}

Li is credited with having introduced both Western art and music to China. He had studied Western painting under the famous impressionist Kuroda Seiki in Japan for four years at the Ueno and Tokyo Art Academies from 1906 to 1910, and was familiar with the "modern" Western methods already popular there, in particular early Impressionism.\textsuperscript{64} He had two classrooms in the school set up with plaster of Paris models which he used to teach his students the rudiments of charcoal sketching. Li also wrote a short tract entitled "The Uses of Plaster of Paris Models" (Shigao moxing yongfa), one of the small number of essays he composed on literature, music and art during his years as a teacher and one of the earliest Chinese treatises on the subject of modern art instruction.\textsuperscript{65} In it he said, "It is now generally recognized that in the

\textsuperscript{62} "Speaking of the Past", p. 163.
\textsuperscript{63} "It was in our third year...that our art classes were taken over by Mr Li Shutong, the music teacher who so often requested leaves of absence." See the essay "Speaking of the Past", pp. 162-63; also quoted in this context by Lin Ziqing, the author of an authoritative chronology of Li Shutong's life, \textit{Hongyi dashi nianpu} (hereafter referred to as \textit{Nianpu}), Shanghai: Honghuayuan, 1944, p. 51. However, in both \textit{Zhuan}, p. 24, and \textit{Nianbiao}, p. 5, it is stated that Li took over the instruction of Feng's art class in his second, not third year. This dating is presumably based on information in another of Feng's essays, "Talking to the Young about Master Hongyi" (Wei qingnian shuo Hongyi fashi) written in 1943 on the occasion of Li Shutong's demise and subsequently revised and republished under the title "In Memory of Mr Li Shutong" (Huai Li Shutong xiansheng), see \textit{Feng Zikai sanwenji}, edited by Feng Huazhan and Qi Zhirong, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1981, pp. 183-90. This essay is of some importance in that more than any of the other works by Feng on Li Shutong it gives an impression of Li's pedagogical method and his relationship with Feng Zikai. Li was also Feng's music instructor, and details of these classes are also found in this essay (pp. 184-85) and in "Sweet Memories" (Ganmeide huiwei), also reprinted in \textit{Feng Zikai sanwenji}, pp. 136-38.

\textsuperscript{64} Kuroda Seiki (1866-1924) studied impressionist art in France under Raphael Collin and in the early 1890s, after ten years in Europe, returned to Japan to introduce what were then the latest developments in Western art, causing a rift with the proponents of the more dour style practised by the followers of the Italian Antonio Fontanesi. Kuroda's school of \textit{plein-air} realism, never a formal school of art in Europe, favoured the use of bright colours observed in natural light outdoors. He was made professor of Western-style painting at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1897. Adopted by his uncle Viscount Kuroda, he inherited the title in 1907 and he is now called the "father of oil painting in Japan". See Minoru Harada, \textit{Meiji Western Painting}, New York/Tokyo: Weatherhill/Shinbundo, 1974, pp. 62-78; Michael Sullivan \textit{The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art}, London: Thames and Hudson, 1973, pp. 138-39; Kawakita Rinmei and Takakai Hideji, \textit{Kindai nihon kaigai shigeki}, Tokyo: Chôbô kôronsha, 1978, pp. 69-81, 144-48; \textit{A Dictionary of Japanese Artists}, Laurence P. Roberts, New York: Wetherhill, 1976, p. 99; Michael Sullivan, \textit{Chinese Art in the 20th Century}, p. 47; and, Kao, \textit{China's Response to the West in Art}, pp. 76-77. Although there is a paucity of material on the history of Li Shutong's friendship with Kuroda and its influence on Li's own ideas on art, it can be assumed that some of the more salient elements of the Japanese \textit{plein-air} school filtered through to China via Li and had an impact on the thinking and artistic development of his students, in particular Feng Zikai. As we will see in Chapter Eight, despite continuous exposure to written material on modernist developments in Western art throughout his life, Feng continued to think of Impressionism, or Post-Impressionism, as being the sole truly representative style of modern Western art in this century.

\textsuperscript{65} See \textit{Hongyi fashi}, edited by the Chinese Buddhist Association, Peking: Wenwu chubanshe, 1984, pp. 81-83. After an introductory section on the virtues of plaster of Paris models, Li describes the care, positioning, and uses of the statues in art classes. For an example of Li Shutong's own art work, see \textit{Hongyi fashi nianpu}, p. 18, a sketch of a very melancholy woman supposedly done in 1916 and kept in Feng's possession after Li became a monk. It was lost in the Anti-Japanese War. According to Zheng Ziyu, who is quoted by Rong Tianyi in an article entitled "The Monk Hongyi Li
instruction of art the training of the eye is just as important as the development of drawing skills... However, to rely merely on the old method of copying and stencilling to achieve this is highly impractical...and undermines the originality of the beginner, as well as encouraging in them the harmful habit of reliance on fixed models....Thus all students of art should be aware that sketching from real objects is by far the best method."  
Feng happily abandoned his earlier practice of tracing and vigorously applied himself to sketching.  

But it was not only Li's theoretical innovations that impressed his students, for as an artist himself his work demonstrated a rare genius. As Mayching Kao, a scholar of 20th Century Chinese art comments, "He was one of the few Chinese artists who had completely mastered a foreign idiom, but what placed him above his fellow artists was not his technical excellence but the spiritual expression and mysterious quality we find in his paintings."  

The most important thing for Feng in those early days as a pupil of Li was the confirmation of an artistic instinct that had originally inspired his interest in painting. He said that in moments of leisure in the past, the contours, shades and shapes of objects around him had given rise to an ineffable interest and excitement in him. But he had convinced himself that apart from providing an enjoyable diversion his "research" into such things had no practical importance or significance, and he was sure he would find no scholarly justification for his musings. Then, suddenly he found himself in an art class in which easels had replaced the conventional tables and stools. His hobby of many years' standing -- sketching objects in his head -- was now a legitimate element of his school work. "My private diversion," he wrote, "had, quite unexpectedly, become something that was now not only public, but had become a subject in which we were receiving instruction from a teacher."  

Writing about this exhilarating although laborious period of study years later, Feng defended the use of model sketching as being crucial for any artist. He was critical of both Western modernists who abandon such a "traditional" grounding in basic techniques arguing that they were out of date, and of Chinese painters who condemned sketching for being too mechanical. "I've always been of the opinion," he wrote, "that 'verisimilitude' (xiaosi) is the basic requirement of painting, just as food and clothing

66 Hongyi fashi, p. 81.  
68 Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 76-77, Plate 9.  
69 "Speaking of the Past", p. 163-64.  
70 "Speaking of the Past", p. 164; "In Memory of Mr Li Shutong", pp. 187-88.
is a basic necessity in our lives. Of course any discussion of food and clothing is far from the elegant heights of such things as scholarship and morality; however, if one is lacking in these basics all else is meaningless. Unless, of course, one is a Bo Yi or Shu Qi. It is the same for painting. Although to talk of formal likeness is not nearly as elevated as discussing brush strokes and spiritual resonance *(bifa qiyun)*, if one has not gone through the stage of learning about formal likeness all else will be wasted. One will end up as a Cubist or the like." Thus Feng set to the task of sketching, spending every spare moment at the easel.

His travails included drawing a bust of Venus, which even after more than ten hours of solid work, resulted in less than satisfying results. Similarly, a painstaking study of a statue of Laocoön, a work that had inspired Gotthold Lessing's lengthy discussion of the differences between poetry and painting, ended up all out of proportion and a disaster. A sketch of Homer proved just as disappointing and Feng began wondering to himself whether all this frustrated effort had anything to do with the visual pleasure he hoped to derive from art, the enjoyment he had had of those clay figurines and the coloured lantern when he was a child. But it was only after spending hours at his labours that he began to see his environment in an entirely new way. "The 'world of forms' which surrounded me took on a new aspect quite different from the confused scene it had presented me with before. Every shape and object revealed its own significance, in the way that every human face does. The patterns of the mud on the ground, the shadows of clouds in the sky, cracks in walls, streaks of water on tables, all said something to me. It was as if the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of every plant were vying with each other to tell me something. But what was most amazing of all was that even the written characters that I had taken for granted [for years] suddenly turned into faces, faces which looked up at me

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71 These two brothers did, in fact, choose morality over physical sustenance, and perished as a result. Bo Yi and Shu Qi were two righteous brothers who fled their own state after both had declined to ascend the throne. They took refuge under King Wu of the Zhou, but when Wu conquered the Yin and proved himself just as despotic as the defeated rulers, they hid on Shouyang Mountain and starved to death rather than eat the unrighteous grain of Zhou. They were praised by Confucius because they "never bore old ills in mind and hence seldom had any feelings of rancour." See *Lunyu yizhu*, translated and annotated by Yang Bojun, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1980, second edition, V: 23, p. 51; and, "Shih chi 61: The Biography of Po Yi and Shu Chi" in *Records of the Historian: Chapters from the Shih Chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien*, translated by Burton Watson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, pp. 12-13.

72 "Food for the Eyes", pp. 80-81.

73 "Food for the Eyes", p. 81; elsewhere, in the essay "The Rigours of Learning" (Wode kuxue jingyan), *Zhongxuesheng*, 1931: 1, p. 51, Feng wrote that the picture took him seventeen hours to complete, and that he used it when, at the age of 19, he instructed his first art class in Shanghai, telling them of the importance of drawing from life.

74 "Food for the Eyes", p. 81.

75 "Food for the Eyes", p. 82; Harbsmeier, *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, p. 17.
Sketching had taught Feng to look at the world anew. Through a study of shapes, lines, tones and colours he relearned the vocabulary of his environment. Shopping expeditions to vegetable stalls and pottery shops amused Feng as he picked out the most aesthetically pleasing although not necessarily most practical purchases, to the incredulous surprise of the hawkers. As in his childhood he had hoarded every conceivable style of clay figurine from the North Yangtze (jiangbei) peddlars in Shimenwan in his bedroom, so now his bookshelves sagged with the array of "models" that he had collected for sketching: vases, bowls, dishes, toys, flowers and grasses. "Objects which others would not think worth a penny, to my eyes were as alive as if possessed of a soul." These insensate things came to occupy so much of his time that companions, the people around him, friends, teachers and relatives, were reduced to the level of models for still life studies or landscapes. Even back home during his holidays his mother, the stern but respected guiding influence in Feng's life, appeared now to little more than a more mobile version of the busts he had been sketching at school. In fact, to his eyes she looked remarkably like the busts of the German composer Richard Wagner that he had seen. His interest in faces and postures as objects often led him to forget his surroundings entirely, causing offence to his family and misunderstandings with ticket sellers and vendors. Feng's particular interest may have been in the technical side of art at this time, but just as

76 "Food for the Eyes", p. 82; "The World of Sketching (I)" (Xiesheng shijie, shang), Yishu quwei, p. 72, a lecture Feng wrote for the Kaiming Correspondent School Student's Club in 1932; and, Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, pp. 17-18.

77 "The World of Sketching (I)", p. 74. See the illustration "A World of Things with Emotional Presence" (Youqing shijie), 1942, reproduced in Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 17. Perhaps the title of this cartoon would best be rendered "The Sentient World", as the word youqing is a Buddhist term indicating sentient beings, an ironical usage on Feng's part to describe the everyday objects that surround him which are, strictly speaking, non-sentient. This question is discussed at length in Chapter Six.

78 "The World of Sketching (II)" (Xiesheng shijie, xia), Yishu quwei, pp. 75-76.

79 "The World of Sketching (II)", p. 76. Busts of composers continued to play quite a role in Feng's life as a teacher, as can be seen from a picture of his art class at the Li Da Academy taken in 1926, reproduced as the sixth picture in Zhuan, in which Feng is seen sitting beside what appears to be a bust of Beethoven. Feng's fascination with faces continued many years after this period of initiation into sketching people's features. In an essay entitled "Faces" (Yanmian) written in 1929, he writes of the artist's perception of faces and the emotions that play on their features and then makes the point that a person trained to see as an artist -- or even more so children -- can, in fact, find faces and emotions in all mundane objects, even non-sentient ones. The world for such a person is anthropomorphic. "The artist finds sentient life in all things. If he is to discover himself in each blade of grass and tree, then he must show sympathy (tongqingxin) for all, and through this empathize will all nature." See Feng's essay collection Yuanyuantang suibi, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1941, ninth edition, pp. 20-25 in particular pp. 24-25.

80 Feng's behaviour must have seen odd to both his family and strangers. Wu Mengfei, "Scattered Reminiscences of Art Education at the Time of the May Fourth Movement". p. 43, recalls that one of Li Shutong's students was actually arrested by the police while looking for a good spot to sketch. See also Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 92-93.
important was his awareness that the things he treasured most, the jumble of odd and
crude objects he had so painstakingly collected, were ignored or disregarded by the
world at large. He delighted in the fact that "worldly people know not the joys of my
heart" (shiren buzhi yu xin le).\textsuperscript{81} This indicated something of the young artist's early
rejection of the accepted norms of taste and attitude with which he found himself
surrounded.

The emphasis in his art classes on heightened visual awareness and the need to
sketch from life were doubtlessly positive aspects of his artistic training, yet they also
made Feng sorely aware of the cheap and vulgar taste that dictated the designs of
contemporary pottery, clothing, and the grotesque and stunted miniature scenes
produced with bonsai and goldfish, all elements of the corrupt and decadent aesthetic
of the Qing Dynasty and the Republican Period.\textsuperscript{82} He even gave the two boxes of
picture cards he had been collecting from packets of cigarettes since childhood to the
neighbour's children. But the frustrations of using charcoal pencils to make
reproductions of busts, still one step removed from reality itself, finally led him to start
sketching outdoors, to "take nature as the master" (shi ziran) as he put it,\textsuperscript{83} only
somewhat recasting the first half of the Tang Dynasty artist Zhang Zao's famous
dictum "externally I take nature as my master..."\textsuperscript{84} At the time he was not particularly
mindful of the fact that although sketching from nature was prized in Western art, it
had also been highly regarded in Chinese art.\textsuperscript{85} He was still enamoured of Western
realism and rejected the skimpy lines of Chinese sketches of nature, for he thought that
every line in a painting had to accord strictly with the physical objects perceived by the
artist, and that the failure of Chinese art to do so proved its essential inferiority and
absurdity.\textsuperscript{86} Although this somewhat overly zealous view was to undergo
considerable change some years later, even so active a champion of Chinese ink-
painting as the Japanese art historian Oomura Seiga, a writer whose ideas had

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{81} "The World of Sketching (I)", p. 74; "The World of Sketching (II)", p. 81.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} "Food for the Eyes", p. 84; "The World of Sketching (I)", p. 73; and, see my introduction to
Peter Quennell's \textit{A Superficial Journey Through Tokyo and Peking}, reprinted Hong Kong: Oxford
University Press, 1986. "Fresh from Japan where the simple lines and natural colours of the Song
dynasty lived on in temple and residential architecture, the Qing taste accepted as 'Chinese' struck him
[Peter Quennell] as heavy and unpalatable, and he ponders the question of when 'this passion for the
grotesque, for shapes bulbous, written and twisted, gnarled and bent, first made its appearance in the
Chinese world....' Ironically, it is just this aspect of Chinese art, a decadent and mongrel aesthetic
rigidly applied by the Manchus ... -- that 'gimcrack of Chinese fantasy', a petit bourgeois
love of bric-
à-brac -- that has come to represent the most visible legacy of the country's past...." (p. xii.)
  \item \textsuperscript{83} "Learning to Paint", p. 70
  \item \textsuperscript{84} wai zi zaohua, the second half of the dictum reads "internally I imbibe from the spring of my
heart" (zhong de xinyuan). See Yu Jianhua, \textit{Zhongguo hualun leibian}, Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju,
Hermann, 1984, p. 20.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} "Learning to Paint", p. 70.
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
considerable influence on Chinese artists at the time, had to admit the virtues of sketching and drawing in Western art. Oomura may have attacked Western painting for its excessive emphasis on the imitation of nature, but he stated in his influential study of literati painting that one of the faults of Chinese art was that, it too often proved to be a pedantic imitation of old masters or teachers. The ancients often spoke of learning only from nature, and in one respect he concedes that Western artists achieve this through their sketching of nature -- a practice that does not undermine their freedom of self-expression. For, he asked, had not Dong Qichang (1555-1636) said that the artist must read 10,000 books and travel 10,000 li? 87

As with many artists, however, what Feng preached was not necessarily what he practised. Indeed, it is significant that at the time of his first prolonged contact with the Westernizing artistic influences of the day, Feng was already producing elliptical sketches that were a long way from the studio realism to which he nominally aspired. Sadly, there are only two extant examples of his student work. One is a simple pencil sketch of a mother with a basket hanging from one arm holding the hand of a child which appears to be saying something to her and pointing as they walk along on what is probably a shopping expedition. Like many of his future paintings the sketch is done with a blank background, the two pencilled figures appearing on a flat white surface. It is entitled simply "Outside Qingtai Gate" (Qingtai menwai), dated May 1918, the title being written in the top right hand corner, the date in the bottom right followed by a seal (perhaps drawn) with the single character "Ren", Feng's school name, on it. 88 This simple image was to appear in Feng's later work, as in the case of a painting he did in 1934 entitled "At a Laneway" (Xiangkou) which shows a grandmother holding a child by its hand. 89 [1: 6] The other one of the two extant works from this period is an untitled picture of a rickshaw boy crouched on the footrest of his rickshaw asleep under a tree. A seal, again with the name "Ren" on it, has been affixed to the bottom right hand corner of the picture. [1: 7] Both pictures were given to Shen Benqian, a schoolmate, in 1918. 90

Shen had just begun his studies at the school, and as an amateur painter in the

88 See note 1.
89 See Feng Zikai manhua quanji, Hong Kong: Bowen shuju, 1976, 4: 48. Perhaps one can find a hint of this scene in the painting Feng did in 1934 which Hu Feng attacked with such vitriol. See Chapter Three.
90 These pictures are reproduced along with an article by Shen, "When by the Lake We Studied Art Together " (Hupan tongchuang xuehua shi -- yi Feng Zikai), Xihu, a monthly published in Hangzhou, 1980: 4, p. 41. The first sketch is also reproduced in Zhuan, p. 25. For more details on Shen and Feng's relationship both at high school and after 1949, see Chen Xing, Xiaosa fengshen, Guilin: Lijiang chubanshe, 1987, pp. 160-64.
traditional style he was anxious to join the painting society that Feng was in the process of setting up under the guidance of the three teachers Li Shutong, Xia Jianzun and Jing Hengyi. Li, Xia and Jing were all members of the Xiling Seal Society (Xilingyinshe), a society of artists and scholars who were interested in epigraphy and seal-carving established at Gushan in Hangzhou in 1904. The student group had taken the name the "Tongyin Art Society" (Tongyin huahui), a reference both to the late-Qing connoisseur Qin Zuyong's work on Ming and Qing artists, the Tongyin lunhua, and to the school's Chinese parasol trees, the shade of which kept their home-room and lecture hall cool in the summer months.91

Shen was introduced to Feng, who, he says, was already a famous school personality. Although Shen had a background in Chinese art, Feng saw this as no obstacle to him taking part in what was primarily a group interested in the study of Western painting. In fact, he expressed ideas prevalent among reformist artists at the time which he was to develop and repeat many years later. "Even if different in style, the basic principles of both Western and Chinese art are the same," Shen recalls Feng as having said. "Your discipline in Chinese art will help you in the study of Western painting -- you can combine the two and achieve something new."92 He picked up what turned out to be Feng's sketch book from a pile of books -- something he had never encountered before -- and was so taken with the first two pencil sketches in it that he asked Feng to lend him the book so he could copy them, a typical reaction to a new artistic model from a boy steeped in the mimetic style of elementary Chinese painting. Instead of encouraging Shen to do so, Feng tore the pictures out of the book and presented them to him.93 After the painting society began its activities in earnest with some twenty student members, they changed the name to the "Foreign Painting Research Society" (Yanghua yanjiuhui), employing the Japanese word yōga, or yanghua in Chinese, to define their interests.94

91 See Li Kangxian's article "Feng Zikai at 'Number One Teachers' College" (Feng Zikai zai "Yishi"), Xihu, 1985: 5, p. 33, which is based on a conversation with the aged artist Shen Benqian (see previous note); Xiaoqing jiniance, p. 232. Qin Zuyong's Tongyin lunhua can be found along with his Tongyin huajue in the reprint of the 1936 Shijie shuju volume Yilin mingzhu congkan, Peking: Zhongguo shudian, 1983. In his comments Shen points out that the character yin in Tongyin is not the word for shade for it should be written without a "grass radical" (ibid.). One of the essays in Feng's collection Yuanyuantang zaibi is called "Parasol Trees" (Wutongshu). It is about the delight the trees in his neighbours' courtyards give him in the spring and summer months, and the overwhelming sorrow he feels when they shed their leaves in the autumn. Generally regarded by their owners as nothing more than mere possessions, Feng sees in the parasol tree a symbol of the natural world unsullied by human foibles. He likens them to the powerful and unfettered nature of art. See Yuanyuantang zaibi, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1939, fourth edition, pp. 30-32.

92 "When by the Lake", p. 41.

93 "When by the Lake", p. 42. According to Li Kangxian's interview, however, Feng picked up his sketchbook and explained that Shen should have one of his own to start sketching. He then tore out two pictures and gave them to Shen along with a work on perspective by the Frenchman Anmand Cassagne (sic, presumably Armand Cassagne) for his reference (p. 34).

94 Ibid.
Sketching took up increasingly more of Feng's time as his interests turned from his other academic pursuits to painting.\(^95\) His grades, formerly among the best in his year, usually in the first five, also slipped, and by the time of his graduation his academic performance was mediocre.\(^96\) He was constantly absenting himself from classes to go to the West Lake to sketch,\(^97\) and on the occasion that the famous Japanese \textit{plein-air} artist Viscount Kuroda Seiki visited Hangzhou to paint and see his friend and former student Li Shutong and sketch, Feng was instructed to show him the sights.\(^98\) Li, who was by this time experimenting with fasting and meditation in preparation to taking up the religious life,\(^99\) increasingly prevailed on Feng to deal with his social obligations and also had him accompany his other artist friends from Japan like Miyake Kokki and Oono Takanori around Hangzhou to sketch.\(^100\) By this time, Feng's private classes with Li Shutong in Japanese had provided him with a basic grounding in the language, and he was more than willing to take advantage of the opportunity to further his knowledge of Western art by working with the Japanese visitors.\(^101\)

An interesting anecdote told by Shen Benqian regarding his involvement in the Tongyin Art Society reveals something of Feng's attitude toward sketching during this period. With his grounding in Chinese painting, Shen continued to be plagued by doubts about his ability to master the skills required by Western art. He was also

\(^{95}\) Li not only used plaster casts to instruct his students, for, in 1913, he introduced a nude model to his drawing classes and took his students out on sketching expeditions for inspiration. See Wu Mengfei, "Scattered Reminiscences of Art Education at the Time of the May Fourth Movement", p. 43; Kao, \textit{China's Response to the West in Art}, pp. 77-78, Plate 12. A photograph of Li's art class sketching a nude is reproduced in Lin Ziqing's \textit{Nianpu}, p. 16. Kao, p. 77, says the model was first used in 1914, although in Lin it is dated 1913.

\(^{96}\) "The Rigours of Learning", p. 50; \textit{Zhuang}, p. 25; and, "Feng Zikai at 'Number One Teachers' College", p. 34.

\(^{97}\) "Speaking of the Past", pp. 164-65; "The World of Sketching" (II), pp. 78-79; and, \textit{Zhuang}, p. 26. In an article written for Lin Yutang's essay journal \textit{Yuzhoufeng} in 1936 entitled "The Boats of West Lake" (Xihu chuan), Feng describes the boats on the lake when he was a student, and follows the course of the decay of the quality of life and the beauty of the lake by describing how they have become increasingly run-down and inelegant over the years. See \textit{Yuanyuantang zaibi}, pp. 92-98. He also wrote an article entitled "Autumn Scenery and Outdoor Sketching" (Qiujing yu yewai xiesheng) for students of art, published in \textit{Zhongxuesheng}, 1930: 11, pp. 39-48, in which he discusses the importance of learning from nature so as to avoid both the pitfalls of imitation of set models (so common in Chinese art), and the formalistic pursuit of new forms.

\(^{98}\) See \textit{Nianpu}, pp. 27-28, 30, 32; and "Li Shutong, the man, his activities and his name" (Li Shutong qiren qishi qiming), by Yao Menggu, in \textit{Li Shutong zhuang ji ziliao}, Taibei: Tianyi chubanshe, 1979, p. 49.

\(^{99}\) \textit{Nianpu}, pp. 55-57; and an essay by one of Li's closest friends at the time, Xia Mianzun, "How his Reverence Hongyi Became a Monk" (Hongyi fashi zhi chujia), reprinted in \textit{Hongyi fashi}, pp. 247-50.

\(^{100}\) See \textit{A Dictionary of Japanese Artists}, pp. 110, 126 respectively; and, "In Memory of Mr Li Shutong", \textit{Feng Zikai sanwen ziliao}, p. 188, for Feng's account of this period.

\(^{101}\) In "Feng Zikai at 'Number One Teachers' College'", p. 34, Shen recalls the occasion when he and Ye Tianrui (Ye Tiandi, Feng's close friend and later a Communist martyr) went sketching with Feng and a Japanese artist at the Yongjinmen Gate, Jingcisi Monastery, and the Lei Feng and Bacchuta Pagodas by West Lake. See also \textit{Nianbiao}, p. 6.
disturbed by the fact that Yu Songshou and Pan Tianshou, the two most renowned Chinese painters in the student body, had not joined the society. He asked Feng Zikai for his advice. Feng pointed at a tea cup on his desk. He said an artist could use either Western or Chinese painting techniques to represent the cup. Yet, both artistic traditions emphasized the importance to the novice of learning to paint the outward form of objects, and, in Feng's opinion, the most efficacious method for acquiring this skill was drawing from life as practised by Western art.\footnote{Feng Zikai at 'Number One Teachers' College", p. 35.} Seeing that his junior was still in something of a quandry, Feng suggested Shen pay a visit to their teacher Li Shutong and seek his advice. Li had by this time had shaven his head and was a resident monk in the Hupao Temple outside Hangzhou. Shen went to see him there.\footnote{Shen describes this encounter and his relationship with Li Shutong in "The Outstanding Monk of a Generation" (Yidai gaosang Hongyi fashi), Zhejiang wenshi ziliao xuanji, edited by the Zhejiang PPCC, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1983, pp. 121-23.} As there is such a dearth of material concerning Li's views of art, the few sentences he exchanged with Shen and which were recorded by Li Kangxian in a recent interview are of both documentary interest and also of some value in pinpointing the origin of certain ideas that influenced Feng's early artistic development, and which were to form an integral part of his aesthetic view.

Li, now known as the Dharma Master Hongyi (Hongyi fashi), reiterated a point made by Feng that the initial phases of both Western and Chinese painting are basically similar in that they concentrate on developing the student's ability to represent forms. However, he pointed out, the Western method is more scientific, the use of perspective, chiaroscuro and shading in particular being eminently suited to realistic representation. He expressed a view we see fully developed later by Feng in his study "On the Reform of Chinese Painting"\footnote{See note 12. The questions raised in this article are discussed at length in Chapter Eight below.} that "Western painting is able to make up for the inadequacies of Chinese art."\footnote{"Feng Zikai at 'Number One Teachers' College", ibid; Feng Zikai, "On the Reform of Chinese Painting", p. 38.} Li admits of the unique value of Chinese art and its aesthetic demands. When Shen, in response to Li's comments on the scientific nature of Western painting, asked why Chinese literati art disregards or rather rejects the pursuit of formal likeness (bu qiu xingsi), Li says, "You are right, of course, but this is something that belongs to a higher realm. Such a stage [in a person's artistic career] can only be attained [by an artist] after a period spent 'pursuing formal likeness' (qiu xingsi)."\footnote{"Feng Zikai at 'Number One Teachers' College", ibid.} This is a crucially important element in the training of an artist, and a sentiment repeated by Huang Binhong (1865-1855), one of the most outstanding innovative Chinese artists in this century.\footnote{See Huang Binhong hua yulu, edited by Wang Bomin, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu
Chen Shizeng, a scholar-painter and friend of Li, encouraged the imitation and tracing of old masters by beginners, but emphasized that "after a time one must leave the confines [of the past] and insinuate one's own ideas and feelings into one's painting so as to bring about a transformation [in style]. To fail to do so is to be a slave of a certain model and never to become a master oneself." Naturally, in terms of Chinese art, none of this was particularly new; however, Li's comments to Shen are of considerable significance when considered in light of the strict regimen of Western-style sketching and drawing he demanded for his students. His aim was not necessarily the training of a class of oriental Western painters who were by this time so common in Japan -- in particular among the followers of his friend Kuroda Seiki -- for he obviously still saw the xieyi tradition of Chinese art as somehow superior. In his later writings Feng does not state explicitly why he abandoned his attempts to master Western painting technique so soon after his graduation from high school. In view of the inordinately strong influence Li Shutong had over him, however, it would be reasonable to assume that both the ideas and aesthetic leanings that were strengthened very much after Feng went to Japan had been first encouraged by Li in his high school days -- at the same time as he was working so hard on sketching. Although an examination of Li's moral and religious influence on Feng will be left to Chapter Six, it should be pointed out here that it was as Li's art student that Feng was first introduced to the concept that a strong relationship existed between the artist's moral and aesthetic worlds. Li Shutong possessed a well-thumbed copy of the Ming Neo-Confucian philosopher Liu Zongzhou's (1578-1645) Renpu which he gave to Feng before he became a monk. It is a work that catalogues stories of righteous deeds and statement of the saintly from the earliest times under divided into categories reminiscent of Liu Yiqing's Shishuo xinyu. On the cover of his copy Li had written the words "one must do one's best to emulate [this]" (shenti lixing). Indeed, it was the combination of "moral rectitude" (renpin) and "artistic mastery" (huapin) in Feng Zikai's later life that most deeply impressed his friend Zhu Guangqian, the scholar of Western and Chinese aesthetics.
In terms of the development of Feng's artistic work, however, the two early drawings which have been preserved by Shen Benqian indicate that he was developing his very distinctive style even at this stage in his education.

Li Shutong ended his conversation with Shen by saying that they were now in an age of endless innovation and variation; he admonished Shen to take advantage of this to enrich his artistic vocabulary to the fullest possible extent while still young. If nothing else, the interview left Shen deeply impressed by both what he had been told, and the fact that it revealed a strong master-disciple relationship between the monk and Feng Zikai.\textsuperscript{114}

As Western art and its tools were both new to China in the first decade of the Republic, the members of the Tongyin Art Society had to buy all of their equipment from overseas. They would go in to Hangzhou where, in the the post office of the Japanese Concession they would send money orders to a Tokyo art supplier, the Bunhôdô, for purchases of oil and water paints, easels, stools and sketch books. Sketching was indeed the central element of their artistic activities, and they carried their sketch books and pencils wherever they went, recording life around them at every opportunity. As Shen comments, although some of their number would occasionally add some simple colouring to their sketches, none of them took these jejune student essays very seriously. They were supposedly merely the first stage in the creation of lasting artistic works.\textsuperscript{115}

Yet even with these diversions, the restrictions of high school life and the seemingly narrow vistas for the future provided by his studies increasingly grated on the nineteen-year old Feng. The subjects which he had previously excelled in suffered badly as he put more time and effort into his art. His devotion did not go unnoticed, and one night when he went to see Li Shutong on some other business, the teacher, renowned as a stern and laconic figure, told him, "Your painting is really coming on. In all my years as an art teacher I've never had a student who learned as quickly as Liangci tanhua), \textit{Meishu shilun congkan}, No. 4, 1982: 2, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{114} It is interesting to note that in the reception room on the ground floor of the recent reconstruction of Yuanyuan Hall (opened in December 1984), Feng's home in the 1930s which was destroyed at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, a portrait of Feng by Shen Benqian hangs in pride of place. It is executed in the garish style of Sino-Western artistic amalgamation, combining the rocks and bamboos of traditional painting with a figure of Feng in a flowing scholar's robe sitting on a rock. His face is done in a overly realistic style using shading to fill out his smiling features; even his glasses are painstakingly represented. One feels it is a sad comment on the results of both Li Shutong and Feng Zikai's instruction of the juvenile Shen. Somewhat overly fictionalized accounts of Li's career as a teacher can be found in Chen Huijian's \textit{Hongyi dashi zhuan}, Taibei: Dongda tushugongsi, 1983, pp. 123-50, and Sang Rou's \textit{Li Shutongde lingxing}, Taibei: Jingmei chubanshe, 1985, pp. 174-99. Both works seem to be loosely based on reminiscences and essays by Feng, with little or no use having been made of Lin Ziqing's \textit{Hongyi dashi nianpu}. On 4 January, 1989, the overseas edition of the \textit{Renmin ribao} began serializing Chen Xing's semi-fictional account of Feng and Li's relationship, a novel which Chen has titled "The Legend of Li Shutong and Feng Zikai -- A World of Buddhism and Art" (\textit{Fotian yihai -- Li Shutong yu Feng Zikai chuanqi}).

\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Chen Shizeng}, p. 36.
Li, at the time, was teaching art both in Hangzhou and at the Nanjing Higher Teachers' College (Nanjing gaodeng shifan). It was hard-won recognition which, to quote Feng was, "like a strong easterly which sends the silky willow catkins of late spring swirling off in a completely new direction." Despite the positive impact of Li's words on Feng's artistic development, they sparked what proved to be a costly enthusiasm for Western painting that led Feng into the first of many financial crises and to a series of crucial decisions that affected his career.

Feng all but abandoned his other studies altogether. Writing immediately to one of his elder sisters (perhaps the sister who was running a girls' school in their house), he told her of his present interests and asked her to sound their mother out for money to buy painting materials for oil-painting and water-colours. Feng's mother was dubious about his new interest. She thought that the dyes in the family shop would suffice for colours and was somewhat disbelieving when told that the canvas he required would be more expensive than satin. Nevertheless, she indulged him and provided the money he wanted, although, he remembers, she was increasingly puzzled and fretful for his future. Indeed, in his last two years at school he absented himself so often from classes that he ended up with only the most tenuous grasp of the principles of education, a subject graduating students were, by reason of the nature of the school, expected to specialize in, and he ignored the requirement that he undertake a period of practical teaching in the neighbouring primary school along with his classmates. But his academic inadequacies disturbed him far less than the growing realization that painting was a highly specialized field, and that the meagre two years of informal study that he had been able to devote to it were scarcely sufficient to obtain anything more than the most rudimentary understanding of the subject. His aspirations to continue his studies were quashed when he graduated from the college at the age of twenty-two in 1919. Although he and his artistic confrères had been able to hold a public exhibition of their paintings in Hangzhou, Feng had no prospects as an artist or even as a student. His mother was ageing and in increasing financial difficulty at home and he now had a wife to provide for: he had married Xu Limin, the daughter of

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116 "Speaking of the Past", p. 164; Zhuan, p. 25. The quotation from Li given in Zhuan is taken from Feng's 1943 article "Talking to the Young about Master Hongyi" (Wei qingnian shuo Hongyi fashi), and it differs somewhat from that in "Speaking in the Past". Presumably this is due to the passage of time between the writing of the two reminiscences. In a later, revised version, "In Memory of Mr Li Shutong" this quotation was deleted, as were Feng's comments about his deteriorating examination results. See Feng Zikai sanwenji, pp. 187-88; for the full version see Feng's essay collection Shuaizhenji, Hong Kong: Xinwenxue yanjiushe, 1975, reprint of 1946 edition, Shanghai: Wanye shuju, pp. 40-41.

117 "Speaking of the Past", ibid.

118 "Speaking of the Past", ibid.

a prominent local Chongde family, shortly before graduation. He turned down the offer of a position in a primary school in Shimenwan, ostensibly because he felt unsure of his teaching ability, but more importantly because he was unwilling to abandon his painting. He went, instead, to Shanghai in search of work and a way out of his dilemma.

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120 Nianbiao, p. 7, which also records a congratulatory poem written for the occasion by Yang Bohao. See also Remembering Uncle Zikai and Aunt Xu Limin" (Yi Zikai shu yu shenma Xu Limin) by Feng Gui, Tongxiang wenyi, pp. 48-50. In Zhuan, p. 11, it says that Xu Ruisun, the schools' supervisor of Chongde County, heard of Feng's excellent school record. On learning he was the son of the late juren Feng Huang he made a trip to Shimenwan to check on the boy himself and shortly afterwards had his daughter, Xu Limin (1896-1983), betrothed to the sixteen year-old Feng Zikai. 121 "Speaking of the Past", p. 165.
Chapter 2: 
Influences on Feng Zikai's Art, Japanese and Chinese

2: 1 Introduction

The importance of Japan as an intermediary for the introduction of Western culture to China was at its height in the early decades of the century.\(^1\) Like his teachers, Li Shutong and Xia Mianzun, before him, Feng Zikai went to Japan to study art, like Li he also concentrated on music. But it was not Western art seen through the distorting prism of Japan that was to inspire Feng; instead it was the ink-sketches of Takehisa Yumeji, a romantic artist with the sensibilities of a pre-modern scholar-painter and the eye of a street artist, that fundamentally changed Feng Zikai's artistic perspective. It was after the discovery of Yumeji's work that Feng searched for and found artistic models within traditional Chinese xieyi painting.

2: 2 Shanghai Interlude

When he graduated from college in Hangzhou in the summer of 1919, Feng was anxious to continue his studies; uninterested in teaching he was convinced it also held no great promise for him as a career. He wanted to continue his artistic education, but for the time being economic difficulties made this impossible. Although he could have readily found employment as a primary school teacher in his native town, he decided to accept the offer of Wu Mengfei and Liu Zhiping, two other graduates from the college and fellow students of Li Shutong, to start a school in Shanghai.\(^2\)

Wu Mengfei had himself just finished a course in design, and Liu Zhiping had returned from studying music in Japan.\(^3\) With Feng as their art teacher -- he was

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1 Kao, *China's Response to the West in Art*, pp. 80-83.
3 Wu Mengfei was a music teacher and a translator of works related to music throughout his life. After 1949, he became a cultural bureaucrat involved with music in both Hangzhou and Shanghai.
primarily employed to give instruction in charcoal sketching -- they established a Teachers' Training School (Zhuanke shi fan xuexiao) in 1920. Wu taking the job of principal and Feng acting as academic administrator (jiaowu zhuren). While fulfilling his duties at this school, Feng also accepted a request from the principal of Chengdong Girls' School, a friend of Li Shutong's by the name of Yang Baimin, to teach art there. His wife, Xu Limin, also took extramural courses at the school.

Feng regretted his decision almost immediately. His enthusiasm for sketching and drawing from life, however, was unabated, and he decided to apply what he later realized were the very much time-worn art theories he found propounded in a Meiji period Japanese work entitled Lectures on Orthodox Western Painting (Seisoku yōga kōgi), to his classes. He decried Chinese painting for its greatest inadequacy: its lack of realism; declaring that only those works that depicted objects in a lifelike way could be called beautiful. These were common sentiments during the May Fourth period when traditional art, like literature, was being attacked for a lack of realism and ossified forms of expression. He even displayed the charcoal sketch of Venus that he

Like Feng, with whom he did remain friendly until the Cultural Revolution, he did, however, remain a Buddhist lay devotee and he was particularly active in the effort made by the students, disciples and friends of Li Shutong to establish a Dharma Master Hongyi Memorial Hall in the Hupao Temple in Hangzhou in the late 1950s. Liu Zhiping went on to teach at the art rebel Liu Haisu's Shanghai Art Training School from 1921-1931, after which he taught art and music at many other schools. Following 1949 he was sent to be the head of the art department at the Shandong Teacher's College. He was in possession of the largest collection of Hongyi's calligraphic work which he guarded jealously until the Cultural Revolution. See Xiaoqing jiniance, pp. 15-16; and for details of Feng and Liu's relationship in the 1960s, see Feng Zikai zhi Guangqiafashi shuxinxuan, edited by Guangqi, Hong Kong: Shidai tushu gongsi, 1977, pp. 49, 70, 73. (This book is without pagination, and I have numbered the pages myself starting with the first letter.) See Appendix I.

4 According to the artist Ding Song (an early cartoonist and the modern caricaturist Ding Cong's father), this was, after Liu Haisu's Shanghai Art School (Shanghai meizhuan), the second school that taught Western painting in the city. See "Early Western Art Education in Shanghai" (Shanghai zaqidie xianghua meishu jiaoyu), in Shanghai difangshi ziliao, No. 5, edited by the Shanghai Wenshiguan, Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1986, pp. 208-10. Wu Mengfei, "Scattered Reminiscences of Art Education at the Time of the May Fourth Movement", p. 45, says that in 1926 the school changed its name to the Shanghai College of Art (Shanghai yishu daxue) and was forced to close for political reasons in 1930 having produced over seven hundred art teachers in its decade-long history. See also Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 111-12.

5 According to a recent article by Zhang Wei, "Feng Zikai and the East Asia School of Physical Education" (Feng Zikai yu Dongya tiyu xuexiao), Yangliu, No. 15, 1987: 3, pp. 7-8, Feng, Wu and Liu all went to teach at this other school as well, Feng taking art classes, and Wu and Liu taught music. The school was founded in 1918 to train physical education teachers for primary schools, and it was one of the first of its type in China. Zhang claims that Feng published his first article on art in the first issue of the school magazine in 1919, and his first translation from Japanese, a piece entitled "Line Drawing" (Sumiao), in the second issue, to which he appended his own comments on art.

6 "The greatest fault of Chinese painting is that it ignores sketching. Nature presents us with untold beauties and the only way we can reveal that beauty is to make ourselves loyal to the representation of nature [in art]. "The Rigours of Learning", p. 51, also quoted in Chen Xing's "Feng Zikai and Japanese Culture" (Feng Zikai yu Riben wenhua), Hangzhou shiyuan xuebao (shehui kexueban), 1985: 2, p. 47.

7 At the forefront of this attack was Lü Zheng, an art teacher and translator who later became a Buddhist scholar. His article "Revolution in Fine Art" (Meishu geming) published in Xinqingnian, Vol. VI, No. 1, called for the importation of both Western artistic techniques and education. See Meishu lunji, Vol. IV, special issue on Chinese painting, edited by Shen Peng and Chen Lusheng,
had worked on so laboriously during his high school days to his students as a way of encouraging them to study Western art. He would later recall in no small embarrassment that the only reason he could really get away with teaching in this fashion -- one which was the result of working in a relative artistic vacuum -- was because of the nature of the Teachers' Training School. More crucial, however, was the fact that, at the time, there was so little information and general knowledge about Western art in China -- apart from the popular belief that Western painting consisted solely of the pictures of beauties to be found on calendars and the paintings in cigarette advertisements. It was a situation, he admitted, that made it easy for him to "fake it" or mai yeren tou.

Following the May Fourth call for art reform, art schools of all descriptions were beginning to flourish in Shanghai. The Teachers' Training School was, in fact, only one of a number of similar schools established in the city during 1920. Returned students, especially those who had been studying in Japan, were coming back to China with up-to-date knowledge of Western art while Feng, for his own part, was able to acquaint himself with the latest developments in the West from the art books he bought in the Japanese bookstores of Shanghai. Obviously, the scant and outdated material provided by his Lectures on Orthodox Western Painting was not sufficient to teach an up-to-date art course in keeping with what he knew of the art scene in the outside world. The dilemma Feng had experienced upon graduating from high school when he was unable to continue his art studies became more acute. "Although none of the art schools were availing themselves of any more modern teaching techniques than I was, nor had the returned students published any articles on art, I completely lost confidence in myself....I regretted my folly in agreeing to become a teacher."

Peking: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1986, pp. 8-9. Lu had been an active supporter of Liu Haisu's work in art education for some years, accepting in 1916 Liu's offer to work at his Shanghai Fine Art Academy (Shanghai tuhua meishu yuan), which had been established in 1912. See Ke Wenhui's Yishu dashi Liu Haisu zhuannian, Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 1986, p. 44. This book provides a useful, although not always accurate, overview of attempts to Westernize the Chinese art world in the teens and early 1920s on pp. 39-55. This and related questions are discussed in Chapter Eight. See also Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, p. 124, on Lu's translation work.

"The Rigours of Learning", p. 51; and the essay "Autumn Scenery and Sketching Outdoors", pp. 46-47. The continued popularity of clumsy "works of art" such as calendar and cigarette advertisement paintings was something that depressed Feng as an established artist and which he would comment on as proof that public taste had not improved since the New Culture Movement since 1919. In fact, he noted that the colourful new-style advertisements in Shanghai "combined the most vulgar of designs with garish colours... and can be found in the cities and countryside alike." See "My Hopes for the National Art Exhibition" (Duqu nour guo meizhande xiwang), written in March, 1929, to be found in the collection Yishu quwei, p. 3.

8 "The Rigours of Learning", p. 51; and the essay "Autumn Scenery and Sketching Outdoors", pp. 46-47. The continued popularity of clumsy "works of art" such as calendar and cigarette advertisement paintings was something that depressed Feng as an established artist and which he would comment on as proof that public taste had not improved since the New Culture Movement since 1919. In fact, he noted that the colourful new-style advertisements in Shanghai "combined the most vulgar of designs with garish colours... and can be found in the cities and countryside alike." See "My Hopes for the National Art Exhibition" (Duqu nour guo meizhande xiwang), written in March, 1929, to be found in the collection Yishu quwei, p. 3.

Feng's crisis in self-confidence came one day at a particularly inconvenient moment -- just as he was teaching a class. "While arranging some green mandarins as [still life] models for the students to sketch, I was suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of worthlessness. I could see that I was no better than this half-ripe fruit, selling myself as a teacher of art." He knew he had to study overseas, and was determined not to return to China until he was "an artist". The fact that he and his wife had just had their first child, a daughter they named Chenbao (her "milk name" was Ah Bao), did not deter him, and after a period of great anguish he finally decided to borrow money from his relatives and his colleagues Wu and Liu to go to Japan. He left for Tokyo in the spring of 1921, a year and a-half after becoming a teacher.

2: 3 A Japanese Encounter

Relying mostly on the loan from his father-in-law which he received after reaching Tokyo, Feng was able to spend only ten months in Japan, returning to China when the money ran out. He was aware that a ten-month stay was too long to be called a trip, and too short to pass for overseas studies, yet he rationalized to himself that as his life-style there was like neither that of a tourist nor a student, it hardly made any difference.

For the first five months he spent the mornings studying art in a "Western Painting Research Group" (Yōga kenyūkai), and the afternoons working on his Japanese. In his last five months he abandoned his Japanese studies and spent the afternoons learning violin and putting in extra time at night to improve his English. He often absented himself from classes to go to art exhibitions, concerts, and Kabuki theatre. He also spent time in Tokyo's libraries, visited the local famous sites and

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11 "The Rigours of Learning", ibid.
12 *Nianbiao*, p. 8.
13 His mother reluctantly sold some of the family property to help him; and he also received loans from his brother-in-law and Xu Ruisun, his father-in-law, who sent him money after he arrived in Tokyo. See *Nianbiao*, p. 9; and *Zhuan*, p. 32.
14 "The Rigours of Learning", p. 52. Ye Tiandi (Tianrui), a classmate of Feng's in Hangzhou who shared his interest in painting -- he was one of the most active members of the Tongyin Art Society -- saw Feng just before he left for Japan and wrote a farewell essay. In it he says Feng was his favourite classmate, and he gave him a few words of warning which merit quotation here. "...don't be mesmerized by the wild cherry blossoms, all that stuff and nonsense about East Asia or Western Europe, it'll only make you into a skeleton, a corpse at repose in an 'ivory tower'! Don't eat too much of their raw fish and cold rice...don't fill yourself up on their militaristic thinking either...But, Zikai, do go, it's all ideal material for painting." Ye joined the Communist Party in the early 1920s, established a Party branch in Shangyu, Zhejiang in 1926 and was arrested in November 1927 during the KMT purge of communists. He died early the following year a revolutionary martyr. See "Parting from Feng Zikai" (Songbie Feng Zikai), March 1921, *Xiaoqing jiniance*, p. 204.
browsed around old bookstores in the Kanda book district.\(^{16}\) It seemed like a sound and industrious schedule when he wrote it up in his essay "The Rigours of Learning" - published in Zhongxuesheng in 1931 with a number of reminiscences by other writers under the general title "After High School..." (Chule zhongxuexiao yihou) -- yet, in reality, those first months spent studying and looking at Western art gave rise to overwhelming self-doubts and a major crisis that fundamentally changed the direction of Feng Zikai's artistic career. His original expectations for his Japanese sojourn were typical of students of his generation. As he wrote in the introduction to his first selection of *manhua* in 1925 only a few years after his return to China:

> When I had gone to Japan in the spring of 1921 I had dreamt of returning to China a painter, after having arrived in Tokyo I was finally able to see the surface appearance (*miányìng*) of Western art, and reflecting on my own lack of talent and material poverty it gradually dawned on me how arduous a task it would be to become an artist. I became depressed and lackadaisical. Every morning when the model who was sitting for us at the art school where I studied took a break, I would dejectedly light up a cigarette and agonize over my future. Sometimes I would secretly wonder to myself whether using a model and canvas was the only way to become an artist.\(^{17}\)

> I became increasingly troubled, then lazy, and finally bored. Later I would often skip my morning classes, and spend my time at the opera theatre in Asakusa, the old bookstores in Kanda, or at the night market (*yomise*) in the Ginza instead. "Since all this sketching is really nothing but a waste of time, I might as well look at and listen to as much as I can while I'm here, as well as think about things." I would attempt to salve my conscience with this thought at the end of every day.\(^{18}\)

During one of his many excursions to the second-hand book stalls in Kanda, he happened to pick up a volume of paintings by the highly-popular Taishō period illustrator Takehisa Yumeji (1884-1934). The book was *Yumeji's Collected Paintings: Spring* (*Yumeji gashū: haru no maki*), published by the Rakuyōdō in 1909. Feng's first contact with Chinese-style ink and brush sketches had come much earlier when he was in Hangzhou, yet it was not until he saw Yumeji's work in Tokyo, when he felt himself to be at such a loose end, that he fell under the spell of this art form. Flicking through the book he was immediately impressed with the simple but eloquent sketches he found. He opened the book at a picture simply entitled "Classmate" (*Kurasumēto*). It was of an evidently wealthy young woman holding a parasol being pulled in a

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) None of these student works, oils, water-colours or sketches, survive.


\(^{19}\) The Taishō Period was 1912-1924.
rickshaw. He explains that in Japan rickshaws are not as common as Shanghai, nor as inexpensive, guessing that this is a rich young woman returning from a shopping expedition to an exclusive store like Mitsukoshi; or perhaps she had been invited to some entertainment by a noble and was on her way home. She was waving to a dishevelled woman on the pavement who had a small infant strapped to her back. Thus, it is in these much changed circumstances that the former classmates have a reunion. [2: 1]

On seeing this picture Feng stood at the book stall in a daze, meditating on the inequities of society and life. But what had really touched him in this picture was not simply the scant lines of the sketch, but also the poetic quality of the work. 20

He did not bother going through the rest of the book there, but bought it and hurried back to his lodgings to study it carefully. He immediately he did a painting in imitation of that sketch that had first caught his eye. 21 [2: 2] Once acquainted with Yumeji's work he made efforts to find out more about the artist himself, believing him to have been at the height of his fame in the last years of the Meiji period, his popularity supposedly being somewhat in decline in the early Taishō. 22 Feng was to have some difficulty in collecting all of Yumeji's works, of which he was now a devoted admirer, a fact which may have contributed to the impression that Yumeji was no longer in fashion. Unsuccessful in his own attempts to find the other three volumes of Yumeji's "Four Seasons" painting collection at old bookstalls, he left the task of buying them to a friend by the name of Huang Hanqiu, a student with a penchant for


21 Indeed, in Feng's collection of school-related paintings, the Images of Students (Xueshengxiang) in Zikai manhua quanjil 3; 4; 3; 7 there are a number of works that are reminiscent of Yumeji's illustration, such as "Classmates from Primary School" (Xiaoxue shidaide tongxue), and "Two Fathers" (Liangjia de fuqin), p. 7, and even "A Teacher Last Year", a picture of two young people, presumably students, pointing at a man sitting outside a lonely pavilion with two baskets of produce for sale, 3; 6, done in 1931. In Bi Keguan's Feng Zikai manhua xuan, Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982, p. 85, there is another version of this painting, which from the relative simplicity of line, possibly predates the work in Xueshengxiang. In this collection there is even a painting entitled "Classmates" (Tongjisheng, or dōkyūsei--a Japanese loan-word that has been replaced by the more simplified tongxue), although it shows a tall, and perhaps older, student in Western style dress walking with a short classmate in a long gown. (p. 11.)

22 "Painting and Literature", p. 41. Feng's comment on Yumeji's popularity in Japan in the late 1910s and early 1920s is less than accurate. Perhaps it was because Yumeji was more active in the Kansai region that Feng got this impression; or the fact that he found one of Yumeji's books at a second-hand stall and had difficulty in finding others may have suggested to him an artist in decline. Whatever the case, Yumeji was still producing volumes of poetry and sketches at the time Feng was in Japan and was, indeed, at the height of his influence. Although Yumeji was extremely popular in the late-Meiji period, he was also one of the most influential of artistic stylists in the years of the Taishō reign, and, since a revival of interest in him in the late 1970s, his work, a mixture of fin de siècle aesthetics and art nouveau, is now regarded as characteristic of the Taishō "decadence."
art who enjoyed browsing in second-hand bookstores. Huang eventually sent Feng the Summer, Autumn and Winter volumes of the collection after Feng's return to China along with two other collections of Yumeji's paintings of dolls and women.

In the early 1930s, over ten years since he first saw these books, all of them being misplaced or lost in the meantime, Feng said he still remembered many of the paintings clearly. The thing about Yumeji's work that left such a deep impression on him was, as he wrote, "the clean and simple form of expression he used; the firm yet fluent strokes of the brush, his endlessly changing yet steady composition; the freshness of his ideas and the elegance of his inscriptions."

2: 4 Takehisa Yumeji

Takehisa Yumeji was born in a small village in Okayama Prefecture on the shores of the Inland Sea, "Japan's Mediterranean", in the middle of the Meiji Period. At a time when art schools, salons and groups flourished, Yumeji proved to be a nonconformist, even an eccentric. After three years at Waseda Technical University (Waseda jitsugyō gakkō) he abandoned his attempts to get a formal education at the age of twenty-two without graduating, and started a career as a freelance illustrator and writer. Although initially he had hoped to become a poet, and indeed during his life he published a number of volumes of poetry, Yumeji soon realized that this was not a viable career, and turned his attention instead to painting and illustration. He rarely entered his works in the large exhibitions of the day and he came to be regarded as something of an amateur or dilettante flitting around the edges of the established art world. Even more striking in a country which, like China, placed a great emphasis on the hierarchy of master-student relationships and the artistic legitimacy based on such bonds, was the fact that Yumeji had no master or mentor. In terms of sentiment, however, he belonged to a definite artistic milieu of the late Meiji (ended 1912) and the

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23 Huang later taught with Feng at the Li Da Academy (Li da xueyuan) in the mid-1920s and Feng subsequently recommended him to Lin Fengmian who was the principal of the West Lake Art School (Xihu yishu zhuanxiao) in Hangzhou. See Zhuan, p. 42, according to which Huang, a colleague of Feng's in his early teaching days, naturally became a subject of the artist's work, and the painting "Relaxation" (Changshi) is of the harmonica-playing Huang, (p. 72) also in Feng Zikai's Minjianxiang, reproduced in Zikai manhua quanjì, 4: 57. In one of his last essays from 1972, Feng says Huang Hanqiu was from Chongming and a good friend from his days in Tokyo with whom he often went out drinking. Again, back in Shanghai in the 1920s they drank together at a vegetarian restaurant inside the precincts of the Temple of the City God. See "Drinking" (Chijiu), Subiji, pp. 476-77.

24 "Painting and Literature", p. 42.

25 "Painting and Literature", ibid.

26 See Kurita Isamu (writer and editor), Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito, Okayama: Sanyō shimbunsha, 1983, p. 45.

27 Kurita, Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito, p. 167.
Taishō periods, that of the Japanese fin de siècle aestheticism of which Yumeji is now regarded as being the most representative artist, just as among writers Tanizaki Junichirō is seen as the main Taishō "literatus".  

It was a period of considerable conflict between Western and Eastern art, evidence of which we have already seen in the comments of Oomura Seigai in the preceding chapter. In Japan there was a rejection against the West in both philosophical and artistic terms by such writers as Okakura Tenshin, and in painting there developed a "new ukiyoe movement" in which artists attempted to combine such native artistic traditions as the Kōrin and Tosa schools with late-19th Century European art, in particular Impressionism, forming the so-called mōrō or "vague" school.  

But it is too simple to categorize Yumeji as a follower even of one group only. During his lifetime, Yumeji was to experiment with a range of artistic media. He switched forms many times in what superficially seems to be a haphazard fashion, although on closer inspection his work reveals a definite pattern of development. Basically he moved from an earlier use of oils to Western style watercolours and then to Japanese ink painting (sumi-e) and illustration, concentrating in his later years on his own form of the traditional bijinka, or paintings of beauties, for which he is renowned today.  

But most important, perhaps, was the fact that he represented a modern version of the "literati painting" (bunjinga) tradition of Japan, something he claimed himself and which has been recognized by later critics. In the introduction to his Haru no maki he expressed this sentiment when he wrote that his paintings were "poems written in the form of painting".  

The style of painting that immediately touched a responsive chord in Feng were those of the illustrations or sashi-e which Yumeji did from 1909-1910, when he was in...

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28 See Kawakita Rinmei and Takakai Hideji, Kindai nihon kaigashi, p. 138. As Edward Seidensticker writes in Low City, High City Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake, 1867-1923, London: Penguin Books, 1983, "Two years older than Tanizaki [Junichirō], the painter and illustrator Takehisa Yumeji was in his late twenties when Taishō began. Among all artists and craftsmen he is the most symbolic of Taishō. His creative years were mostly in Taishō, and his illustrations, while they may not be great art, speak more eloquently of Taishō than do those of any other artist." (p. 258) Coincidentally, during the Anti-Japanese War, Tanizaki wrote a review of the Japanese version of Feng Zikai's volume of essays Yuanyuantang suibi translated by Yoshikawa Kōchirō which was subsequently translated into Chinese by Xia Mianzun and commented on by Feng, Suibi ji, 276-83.  
29 Kindai nihon kaigashi, pp. 110-12. The vague school, mōrō or menglongti in Chinese, was attacked in the Japanese press in terms very similar to those used by older Chinese poets in their denunciations of vague or misty poetry in the early 1980s.  
30 Kurita, Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito, p. 35, also Takahashi Kōko's introduction to a reprint of a collection of Yumeji's poems and stories, Wasurenagu sa (Forget-me-not), Tokyo: Nöberu shohō, 1975, pp. 6-7.  
31 Kurita, Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito, p. 171, where he says that Yumeji's personality is strongly reminiscent of the unorthodox Qing artists Zhu Da and Shitao; see also p. 36. Feng refers to this comment by Yumeji in his essay "The Japanese manga" (Ribonde manhua), in Yishu mantan, p. 193.
his late twenties. Again in his introduction to the *Haru no maki*, the first volume of this four-part series, Yumeji wrote, "From my earliest years the world I longed for was neither that of 'truth' or 'goodness', but rather that of 'beauty'." In Tokyo he was overwhelmed by the sounds and visions of the past -- the wafting notes of the *koto*, the misty nights along streets where loyal and brave men had met their deaths, the lingering sobs of women sacrificed to honour and chastity. Other sights and emotions -- the antique wood of *toko no ma* (shrine-like recesses in the main room) of old houses, the desolate scene of a crow on a withered branch, a treeless Mount Fuji, the grey depths of a valley -- "cannot all of these subjects be most suitably and powerfully expressed in Japanese line painting?" In fact, the *Haru no maki* was Yumeji's first concerted attempt to merge poetry with painting; it was a book in which he displayed his particular style of modern sketching. \[2: 6\]

In a comment on *sashi-e* appended to the end of the *Natsu no maki* written the following year, he said:

> I like to think of *sashi-e* as being divided into two types: those that depict things from the inside and those that depict things from the outside. What I mean by illustrations that depict things from the inside is that they are like a report on one's inner life; a recollection of sentiment. Those *sashi-e* that depict from the outside act as adjuncts to stories and poems, or sketches that are presented as studies for specialist art magazines.

> ...one must make this differentiation, and in my case I prefer to choose the *sashi-e* that depicts the world from the inside.

> Up to now I have attempted doing such illustrations for magazines, yet, needless to say, because I was not going about it in a conscientious fashion such work has remained relatively unrecognized. But the least we can try do in the future is to continue such creative work and wait for the day when our "soundless poems" will appear [independently] as a page in the magazines.\[35\]

Further on in his postscript to *Natsu no maki* he said that he had abandoned oils in favour of ink sketching because he was interested in expressing heartfelt sentiments, and that was only possible within the free format of the ink sketch. "I want to use the simple line to express these basic and clear emotions of mine." In

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32 Kurita, *Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito*, p. 90.
33 *Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito*, p. 91.
34 *Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito*, p. 106. In fact, Yumeji's *sashi-e* found favour with another Chinese writer, the Japanologist Zhou Zuoren, who commented on the similarity between Yumeji's work and Feng's illustrations for Yu Pingbo's first volume of poetry *Memories* (Ti). See Chapter Four.
35 Kurita, *Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito*, p. 78.
36 *Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito*, p. 80.
37 *Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito*, p. 81.
fact, it was during his early months in Tokyo, when he was living with two women, that he gave up the time-consuming work of oil-painting so as to catch the impressions and feelings he had about his new life, street scenes, plays, and so on in the form of sketches. But it was scenes of a life experienced rather than merely observed for impromptu recording, and the attractions of the opposite sex that were utmost in Yumeji's mind. He is remembered for his well-known statement that it was more enjoyable and important to spend the day in conversation with a woman than to produce a masterpiece of art.\(^{38}\)

This romantic spirit is perhaps best conveyed in one of the casual essays he wrote at this time in which he records his own encounter with a "soundless poem." In the essay "The Transience of Things" (Mono no aware) he wrote:

> I was on the Keiō tram... when three girls boarded. Their healthy and relaxed manner suggested that they were on their way to the outskirts of the city for a picnic. It seemed that at the very instant I looked over at the group, one of them noticed a dragon-fly alighting on the shoulder of the girl standing in the middle. I smiled: what a marvellous sketch [shōhinga, i.e., xiaopinhua] it would make. Then, without a noise, the girl caught the creature and let it fly out of the tram window. I was touched by the quiet, kind way in which she had dealt with the dragonfly; somehow the impact of the scene transformed my smile. It would be too much to say that I felt touched to the point of tears, yet I felt an emotion stronger than joy, a deeply positive feeling.

> What delighted me was that in her movement there was no hint that the girl had acted consciously because the dragonfly was small and delicate, and therefore worthy of some maudlin sympathy.

> I felt warm and uplifted, possibly too because she had not resorted to a cry of "Dear me, look at this!" or "Oh, what a fright it gave me!" employing the strongest words at her disposal. Instead she had simply caught the creature silently and let it go.

> I bid the girl farewell unnoticed at Shinjuku with a sense of gratitude, having seen her draw a touching sketch (shōhinga) with the deft movement of a finger, a sketch that then blossomed into a lyrical poem.\(^{39}\)

Although Yumeji championed the sashi-e as an independent art form, he called himself a sōgaka (literally, "grass painter"). The word "sō" (kusa) or grass was one that constantly reappeared in his work. He called one of his books Sōgashū, or "Collection of Grass Paintings"; and he named his first son Sōichi. He used the word sō with perhaps two meanings in mind, that of wild grass, or stray weeds, and that of the grass script in calligraphy, an unfettered and highly personalized style of writing, the common form of writing closest to everyday life. He was an advocate of street art,

\(^{38}\) Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito, ibid.

\(^{39}\) In Wasurenagusa, p. 126.
and to a great extent thought of his works as a message from the streets in the form of painting. ⁴⁰

Feng Zikai was to accept the word "manhua" to describe his own paintings throughout his life, even after it was generally used to indicate cartoons or caricatures. Nonetheless, his own understanding of the term remained very close to Yumeji's comments on the sashi-e or sōga. In a short treatise on the painting of manhua, Feng defines the word as "line drawing that emphasizes meaning. The meaning of the word 'man' in manhua is the same as in the compounds manbi [casual essay] and mantan [idle conversation]. Both of these are in terms of literary composition forms of the essay, suibi or xiaopinwen. In the main, themes are selected at random and they are short yet rich in content. The manhua is the painted form of the suibi, it is a xiaopinhuā..." ⁴¹ It is just this type of "personal essay" or "sketch", be it written or painting, that Zhou Zuoren and Lin Yutang championed from the late 1920s. ⁴² Its significance in the realm of painting will be discussed at length in the following chapter. [2:7]

2:5 Taipingyangbao and Shizeng manhua

Although the work of Takehisa Yumeji provided the direct inspiration for Feng Zikai's early work, Feng did find in China a tradition of casual sketching from which he drew inspiration and to which he would relate his own works in later years. Of the two major Chinese artistic precursors of Feng's style, Chen Shizeng is by far the better known. Writers on Feng Zikai have generally overlooked the importance of Chen's work in the development of his style, although this is possibly due to a scarcity of readily-available material on Chen Shizeng. For this reason I intend to deal with this subject at some length in the following pages.

Chen Shizeng (1876-1923), or Chen Hengque, was the son of the famous late-Qing poet Chen Sanli (Sanyuan), and his brother Chen Yinque was one of the most outstanding Chinese historians of this century. Shizeng's biographer, the art historian Yu Jianhua, states that he evinced an aptitude for art at an early age. Although Yu provides only scant evidence for this claim, it should not be discounted simply because similar statements are virtually pro forma in most classical biographies of Chinese artists. After receiving a traditional education in which a particular emphasis was put on calligraphy, Chen went to Japan in 1903 to study natural science. He returned to

⁴⁰ Kurita, Takehisa Yumeji: ai to uta no tabibito, p. 55.
⁴¹ Manhuade miaofa, Guilin: Kaiming shudian, 1943, pp. 3-4.
China in 1910 to take up a teaching position at the Nantong Normal University in Jiangsu. Following a short period in Hunan in 1913, he moved to Peking where, in 1916, he started lecturing in art. From his early days in the capital, Chen was active as both an educator and artist. He also saw a great deal of Lu Xun, a friend from his student days in Japan.

In articles he wrote discussing the introduction of the word \textit{manhua} into Chinese, Feng Zikai pointed out that although the term had first been used in reference to his paintings, he was by no means the originator of this particular style of art in China. He declared that the impromptu works of Chen Shizeng which appeared in the pages of the Shanghai-based newspaper \textit{Taipingyangbao}, over a decade before he started publishing his paintings, were, in fact, the first modern \textit{manhua} in China. He said Chen's sketches were "done on the spur of the moment, small sketches which made a sparing use of ink, and yet were suffused with a poetic sense." These paintings left such a deep impression on Feng that even some thirty-five years later he could still remember the titles of a number of them such as "Boating at Dusk is Ideal" (Luori fangchuan hao) and "Solitary Tree Outside a Farmer's Hut" (Dushu laofu jia). He states that he had seen these works as a youth and had basically forgotten the details of the paintings themselves. When he discussed the history of the \textit{manhua} in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Manhua de miaofa}, p. 6; see also the essay "My \textit{manhua}" (Wode \textit{manhua}), written in December 1947, and reprinted in \textit{Subibi}, p. 309-13, in particular, p. 309. Feng says that \textit{Taipingyangbao} (a short-lived daily which should not to be confused with the monthly \textit{Taipingbao}, established in Shanghai in April, 1917) was published in the late Qing. Actually, it was not started until the first year of the Republic, and continued publishing only for some fifteen issues in mid-1912 (Liu Wu-chi in his biography \textit{Su Man-shu}, New York: Twayne, 1972, pp. 84-85, states that the paper closed in October, 1912). Founded by Ye Chucang and edited by members of the Southern Society (\textit{Nanshe}), the offices of \textit{Taipingyangbao} were located on newspaper row in Shanghai's International Settlement. It had an arts page that was variously run by Liu Yazi, Hu Jichen and Li Xishuang (Shutong), Feng Zikai's mentor. It was under Li's aegis, in fact, that Chen Shizeng's paintings were printed. See the article "\textit{Taipingyangbao} and Liu Yazi" (\textit{Taipingyangbao} he Liu Yazi) in Zheng Yimei, \textit{Shubao huajiu}, Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1983, p. 130; also \textit{Nianpu}, pp. 39-43.
\end{itemize}
China in a book devoted to the subject, he was even unable to find any copies of the *Taipingyangbao* to illustrate his argument.\(^{46}\)

It is not clear, however, whether Feng saw the paper as a youth in Shimenwan. He was fifteen at the time the paper appeared, even considering his particular interest in art, since the town was some distance from Shanghai, it is doubtful that he would have seen it there. On the other hand, it is quite possible that later he saw back issues as a student of Li Shutong in Hangzhou. An argument in favour of this hypothesis is that Li, a friend of Chen Shizeng's since their student days in Japan and the editor of the paper who had invited Chen to do a regular column of illustrations for the arts supplement, may well have kept issues of the paper with his friend's works.\(^{47}\) [2: 8]

It is not unreasonable to suppose that he may have shown these to his favorite art student, Feng Zikai.\(^{48}\)

It was not until quite recently that, after a strenuous search, the cartoonist and historian of the Chinese cartoon Bi Keguan was able to locate copies of *Taipingyangbao* which carried Chen's paintings.\(^{49}\)

In an article devoted to the relationship between Chen, Li Shutong and Feng Zikai, Bi has reproduced four paintings by Chen Shizeng, the first of which is indeed "Boating at Dusk is Ideal", the picture which had so impressed Feng that he could still recall it many years later.\(^{50}\) The picture, signed "Xiudaoren", one of Chen's hao, is


\(^{47}\) See Li Shusheng, "Chen Shizeng, A Famous Modern Artist" (Jindai zhuming huajia Chen Shizeng), *Meishu yanjiu*, 1982: 1, p. 59. Also see Bi Keguan, "Li Shutong, A Forerunner of Modern Art" (Jindai meishude xianquzhe Li Shutong), *Meishu yanjiu*, 1984: 4, p. 70. Bi Keguan notes that apart from designing and publishing China's earliest advertisements (pp.71-74), Li was also the editor of *The Pacific Pictorial (Taipingyang huabao)* which, Bi speculates, mainly carried works by Li himself (p. 69). Also see Jiang Jianfei, *Zhongguo minchu huajia*, Taibei: Yishujia chubanshe, date of publication not given, p. 8. Jiang comments on the connection between Li Shutong and Chen, and suggests that Feng's early *manhua*, which took their themes from lines of poetry, were directly inspired by Chen's sketches.

\(^{48}\) Bi Keguan, "Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai" (Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng, Feng Zikai), *Meishu shilun*, 1985: 3, p. 54. There is a misprint in Bi's article whereby "Taipingyangbao" is consistently written "Taipingyang huabao". The copy of the article I have used has been corrected by Bi himself. For some detail of Li Shutong's period as editor in the paper see Chen Wuwo's *in memoriam* for Li "On the Past" (Hualji), in *Hongyi fashi*, p. 270. Chen Wuwo was also an editor at the paper and he notes that Li, a man he had admired from a distance for many years, was an eccentric character who preferred his own company to that of others. He lived and worked in a small upstairs room of the paper keeping his door closed at all times, only coming down to eat.

\(^{49}\) Bi was a student of Feng Zikai, and his own style of satirical cartoon is technically highly reminiscent of Feng's work. For a selection of Bi's work, see *Bi Keguan manhua xuan*, Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981. In his introduction (p. 5) Bi acknowledges the inspiration of Feng Zikai's volume *Urban Images (Dushixiang)*.

\(^{50}\) Bi, "Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai", p. 53-55, in particular see page 53 for the reproduction of "Boating at Dusk is Ideal" which was published on 3 May, 1912. Bi has collected a number of Chen's paintings and estimates that he published some fourteen or fifteen works in the paper. Chen arrived in Shanghai from Peking in May 1912, and on the eighth of that month
framed by a black line which is interrupted on the lower left-hand side by a drawn seal with the name "Shizeng" written in it. The painting shows the trunk of a willow tree in the foreground denuded of leaves, possibly indicating autumn, and behind it a crude skiff with a figure in scholar's robe and hat seated towards the bow. The title of the picture is written on the left side, within the frame. [2: 9]

Bi discusses a number of other paintings which are worthy of mention here, if only in that we shall see something of Chen's style, in terms of composition, subject matter, and inscriptions reflected in Feng Zikai's own work.

The second picture in Bi's article is entitled "Begging for Food (III)" (Qishi san), attributed simply to "Xiudaoren". It is a sketch of a wispy bearded beggar dressed in a patched robe, who is holding a walking stick in one hand and a dog on the end of a leash in the other. The dog is carrying a begging bowl in its mouth which breaks the roughly traced black line framing the picture, extending slightly onto the page, an unusual device for a Chinese artist of the traditional school. The spare, somewhat haggard features of the beggar convey a clarity of emotion and sympathy that was also rare for Chinese painting of the time, and indeed the choice of such a subject for an artistic study by a scholar painter like Chen was, according to Bi, in itself an innovation.51 The Taiwanese art critic Jiang Jianfei, however, has found of volume of figure paintings by a little known late-Qing artist which he speculates may have been an inspiration to both Feng Zikai and Chen Shizeng.

Wang Zhimei, a painter from Nanjing (Jinling), retired from office and went to study in Japan during the Tongzhi and Guangxu reigns (the 1870s) whereupon he made a name for himself as an artist. He spent his latter years living from sales of his paintings in Shanghai.52 Jiang sees in Wang's ink paintings a definite forerunner of Feng's manhua. Wang's brushwork is reminiscent of the figure paintings of traditional art manuals, a hint of which we also find in Feng's work, and one of the paintings he reproduces to accompany his article certainly gives added proof to his argument that Chen Shizeng knew Wang's work, for it is of a beggar with a dog on a leash that is strikingly similar to the painting by Chen mentioned above.53 [2: 10]

The painting, "When the Water is Warm the Ducks are First to Know it's Spring" (Chunjiang shuinvan ya xian zhi), offers a contrast between the styles of Chen

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Taipingyangbao printed a photograph of Chen in an oval frame under the caption "A Picture of Xiudaoren" (Bi, p. 54).

51 Bi, "Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai", pp. 53-54, the picture was published on 17 May, 1912.
52 Jiang Jianfei, "Reading Wang Zhimei's Casual Brushstrokes for the Delight of the Heart and Commenting on Feng Zikai" (Du Wang Zhimei <<Shangxin sui·i>> zai tan Feng Zikai), Yishujia, 1984: 3, p. 200.
53 "Reading Wang Zhimei's Casual Brushstrokes for the Delight of the Heart and Commenting on Feng Zikai", p. 204. Jiang does not attempt to force his argument, and it is evident that he has not see Chen's Taipingyangbao paintings as reproduced by Bi Keguan.
and Feng. 54 It is based on a line from a poem one of the most famous painting inscriptions by the Song writer Su Shi (Dongpo, 1037-1101). 55 In the top right-hand corner of Chen's painting is a group of five ducks in a river swimming away from the viewer. Ripples lead off from the tail of the last duck and an expanse of water, presumably the river swelled by spring rain, occupies the centre of the scene with a section of a willow tree growing on the bank on the bottom left-hand corner of the picture, its branches dangling languorously in the space on the top left hand, showing buds -- a hint that it is still early in the season. The drawing of the ripples in the water, the composition of the picture with the willow in the foreground as in the first picture, and the slight hint of receding distance denote something of a foreign influence, but the mood of the work is definitely Chinese. 56 Even though Feng Zikai never mentions this particular painting by name, he did at least two paintings of his own using the same line of poetry. 56 In comparing these pictures with Chen Shizeng's painting, it is obvious that the scene depicted by Feng is neither as sparse nor as suggestive as that of Chen. Both scenes are idyllic and more illustrative in the style of Takehisa Yumeji. Feng uses much stronger brush strokes, heavier and darker ink and shows much less movement in his lines. Moreover, Feng's puts his focus on the ducks, placing them in the centre of the painting, while Chen Shizeng makes a greater use of empty space and an off-centre focus to indicate the movement of the ducks. Feng's style in these paintings is typical of his later work.

The last picture that Bi presents by Chen Shizeng is of two old gentlemen sitting on a crag entitled "This Chance Companion is an Old Man of Mt Shang" (Ouzuolü shi Shangshan weng). 57 Again, in the foreground there is a portion of a tree, this time a pine, the symbol of longevity, which stands slightly to the right of the middle of the frame. The crag extends from the bottom right hand corner to the left of the frame reaching to about half-way point on the left-hand side. Two figures sit on the edge of the crag, possibly talking to each other. The effect is that of a sketch in which the artist has employed basic linear perspective, but only in so far as it helps portray a scene redolent with traditional Chinese associations: the saintly old recluse of

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54 "Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai", pp. 53-4, published on 10 April, 1912. Although this is the earliest published picture in Bi's selection, I have retained the order he uses in his article for convenience.

55 The poem is one of two inscriptions "For A Dusk Scene on a Spring River by Huichong" (Huichong chunjiang wanjing) can be found in Hong Pimo's Lidai tihuashi xuanzhzt, Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1982, pp. 15-16. This line of poetry was not universally appreciated, and for other writers' comments on it see Qian Zhongshu, Tanyilu, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, revised edition, 1984, pp. 221-22, 543-44.

56 See Husheng huaji, Hong Kong: Shidai tushu gongsi, 1979, Vol. III, p. 58; and Feng Zikai huaji, p. 69, also reproduced in Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 177, which he dates 1941.

57 "Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai", p. 53, and 55, published on 1 May, 1912, signed simply "Xiu" and attributed to "Xiudaoren". A heading above the picture reads "Pacific Painting Collection" (Taipingyang hua).
the mountain sharing the scenery with a traveller; the pine tree indicating something of the legend of the "Four Silver-haired Ones of Mt Shang"; and the title of the painting outside the left hand frame of the picture a line of poetry with an historical allusion.\footnote{The Old Man of Mt Shang is presumably one of the four recluses who retired to this mountain in the south-west of Shang County, Shaanxi at the end of the Qin dynasty. They are known collectively as the "Four Silver-haired Ones of Mt Shang" (Shangshan sihao; the word hao being a synonym for old man), and were all over eighty when they ascended the mountain.}

In these pictures Chen uses lines of poetry to add a verbal dimension to the picture.\footnote{Bi, "Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai", p. 55. Meiyu was the journal of the Chinese Society for Aesthetic Education (Zhonghua meiyu hui), founded by teachers at the Shanghai Teachers' Training College (Shanghai zhuanye shifan) and the Patriotic Girls' School (Aiguo nüxiao) by Jiang Danshu, Ouyang Yuqian (the playwright), Wu Mengfei, Liu Zhiping and Feng Zikai in 1919. It only ran for seven issues. See Zhuai, p. 31. I have been unable to locate any copies of this magazine in libraries in China or overseas.} Although the style of framing a scene that Chen employs was commonly used in Chinese woodblock prints and engravings, and again we may see a hint of Wang Zhimei's painting, Chen has combined with it a vaguely Western sense of composition and perspective. This, along with his choice of subject matter as in the case of the beggar, are the elements of innovation of traditional art that Chen has been noted for. It is also this aspect of Chen's casual sketching, if we may call it that, which he further developed in his Scenes of Peking Life (Beijing fengsuzu), discussed below.

Of Chen's casual painting then the works he did for Taipingyangbao undoubtedly belong to the now all but extinct "genre" of the Chinese lyrical manhua, and it is little wonder that Feng regarded Chen as both his artistic predecessor and the originator of his style in China. Although Feng was unable to reproduce any of Chen's pictures in his own works, or indeed locate any in later life, Bi Keguan says that after Li Shutong entered the Buddhist priesthood in 1918, a number of his students including Jiang Danshu, Feng Zikai and Wu Mengfei were in touch with Chen. When they founded the arts journal Aesthetic Education (Meiyu) in 1920, they invited Chen Shizeng to do the calligraphic inscription for the title of the magazine cover.\footnote{Edited by Zheng Zhenduo and Lu Xun and republished by Rongbaozhai as Beijing jianpu, Peking: Rongbaozhai, 1959. See Volume IV of this edition for some thirty-two works by Chen Shizeng. Although the majority of these are bamboo and flower paintings, there are also eight ink sketches of rural scenes accompanied by lines of poetry to which, I presume, Feng is referring. In February 1933, after seeing a range of letter paper at Liulichang in Peking with Zheng Zhenduo the previous winter, Lu Xun wrote to Zheng and suggested they make a selection of works by artists like Chen Shizeng and Qi Baishi before the art of engraved designer letter paper was lost forever. See his letter to Zheng of 5 February, 1933 in Lu Xun meishu nianpu, by Wang Xingqi, Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu chubanshe, 1986, p. 198, and the subsequent correspondence on the subject on pages 212-13, 218, 221, 223-24. In a letter to Zheng concerning the publication of this book Lu Xun wrote, "It is imperative to print books such as these. The new culture is in its infancy and oppressed, and therefore..."} Subsequently, in trying to describe Chen's evocative and deceptively simple style, Feng suggests that his readers might find a hint of Chen's method in the collection of letter paper made by Zheng Zhenduo and Lu Xun in the early 1930s, the Beiping jianpu.\footnote{Bi, "Li Shutong, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai", p. 55.}
China must be dated from the time that these paintings were published. Unfortunately, as Feng wrote, "people only recognize 'Zikai's manhua' and know nothing of 'Shizeng's manhua.'"  

2: 6 Beijing fengsutu

A work which represents Chen Shizeng's interest in manhua and one which is somewhat more accessible than the paintings he did for Taipingyangbao is the series Beijing fengsutu. This collection of pictures is taken by some writers as having been an important inspiration for Feng's own work, especially the "urban" paintings which he eventually published in the collection Urban Images (Dushixiang, first printed under the title Renjianxiang),\(^6\) the product of Feng's years as a teacher in and near Shanghai. Chen lived in Peking from 1913 until his death, first as a teacher of natural science, and, from 1916 on, as a lecturer in Chinese art.\(^6\)

The thirty-four paintings in Beijing fengsutu are done in folio pages, illustrations of everyday life and scenes in the capital during the first decade of the Republican era.\(^6\) They chiefly consist of pictures of common people: rubbish collectors, camel drivers, street musicians, professional mourners, hawkers, and even Manchu bannermen and ladies.\(^6\) [2: 14] Chen was the first prominent artist to make such unpoetic and mundane characters the subject of his work, a recent critic claiming this to be due in part to the "democratic and progressive influence" of Lu Xun.\(^6\)

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\(^6\) From the article "My Manhua " (Wode manhua), Suibiji, p. 309.
\(^6\) Li Shusheng, "Chen Shizeng, A Famous Modern Artist", p. 61; and Jiang Jianfei, Zhongguo minchu huaqia, p. 8. Dushixiang is the fifth volume of Zikai manhua quanji, first published in 1945.
\(^6\) Yu Jianhua, Chen Shizeng, p. 1.
\(^6\) After 1949, the paintings were acquired by the Chinese Museum of Art (Zhongguo meishuguan) and only published for the first time recently: Beijing fengsutu, Peking: Beij ing guji chubanshe, 1986. The editors of the new edition have determined that the paintings were executed in the years between 1914-1915, shortly after Chen arrived in Peking, and published in the Bei yang huabao soon after. See also Lin Hong, "Chen Shizeng's Beijing fengsutu" (Chen Shizengde <<Beijing fengsutu>>, in Guji chuban qingkuang jianbao (internal distribution), No. 145, pp. 4-7. Lin says Li Yimang, the veteran artist and calligrapher, suggested Chen's work be printed as early as 1982.
\(^6\) In Beijing fengsutu, Lin Xilin's appendix, " Chen Shizeng's Beijing fengsutu" (Chen Shizengde <<Beijing fengsutu>>), pp. 3-4, Lin divides the paintings into four categories: labourers and struggling townsfolk; weddings, funerals and popular diversions; the decadent and impoverished descendants of the feudal rulers; and, one politically satirical painting. Beijing fengsutu, Lin Xilin's appendix, pp. 1-2 (the book is without pagination). Affecting the wooden prose that is characteristic of much Mainland Chinese writing, Lin says that, "In terms of
Friends and admirers added lines of poetry to his pictures in the fashion of literati painting, although it should be pointed out that many of these are satirical, somewhat reminiscent of works by artists like Luo Pin (Liangfeng, 1733-1799), one of the "Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou" (Yangzhou baguai). Liang Qichao, who is said to have described Chen's passing in 1923 as "a massive earthquake for the Chinese cultural world," bought a copy of the Beijing fengsutu at considerable expense.

The Beijing fengsutu are little more than impromptu coloured brush sketches. The element of whimsy is reminiscent of the literati tradition, but the subject matter and use of titles and poems reveals the artist's very modern sensibility. They may well have been inspired by the work of Japanese artists like Takehisa Yumeji, although there is no evidence to indicate this. In terms of technique, moreover, one writer who is familiar with the original works has noticed that Chen has combined his calligraphic brushwork with Western sketching, for he has found numerous traces of pencil used to outline figures, as well as commenting on more obvious things such as a delicate use of shading and perspective to add to the hint at the three-dimensionality of figures. Even though Feng mentions Chen's work for Taipingyangbao a number of times, he never seems to have referred to Beijing fengsutu. This is surprising as it is a work which was certainly more readily available to him, and one produced at a time when Feng was engaged not only in art education, but also in developing his own style of painting. Also, as we have suggested, it is a work that possibly had a considerable influence on Feng's manhua.

Although Chen is categorized as a painter in the literati style, his impromptu sketches remain some of the most innovative works of the early Republican period. In his work and writings he showed himself to be one of the first advocates of a new style of Chinese painting, one that was in keeping with the later scholar-painter tradition of native art but that could also encompass more modern sensibilities. In this attempting a realistic representation of life and expressing a considerably more progressive democratic ideology [than other painters of figures, Chen's book] is unquestionably part of the precious artistic heritage of post-1840 Chinese art.”

In an essay on Chen's Beijing fengsutu the contemporary calligrapher and art-critic Huang Miaozhi quotes a poem accompanying a sketch of a huqin (two-stringed zither) vendor weighed down by his burden of instruments. It reads, "A soul-mate knows these tunes, and declares himself not vulgar. But these strings and bamboo are enough to fill my stomach!" (zhuyin shi qu, zizhi bu su, ci si ci zhu, liangguo wu fu!) Huang comments that such lines add considerably to Chen's paintings, although he gives the impression that the poems were written by Chen himself, whereas they were the work of a number of other writers. See "The Landscape of Old Peking -- Introducing Beijing fengsutu" (Guolao Beijingde fengmao -- jieshao "Beijing fengsutu") in Huolangji, Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe, 1981, p. 100. Yu Jianhua describes another painting, that of a rickshaw puller, see Chen Shizeng, pp. 8-9, and reproduces the picture with the original poem (illustration 3). Li Shusheng in "Chen Shizeng, A Famous Modern Artist", describes another example, "The Walls Have Ears" (Geqiang you er), to illustrate Chen's political awareness: the picture is of a tea house with an informer listening in on a conversation inside (p. 61). Also Lin Hong's "Chen Shizeng's Beijing fengsutu", p. 6.

Yu Jianhua, Chen Shizeng, p. 4.

Beijing fengsutu, Lin Xilin's appendix, pp. 5-6.
his ideas and achievements are not unlike those of Takehisa Yumeji. Yet his influence on Feng Zikai was perhaps not merely limited to artistic style, for elements of his ideas on aesthetics and artistic renewal find an echo in many of Feng’s later writings. In an influential essay on literati painting, Chen had made the point that, "The essence of literati painting lies in personal quality (renpin); scholarship (xuewen); talent (caiqing); and, thought (sixiang)...only with a combination of these qualities can a work of art actually touch others; this is what is known in modern aesthetics as 'Einfühlungstheorie' (ganqingsiyu)." He called for the refinement of popular tastes, believing that only if people searched out the essence of literati painting rather than constantly attempting to justify it in terms of its "scientific relevance" would Chinese art be saved from stagnation and irrelevance. As we noted in the previous chapter, while Li Shutong had been inculcating in his student a powerful interest in sketching and Western art, he had impressed upon Feng the importance of moral cultivation, a positively traditional approach to the relationship between artistic excellence and moral rectitude.

As we will see further on, Chen’s statements on modern art and the value of the literati tradition adumbrates aesthetic views Feng would express many years later. Of these the most important perhaps was Chen’s advocacy of the coalescence of Eastern and Western painting, while in terms of style and personal inclination he remained a firm supporter of the virtues of Chinese art. He wrote in an unfinished essay that the spirit of Chinese painting was modern and in no way out of step with recent developments in European art, an attitude that flew in the face of the "progressive" popular assumption that Chinese ink painting was "not scientific."

In 1917 Chen was to find in the painting of Qi Baishi (1863-1957), an artist from Hunan who had just arrived in Peking, a quality of naive elegance that led him to introduce Qi’s work to Japan. This was the beginning of Qi’s long-lived international fame as an important and innovative modern Chinese painter. In the early 1920s, he

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70 Chen Shizeng, “The Value of Literati Painting” (Wenrenhua zhi jiazhi), an exposition on the subject of traditional Chinese art appended to Chen’s translation of the Oomura Seiga’s speech “The Renaissance of Literati Painting” (Wenrenhua zhi fuxing) in the book Zhongguo wenrenhua zhi yanjiu, p. 10. In talking of Einfühlungstheorie Chen is, of course, referring to the aesthetics of such German philosophers as Kant and Theodore Lipps which had been introduced by Cai Yuanpei when he called for “aesthetic education to replace religion” at the time he inaugurated the Peking University Art Research Society (Beida huafa yanjiuhui) in 1918. The society produced a half-yearly magazine, the Huixue zazhi, the first issue of which printed Chen’s “The Value of Literati Painting”. See Liushi nian wenyi dashiji 1919-1979, Hong Kong: Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu zhongxin, 1979, p. 3.

71 "The Value of Literati Painting", Zhongguo wenrenhua zhi yanjiu, p. 10.


73 Chen Shizeng, “Chinese Painting is Progressive” (Zhongguohua shi jinfu), referred to in Li Shusheng, "Chen Shizeng, A Famous Modern Artist", p. 59.

74 Yu Jianhua, Chen Shizeng, p. 3, quoting Qi Baishi’s autobiography where it says that Chen was the only admirer of his painting at the time and it was his encouragement that led him to develop his
encouraged Xu Beihong to travel to the West and build a bridge between the different artistic traditions. In his conclusion to his book *A History of Chinese Art*, he wrote, "There are now many more chances for contact with foreign art, thus efforts should be made to reconcile [the two], for it is on such a basis that it will be possible to develop our unique qualities."\(^{75}\)

The impact Chen had on his contemporaries is adequately attested to by an oration made by Liang Qichao at Chen's funeral in 1923:

> No art is the result of imitation; real and lasting value comes from the creative expression of the genius of the individual...in the art world of today, Chen Shizeng was one of these people....He lived in the distracting confusion of the modern world and although he did not show any signs of resistance to it, in his works it is evident that he never gave in to following the crowd nor did he exert himself merely to please other people. His was not the spirit of a haughty or bellicose man, and in his refined and elegant personality we find something on which to model ourselves.\(^{76}\)

One foreign observer, the Sinologist Richard Wilhelm, met Chen in Shanghai not long before the artist's unexpected death in 1923 at the age of forty-eight,\(^{77}\) and recorded the following comments on their conversation and his impressions of the man:

> A small group of artists and scholars met to partake of a choice meal. An old gentleman spoke of the incomprehensibility of modern European art. The painter Chen Shizeng,\(^{78}\) the leader of the modern Chinese painters (he has died in the meantime, and his pictures and drawings have become very much sought after in China by collectors), gave in a few sentences a survey of the modern artistic movement and tendencies, and really hit the nail on the head, in his quiet and matter-of-fact way. He himself has expressed some of this new spirit in Chinese art: not by means of superficial imitation of the language of form, nor by vain attempts at a half-understood technique of oil painting. He has assimilated in a perfectly free manner, on the basis of the Chinese technique of ink drawing, the stimulus supplied by French artists, and he has created from it a new national Chinese art, which, because it is art, is universally comprehensible. This conversation in a quiet corner of Shanghai shows that even in the modern hubbub of the world there are, as it

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75 Quoted in Li Shusheng, "Chen Shizeng, A Famous Modern Artist", pp. 59-60.
76 Quoted in Li Shusheng, "Chen Shizeng, A Famous Modern Artist", p. 61.
77 See *Chen Yinque xiansheng biannian shiji*, pp. 54-55.
78 Wilhelm romanizes the name as Ch'en Chu Ts'ung.
were, islands of refuge where quietly and strongly the good taste of the Song period still finds expression today. 79

As a literatus artist Chen's works reflect the strong influence of painters of the Zhejiang or Shanghai School (Shanghaipai) such as Wu Changshuo (1844-1927), 80 and Chen, like Li Shutong himself, is regarded as having belonged to the "epigraphy school" (jinshipai) of painting and calligraphy of the late-Qing and early Republican period. In fact, his figure paintings, landscapes and flower and bird paintings show a range of influences, 81 even though it is his sketches of everyday scenes which constitute his major contribution to the development of Chinese illustration art this century.

Although it is not certain what led Chen to include everyday, in particular the prosaic, sights of the world around him in his painting, there are indications in Feng Zikai's essays and sketches which will be discussed below that reveal a similar interest in combining the sensibilities of the literati with a contemporary and sympathetic, even humanistic, approach to artistic themes.

2: 7 Zeng Yandong

Although the important formative influence of the works of both Takehisa Yumeji and Chen Shizeng on Feng Zikai's painting is generally recognized, it is not widely known that Feng himself considered that there was one other major artistic influence on the development of his style, that of the paintings of the Qing scholar-painter Zeng Yandong. 82 As so little is known about this aspect of Feng's art, a somewhat lengthy comment is called for.

Zeng (1750-1825), whose hao was Qi Daoshi (the Seventh Daoist Master), claimed to be a descendant of Confucius' disciple Zengzi. Born in Shandong, he grew up in southern China where his father was posted as a government official. After numerous attempts he passed the official exams and became a juren, and although he was frustrated in his attempts to make an official career he was eventually given a

82 This is certainly the case among Mainland Chinese scholars, as well as the friends and family of Feng Zikai who have published accounts of his life and works. The Hong Kong scholar Ming Tsuen also limits herself to a discussion of Takehisa and Chen in her well-researched article on the subject, "Early Influences on the Painting of Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai zaoqi huilhua suoshoude yingxiang), *Bowen* magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, August, 1974, pp. 11-15.
lowly appointment in Hubei when he was in his fifties. A dispute with a superior over the judgement of a legal case led to him being cashiered and exiled to Wenzhou in Zhejiang at the age of sixty-three. Upon his remission, however, he was in such a reduced state financially that he spent his last years relying on his talent as a painter and calligrapher to make a living. He was said to be a great admirer of Zheng Xie (Banqiao, 1693-1765), and commented of himself that he too had won "a hard-earned stupidity" (nan de hutu). Of his literary works perhaps the best known is Xiao doupeng, a collection of stories written in the manner of Pu Songling's Liaozhai zhiyi.

Zeng's admiration for Zheng Banqiao is evident from a vignette he wrote concerning Zheng for Xiao doupeng, the longest account of the artist in notebook literature. "His was a personality that was completely unfettered. He indulged in the most eccentric of actions, and was quite unconcerned with convention," wrote Zeng. "A man such as Banqiao would be ideal as an official or an academician....that the Maker of Things gave birth to such talent and that it should go unrecognized or, even worse, be abused is a matter of great regret!" Zeng's sympathy for Zheng Banqiao may well have stemmed from the unhappy events of his own life which, to an extent, paralleled those of Zheng.

Zeng's style of painting certainly has something of the masterful casualness of Zheng Banqiao's work about it. In the main, however, his interests lie in the painting of figures, not bamboo for which Zheng was renowned, and it is here perhaps that we can see the influence of his work on Feng Zikai. Apart from the evidence provided by a comparison of Feng's own paintings and extant works by Zeng Yandong, there is sadly only one reference in the considerable corpus of material written on the artist which provides a clue to Feng Zikai's indebtedness to Zeng Yandong.

Chen Lianzhen, a newspaper reporter in Chongqing during the Japanese War, wrote about a visit he paid to Feng at that time in a three-part article published in 1980. Chen had met Feng years before when he was teaching at the Li Da Academy in Shanghai. His decision to renew the acquaintance after the lapse of some fifteen years was motivated by a rumour that Feng was planning to move on to Yan'an. Chen had a

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83 See Chen Ruheng's Shuoyuan zhenwen, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981, p. 84, where a number of anecdotes popular among Zeng's contemporaries are recorded.

84 For details of his biography see the introduction to the new edition of Zeng's stories, Xiao doupeng xuan, selected and edited by Xu Zhenglun and Chen Ming, Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1986, pp. 1-2. Xiao doupeng is presumed to be in imitation of a popular collection of tales entitled Doupeng xianhua by Aina jushi (the Layman Aina). See also Chen Ruheng, Shuoyuan zhenwen, p. 82.

85 Xiao doupeng, pp. 99-100.


87 Xiao doupeng, pp. 99.
sister there and hoped to take advantage of the artist's departure to send her a package.  

Following an exchange of pleasantries during which Chen prodded Feng into recalling their "friendship" in the 1920s, the topic of conversation turned to calligraphy and painting. "People have got into the habit of saying that I'm unorthodox (ziyoupai), that all my work is completely original and belongs to no particular school...", commented Feng. "In fact, I'm not that happy about people offering me such praise." He asked Chen whether he thought his calligraphy and painting were so unique, or, in fact, did have definite artistic predecessors (shicheng). After discussing calligraphy for a while, Chen was asked to comment on Feng's manhua. At first he offered the usual comments about his work and said that he presumed that Chen Shizeng had influenced his figure drawing, in particular his scenes of city life and society. Feng gave a nod, "He gave me a lot of inspiration, certainly, but his lines and artistic touch (dianran), not to mention the use he makes of the cun or wave brushstroke in his landscapes and his layering of ink, are quite different from mine. Can you tell who influenced the technique I use for my figures? Let me warn you, it has absolutely nothing to do with Zeng Jing’s school [of figure drawing]. Actually, I learnt it from an relatively obscure Qing artist who is highly thought of and popular in Japan." Much to Feng's amazement, Chen suggested that another artist by the name of Zeng, Zeng Yandong, had indeed been the source of his inspiration. It turned out that Chen's father had a painting by Zeng of "Three Laughs by the Lion Creek" which a Suzhou connoisseur had brought back from Japan in his private collection. Chen said that the three figures in the painting (Tao Yuanming, Huiyuan and Lu Jingxiu) looked like spirits rather than men, the features of their faces being hinted at with only a few strokes of the brush, and, although the folds of their clothes were executed in a similarly carefree manner, the general effect was superb for the artist had caught the spirit of the three men perfectly. Feng commented:

Qi Daoshi, Zeng Yandong, was one of the artistic curiosities (guaijie) of the Qing dynasty. Although there is no way that he

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88 Chen Lianzhen, "A Poem Presented by Mr Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai xianshengde zengshi), Ta Kung Pao, Arts Supplement, 16 August, 1980. Apart from this article, I have found no other evidence that Feng seriously considered removing his family to the Communist base in Yan'an. Chen even claims that Feng's move to Chongqing was because of the "repressive and sombre atmosphere" in Guizhou, the city where the family had been settled since 1939, caused by the "defeatist and capitulationist policies of the KMT and the high wave of their anti-Communist push."
90 The "Three Laughs by the Lion Creek" was a popular theme for artists. It is based on a story from the Shihua xinyu which tells of an occasion on which the poet Tao Yuanming went with his friend Lu Xiujing to visit the monk Huiyuan at Mount Lu. When Huiyuan was seeing them off he was so enthralled by the company of his friends that he forgot an oath he made not to cross the Lion Creek. When they realized what had happened they all laughed merrily.
could have come into contact with Western painting, there is an energy and texture in his brushwork that goes far beyond the traditional elements of Zeng Jing's portraiture. He added a new dimension to the representation of figures in Chinese art. His landscapes are equally exceptional, less fussy even than Shi Tao... little wonder the Japanese like his work so much...  

Although Feng may have been familiar with Zeng's painting, this comment reveals that he knew little of his life, and most certainly had not read *Xiao doupeng*. As a young man in southern China Zeng had more than adequate opportunity to come into contact with Western culture, indeed two stories in *Xiao doupeng* offer a rare scholar-painter's record of such early contact. One of these, entitled "Painting Boards" (*Huaban*) tells of the first time he saw a Western painting when he was studying under the artist Yuan Chunfang in Xinhui, Guangdong. In his storeroom Yuan had a portrait of "a Western beauty" which he showed to Zeng who described it as "fearfully realistic".  

It is impossible to claim categorically on the basis of this one account by Chen Lianzhen that Zeng Yandong had a strong influence on Feng's artistic style. Nor, for that matter, can we be sure of the accuracy of Chen's record of his conversation with Feng as it would appear that some forty years passed before he wrote it down (although he may have had an account in a personal diary on which he based his article). Nonetheless, even a cursory comparison of easily accessible extant works by Zeng with Feng's *manhua* reveals points of similarity that tend to corroborate Chen's evidence. Zeng's paintings of the twelve signs of the Chinese horoscope, for example, reveal why he remained popular in Japan although he had been forgotten in China, his depicting of figures and the humour of the poems that accompany them are strongly reminiscent of Japanese Zen and Haiku painting.  

2: 8 Conclusion

Feng Zikai's interest in painting was evident from a very young age, the illustrations of his first school texts attracting him far more readily than the poems

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91 "A Poem Presented by Mr Feng Zikai", ibid. Feng said he hoped to see the picture Chen had mentioned after the War, although this was never possible.


which they were meant to accompany. Although his fascination with toys, the local lantern festival and even tracing pictures for classmates may be seen in retrospect as an early indication of his future vocation, it was not until the third year of his high school studies at Hangzhou that he began seriously entertaining thoughts of becoming "an artist". But perhaps even more important than the classes in sketching he took then was the personality of his teacher: Li Shutong, a man whose varied talents and experiences make him one of the representative figures of the years bridging the Qing dynasty and the early Republic. As we will see in Chapter Six, Li was a romantic who turned to a Chinese style of "stoicism" which cast a long shadow over Feng's subsequent career.

We should also note here that Li's own experience as a student in Japan and his coaching of Feng in Japanese certainly fired Feng's enthusiasm for studying in Japan, despite his financial difficulties. Indeed, it was during those ten months in Tokyo that Feng first came across Takehisa Yumeji's work and realized that it was in the developing his own style of sketching or casual painting and illustrative art rather than aspiring to be a conventional Westernized "overseas returned artist" from Japan that his future lay. Li provided an influence in another, equally tangential, fashion, for it was the paintings by Chen Shizeng that he had published in the short-lived newspaper Taipingyangbao that provided a local inspiration for Feng. It is not certain when he first came across the works of Zeng Yandong, one of the lesser artists of the mid-Qing. Despite the lack of documentary evidence concerning Zeng's influence, however, Feng's paintings themselves perhaps provide a clue to their relationship. These influences combined to put Feng at odds with "formalistic iconoclasm" of many members of his generation.
Chapter 3:

Manhua

3: 1 Introduction

Whereas Feng Zikai had been enamoured of various schools of art up to the time of his return from Japan, he only began to develop his own particular style at Baima Lake, Shangyu, Zhejiang, in 1922. In this period, one during which a number of idealistic and romantic teachers gathered at the Chunhui High School, Feng more than any other artist in China developed the "casual sketch" (manhua)\(^1\) into an art form of considerable power and lyricism. The genesis of term manhua in China and Japan up to the introduction of Zikai manhua by Zheng Zhenduo in the pages of the Wenxue zhourbao to some extant presages the chameleon history of the word in 20th Century China.

3: 2 Xia Mianzun and the Baima Lake Community

The short months in Tokyo spent in going to classes on music and art were crucial in the development of Feng Zikai's ideas about his own art. As we have mentioned, among the key influences of this period was his chance discovery of Takehisa Yumeji's work. However, an equally important element in his approach to art in the early 1920s was the increasing dissatisfaction he felt for his artistic studies. He was frustrated with what he perceived of as an inability to continue painting in the Western style and eventually became unwilling to do so.

In the introduction to his first collection of paintings, Feng commented that his first real contact with Western art, or at least works executed in the Western style, was in Tokyo. As a student in China he had, of course, seen reproductions of Western

\(^1\) The term manhua, even in the case of Feng Zikai's work, is generally translated as "cartoon" (Harbsmeier) or "Chinese cartoon" (Shuen-shuen Hung) in English. For reasons that I hope will have become obvious by the end of this chapter, I prefer to leave the term in Hanyu pinyin or refer to Feng's works as "paintings", "sketches" or "illustrations".
works of art, yet in Japan he had had a chance to see both Western originals and the results of the Japanese artistic revolution in the galleries of the capital. The experience was extremely disheartening.

Feng's Chinese biographers elucidate the details of the crammed schedule he set for himself during his ten-month stay in Tokyo with considerable relish, but pass over the "depression" that Feng describes in his introduction without comment. In fact, it is clear from the direction that his own artistic work took in the years immediately following the Japan sojourn that those months in Tokyo, in particular his frustration with conventional Western art as he was being taught, hastened the development of his own style of painting.

In 1922, after a short period teaching art in Shanghai again, Feng accepted the invitation of his former Chinese teacher and Xia Mianzun (1886-1946) to take up a position at the newly established Chunhui High School at Baima Lake, Shangyu in Zhejiang Province. The school had been started the year before with money from a progressive and wealthy member of the local gentry, Chen Chunlan, by Jing Hengyi.

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2 See Zhuan, pp. 33-34. The authors of this book describe Feng's activities at this time as the model for the industrious student of self-improvement. Indeed, Feng continued his study of the Japanese language and worked on his English as well as attending music and painting classes while in Tokyo.

3 Feng went back to work at the Teachers' Training College where he had taught before leaving for Japan. His colleagues included Chen Wangdao, a former teacher in Hangzhou who was to become famous as an educationalist and scholar of aesthetics. Among the students Feng instructed was Tao Yuanqing, a future woodblock artist and book jacket designer much favoured by Lu Xun who used his work for a number of his books. See Shuji zhuangzhen yishu jianshi, Qiu Ling, Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984, pp. 75-77. Another of his students was Qian Juntao, a young man from Feng's native district who set the style for book jacket designs for many years. See Shuji zhuangzhen yishu jianshi, pp. 79-80, which mentions Qian Juntao's work for the Kaiming Bookstore and Feng Zikai's introduction to a volume of Qian's book designs. In 1985, Qian designed a pamphlet for the reconstructed Yuanyuan Hall in Shimen which is given out to visitors. Apart from his duties at the school, penury forced Feng to undertake part-time work at the secondary division of the Wusong Zhongguo Gongxue, where his colleagues included Zhu Guangqian and the educationalist Kuang Husheng. See Zhuan, p. 37, and Nianbiao, p. 10. Zhu Guangqian mentions this period only in passing in an autobiography written shortly before his death. See Zhongguo meixue wenji, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1982, Vol. I, p. 6. According to Ke Wenhui in his Yishu dashi Liu Haisu zhu, p. 52, Feng and Liu met in 1922 when Liu was sketching at the West Lake. Ke says that Wu Mengfei set up the Teachers' Training School after this meeting. He does note, however, that Liu Zhiping, a pupil and disciple of the Monk Hongyi, went on to found the Department of Musicology in Liu's art school. Liu Haisu wrote an article in appreciation of Feng, "Feng Zikai's Paintings" (Feng Zikaide hua), published in the Hong Kong magazine Meishujia, 1985: 4, p. 25, but fails to mention their first meeting.

4 Chen was a prominent member of the local Shangyin economic elite who had been a director of the Zhejiang Railway Company in 1911. See Gao Zhilin, "Jing Hengyi and Chunhui High School" (Jing Hengyi yu Chunhui zhongxue), Xuexi yu sikao, 1987: 8, p. 20; Rankin, "Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911," p. 256, also pp. 283-98 for an analysis of the political and economic role of the elite in the railway. Schoppa, Chinese Elites and Political Change, provides a study of the development of local elites in Zhejiang in the late Qing. There is a photograph of Chen in Chunhui zhongxue liushi zhoubian xiaozheng jiniance, 1921-1981; also referred to as Chunhui jiniance), Shangyu: Chunhui zhongxue (internal distribution), 1981, p. 3, and p. 18 where it says Chen contributed two hundred thousand yuan to the projected school, half of which was used for constructing school buildings, while the other half was invested in shares of the Shanghai Zhabei Water and Electricity Company. The details of the background to the school are given in
the former principle of Feng’s high school, who had left Hangzhou as a result of continual conflict with conservative forces over his educational policies in 1920. Along with Xia Mianzun, Jing was able to attract an impressive range of young teachers to the school, many of whom were already or would soon become leading literary and cultural figures. They included Ye Shengtao, Zhu Ziqing, Zhu Guangqian and Wang Renshu (Ba Ren). During Xia’s short period of tenure, the school was a leading southern centre of educational and cultural experimentation.

The natural setting of the school by the Baima Lake was no less than idyllic, and recently written memoirs and poems often speak of it in terms of Tao Yuanming’s utopian “Peach Blossom Garden”. Considering the confused political scene in the

“School History” (Xiaoshi), Chunhui jiniance, p. 18; also, Gao Zhilin, “Jing Hengyi and Chunhui High School”, ibid.

5 Xia had a stormy career in the years following Feng’s graduation from the Hangzhou Teacher’s College. He was known as one of the “Four Devaraja” (Guardian Demons) of the college during the May Fourth Movement of 1919, along with Chen Wangdao, Liu Dabao and Li Cijiu, and they were threatened with expulsion from the school by the provincial authorities along with the principal, Jing Hengyi, in 1920 for their radical educational stance. The climax was the “Yishi fengchao” (Number One Teacher’s College Disturbance) in February and March 1920, involving threats by the local authorities to persecute students involved in Anti-Confucian activities and attempts to crush the New Culture movement. See Wusi yundong zai Zhejiang, edited by the CPC Zhejiang Provincial Party School Party History Department, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1979, pp. 32-36; Xiaojing jiniance, pp. 7-8; and Jiang Danshu’s 1960 memoir, “Anti-Filial Piety and the Anti-Feudal Struggle at Zhejiang Number One Teachers’ College” (<<Feixiao>> yu Zhejiang diyi shifande fanfengjian douzheng), Wusi yundong huiyilu, Peking: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan, 1979, Vol. II, pp. 757-62. Xia soon resigned his position and taught for a short time at the Hunan Number One Teachers’ College under the direction of Kuang Husheng. Mao Zedong was one of his colleagues. Xia went to work in the Chunhui High School in Shangyu. Xia’s native place, in 1921 at the age of thirty-five. See Xia Mianzun wenji: Pingwu zhi ji, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1983, pp. 9-22 for a chronology of Xia’s life, in particular pp. 12-13.


7 Zhu Guangqian and Xia Mianzun (Zhu Guangqian yu Xia Mianzun), Xia zhuanjii, pp. 62-64.

8 Feng’s old classmate Ye Tiandi also worked in the school from 1922. Like Feng he taught music and art. In an attempt to indicate the involvement of the CPC in the school in the 1920s, the “School History”, in Chunhui jiniance, p. 19, claims that Ye actively propagated the revolution among students, although I have found no confirmation of this in other sources. On p. 33, Xu Bojun, a student at the school in the 1920s says he recalls Ye talking about taking part in Party meetings in Shanghai and the strategies they used to avoid capture by the police. See also Wang Wenchuan’s reminiscences on page 37.

9 A saying became popular in the early years of the school that “there is Nankai [High School in Tianjin] in the North and Chunhui in the South”. Gao Zhilin, “Jing Hengyi and Chunhui High School”, ibid.

10 There is no lack of lyrical descriptions of the area. See Chunhui jiniance, pp. 13, 29-30, 44, 47, 58-61; Ye Zhushan, “Xia Mianzun and Baima Lake” (Xia Mianzun yu Baimahu), Xia zhuanjii, pp. 107, 109; Hu Shihong, a graduate of the school, “Searching for Dreams at Baima Lake” (Baimahu xumeng -- a title inspired by the Ming essayist Zhang Dai’s volume Xihu mengxun), Renmin ribao, 14 December, 1987. As Hu comments, "The campus of Chunhui had water on three sides and was shaded by lush trees. At the time it boasted some of the best school buildings in the country." The buildings, which remain substantially unchanged today, had such poetic names as "Pavilion for Gazing at the Mountains" (which contained the main classrooms), "Winding Courtyard" (student dormitories) and the "Pavilion of Western Rain". There is a picture of the school and surrounding countryside taken in the early 1980s in Chunhui jiniance, p. 5.
early 1920s, it would seem that Shangyu did provide a tranquil and other-worldly environment for the young idealists who gathered at Chunhui. Feng rented a Japanese-style house near Xia's "Simple Dwelling" (Pingwu) by the lake, living in close proximity to most of the other teachers. One of Xia's most celebrated essays, "Winter on Baimahu Lake" (Baimahu zhi dong), describes the area as it was when he moved there in 1921: a rural backwater without buildings of any significance apart from the newly constructed school which was situated on the shore of the lake opposite his own dwelling, a draughty house the run-down appearance of which belied the fact that it was new. Feng Zikai's home was in a similar state and next to it, by the edge of a wall, Feng planted a willow and named the place "Small Willow House" (Xiaoyangliuwu). Xia describes the sound of the wind howling in the pine trees on winter nights; Feng's willow must have been the first of its kind in the area. Although the willow was to become something of a leit-motif of Feng's paintings, so much so that the essayist and poet Yu Pingbo call him Feng Liuyan (willow and swallow), the planting of the willow was not the result of a conscious decision to be lyrical; someone just happened to give him one, and as it was growing by his house he got into the habit of sketching it and then painting willows into his pictures.

11 Pingwu zhi ji, pp. 13-14.
12 Pingwu zhi ji, pp. 161-62. "Simple Dwelling" was, in 1980, still in existence, and two photographs of it are reproduced in Pingwu zhi ji. Xia's two essays "Leisure" (Changxian) and "Cat" (Mao), see pages 68-74 and 75-82 of Pingwu zhi ji respectively, give further details of life at Baima Lake. Yang Mu (Wang Ching-hsien) comments in his short study "Modern Chinese Prose" (Zhongguo xiandai sanwen), written as an introduction to a two-volume collection of 20th Century Chinese prose, that Xia Mianzun's 'essay Winter on Baimahu Lake' established a model for narrative prose in the vernacular. It is marked as a piece of writing that is lucid, unaffected and in no way forced, while at the same time quite unashamedly sentimental. Zhu Ziqing also wrote in this style, becoming one of the representative writers of his age. Both came from Shangyu [in Zhejiang]. See Yang Mu, Wensuede yuanliu, Taipei: Hongfan shudian, 1984, p. 56.
13 Zhuan, p. 37; Nianbiao, p. 10.
14 See Chen Xing's Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 22-23.
15 See the essay "Willows" (Yangliu), written in 1935 and collected in the volume Yangliu, Hong Kong: Shanghai shuju, 1961 reprint, pp. 89-93, also in Suibiji, pp. 146-49. Feng comments that if brambles had been growing by the lake he most probably called his house "Small Bramble Cottage", and he may have even become known for his painting of brambles. He scoffs at the idea that he had to justify his association with willows by making erudite references to the place of the willow in Chinese poetry. He says it would be all too easy to say he favoured the tree because Tao Yuanming planted five of them next to his hut, and so on. But, he admits, by the time he was writing this essay, he did happen to find the willow superior to the more elegant and poetic varieties of vegetation such as the peony for the simple reason that they required no special care or nourishment: they were "uncomplicated" (jian). In philosophical terms, moreover, the willow was one of those rare trees that actually grows back to the ground, extending its long, S-shaped tendrils down to the earth that had given it life. It is a tree that more than any other symbolizes the spring. Unlike the plants that are anxious to flourish far from the earth which are renewed during the spring and reach out for the sun, the willow remains meek and close to the ground over which its green branches play in the wind.
Within a month of this essay being written in March 1935, Zhou Zuoren wrote a piece with the same title in which he discussed high school compositions and the casual essay. See Zhou Zuoren, Kucha suibi, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1987, pp. 123-27.
Despite these poetic connotations, Feng's "Small Willow House" itself was something of a tumble-down building. Zhu Ziqing described the house as having a sitting room "as small and square as a die" with an "oppressively low ceiling".\(^{16}\) Feng lived next to the history teacher Liu Shuqin, and Xia next to the mathematics instructor Liu Xunyu.\(^{17}\) The four households were also very close socially, and the men met regularly, taking it in turns to provide wine for their gatherings. As Zhu Guangqian and Zhu Ziqing were bachelors, they lived in the school dormitory, although they frequently joined the others for meals and spent evenings with them chatting and drinking.\(^{18}\) Still in financial straights even with this new job (a third child was born in April), Feng also took up work at the Number Four High School in Ningbo, commuting to the city to teach.

Xia Mianzun provided a model for the new teacher, indeed Xia was a rare inspiration to his students. At the Number One Teacher's College in Hangzhou, Xia had taken on the highly unpopular job of monitor in charge of student boarders. On one occasion he was at a loss as how to deal with a case of theft among the students. Everyone was convinced a certain student was guilty but they could find no proof. Desperate, Xia went to ask his colleague Li Shutong's advice. Li, a man with a rather single-minded approach to educational problems and a strict disciplinarian, said the dilemma could be resolved if Xia was willing to commit suicide. Li suggested his colleague post an announcement stating that if the guilty student did not come forward within three days as the monitor responsible for all the students he swore he would commit suicide for his failure to win the trust of his charges. Li was convinced that the moral integrity displayed by such an approach would so move (jiaohua) the offending student that he would give himself up. Of course, he added to Xia, if the offender did not surrender himself, he would have to kill himself otherwise he would lose all

\(^{16}\) Zikai manhua, p. 12. The house is still there and described with perhaps excessive poetic fancy by Gu Zhikun, "A Willow Branch by Baima Lake" (Baimahu pan yi zhi liu), Zhejiang ribao, 12 February, 1984.

\(^{17}\) Liu Shuqin was from Ningbo and studied history in Japan. Like Feng he later taught at the Li Da Academy in Shanghai going on to become an editor and scholar of local histories. He died during the war. Liu Xunyu was from Guizhou and graduated from college in Peking. During their time as colleagues, Xia and Liu Xunyu wrote Werchhang zuofa, a popular textbook on composition published by Kaiming shudian. He also edited a maths text for Kaiming with Zhang Kebiao and Zhou Weiquan. He later studied in France and after 1949 became a textbook editor in the Ministry of Education. See Zhang Kebiao, "Miscellaneous Memories of the Li Da Academy at Jiangwan" (Jiangwan Li Da xueyuan zaiyi), Wenshi ziliao xuanji, edited by the Shanghai PPCC, No. 39, 1982: 2, pp. 150-53.

credibility. According to one source, the thief did present himself to Xia before the "deadline" shedding tears of remorse.

Although he set high standards for himself, Xia Mianzun also had great hopes for the school. He was a firm believer in the importance of the relationship between teacher and student (as indicated in the anecdote above), and he wanted to make the school a model of "education through love" (aide jiaoyu). Whereas he had experimented in teaching free composition to his students in Hangzhou, he now wanted to introduce a range of educational reforms. As the school maintained a distance from local warlord interests, this seemed more than feasible. It was a privately-established school and therefore relatively free of the economic constraints being experienced by government schools at the time. It was also the first school in the province to introduce coeducation; its organization was less authoritarian than that of other schools, and Xia praised it for its "open door" policy towards school management and teaching. Being located in the countryside, Xia was also anxious to see the school play some in the Rural Movement (xiangcun yundong) that was developing in other parts of China by holding evening classes for farmers. Special seminars were even organized for the borders three times a month which featured speeches by scholars and educationalists, including such visitors as Cai Yuanpai, Wu Zhihui, He Xiangning, Huang Yanpei and Yu Pingbo. While Xia taught and wrote about teaching with great energy, his tenure at Chunhui was short. Differences of opinion between Jing Hengyi and other members of staff, in particular Xia, Kuang

19 Xia Mianzun, "On Dharma Master Hongyi's Becoming a Monk" (Hongyi fashi zhi chujia), Hongyi fashi, pp. 247-48.
20 Lou Shiyi, "Eternal Remembrance -- Commemorating the Centenary of Mr Xia Mianzun's Birth" (Yongyuande huai min -- jinian Xia Mianzun xiansheng danchen baizhounian), Xia zhuangi, p. 16.
21 Xia zhuangi, p. 181.
22 In "An Experiment in Teaching Composition" (Zuowen jiaoshoushangde yige changshi), Xia records his methods at the new school. See Xia zhuangi, pp. 142-50. He states his basic criticism of the May Fourth literary revolution: "the situation...is pathetic...while students may use the vernacular to do compositions, and call the result 'new essays', in reality they are only translating the classical language into spoken Chinese. In terms of content, there is nothing even vaguely new about what they write...To change the language people use without altering their basic approach is, in the end, a complete waste of time." (p. 143.) Xia's approach was to encourage students to start writing about themselves and the world around them. More than sixty years later the Mainland author Ah Cheng would deal with a similar theme in his short story "King of the Children" (Haiziwang), made into a film of the same name by Chen Kaige in 1987.
23 Chunhui jiniance, p. 18. Jing Hengyi had suggested the school not register with the warlord government. His slogan was "oppose the forces of the past, and establish a new style of study".
24 See Xia's "The Role of Chunhui" (Chunhui de shiming), written in December 1923, Xia zhuangi, p. 140. The general tenor of this essay would be familiar to participants in the "open door schooling" (kaimen baxue) of the Cultural Revolution. Of course, many elements of the Maoist educational reforms had their origins in the work of educators in the 1920s and 1930s.
25 For this aspect of the school see Xia's "The Role of Chunhui" (Chunhui de shiming), Xia zhuangi, pp. 139-41.
26 Chunhui jiniance, p. 18-19.
Husheng, Liu Xunyu, Feng Zikai and Zhu Guangqian led to a series of resignations, and the disaffected teachers moved to Shanghai in 1924 to found another school, the Li Da Academy, more of which will be said in Chapter Five.

Even before these unsettling incidents, Feng Zikai had felt ill-at-ease in his new job. In the introduction to his first book, Feng wrote that returning to the profession of teaching after the unbridled interlude in Japan was a difficult and chafing experience.

To put on a stern face and become a teacher really required a considerable amount of effort. My mind was constantly wandering, and the things that floated around in my head were the numerous little images that make up one's life and nature. I could not get myself interested in the school's administration or curriculum, and I was always at a loss as to what to make of the various proposals raised at faculty meetings. When it came time to vote by a show of hands, I would be in a complete dither.

I remember one meeting during which I hadn't paid any attention to what they'd been discussing. I'd been too enthralled by the exhausted and bored poses of my colleagues who sat around at the table with their heads listlessly drooping on their arms. These impressions stayed with me after the meeting, so I used a Chinese brush to paint a picture of a faculty meeting on paper. I thought it would be improper to let the students see it, so I fixed the painting to the back of my door. 28

This is how Feng himself describes his first impulse to paint the minor scenes of everyday life which he says ""floated around my head" (yingxin de suoshi xigu). The feeling he experienced after doing this picture, he said, "was as joyful as that of a mother giving birth to a child." 29 From then on he found "canvas" for his paintings in

27 *Pingwu zhi ji*, p. 14; Shang Jinlin, "Zhu Guangqian and Xia Mianzun", *Xia zhuari*, pp. 62-63; Bi Keguan, "Zhu Guangqian Talks about Painting", p. 9, where Zhu, being interviewed in 1979, says there was a disagreement with the school principal (Jing) over "the ideals of free education". In the official "School History", *Chunhui jinian*, p. 19, the disagreement is described so as to avoid any mention of Jing Hengyi by name. "At the time it cannot be denied that there were struggles over educational thinking. In 1924, for example, some people attempted to stultify the teachers and students with a series of debased feudal ethical restraints. These attempts were violently rejected by the progressive teachers headed by Kuang Husheng, Xia Mianzun, Feng Zikai and Liu Xunyu, who engaged in numerous struggles in an attempt to overcome [the problems]." According to the chronology of Xia's life in *Pingwu zhi ji*, p. 14, the first clash occurred when a student, Huang Yuan, wore a Shaoxing felt cap (a la Runtu) to a physical education class and was abused by his teacher, who is described as a KMT Party bully. The resulting furore led to the student supervisor Kuang Husheng's resignation. The second incident involved a proposal to combine the girls' and boys' schools. Jing Hengyi was opposed and Xia Mianzun quit, taking with him a number of other teachers, including Feng Zikai. See also an essay by Feng's student, Wei Fengjiang, "Mr Kuang Husheng at Baima Lake" (*Zai Baimahushide Kuang Husheng xiansheng*), *Chunhui jinian*, pp. 46-47, in which he says the origins of the dispute were to do with "[KMT] Party classes" being introduced to the school, followed by weekly Party activities and the singing of the Party song. Wei says Fang was particularly opposed to the Party song and supported the continued use of the school song written by Li Shutong. The Huang Yuan incident brought the conflict out into the open.

28 *Zikai manhua*, pp. 21-22.

29 *Zikai manhua*, p. 22.
such disparate objects as wrapping paper, old lecture notes and the backs of cigarette packets. His studio, he says, "was anywhere there was a brush." 30

As we can see from this short description, Feng had finally abandoned his training in Western art for an aesthetic spirit akin to the casual sketches of Takehisa Yumeji.

3: 3 First Publication

Not long after arriving at Baimai Lake, Feng published his first work in the pages of a December, 1922 issue of the Chunhui High School journal. The picture is entitled "A Lady Visitor -- Ningbo Women's Teacher's College" (Nü laibin -- Ningbo nüzi shifan), and it is signed "Zikai". [3: 1] As we have noted, Feng had a part-time job teaching music and art at Ningbo. This early painting is a sketch of girls in what is most probably an assembly yard. The six figures in the picture are in two groups, all with their backs to the viewer. The contrast of the girls' light school tunics and their dark skirts is striking, and the composition of the work is artfully casual. Feng has used a rough border reminiscent of Chen Shizeng's pictures, and the girl on the extreme left actually breaks the frame, introducing a spacial extension of the area enclosed by the rectangular border. Due to the obscure nature of the school magazine, however, this painting only came to light again in 1986. 31

It should also be noted at this point that, apart from this picture, Feng Zikai's first published work were not paintings at all but rather jacket designs for the magazine Aesthetics (Meiyu) which he had edited with colleagues and friends in Shanghai prior to his trip to Japan. 32 Although the details are scant, it is obvious that not long after starting work in his new job Feng was painting in this new style and did so consistently during his two years at the Chunhui High School. 33 It is noteworthy that while Feng abandoned attempts to imitate Western art himself, thus striking out in a very different direction from his contemporaries who took Western art as a standard

30 Zikai manhua, ibid.
31 See the article "An Important Finding for the Study of Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai yanjiude yige zhongyang shouhoo) by Zhang Wei, Wenyibao, 20 December, 1986. Zhang says that he had submitted the picture to Feng Chenbao, Feng Zikai's eldest daughter, for verification. Also Gu Zhikun, "A Willow Branch by Baima Lake", ibid.
32 Meiyu, the first magazine of its kind in China, was produced by the Chinese Aesthetic's Association (Zhonghua meiyu hui) in April 1920. The members of the Association were Feng Zikai, Wu Mengfei, Liu Zhiping, Ouyang Yuqian (playwright and friend of Li Shutong), Jiang Danshu, Zhou Xiang and Zhang Gongbi. See Huang Ke, "Feng Zikai's Art of Jacket Design" (Feng Zikai zhuanghuang yishu), Dushu, 1985: 12, pp. 131-36, in particular p. 131. Also Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 120, 355.
33 Zhu Guangqian in Bi Keguan's "Zhu Guangqian Talks about Painting", p. 3, also noted that Feng began doing woodblock prints at this time and claims he was the first artist in this medium in China. Unfortunately, none of these works seems to have survived.
for emulation, as a translator, however, he was no different from numerous other May Fourth generation of intellectuals, and he joined in the rush to introduce the Western artistic scene to both students and general readers.  

Despite the recent discovery of the picture in the school magazine, it is generally accepted that the first prominent publication of a painting characteristic of Feng's mature style was in Our July (Womende qiyue), a collection of poetry and prose works published in book-format by members of the Literature Research Society (Wenxue yanjiuhui), edited by Zhu Ziqing, and published in August 1924.  

The picture was inspired by a line from "Qianqiu sui" a ci poem on a summer scene by the Song poet Xie Wuyi: "Everyone has departed/ The new moon a hook, sky like water" (Ren san hou, yi gou xinyue tian ru shui). Feng signed his work with the initials "TK". The use of roman initials was a modern affectation popular among Japanese artists at the time, including Yumeji, although Feng put the letters in a circle which was drawn in imitation of a seal. Calligraphed initials as opposed to signing his paintings with the characters "Zikai" was characteristic of most of his pre-1949 work. Feng Zikai also did the cover illustration for this volume, a willow bending in the wind on the shore of a lake over which hangs a rainbow. The scene conveys the sense of cool agitation following a storm -- a suitable summer scene for the July issue of the

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34 Feng did a partial translation of John Ruskin's Modern Painters in 1923 while he was at Chunhui, see "Real Personalities that Make Art Great" (Shi yishu weidade zhende xingge), Dongfang zazhi, Vol. XX, No. 14, 1923: 2, pp. 62-75; Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 120-30 covers the confusing translation efforts of works on art history and aesthetics at this time. Bonnie McDougall in her The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China, pp. 92, 141, 157, fails to realize that Feng, and not the "Creationist" Tian Han, was the first to translate Ruskin's work. For her part, Kao states, however, that Feng also translated Kuroda Hoshin's Geijutsu kairon for publication in Shanghai in 1922 (p. 363). In fact, the first edition of the book was produced by Kaiming shudian in 1928, and in his introduction, dated early 1928, Feng says the translation was done as a text for art classes at the Li Da Academy. Another early translation of an art text by Feng is Ueda Bin's collected lectures on art, Gendai bijutsu, published by Kaiming shudian in 1929, which Feng used as teaching material for his second year art students at Li Da. See Feng Zikai, tr., Xian.dai yishu shier Jiang, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929, p. v.

35 Womende qiyue, ed. O.M. (Zhu Ziqing), Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1924 (reprinted Shanghai shudian yingyin, 1982), containing poems and essays by Zhu Ziqing, Yu Pingbo, Ye Shengtao and Panxun. On the two issues of this magazine-book Womende qiyue and Womende liuyue, see Yu Shi's article "Our July and Our June" (<<Womende qiuyue>> he <<Womende liuyue>>, Wen Wei Po (Hong Kong), 21 September, 1979. For Feng's painting, see the illustration between pages 152-53. The author of Nianbiao incorrectly states that on page 11 of this work Feng had three illustrations published in Womende qiyue in 1922, instead of one illustration published in 1924.

36 This is one of two poems by Xie Wuyi written to the "Qianqiusui". A literal translation of the whole poem is: "No hint of lover's tryst/ Who can assuage this hidden regret/ By the cultivated bamboos, through the sparse slats of the blind/ Dust settles on fans after the song/ The breeze flutters through sleeves at the end of the dance/ Everyone has departed/ The new moon a hook/ sky like water." See Quan Song ci, edited by Tang Guizhang, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1965, Vol. II, p. 649. In the version of the poem recorded in this volume an alternative reading of the last line is given as "The pale (dan instead of xin) moon, sky like water".
magazine, and one presumably inspired by Baima Lake.37 Many of his other paintings were inspired by his small house and the scenery of the lake.38 In this jacket design we clearly see characteristic elements of Feng Zikai’s idiosyncratic style, which also represent the vision of an idyllic world that he frequently invoked in his early work. The painting is printed in dark blue on a white background, and both the painting and the calligraphy for the book title are done with thick, full brush-strokes. The whole tone of the work is one best captured in the word man, casual, wistful, unfettered. [3: 3]

Zhu Ziqing must have seen either the picture of Xie Wuyi’s line of poetry or other works by Feng before officially taking up Xia Mianzun’s invitation work at Chunhui full-time. He had received the invitation in September 1924, some two months after Womende qiyue was published. Although it is not clear just how Zhu came to use this picture, it is most likely that he first saw Feng’s work in the spring of 1924 when he visited Baimahu.39 Similarly, from the evidence in Zhu’s diary, entries from which were published in China in the 1960s, it is clear that, although Feng and the essayist and poet Yu Pingbo were not to meet for some years, at some time in early 1924, Zhu commissioned Feng to paint a series of illustrations for a volume of children’s poems by Yu entitled Memories (Yi).40

Zhu’s diary states that on 4 August, 1924, he received three advance copies of Womende qiyue from the publisher. The next entry ten days later notes that he had just received illustrations by Feng Zikai for Yu Pingbo’s Yi, which numbered eighteen in all,41 as well as the cover illustration for Zhu’s own volume of poems and prose

37 In his article “Feng Zikai’s Art of Jacket Design”, p. 132, Huang Ke interprets this picture to be of the seaside: in the background a rainbow over a sea lying calm after a storm while a persistent windbuffets a tree growing amidst scattered and spiky rocks on the shore.

38 Gu Zhikun, “A Willow Branch by Baima Lake”, ibid.

39 There is no indication of this in the detailed chronology of Zhu’s life in Zhu Ziqing yanjiu ziliao, pp. 374-75. See the following note.

40 Yu Pingbo wrote a codicil to Feng’s first volume of paintings in 1925 in which he says, “Zikai although you are still a vague figure to me, your heart is transparent and familiar.” See Zikai manhua, p. 97. There is some confusion about the early days of Zhu and Feng’s friendship in Chinese works on Feng Zikai. In Chen Xing’s Xiaosa fengshen, Guillin: Lijiang chubanshe, 1987, a volume of articles on various aspects of Feng’s life and works by one of the most active Feng scholars in China, the author assumes that Yu Pingbo was more familiar with Feng’s work in 1923-1924 than the documented evidence available would seem to indicate. (pp. 20-21.) I have corresponded with Chen on this point and he believes that although Zhu may not have started full-time teaching at Chunhui until November 1924, it would seem he did some casual teaching there before then (see Xu Bojun’s reminiscence in Chunhui jiniance, p. 33 where it is stated Zhu taught at the school in early 1924). In an essay entitled “Baima Lake” (Baimahu) Zhu says his first day at Baima Lake was in the spring, presumably early 1924.

41 Ming Tsuen (the pen-name used by the Hong Kong scholar and essayist Lu Weiluan in her work on Feng) notes in her “Addenda to A Biography of Mr Feng Zikai” (Feng Zikai xiansheng niandiao buyi), Mingbao, 1979: 9, p. 47, that Feng painted twenty illustrations for Yu Pingbo’s Yi in 1925, where in fact he did eighteen paintings for the book in 1924. See also Zhou Zuoren’s article on Yu’s book “The Book Design for Yi” (<<Yi>> de zhuanding), Zhou Zuoren, Zhiliang shuhua, Changsha: Yuelushushe, 1986, Vol. 1, pp. 115-17, in which Zhou wrote:
works, *Tracks* (*Zongji*), which was published in December of that year a little over a month after Zhu took up full-time teaching at Chunhui. [3: 4] Zhu commented that all of these works were "exceptionally beautiful," adding that the tone of "his [Feng's] letter was also extremely sincere in tone".

In his introduction to *Zikai manhua*, the first published collection of Feng Zikai's paintings, Zhu Ziqing recalls spending some time at Feng's cramped dwelling by Baima Lake one dusk looking through a collection of Takehisa Yumeji's paintings. He recalls saying, "Soon you'll be able to publish a volume like Yumeji's", for covering the walls of the front room of Small Willow House were rows of "paintings like small eyes" that would flutter whenever a breeze came into the room. Although this collection of paintings did not appear until 1926, Zhu, who was by then teaching in Peking, says that he believed he saw most of the paintings when they were colleagues at Chunhui. In 1979, Zhu Guangqian could still remember the small sitting room in the house with its walls "papered" with Feng's paintings.

The man who really did "discover" Feng Zikai, however, was his former language teacher, his sponsor at Chunhui and his new neighbour, Xia Mianzun. Feng also did a cover design and illustrations for one of Xia Mianzun's books, his translation of the Italian writer Edmondo de Amicis' *Cuore* (*Aide jiaoyu*), published by

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Another remarkable aspect of this book [the first being that all of the poems were written in the author's own calligraphy] is the eighteen illustrations done by the young Feng Zikai. Such works are rare in Chinese books. When Pingbo showed me the manuscripts of these illustrations I felt there was something reminiscent of Takehisa Yumeji's style about them, even though I have only seen the *Haru no maki* of Yumeji's work, as well as a few individual paintings. Later I was to read Peixuan's [Zhu Ziqing] essay [written for Feng's *Zikai manhua*] in which he confirms that Yumeji has had an influence on Zikai... Yumeji has eliminated the satirical element [of traditional Japanese manga] which dated back to Toba Kakuyū while retaining the natural elegance of manga brushwork and adding his own tone of the sensuous, to create a unique style: his large-eyed willow waisted girls certainly still cause many a heart to flutter even today. France has Lautrec, Germany Heine, and they are outstanding in their own way, but I always feel that their [Takehisa's painting] unfetteredness appeals more to me. Not being an expert it is impossible for me to say whether China has such paintings; I certainly haven't seen any. For this reason I am much taken with Feng's work.

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44 *Zikai manhua*, pp. 13-14; and the essay "Remember the Delights of the Lake that Year -- Feng Zikai and Zhu Ziqing at Baima Lake (Ying yi dangnia' hushang yu -- Feng Zikai yu Zhu Ziqing zai Baimahupan), in *Xiaosafengshen*, pp. 24-26. Feng Huazhan, Feng's eldest son, writes that Zhu Ziqing was "the first to realize the value of his paintings... encouraging father to continue painting so that one day he could produce a collection." "Following this," Feng Huazhan writes, "Mr Zhu was the first to have a painting by my father published...". See "Feng Zikai and Zhu Ziqing" (*Feng Zikai yu Zhu Ziqing*), *Xihu*, 1983: 9, p. 41.

Kaiming shudian in October 1924. These illustrations are some of the only paintings Feng seems to have done of Europeans and they are obviously in imitation of Western illustrative art and quite unlike his manhua paintings.

Feng Zikai records that after he started painting on any loose scraps of paper at hand, often using favorite lines from classical poetry as his theme, he would fix these "translations" (fanyi), as he called them, on his walls at home. One evening, his neighbour Xia Mianzun, having sated himself on Shaoxing wine, came into Feng's house calling out his name. Seeing the paintings which covered the walls he cried gleefully, "Marvellous! Keep painting!", encouragement that Feng says made him more confident in what he was doing. Xia also claims that, "The reason Zikai was painting works like this was due to my having encouraged him." Immediately following this, Feng comments that his first paintings were published in the two issues of Women, i.e., Womende liuyue and Womende qiyue -- an error on Feng's part as we have seen, although it is likely that Feng did not think of paintings used in the school magazine as "publication". Thus it may not be unreasonable to assume that Zhu Ziqing first learnt of Feng's work through his friend Xia Mianzun.

Following the publication of his paintings in books by members of the Literature Research Society, and also due to Zhu Ziqing's enthusiastic support, Feng Zikai's work came to the attention of the literary and art historian Zheng Zhenduo. Zheng wrote of the impression he had of Feng's work upon seeing his painted translation of Xie Wuyi's line in Womende qiyue, "In all truth, Zikai has not merely given us a pictorial representation of the sentiment of that ancient poem; he has done no less than transform it into an even more beguiling and ethereal vision." Again it was through Zhu Ziqing that Zheng inquired about Feng's activities and eventually came to meet him. This led, in 1925, to the regular publication of Feng's paintings in

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46 See Xia's introduction to this book, Aide jiaoyu, by Yamiqiesi (Edmondo de Amicis), translated from Japanese by Xia Mianzun, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1924, reprinted Hong Kong: Zhongliu chubanshe, 1986, pp. vii-ix. Also Pingwu zhi ji, p. 43, in which Xia mentions the first readers of the manuscript were Liu Xunyu and Zhu Ziqing, and that his neighbour Feng Zikai did the art work for the book.

47 The style of these painting is, however, seen again in Feng's illustrations for Lin Yutang's immensely popular English text Kaiming yingwen duben, published by Kaiming shudian.

48 Zikai manhua, p. 22.

49 Zikai manhua, p. 10.

50 Zikai manhua, p. 3; and Xiaosa fengshen, p. 24-25.

51 According to the biographical details of the members of the group given in Wenzue yanjiuhui ziliao, edited by Jia Zhifang, et al., Kaifeng: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1985, Vol. I, p. 22, Feng joined the Literature Research Society in 1923, possibly at the instigation of Xia Mianzun who had become a member in 1921. (p. 36.)
Wenxue zhoubao, the weekly journal of the Literature Research Society published in Shanghai.  

3:4 The Literature Research Society and a Literature for Life

Feng's paintings were printed at an important new phase in the history of the weekly, which previously had been sold as a supplement to the Shanghai Shishi xinbao. In an editorial written for the new independent weekly, Zheng Zhenduo bewailed the fact that reactionary literary trends were the pressing problem of the day. A tabloid press was flourishing, its pages filled with works by eager "scandal fiction" (heimupai) writers. The tastes and interests of young people had made a marked about-face in favour of this crude and degenerate popular literature, yet few writers were introducing or creating new works, and meanwhile "those who chant from cloth-bound volumes of Record of the Western Chamber (Xixiangji), and the poetry of Li Houzhu and Nalan Guruo are on the increase." As for the general public, traditional popular novels about Judge Bao, Judge Shi, and the Mad Monk Ji were all the rage. "To be quite frank," Zheng wrote, "one is at a loss to describe just how divorced the masses of China are from life in the modern world."

It was out of a desire to provide young readers with an alternative, Zheng declared, that, instead of closing down their publication -- as they had been tempted to

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52 Zikai manhua, p. 3. For details of the Literature Research Society see Amitendranath Tagore, Literary Debates in Modern China, 1918-1937, Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1967, pp. 48-52; McDougall, The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China, pp. 23-37.

53 The salient features of scandal fiction were, in the words of Perry Link, an authoritative scholar of the "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly" school of Chinese fiction, to expose "corruption and depravity in the worlds of officialdom, business, education, journalism, entertainment, diplomacy, religion, and almost every other walk of urban life. Powerful people hired writers to discredit their enemies with scandal stories." See Link's essay "Traditional-Style Popular Urban Fiction in the Teens and Twenties", Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era, edited by Merle Goldman, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977, p. 333. Zheng had first written an article entitled "Literary Prostitutes" (Wenchang) in 1922 attacking the "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly" writers. See Wei Shaochang, Yuanyang hudiepai yanjiu ziliao, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1962, p. 40. Criticisms of "scandal fiction", on the other hand, had been mounting since 1918, with such writers as Qian Xuantong opposing this genre. See Wei Shaochang, Yuanyang hudiepai yanjiu ziliao, pp. 44-46, also Zhongmi's article on the subject. (pp. 73-83.)

54 Wenxue zhoubao, 10 May, 1925, issue No. 172, pp. 1.

55 Link, "Traditional-Style Popular Urban Fiction in the Teens and Twenties", pp. 329-30, calls the escapist literature which Zheng denounces here a "third stage" in the development of popular Shanghai literature that developed in the late teens and early 1920s following an earlier period of aimed at amusing its audience. "As the exigencies of the new urban environment became burdensome, the reader's desire to keep up with the world gave way to the desire to forget that he could not keep up. Novels of ideals and discovery declined and were replaced by scandal stories, detective stories, and fantastic 'knight-errant' (wuxia) stories." (p. 330.)

do due to the pressure of other work -- the editors of the weekly had decided to redouble their efforts and publish the journal independently of the newspaper. Previously having concentrated solely on literature, the weekly would now expand its interests to include many new subjects. "Formerly the magazine has been overly concerned with scholastic works; from now on we plan to struggle [for the attention of] the sleeping and lost masses....We wish to travel a fresh, new and lively path of life."57

The Literature Research Society, the earliest group of its kind established after the May Fourth Movement, had been officially founded in Peking in January 1921, and championed what was termed the "Art for Life" (wei renshe sheng er yishu) philosophy of literature. The credo of the association is perhaps best summed up in the words of Zhou Zuoren, one of the guiding influences on the group, in a lecture he gave in January 1920, "The Demands of the New Literature" (Xinwenxuede yaoqiu):

...authors should use artistic methods to express their thoughts and feelings about life, enabling readers to enjoy an artistic experience at the same time as adding to their understanding of life.58

This general and seemingly obvious statement on the nature of literature was basic to Zhou's call for a "literature of humanity".59 After taking over Xiaoshuo yuebao, the established literary monthly of the Commercial Press, China's largest publishing house, they purged its pages of old-style belles-lettres and began publishing new fiction, criticism, and, most importantly, translations.60 Although, until its final demise in 1932 with the destruction of the Commercial Press Building by the Japanese, the Literature Research Society remained a loose-knit organization without definite political or even literary aims, some of its members did express radical ideas from the early 1920s. This is particularly true in the case of Mao Dun, a writer from a

57 Wenxue zhoubao, 10 May, 1925, issue No. 172, p. 2.
58 Delivered at the Beiping Youth Society on 6 January, 1920, this speech was published in the Peking Chenbao on 8 January of that year. See Wenxue yanjiuhui ziliao, Vol. I, p. 49. The actual "manifesto" of the society, which was written by Zhou Zuoren, did not propound any definite objectives or theory. See Wenxue yanjiuhui ziliao, Vol. I, pp. 1-2; and, Chen Jingzhi's comments in Wenxue yanjiuhui yu Chuangzaoshe, Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1980, p. 10. Chen quotes Mao Dun to this effect as well.
60 See C. T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, pp. 55-56; McDougall, The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China, pp. 25-35.
neighbouring town to Feng's Shimenwan, who had joined the Communist Party of China as early as 1921.

The Creation Society (Chuangzaoshe), a literary group founded by Guo Moruo, Yu Dafu and other students in Japan during 1921, was quick to advocate a credo of "art for art's sake" (wei yishu er yishu) in opposition to the call for "art for life's sake" issued by the Literature Research Society. An acrimonious debate unfolded between protagonists whose positions constantly changed as they attempted to wade through the quicksands of political and ideological turmoil of the 1920s. Yet it is evident from the above comments of Zheng Zhenduo and articles by his cohorts that Feng Zikai was starting his artistic career by publishing paintings in a journal that was run by a group of writers who championed the cause of a literature and art that was both relevant to the China of the 1920s and committed to bringing the major issues of the day to the attention of its readership. As Zheng Zhenduo had explained in his editorial for the new Wenxue zhoubao, "We wish to travel a fresh, new and lively path of life." It was a path that members of the society hoped would lead them between "the traditional, orthodox theory that 'literature is meant to convey the dao' and the light attitude taken toward literature by the contemporary Saturday

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61 Mao Dun was from Tongxiang, a town to the east of Shimenwan, see Chapter Six. See "When will there be a volte face?" (Da zhanbian shiqi heshi lai ne), published in the Wenxue supplement of the Shanghai Shishi xinbao newspaper on 31 December, 1923, Wenxue yanjiuhui yanjiu ziliao, Vol. I, pp. 110-13. In this piece Mao Dun wrote that, "Literature is not merely a form of relief for the depressed, or a intoxicant for those who wish to escape from reality. Art has a more positive role of being able to excite people. We hope that literature can take on the crucial responsibility of bringing people to their senses and giving them new energy. This is particularly important in this present age of ours." p. 112. See also Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, pp. 140-41. Mao Dun did, however, readily acknowledge that, "As far as I know, apart from the 'basic attitude' of the Literature Research Society [i.e., literature for the sake of life]... we had no group platform... the articles printed [by us] only represented individual authors, not the group as a whole." From "Concerning The Literature Research Society" (Guanyu <<Wenxue yanjiuhui>> ), see Wenxue yanjiuhui yanjiu ziliao, Vol. II, p. 698.

62 The claims for these differing, although not mutually exclusive, approaches to literature were expressed in a number of articles and declarations published by writers of both schools in the early 1920s. These are collected in Zhongguo xinwenxue yundongshi ziliao, edited by Zhang Ruoying, Shanghai: Guangming shudian, 1934, reprinted Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1982, pp. 291-352. Xia Mianzun, an advocate of "art for life", presented his view of the two schools in Wenyilun yu wenyi piping, Taipei: Zhaneryan chubanshe, 1982 (reprint), Chapter Six, "For Life and For Art", pp. 19-23. See also Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, pp. 93-95; Amitendranath Tagore, Literary Debates in Modern China, 1918-1937, pp. 52-59. Feng Zikai remained loyal to the idea of "art for life", although his own interpretation of the term was different again. In an article written in 1943 in Chongqing entitled "Art and Life" (Yishu yu rensheng), he made a point of declining to use the terms "art for art's sake" and "art for life" because both were "vague" and "grammatically incorrect", after all "all art is part of life itself". See Shuaizhenji, Hong Kong: Xinwenxue yanjiu she, reprinted without a date, p. 128. "I welcome life that is itself a work of art (yishude rensheng) or the art of life (renshengde yishu)." (p. 132.)

63 Lee, A Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers, pp. 19-27. Xu Huaizhong in his Lu Xun ya wenyi stichao liupai, Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1983, pp. 91-112 and 158-95, offers a careful Marxist analysis of the debate and the changing relationships between the advocates of both schools of thought in the 1920s and 1930s.
Considering that the magazines of the "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly" writers were often lavishly illustrated with paintings that highlighted the frivolous themes of their contents, Zheng's decision to use Feng Zikai's paintings in the Wenxue zhoubao was an attempt to compete by illustrating the journal in a fashion that would be both striking and appealing to readers. But more than that, Zheng was genuinely delighted to have "discovered" Feng Zikai. After selecting a series of Feng's works for publication he said, "Returning home on the train with that large bundle of Zikai's manhua in my hand, I experienced a sense of great delight, it was as though I had captured some new territory."

Indeed, even the front page of the now-independent weekly revealed something of a fresh spirit. Feng Zikai had designed a new inverted-L shaped logo of what appears to be a grapevine growing up a tree, with the characters for Wenxue zhoubao signed "T.K." in his characteristic style, for the magazine, one which was to be used for future issues. [3: 6]

3: 5 Manhua

It is now generally recognized by Chinese writers that the term manhua in the meaning of "cartoon" or "impromptu sketch" was first adopted by Zheng Zhenduo. When he published Feng Zikai's paintings in the early-May issue of Wenxue zhoubao in 1925, he featured them under the title Zikai manhua. As we have seen in our discussion of the influence of Chen Shizeng on the evolution of Feng Zikai's artistic style, Feng himself also attributes the introduction of the word to Zheng. At the same time, he claimed that the originator of this style of contemporary casual painting (suyihua), although not of the term, was, in fact, Chen Shizeng.  

65 See Wei Shaochang, Yuanyang hudiepai ziliao, pp. xi-xvi; Middlebrow Fiction, Renditions, Nos. 17 & 18, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1982, pp. 30-35.
66 From Zheng's introduction to Zikai manhua, p. 5. Zheng expressed his hope for the appearance of a fresh, realistic style of art in China as early as 1921 when writing an introduction to Geng Jizhi's translation of Leo Tolstoy's What is Art? Zheng's comments are translated in Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, p. 122.
67 The word actually first appeared in an announcement that Wenxue zhoubao would start publishing independently of Sishi xinbao as of 10 May, 1925. This announcement appeared in the Wenxue supplement of Sishi xinbao on 4 May, 1925. See Wenxue yanjiuhui ziliao, Vol. II, p. 557.
68 See Manhuade miaofa, p. 6: "The word manhua may well have only first appeared in China when the editor of Wenxue zhoubao published my paintings, but I know for a fact that this type of art was not of my creation." Also the essay "My Painting" in Suibi ji, p. 309, and, Feng's entry for 9 June, 1939 in his wartime diary Jiaoshi ri ji, p. 144. Bi Keguan in his book Zhongguo manhua shihua, Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1982, pp. 42-44, devotes a chapter to the origin of the term, but fails to offer any new material on why Zheng Zhenduo chose this word to describe Feng's paintings. The same is true of the earlier study of the manhua by the leftist Hong Kong-based art critic Huang Mao, Manhua yishu jianghua, Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1973, pp. 24-25, also referred to in Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 31.
Feng Zikai’s contemporaries, however, were less certain of the pedigree of the *manhua*. As Yu Pingbo wrote in his codicil to the first collection of Feng’s paintings, "What are herein called 'manhua' are, quite frankly, an innovation, employing the spare gracefulness and vague concept of space of Chinese painting without sacrificing the verve and energy of Western art."\(^{69}\) Feng, along with many later writers, assumed that Zheng Zhenduo had borrowed the expression from Japan, in the way that so many literary and artistic, not to mention political, scientific and military, terms had been taken from Japan since the Meiji period.\(^{70}\)

Prior to the word *manhua* becoming the popular term used to cover the whole range of newspaper and magazine illustrations, caricatures and cartoon, as in the case of Japanese artists, Chinese artists employed a number of words to describe their work. The authors of *A History of the Chinese Cartoon* (*Zhongguo manhua shi*), Bi Keguan and Huang Yuanlin, list seven different terms current in the late Qing-early Republican period. They are: *fengcihua* (satirical painting), *yuyihua* (moral painting), *fengyuhua* (allegorical painting), *shihua* (current [affairs] painting), *xiehua* (humorous painting), *xiaohua* (comic painting) and *huajihua* (slapstick painting).\(^{71}\)

Despite the fact that the recent use of *manhua* can be explained as a loan-word from Japanese, the expression actually has a fairly venerable history in the Chinese language. One of the earliest references to *manhua* appears to be in a Song dynasty notebook, the *Rongzhai suibi* of Hong Mai (1123-1202). In the fifth addition (*wubi*) to this book which was collated after the author’s death, there is an entry on two birds found in the border region of Yingzhou and Mozhou (the region of Baoding in present day Hebei Province). One, the "Xintianyuan" (literally, "He who trusts in heaven's providence"), a type of stork, would stand in the water all day long without moving, waiting for fish to swim between its legs, not changing its position even if it went without fish all day. The other, the "Manhua", a water fowl akin to a wild duck, would flit around in the water getting its fill by sticking its beak even into rotting rushes and mud without a moment’s respite. "Nature has endowed them with such different characters," the author comments in amazement.\(^{72}\)

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69 Zikai manhua, p. 98.
72 *Rongzhai suibi*. V: 3, Hong Mai, *Xiaoshuo biji daguan*, Yangzhou: Jiangsu guangling guji keyinshe, 1984, Vol. III, p. 378. This story is mentioned in an article by Feng Tao published in
As we will see below in our discussion of the origins of the Japanese term *manga*, Shimizu Isao, the historian of the *manga*, has found a similar story in the introduction to a Japanese essay collection written in 1771. Presumably this is based on Hong Mai, although there has been some reinterpretation of the original.

The only other noteworthy pre-modern use of the term *manhua*, this time in the sense of casual or impromptu painting, that I have been able to locate is to be found in the writings of Jin Nong (Dongxin, 1687-1763), one of the "Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou". In *Mr Dongxin's Inscriptions for Miscellaneous Paintings* (*Dongxin xiansheng zahua tiji*) one inscription reads as follows:

My dwelling is on the bank of the Zhe River. During May seasonal fruits come from the mountains in a veritable flood; the most exceptional are the plums of Xiang Lake, and a basket can be had for a few cash, plums and woven container together. Their sweet juice tingles the teeth, and one cannot have enough of them. In comparison, the loquats of Dongting are hardly worth relishing. The season has now arrived and I find myself thinking of the flavours of my old home. I casually paint (*man hua*) some broken branches [of the plum] -- what difference is there between doing this and "gazing at plums to quench one's thirst"?73

As we have seen, the next acknowledged appearance of the words *man* and *hua*, this time linked in a nominal compound, was in May 1925, in *Wenxue zhoubao*.74 However, in 1924, Lu Xun had employed the word in his translation of the Japanese critic Kuriyagawa Hakuson's (1880-1923) book of essays *Leaving the Ivory Tower* (*Zôge no tô o idete*).75 One section of the book was devoted to the

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73 See *Meishu congshu*, edited by Huang Binhong and Deng Shi, Shanghai: Shenzhou guo guang she, 1947, fourth edition, Vol. XI, p. 185. The Hong Kong sculptor Wen Lou refers to Jin Nong's use of the expression *man hua* in an introductory essay written for an exhibition of Chinese cartoons in 1987, *Zhongguo manhua shen 1900 zhi xianzai*, Hong Kong: Zhongguo wenhua cujin zhongxin, 1987 (no pagination). Of course, Jin Nong, like many other artists (and writers), also uses the word *man* in his inscriptions to describe casual or leisurely painting, for example, *man zuo*. See *Meishu congshu*, p. 178. The saying "to gaze at plums to quench one's thirst" comes from a story in Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo xinyu*, in which the general Cao Cao deceives his troops who have been on a long march in a place with no water into believing a glade of plum trees lay before them. Their mouths water in expectation of eating the plums. See Liu Qingyi, *Shishuo xinyu*, Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chubanshe, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 442.

74 Issue No. 172, 10 May, 1925, p. 5. The word *manhua* is printed in brackets in the table of contents on page 1 following the title of Feng Zikai's painting "The swallows have returned, yet not him" (*Yan gui ren wei gui*).

75 This book was published in Japan in 1920, and followed in 1925 by another volume of collected essays, *Toward the Crossroads* (*Jûjigai o yuku*).
manga.\textsuperscript{76} In what is essentially a short history of the Western cartoon used to bewail the fact that Japan lacks mature satirical painters, Kuriyagawa only refers to one traditional Japanese "cartoonist", Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849). Kuriyagawa wrote, "In Japan, the scope of the manga is very wide....Regardless of the type of painting, the essence of the manga is that it attempts a serious 'critique of life', although on the surface they put on a smiling face."\textsuperscript{77} Considering the popularity of Kuriyagawa's work in China at the time, one may presume, both Zheng and Feng were familiar with this translation. Feng was impressed enough with Kuriyagawa's work to translate one of his books, Symbols of Frustration (Kumō no shōchō).\textsuperscript{78} Is it not also possible that there was something in Feng's early work that recommended this use of the Japanese term to Zheng Zhenduo?

Before going any further in our study of the fate of the word manga/manhua in China, it may be appropriate here to consider the history of the word in Japan.

\textsuperscript{76} Lu Xun quanj, Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1973, Vol. XIII, pp. 306-21; Bi Keguan, Zhongguo manhua shihua, pp. 43-44.

\textsuperscript{77} Lu Xun quanj, Vol. XIII, p. 309. This quotation was later included in the introduction to the Shanghai satirical cartoonist Huang Wennong's collection Wennong fengchuaqi, see Bi Keguan, Manhua shihua, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{78} Ching-mao Cheng in his article, "The Impact of Japanese Literary Trends", see Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era, pp. 84-86, comments on the fascination for Kuriyagawa in China during the 1920s. "The 'modern agony' Zhou Zuoren referred to in his remarks on [Yu Dafu's story] 'Sinking' describes the mental state of modern Chinese intellectuals. Its very existence explains to a great extent why the Chinese writers are so attracted to Kuriyagawa Hakuson (1880-1923), something that never fails to amaze the Japanese. Once popular, but obscure since his death, Hakuson was neither an original thinker nor a great writer. He does not even appear in all the voluminous comprehensive anthologies of modern Japanese literature published to date." (p. 84.) Both Feng Zikai and Lu Xun did translations of Kuriyagawa's Symbols of Frustration (Kumō no shōchō), a theoretical work which, to quote Cheng again, was "based on his simplistic contention that 'agony or frustration arising from the suppression of human vitality is the foundation of literature and art, and the way to express it is symbolism in its broad sense....a creative synthesis of his extensive knowledge of Western literary tradition." (p. 85.) "Obviously," Cheng comments, "even the title of Hakuson's Symbols of Frustration strongly appealed to Chinese intellectuals who sought ways to release their agony, anguish, and bitterness in those times of national and individual misfortune....Lu Xun, who translated both Symbols of Frustration and Leaving the Ivory Tower, wrote in the epilogue to the latter about his agony at being a confused observer at the Chinese crossroads. He urged his readers to forsake their historical burdens and follow Hakuson's example of fearless criticism of his own people and country". (p. 85.) On Lu Xun and Kuriyagawa, see also Li Oufan's study "Lu Xun and the Psychology of Modern Art" (Lu Xun yu xianzai yishu yishi), Dangdai (Taipai), 1987: 10, pp. 21-25. For a more detailed, although not unbiased, analysis of Lu Xun's appreciation of Kuriyagawa's work, see Xu Huaizhong, Lu Xun yu wenyi zhexiao liupai, pp. 119-42. See also Lung-kee Sun, "To Be or Not to Be 'Eaten', Lu Xun's Dilemma of Political Engagement", Modern China, Vol. XII, No. 4, October 1986, p. 474. Concerning the date and details of Feng's translation of Kumō no shōchō, see Deng Xiaolin's article "Anecdotes Concerning the Two Translations of Kumō no shōchō" (<<Kumende xiangzheng>> liangzhong yi bende yiyen), Yilan, 1983: 2, pp. 119-20; Chen Xing's Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 38-42; and, Zhuan, p. 56. Feng's translation of Kuriyagawa's book appeared as one of the Literature Research Society Publication Series in 1925, by Commercial Press; Lu Xun's was published by the Beixin shuju in late 1924 in the Weiminshu Series. Bonnie McDougall covers Kuriyagawa's fate in translation in her Western Literary Theories in Modern China, pp. 108-14, 117-18, mentioning both Feng and Lu Xun's translation of Symbols of Frustration, which she calls Symbols of Bitterness, on p. 108.
It is presumed by Shimizu Isao, the leading historian of the Japanese manga, that although the word manhua entered Chinese from Japanese as a loan word in the 20th Century, it is likely that the Japanese term manga actually had its origin in a Chinese word like manbi (casual writing, essay, belle-lettre).\(^{79}\) One of the earliest uses of the word manga, or mangaku, is to be found in a Japanese collection of essays entitled Mangaku zuihitsu written by Suzuki Kankō and published in 1771.\(^{80}\) The word mangaku appears in the title of the book although there is not a single essay about manga in the work, nor indeed any illustrations. Suzuki explains his reason for using the word in his introduction:

In the vast sea there dwells a bird called the mangaku. The creature spends its days wandering over the waters catching small fish, yet despite its exertions it can never satisfy its appetite. There is another kind of bird...that remains motionless, waiting for fish to swim in front of it; it is always sated. I am like the mangaku. I am inept at playing the koto, at chess, calligraphy, indeed in all the arts... my sole talent is that I can read. None the less, I too exert myself all day long without ever achieving repletion.\(^{81}\)

The native Japanese name for the mangaku is herasagi, a large species of egret common in Japan until the Meiji period. The word mangaku was later read as manga and subsequently used to denote pictures of scenes observed and depicted at random or in a casual manner. Shimizu notes that in 1769, two years before the publication of Suzuki's Mangaku zuihitsu, a posthumous collection of manga-like paintings by the artist Ei Ichchō (1652-1724) was published under the title Mangaku zakō gunchō kaku'ei, itself a play on words using Ei's name.\(^{82}\) Some two decades later in 1798,
Kitao Sei'en wrote in the introduction to his book *Shiji no yukikai*, "I often sit by the window of the shop and sketch (mangaku) the wayfarers who pass by at the crossroads, the wealthy and poor, men and women, young and old." But it was not until 1814, when Katsushika Hokusai published his *Hokusai manga* that the word *manga* actually entered the Japanese language as a popular term. Although the meaning of the word was to vary widely, in the case of Hokusai’s works it meant, according to Shimizu, "paintings done on the spur of the moment" (omoitsuku mama ni egaita e) or "casual essays done as paintings" (e de egaita zuihitsu). In the same year that Hokusai’s works appeared, a volume of humorous paintings of Kyoto women, the *Manga hyakujo* (literally "casual paintings of one hundred women"), was published, and in the following decades a number of collections of illustrations appeared with *manga* in their titles. It is impossible to know whether Hokusai was thinking of the *mangaku* bird when he named his book, although, as Shimizu concludes, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have had the already popular term *manpitsu* (manbi or suibi in Chinese) in mind.

Nonetheless, more established words such as *tōba-e*, named after the artist of the *Chūjū giga*, Toba Kakuyū (1053-1140), and *ōtsu-e*, originating in the township of Ootsu on the Tōkaidō outside Kyoto, continued to be used to denote the casual sketch throughout the Edo period, and even up to the Taishō era. In the Meiji period, the word *manga* came to be used alongside *toba-e, odoke'e, ponchi* (from the word "Punch"), *kyōga* and *giga; manga* being used more generally for large collections of ukiyoe such as *Ukiyoe manga* (published in 1882) and *Hōnen manga* (1885). Satirical illustrations, especially those that lambasted the government and the customs of the times, became increasingly popular during the Meiji period. The English artist Charles Wirgman (1835-1891) founded *The Japan Punch* in imitation of the British journal of humour in 1862, a move made possible by the extraterritorial rights guaranteed to foreigners residing in Yokohama. The French art teacher and

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83 *Edo no manga*, p. 176, with a reproduction of the original Chinese text on p. 177.
85 *Edo no manga*, p. 56.
86 *Edo no manga*, pp. 176-78. These books include such titles as *Kōrin manga* (published in 1817), *Kokkei manga* (1823), *Manga hitorikiiko* (1839), and so on.
87 *Edo no manga*, p. 178.
89 *Edo no manga*, p. 180.
itinerant artist George Bigot (1860-1927) started his own short-lived illustrated magazine Tōbaé in 1887, which he called "un journal satirique." Due to the pervasive influence of Wirgman's journal in the Meiji period and beyond, the word panchi (or ponchi, the Japanese equivalent of Punch) was generally used to denote satirical cartoons and came to convey something of the heady feeling of the "bunmei kaika", the Meiji Enlightenment. Overt political pressure on The Japan Punch finally led the editors to abandon their ambitious editorial style, and the magazine ended up as a comic journal for adolescents.

In the late 1890s the educationalist and reformer Fukuzawa Yukichi had his nephew Imaizumi Ippyō (?-1901) start up a cartoon column consisting of satirical drawings of current affairs in his paper the Jijishimpō. It was with the highly popular drawings of Kitazawa Rakuten (1876-1955), a young artist who joined the column somewhat later, that the word manga finally became the accepted equivalent for the Western "cartoon" and even "caricature" (karikechyūa in modern Japanese) during the Taishō and Shōwa periods. Shimizu believes that as the Jijishimpō already had a current affairs column called jiji mangen (literally "casual comments on current affairs"), Kitazawa decided to call the Sunday supplement of satirical drawings which he edited jiji manga to complement it. With the increasing popularity of Kitazawa's work, and of cartoons in newspapers generally, during the last years of the Meiji and throughout the Taishō periods, manga came to be used to refer exclusively to satirical cartoons on current affairs.

By the time Feng Zikai arrived in Japan the word manga had come to denote exclusively cartoons. The Chinese-ink sketches of Takehisa Yumeji with their poetic resonance could hardly compete. "Tastes have changed," Feng commented, "today people are more interested in manga which satirize our 'dog-eat-dog world' than paintings which have any lyrical quality."
In the autumn of 1927, little over two years after the inception of the manhua in China, the term was taken over by a group of eleven artists in Shanghai who formed themselves into the "Manhua Society" (Manhuahui). The group rejected the various popular Westernized names available to them such as cartoon (katong), satirical painting (fengcihua), caricature (choushian), humour (youmo), as well as the various Chinese words like slapstick picture (huaijihu), deciding instead to use the popular Japanese manga. In the words of Wang Dunqing, one of the founding members of the society, by so doing they "officially introduced the word manhua to China, initiating a process for the study of both the theory and technique of this art". Bi Keguan also suggests that since few of the artists in the society had graduated from art schools, their work went generally unrecognized by the conventional art world, including the new Western-style art institutions. For this reason their use of the word manhua was, to an extent, a reaction to this treatment and used as a calculated contrast to "conventional" (zhengtong) painting.

In the same year the Manhua Society published the first volume of the "Manhua Society Series", a collection of political works by the artist Huang Wennong. In April 1928, the weekly art magazine Shanghai manhua was founded. The works published in this journal were obviously influenced by Western cartoons and political caricatures as was the short-lived May Fourth period cartoon monthly, Shen Bochen's Shanghai Puck (Shanghai poke), from which in effect it was carrying on.
According to a one-time editor of *Shanghai manhua*, the artist Ye Qianyu, it was, in terms of the history of the political cartoon in China in the 1920s, "a magazine whose growth and demise encompassed the flourishing of the art of the manhua. When it closed [in June 1930], the initial stage of the manhua in China came to an end."¹⁰¹ By the mid-1930s when a number of cartoon magazines were flourishing in Shanghai, *manhua* had lost virtually all of its lyrical or non-satirical connotations. In an article written for a book devoted to the subject of the casual essay and *manhua* edited on behalf of *Taibai* magazine by Chen Wangdao in 1935, Lu Xun could write, "*Manhua* is a translation of the word *karikatur*, the man of *manhua* has absolutely nothing to do with what in olden times the literati meant when they talked about 'casually inscribing' (*man ti*) a painting, or 'writing something whimsically' (*man shu*)."¹⁰² He described *manhua* paintings as being devoted to "exposé, satire and even vilification."¹⁰³ Feng Zikai's contribution to the book was an article on his painting materials which, he said, he only managed to write after considerable thought and some prompting from a student. Interestingly, he made no mention of his understanding of the word *manhua* apart from echoing his student's comment that the *manhua* takes themes from everyday life and to be proficient in the art the artist required a grounding in sketching.¹⁰⁴

The rapid displacement of Feng as the sole artist of the *manhua* in the late 1920s did not deter him from continuing to use the term to refer to his own work, although, he was sorely aware of the confusion that would ensue. His comment on the subject was, "I think the question as to whether my paintings are indeed 'manhua' is still open to debate. This is because this word was never used in China before."¹⁰⁵

Surface things have changed, but deep down the mentality is the same as of old. So it is hardly surprising that satirical paintings (fengcihua) are immediately employed for the sake of character assassination.

This essay, "Random Thoughts, No. 43" (Suiganlu, 43), was printed in *Xinqingnian* in January 1919, the month after Shen's magazine closed down. See *Lu Xun quanjì*, Peking: Beijing renmin chubanshe, 1981, Vol. I, p. 330. Lu Xun has more to say about Shen Bochen in the same vein in "Random Thoughts", Nos. 46 and 53, again in *Lu Xun quanjì*, Vol. I, pp. 332-34, & 340-43.

¹⁰¹ Bi, Huang, *Zhongguo manhua shi*, p. 90.

¹⁰² "Casual Talk on manhua" (<manhua>, *Xiaopinwen he manhua*), edited by Chen Wangdao, Shanghai: Shenghuo shudian, 1935, reprinted Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1981, p. 10. A painting by Feng Zikai entitled "Rice and Beans" (Mi he dou) was used as the cover illustration of this book.

¹⁰³ "Casual Talk on manhua", p. 12. Similarly, in his essay "My manhua Theory" (Wode manhua lìlùn), the calligrapher Huang Miaozi wrote that "manhua are done to incite people, to stimulate them." *Xiaopinwen he manhua*, p. 61. Huang does admit, however, that as an art that relies on generalization and exaggeration the manhua can have a somewhat less bellicose aspect. (p. 60.) Another artist, Zhang E, said that "manhua artists in China today should turn every fountain pen, brush and eraser into a tool for struggle, and share in the common responsibility of all those who paint." (p. 147), while Ye Zi declared, in the style of Lu Xun, that the manhua should be a "dagger" (bishou) and a "spear" (touqiang), for paintings were "the only weapon an artist can use to engage in combat." (p. 206.)

¹⁰⁴ Chen Wangdao, *Xiaopinwen he manhua*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ As we have seen this was, strictly speaking, not the case.
The Japanese were the first to use these two Chinese characters together; yet there is no fixed definition for the term *manga* in Japanese. To my knowledge, *manga* covers Chinese style impromptu sketches (*jijiuhua*, or *jixinghua*) as well as the Western cartoon, even though these two forms are so vastly different in mood (*quwei*).[^106]

Having explained that *manga* covered both Western and Eastern artistic genres, Feng elucidated his own relationship with the word:

> The impromptu painting is rich in the sentiment of the pen and tone of ink (*bimo qingqu*), while the cartoon or caricature is concerned with satire and humour. The former is a matter of a scant number of brush strokes, the latter is the product of detailed and fine drawing executed with a pen... Generally speaking, one can understand the meaning of the term from the two characters of which it is composed: *man* meaning according to one’s wishes (*suìyi*); and whatever paintings are done according to such a whim (*suìyi*) can justifiably be called *manhua*. Indeed, the feeling I get doing a *manhua* is just the same as when I write an essay (*suìbi*); the only difference being the tools employed: one relies on lines, the other on words.[^107]

In his study of the *manhua*, *The Painting of manhua* (*Manhuade miaofa*), published in 1943, Feng Zikai elaborated a definition of the term that could cover both his own type of lyrical impromptu painting as well as the more political or humorous cartoons being published in the press. He called it "a sketch with an emphasis on content" (*jianbi er zhuzhong yiyide bian shi manhua*).[^108] He went on to divide

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[^106]: "My Painting", p. 309. This passage is quoted in Bi and Huang's *Zhongguo manhua shi*, p. 72, although the reference given is to another title for this essay, "Twenty Years of Painting manhua" (*Manhua chuangzuo ershinian*). Indeed, Huang Mao in *Manhua yishu jianghua*, p. 24, dismissed the importance of Feng's work and its place in the history of Chinese manhua as belonging to the Japanese school of painting. "[In the 1920s,] the Japanese manhua with the *quwei* of its clean and simple lines... was imported into China."

[^107]: "My Painting", p. 310; also *Manhuade miaofa*, p. 4, for a similar definition and Feng's view of the correspondence of *manhua* to *suìbi* or *xiaopin* essays. Feng clashed with some of his students over this question during the war. He records the incident in his *Jiaoshi riji*. He writes that he found his Guangxi students to be particularly obstinate in that when they were discussing material for blackboard propaganda against the Japanese, they demanded that essays and cartoons be divided into different columns on the board. I was opposed to this... for in my view all *manhua* are the same as prose writing, differing only in the mode of expression... Anyway, to attempt such a clear distinction between the two would result in an unattractive blackboard. Despite my explanation a couple of the students persisted in their argument, although neither of them made a convincing case in favour of their method; proof that they lack commonsense and were being purposefully obdurate. Nonetheless, I thought it best to go along with them. I'll be able get back at them when they next ask me to write something for them: I'll refuse on the grounds that my articles always have illustrations and therefore don't conform with their requirements. By playfully chiding them in this way, I might be able to show them how simple-minded their attitude is.

See *Jiaoshi riji*, p. 27.

manhua into three categories: the reflective or impressionistic manhua, a style of painting that both Bi Keguan and Christoph Harbsmeier call the "lyrical manhua" (ganxiang or shuqing manhua); the satirical manhua (fengci manhua); and, the propaganda manhua (xuanchuan manhua). In his description of the "lyrical manhua" Feng wrote that it was the "most artistic of manhua styles...it is born of sentiment (ganqing), springing from the artist's own nature, therefore it is quite unlike satirical paintings which aim at social criticism, or propaganda paintings which are done with a desired effect in mind. Such manhua are art because they may create a sympathetic response in people's hearts. As Mencius put it, 'What is common to all hearts? Reason (li) and rightness (yi). If the sentiments expressed in a painting conform with reason and rightness then they will result in a similar reaction in the viewer's mind, making it possible for hearts [of artist and audience] to communicate.'

Despite this rarefied view of the nature of manhua, Feng realized only too well that during the Anti-Japanese War his favoured form of the lyrical manhua was little more than an oddity, indeed, one that he had been criticized for championing on a number of occasions. Even the satirical cartoons which he had ranked second in

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109 Bi, Huang, Zhongguo manhua shi, p. 76; Bi Keguan, Manhua shitan, pp. 31, 35. In his chapter dealing with the types of manhua, Bi has replaced Feng's category of "propaganda manhua" with one called "eulogistic manhua" (gesong manhua), now one of the most universal expressions of this art form in Mainland China. Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 9. It is interesting to note the marked change in tone of Bi Keguan's writings concerning manhua over the years since the Cultural Revolution and the gradual reappraisal and recognition of the importance of Feng Zikai's work in the history of the Chinese manhua.

110 See Mengzi, VIA: 7; Mencius, translated by D. C. Lau, London: Penguin Books, 1970, p. 164. In his quotation from Mencius, Feng omitted the word wei (to be called). Lau has chosen to render yi as "rightness", although "righteousness" is a more common translation.

111 Manhuade miaofa, pp. 20-21.


113 One of the most celebrated examples of this was when Cao Juren, a writer and former high school classmate of Feng, suggested that the Husheng huaji should be put to the torch. See Xiaoshi riji, p. 95; and, Chen Xing, Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 116-18. An earlier instance was when Hu Feng wrote an essay included in the book Manhua he xiaopin entitled "Some Comments on 'Casual Essays' and 'manhua'" (Lietan 'xiaopinwen' yu 'manhua'), pp. 173-76. After declaring a youthful fondness for Feng's early children's cartoons, he commented that a recent work, "Grandmother Selling Gold Taels" (Mai jin yuanbaode zumu), published in the Ziyoutan of 5 March, 1935, was a reprehensible painting. "An old lady with her back to us carrying a string of gold taels, with a young child holding on to her
importance to lyrical *manhua* had been replaced by the propaganda cartoon during the war. "...As the struggle is so violent even satirical cartoons have lost their relevance and artists vie with each other to paint *manhua* in defense of one ism or another. The *manhua* has become a substitute for guns and cannon. So it is that the *manhua* of today are nearly all propagandistic..."\(^\text{114}\)

Even at a time when Feng's own works were showing clear evidence of an increased social awareness and patriotism, due in no small part to the destruction of his home and the flight he had undertaken with his family from Zhejiang to Guizhou in the face of the invading Japanese,\(^\text{115}\) his attitude to the real significance of his art was little changed from his earlier days. In his discussion of the types of *manhua* he comments that in the West art had only recently achieved an independent status, yet this subsequently led to criticisms for "hiding in an ivory tower". Now, chased out of its ivory tower, art was expected to "embrace life", therewith once more falling into the service of some ideology, to be used as a weapon in a new struggle.\(^\text{116}\) "But," he writes, "in China art has been independent for a long time. In the case of painting, it was liberated from utilitarianism as early as the Tang, becoming a pure form of art for the cultivation of the self (taoye xingling de chun yishu).\(^\text{117}\) If, indeed, all art is supposed to be propaganda, then we must ask what is the propagandistic aim of Bada's [Shanren] landscapes, or the flowers and grasses of Nantian [Yun Shouping]? Or, is it that we are now expected to think of these things as non-art? It is obvious that not all art is propaganda, nor do all *manhua* have to concentrate on propaganda...[due to the nature of *manhua*] they can most easily be used as weapons of conflict, and propagandistic *manhua* become increasingly common as the fighting becomes more fierce. It is no surprise then that people have forgotten the original and artistic nature of the *manhua*, and blindly come to believe that 'all *manhua* are propaganda', thus mistaking the stream for the spring, the fruit for the tree."\(^\text{118}\)

It is here that we find Feng Zikai in basic agreement with Zhou Zuoren's dislike of the use of literature for propaganda. In 1940 when commenting on the "literature for life" which he had promoted in the 1920s, Zhou points out that even such an

\(\text{skirt -- what's this supposed to mean?" "Manhua are supposed to act as a microscope, allowing an enlarged view of the world that the artist perceives... I for one am at a loss as to see what this simple two-dimensional and isolated scene is supposed to represent. It seems that in recent years Mr Zikai has found an enthusiasm for depicting superficial scenes of the lives of the poor, but if he fails to let his readers understand what relationship these people have with their surroundings, then the meaning of his works must remain obscure."}

\(\text{Chen Wangdao, \textit{Xiaopiwen yu manhua,} p. 176.}\)

\(\text{114 Manhuade miaofa, p. 34.}\)

\(\text{115 Discussed at length in Chapter Six.}\)

\(\text{116 Manhuade miaofa, ibid.}\)

\(\text{117 Over thirty years later, in the early 1970s, in an introduction to his last collection of \textit{manhua}, Feng used these same words to describe his own work. See Appendix I.}\)

\(\text{118 Manhuade miaofa, p. 35.}\)
innocuous literary platform should not be promoted as such, for "it might easily turn into the vocabulary of gangsters or the attitude of charitable old ladies." In general, Feng advocated that art should be seen as something that was non-utilitarian or useless, much like Yu Pingbo, and in his book on the manhua he was critical of Upton Sinclair's famous statement that "all literature is propaganda", bewailing the fact that the true nature of the manhua was being perverted.

Explaining his own engaged wartime works and the transitory nature of political manhua, Feng went on to say that, "We must hold it in mind that just as war is a distortion of normal life, so propagandistic manhua are a distortion of the art of the manhua. I have no objection to painting propagandistic manhua for the sake of defending righteousness and humanitarianism, but we must not forget that this is not the original nature of manhua, which is art." Ironically, the lyrical manhua as developed by Feng Zikai was, by 1949 barely even recognized as manhua, or at best seen as being peculiar to one artist: Feng Zikai. Although recent writers on the subject acknowledge Feng as a manhua artist, and as the author of a highly individual form of the art, he is not regarded as belonging to the mainstream of art in China.

A note on the meaning of the word manhua written by Zhu Jinlou for the first issue of a new manhua magazine called simply Manhua and published in 1950, best sums up the politicized aspect of the term that remained in prominence in Mainland China for the rest of Feng Zikai's life:

The manhua is an art form that is most intimately aligned with politics; it, above all other arts, can reflect reality with immediacy. It is a form of painting which employs such methods as "super exaggeration" and "exaggeration through the use of metaphor", as well as plain and straightforward means to praise and encourage, educate and elucidate, satirize and expose. It is a type of painting that is not restricted to newspapers, wall posters, placards, handbills and cartoon strips.

119 From "The Tradition of Chinese Literature" (Hanwenxuede chuantong), Yuotang zawen, p. 5, quoted in Pollard, A Chinese Look at Literature, p. 35.
120 In his 1925 essay "The Alienation of Literature and its Independence" (Wenxuede youli yu qi duzai), Zaba er zi yi, Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1982, p. 4, Yu wrote, "Is it [literature] nothing more than a rootless flower, a stream without a source, a husk bereft of content? If you accept this to be the case, then in the life of man art and literature not only has no great purpose, it is quite simply a useless excrecence."
121 Manhuade miaofa, pp. 34-35; Zhou Zuoren was equally negative in his appraisal of this saying. See Pollard, A Chinese Look at Literature, pp. 35, 46.
122 Manhuade miaofa, p. 36.
123 "Explaining the Term manhua" (Shi manhua), quoted in Manhua shitan, pp. 2-3. A more recent definition of the word manhua gives us some idea of how much wider the interpretation of the word has become since the Cultural Revolution:

Originally the manhua was an artistic form for which there were no prescribed materials or technique, the only essentially element being that the thinking behind it and its mode of expression had to be dissimilar to conventional
One of the dilemmas for Chinese artists and critics in the early part of the century was finding a suitable name for their own form of art, be it traditional scholar painting or the product of some Western-inspired reform. In 1935, the editor and writer Sun Fuxi saw the crux of the problem as being in the fact that there remained a distinct division between Chinese and Western art even within China. Something had to be done about the word "Chinese painting" (guohua) and the concept behind it.

We open a silk scroll and immediately think to ourselves "Zhonghuohua". Needless to say, what we mean by this is that it is a painting done in the fashion of the ancients. The artist would feign from touching on new subject matter, or enploying new techniques. This is because he wants to create a Zhongguohua, and if he used new materials, or the techniques of painters in oils then someone would be sure to say, "This is not Zhongguohua!"124

Sun thought that the first step in dealing with the problem was to introduce a change in nomenclature. "If we want to make any progress, then we have no choice but to get rid of the words Zhongguohua and Xiyanghua."125 For the artists of the Lingnan School (Lingnanpai), painters, "reformers" who melded Chinese and Western art in an uneasy and often ungainly form, the answer was to call their work "New Chinese Painting" (xinguohua)126 In the case of Feng Zikai, the solution was simple, although not one of his own formulation. He called his style of syncretic art manhua and, as we have seen in the above, he had no difficulties in relating this both to traditional Chinese "eidetic art" (see the following chapter for a discussion of this term), as well as its Japanese offshoots, and to the Western artistic approach of sketching. It was also an ideal vehicle for the expression of the romantic spirit that

painting. Satire and humour are its most outstanding elements, and in fact something unique to the manhua.

See Zhongguo manhua shi, p. 1. Fang Cheng, the Peking Renmin ribao cartoonist and scholar of humour, has also published collections of articles on manhua which he interprets exclusively as signifying "comical or satirical cartoons". See Youmo, fengci, manhua, Peking: Sanlian shudian, 1982, pp. 5-12, 58-76, 96-98; also Fang's Jichuji, Peking: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1987, pp. 109-11.

124 From "A Discussion of the Future of Chinese Art" (Zhongguo yishu qiantu zhi tantao), quoted in Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, Zhongguo xiandai huahu shi, p. 149.

125 Ibid. After 1949, despite Feng's reputation as a "mere" manhua artist, he was appointed to head the newly established Shanghai Academy of Chinese Art (Zhongguohua yuan) in 1960. See Appendix I.

126 Gao Jianfu, the founder of the school, developed his thoughts in the article "My View of Modern Painting (xinguohua)" (Wode xianzaihua -- xinguohua -- guan), Meishu lunji, No. 4, 1986, edited by Shen Peng and Chen Lusheng, pp. 50-60; Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 89-91. Feng's views of art in respect to the Lingnan School are discussed in Chapter Eight below.
characterized his earlier work. Once (re)introduced to China in the 1920s by Zheng Zhenduo, however, the fate of the word *manhua* was beyond Feng's control, and within a few years of adopting the term to describe his art he paradoxically found himself to be the practitioner of an obscure and little-recognized form of the *manhua*. The necessities of the time, the social and commercial milieu of Shanghai, and above all the taste and aims of artists changed the connotations of the word so that rather than being able to discuss the history of Feng Zikai's school of *manhua* in China today, we can only talk of Feng's peculiar form of lyrical *manhua*.  

Huang Mao, an early historian of the Chinese *manhua*, thought Feng's work so insignificant that he gave it only four lines in his study of the subject. However, in his laconic comment he touched on an essential aspect of Feng's artistic achievement. "The main element [of Zikai *manhua*] is the use of lines done with brush and ink which retain the essential mood (*qingdiao*) of Chinese art...he depicts the trivia of family life, certain aspects of the society and the unsullied emotions of children. They have been consistently well-received by students and young intellectuals." This is, on the other hand, a credit to Feng since, despite many attempts to imitate his work, the "Zikai *manhua*" remains a very personal artistic form.

127 Richard Gilman in his masterful essay *Decadence: The Strange Life of an Epithet*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980, pp. 20-21, describes the process of lexical displacement rather well. "A word, after all, is a sign for a thing, an action, a quality, or a condition, and signs have a way of breaking loose from their fixed positions or of being uprooted from them. When time, duration, enters in as a protracted influence the word as sign may come to find itself at a great remove form the actuality it was once employed to indicate. It would be like a piece of wreckage with a ship's name on it floating away from a sulken hulk, or a marker in the desert pointing to a vanished city. The word retains a reality, a fragment of consciousness clings to it, but there is nothing 'real' to which it now corresponds." As we will see in the case of the *manhua* the political and social upheavals of China in the 1920s and 1930s compressed Gilman's "protracted influence" of time into a very short period.

128 *Manhua yishu jianghua*, pp. 24-25.
Chapter 4: 
Poetry, Likeness and quwei

After thirty years of life in this world of ours, I have had more than enough of the suffering, anger, belligerence and sadness which are ever present; and I find it very trying to be subjected to repeated doses of stimulants designed to evoke these emotions when I go to the theatre or read a novel. I want a poem which abandons the commonplace, and lifts me, at least for a short time, above the dust and grime of the workaday world; not one which rouses my passions to an even greater pitch than usual. ¹

The use of poetic inscriptions, either of the artist's own composition or the works of others had been common in Chinese painting since the Song Dynasty. Paintings inspired by lines of classical Chinese poetry were prominant in Feng Zikai's earliest published work. It was within the tradition of scholar painting, or xieyihua, in particular in the mixing of painting with poetry, "the literary aspect of art" as Feng called it, that he found the earliest model for his work. It was also in his personalized form of scholar painting, where he could combine the painted line of the sketch with the calligraphic stroke of poetry, that Feng found the ideal form for the manhua art he had admired in both Japan and China. But above all, he was most keenly aware of the relevance to modern man of the sensibility and emotions of the authors of famous lines of poetry. It is through his reinterpretation of his favourite lines of classical verse that he launched his personal effort to create "an experimental form of art...using Western principles in Chinese artistic expression"².

His "new paintings from old poems" allowed him to create an art form that he felt was both Western in its use of sketching techniques and observation of everyday life, while still being part of the lyrical and imaginative tradition of Ming and Qing

¹ This is a quotation from Natsume Soseki's Kusamakura, Feng Zikai's favourite Japanese novel which he first translated into Chinese for publication in 1958, and retranslated during the Cultural Revolution. For this English version, see The Three Cornered World, translated by Alan Turney, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1967, p. 19; the original text is Kusamakura, Tokyo: Shinsho bunko, 1985, p. 10. This quote is used by Feng Zikai in his essay "Temporary Escape from the Dusty World" (Zanshi tuoli chenshi) written in 1972, see Suibiji, p. 454. For Feng's own published translation, see Xiama Shushi xuanji, translated by Kai Xi and Feng Zikai, Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1958, Vol. II, p. 118.

² "Introduction to My Hong Kong Exhibition" (Xianggang huazhan zixu), in Feng Zikai huazhan tekan, Sing-tao jih-pao, 15 April, 1949.
scholar painting. The relationship of art to literature, of formal likeness to poetic expression, were central to his thinking and activities in the 1920s and 1930s.

Feng's first published paintings appeared in the pages of *Wenxue zhoubao* in May 1925, around the time of the May Thirtieth Incident, a point of departure for the politicization of Feng Zikai's generation of intellectuals. Although Feng would remain sympathetic to the trials of the labourers of China, he never became politically active in the manner of other members of his generation like Mao Dun, a native of the district next to Feng's home, or Cao Juren, a fellow student of Li Shutong, or even his friend Ye Shengtao. The nature of his artistic pursuit, his interest in self-expression as an artist, his emphasis on the cultivation of an "artistic heart" as a teacher and the pursuit of "interest" (taste, flavour) or *quwei* in his essays and personal life aligned Feng instead with such writers as Yu Pingbo, his former colleague Zhu Guangqian, as well as both Zhou Zuoren and Lin Yutang.

4: 2 Paintings from Poetry

As we have noted, Zheng Zhenduo was initially attracted to Feng Zikai's paintings of classical poetry because, as he put it, "Zikai has not merely given us a pictorial representation of the sentiment of that ancient poem [by Xie Wuyi]; he has done no less than transform it into an even more beguiling and ethereal vision." The first paintings Zheng had printed in *Wenxue zhoubao* were of a similarly other-worldly character. They were, like the illustration of the line from Xie, taken from classical poetry, and although they constituted a striking change for Chinese literary journalism, from the very beginning these paintings tended to be out of keeping with the mood of the magazine as a whole.

The first picture published in the weekly, "The swallows return but not he" (Yan gui ren bu gui) [4: 1] was, appropriately enough, placed on a page of love songs by the Greek poet Philodemus translated from English by Zheng Zhenduo. In it we have the most characteristic symbols of Feng's early work: swallows flying into view, in fact breaking the border of the picture, and the young growth of a willow in the spring. Both of these traditional symbols of longing and spring complement the mood of the lovesick young woman who is leaning on what is decidedly a modern-looking balcony.

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3 *Zikai manhua*, p. 3; and Chen Xing's *Xiaosa fengshen*, p. 24-25.

4 They were not, however, an innovation in Shanghai journalism. Even as early as 1912 *The True Record* (*Zhenxiang huabao*), the first illustrated magazine, had used ink sketches as graphic material between articles and as mastheads.

5 *Wenxue zhoubao*, No. 172, 10 May, 1925.
However, the correlation between Feng's paintings and the contents of the weekly were not always so felicitous, and only a few weeks later the painting "The jade-green [of willows] caresses the heads of passers-by", one of Feng's most famous early paintings, was printed alongside the third installment of an article by Mao Dun entitled "On Proletarian Literature".6 [4: 2] This issue of the magazine appeared the day after the May Thirtieth Incident in which a number of students were killed during a confrontation with British officered police in Shanghai's International Settlement, leading to widespread disturbances throughout China.7 It is interesting that Feng did not have another painting in the weekly for over six weeks, and the next picture of his to appear was "The Vote" a decidedly poetic depiction of a vote-taking at what appears to be a public meeting.8 [4: 3] It was a period that marked a highpoint in the politicization of the intellectuals of Feng's generation, but one that appears to have made little immediate impact on him.9 His paintings of poetry did not start appearing in the pages of the magazine again until early August.

As one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Feng's paintings, Zhu Ziqing also found in these pictures something quite new. "We are delighted by your manhua because of their lyrical dimension (you shiyi). Each painting is like a short poem, a poem with a very special kernel. You reveal to us a poetic world in captured images and fleeting moments. It is as though you have given us olives to eat: they have a flavour that lingers."10

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6 Wenxue zhoubao, No. 175, 31 May, 1925.
8 Wenxue zhoubao, No. 182, 19 July, 1925. It would be simple to interpret this work as political, since it is possible that it illustrates the scene at one of the protest meetings called in Shanghai by concerned public, educational and literary organizations. As a member of the Literature Research Society, a signatory of the joint protest issued by groups in Shanghai, Feng may have been at a meeting where such a vote was taken. While there is reasonable to speculate that Feng was as shocked and outraged by the incident by his fellows (their reactions are described in Schwartz, see previous note), it is also obvious from the painting that the willowy configuration created by the swaying arms all raised in support of (or opposition to) a motion was the thing that caught Feng's eye and led to this sketch.
9 Ye Shengtao (1893-1988), a friend and colleague of Feng's, was much more deeply affected by the events of 1925. Both his novel Ni Huanzhi (1928) and his later story "The English Professor" (Yingwen jiaoshou), written in 1936, featured the May Thirtieth Movement as the key event which forces a saintly teacher to face China's tragedy. See C.T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, pp. 64-66; and Rigby, The May 30 Movement, pp. 256-57. Hsia notes that following this patriotic awakening, the hero of the story "works tirelessly for the revolutionary cause, until with the massacre of Communists in 1927 he suffers a nervous breakdown and turns to Buddhism for solace" (p. 65), and although the tone of the story is critical of the pacifism of the teacher, Hsia sees it as evidence of a form of "self-criticism", since Ye was friendly with both Feng Zikai and the Dharma Master Hongyi in the 1930s at the time he wrote the story. (p. 66.)
10 Zikai manhua, p. 14; also quoted in Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 9. Feng's works were not the only ones referred to as having something of the lingering flavour of the olive. Zhou Zuoren said that the school of essay writing represented by Yu Pingbo and Fei Ming was "as acerbic
Feng’s paintings of lines of poetry were hardly an innovation, indeed, it had been common among scholar-painters since the Song Dynasty when Su Shi made the famous comment that there was poetry in Wang Wei’s painting and painting in his poetry,\(^1\) and by the reign of Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty (reigned 1101-1125), candidates for the Imperial Art Academy were being tested by illustrating lines of poetry.\(^1\)

On the surface it may seem surprising that Feng Zikai should choose lines from classical poetry as the major source for his early work. Despite the years he spent assiduously acquiring an understanding and training in Western art and the fact that he began painting for publication shortly after the beginning of the May Fourth period, the most iconoclastic era in Chinese cultural history, it was in the familiar and in fact highly restricted area of traditional prosody that he found an inspiration for some of his most memorable, indeed some of his most successful, works. Yet it is in the very nature of the relationship of Chinese poetry to Chinese painting that Feng may have found a key to his own approach to art, what he called the “literary perspective of an artist”. “When I read landscape poems by ancient Chinese writers,” he said in an article on perspective in art written in 1930, “I often discover that they definitely have a sense of perspective, even if it is intangible. So it is clear that both painters and poets observe nature from the same angle, the only difference between them being that the former uses forms and colours while the latter uses words to express the same thing.”\(^1\)

Feng had an experience during his early days as a teacher, presumably when he was still at Chunhui High School, which may have led him to embark upon the initial phase of his painting career of depicting poetry in his paintings. The incident occurred at the height of his interest in outdoor sketching in the early 1920s. He had taken a leave of absence from his school to spend some time sketching with a friend who lived as the taste of an olive”. See Zhou Zuoren, “In Memory of Zhimo” (Zhimo jinian), Kanyunji, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932, p. 122.


\(^1\) “The Unique Character of Chinese Art”, (Zhongguohuahua tese), Dongfang zazhi, Vol. XXIV, No. 11, 1926, pp. 49-50, where Feng gives the most famous examples of this method of examination.

\(^1\) “Perspective in Literature” (Wenxuezhongde yuanjinfa), Huihua yu wenxue, Hong Kong: Hongtu tushu gongsi, 1978, p. 1. The question of perspective in art and its place in Feng’s own artistic view is dealt with at length in Chapter Eight.
by West Lake in Hangzhou. Feng went out on the lake at dusk one day, hopeful of being able to sketch the moonlit lake scene. His attempts to catch the mood of the evening on paper were frustrated, having failed to strike the right balance of colour between the lake, the hills and the moon, and he returned home dejected. His friend, a fellow whose passion was in poetry not painting, looked through the sketches and recited a line from the Tang poet Zhao Jia's "Reflections on the Past from a Riverside Pavilion" (Jianglou ganjiu), "The moonlight is like water,/ The water like the sky" (yueguang ru shui/ shui ru tian), and then, with a sigh, finished the poem, "Where is the person who came to watch the moon with me [last time]?/ The scene is unclear as it was last year" (tong lai wan yue ren hezai? fengjing yixi si qunian). Thereupon the poet lay down on his bed and give himself over to solitary reflection.14

Feng's turning away from Western art and the techniques he had been trained in from his high school days was, as we have seen above, a gradual process of which he became conscious only during his period in Japan. There is little evidence to prove which crucial incident, or series of incidents, finally led him to develop his personal form of syncretic art, but certainly this episode was of considerable importance. It was after this, Feng comments, "the eye of the poet is a wonderous thing, and those who study painting must read poetry."15 Having come to this realization he made a point of "reading poetry (shici) at leisure whenever [not] painting."16 After observing how two lines of poetry by Bai Juyi could capture the essence of a scene at the Su Causeway in Hangzhou far more successfully than his own efforts at painting it, he said that, "I began to pay careful attention to the description of scenery in poetry, and whenever I came across particularly good lines I would write them down on a strip of paper which I would place on my desk to recite and enjoy at leisure."17 Sometimes, although tempted to paint a scene, Feng would find that he could equally satisfy himself by reading some poetry, "Thus the release I found in poetry was greater than that provided by painting."18 Here we see not only an artist who discovered inspiration in the correlation between poetry and painting, but also a man who does not give into the temptation to paint a scene in imitation of some poetic model, unless he

14 "Sketching in Literature" (Wenxuede xiesheng), Hua hua yu wenxue, p. 16. The poem is quoted again in this article on p. 38.
15 "Sketching in Literature", p. 16.
16 "Sketching in Literature", p. 17.
17 "Sketching in Literature", ibid.
18 "Sketching in Literature", ibid. We find in the writings of such connoisseurs as Li Rihua (1565-1635) of the Ming Dynasty a considerable emphasis on the artist's need to read poetry. See Wu Lipu's "An Essay on There is Poetry in Painting", p. 237. However, as Wu points out, by the time of the Ming there was a tendency among scholar-artists "...to let the reading of poetry replace the artist's study of nature...indirect experience was replacing direct experience with the result that artists were becoming divorced from reality." Feng Zikai's poetry paintings were, to an extent, an attempt to combine his fascination with classical poetry and his long years of training in sketching from life.
felt he could present his own particular appreciation of a scene or poem. This confirms the impact Takehisa Yumeji's art had on Feng Zikai. He had initially been drawn to Yumeji's work not for its pictorial content alone, but also because of the Japanese artist's use of inscriptions on his paintings. It was this aspect of "literati painting" (wenrenhua) that he believed to be at the centre of the Chinese artistic tradition with which he aligned himself. He rationalized the use of literary references in a painting in a pointed reaction to the 1930s debate concerning "mass art and literature" (dazhong wenyi) by saying that language was the form of art that was most easily popularized, and to combine it (that is lines of poetry and literary inscriptions) with art could create a mass art form that was a viable continuation of traditional painting.

A number of writers have commented that in both Chinese art and in classical writing "the emphasis is always on interpretation rather than on invention." As Simon Leys says, "For a painter or a poet, the question is not how to eliminate stereotypes, but how to handle them in such a way that, through the stereotypes, the 'current' may flow. Under the efficient power of qi, a conventional mountain-and-water combination can then become a microcosmic creation, the worn-out image of falling flowers can turn into a poignant and universal metaphor of fate, and the old cliché of the abandoned woman on her balcony becomes an effective summing-up of the entire human condition."
Feng Zikai's choice of poetry as his first artistic theme was one that was hallowed in Chinese tradition and perhaps a natural step for an artist who wanted, through his own work, to reinterpret conventional images and stereotypes, ones such as the willow, swallows, mournful women, lonely evening scenes, and other such images as we see in his early paintings; images which were taken from the most popular and well-known classical poems available to him. Feng had himself enjoyed classical poetry from his youth, although, he said, he rarely liked poems in their entirety, invariably preferring only one couplet or line in a poem rather than the work as a whole. "When," he wrote, "I felt I couldn't find enough satisfaction in reciting that one line, I'd often translate (fanyi) it into a painting and put it aside to enjoy at leisure." This is a sentiment not all that different from that expressed by the Song Dynasty artist Guo Si in his commentary on The Great Message of Forests and Springs (Linquan gaozhi), the famous treatise by his father Guo Xi, in which he records lines from poetry that are suitable for inspiring the thoughts of a painter. In fact, one of the last lines Guo quotes is from a poem by the Tang writer Wei Yingwu (737-786 or later), and one which Feng illustrated in his earliest Zikai manhua.26

The series of "new paintings of old poems" (gushi xinhua) which Feng did in the mid-1920s grew out of his habit of "translating" poems, a form of appreciation of classical poetry, that was, in Feng's words, a type of "passive creation". In commenting on the paintings and poetry of the Tang poet Wang Wei, Su Shi had summed up the relationship between the two art forms in the statement, "In every poem by Wang Wei there is a painting, and in every one of his paintings there is a

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24 "My manhua", p. 310.

...Indeed as a man of former times said: 'a poem is a picture without form, a picture a poem in form.' Wise men have often discussed this (saying), and we have made it our teacher.

I have therefore in my leisure hours looked through some poems of the Jin and Tang periods and sometimes found among them excellent verses which express the things which are in a man's heart or the views which present themselves to his eyes.

...I have recorded some of the beautiful verses of ancient poets, which my father used to recite and which contain excellent thoughts for painting.

26 The line is "There is no one at the crossing and the boat moves over the river by itself" (ye du wen ren zhou zi heng), from Wei's poem "Chuzhou xijian". See Zhongguo hualun leibian, p. 641, and, Zikai manhua, p. 53. Feng's interpretation of Wei's poem was criticized by Yu Pingbo who took a somewhat too doctrinaire approach to some of Feng's early paintings. Basing his interpretation of the poem on notebook comments on the poem, Yu pointed out that in fact the boatman was asleep in the bow of the craft and it wandered into the centre of the river unattended as no one wanted to make the crossing. Yu was of the opinion that it was unnecessary for Feng to leave out the boatman altogether and not really in keeping with the meaning of the poem. See Yu Pingbo, "A Few Words on Zikai's Manhua" (Guanyu Zikai manhuade jijuhua), Yiban, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 122. This critique is discussed at length below.
poem", 27 or as Leys puts it, "The aesthetic principles and expressive techniques of poetry have a pictorial character. The aesthetic principles and expressive techniques of painting have a poetical character." 28 The relationship between painting and poetry was something that held a continuing fascination for Feng, and he wrote a number of articles of some length on the subject in the early 1930s. The most important of these were the essays "Perspective In Literature" (Wenxuezhongde yuanjinfa), 29 "Sketching in Literature" (Wenxuedexiesheng), 30 both written in early 1930 for Zhongxuesheng, "Painting and Literature" (Huihua yu wenxue), 31 and "Perspective in Chinese Painting" (Zhongguohua yu yuanjinfa), 32 from late 1933. Feng's comments on the question of perspective in Chinese painting will be discussed in Chapter Eight below.

His writings on the subject of the relationship between literature and art, in particular between Chinese poetry and painting, dealt with his observations on the fact that Chinese poets demonstrate a painter's eye for perspective and scale, while painters have tended to express a poet's appreciation of scenery.

When Feng Zikai referred to this paradoxical situation, he wrote:

"Chinese art really is mysterious: when composing a poem the artist is quite capable of representing a three-dimensional scene on a flat surface; but when he is faced with the flat surface of paper on which to paint, he is incapable of representing objects as he sees them and produces works with faulty perspective." 33

A number of Feng Zikai's comments on this subject were echoed in the writings of Zong Baihua, a scholar of aesthetics, in the late 1940s, 34 and Chiang Yee, a writer best known to Western readers for the "silent traveller" series of travelogues, thought so highly of Feng's articles on poetry and perspective that he drew on them extensively when writing a chapter entitled "Painting and Literature" in the book The

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29 "Perspective In Literature" (Wenxuezhongde yuanjinfa), reprinted in Huihua yu wenxue, pp. 1-15.
30 "Sketching in Literature" (Wenxuedexiesheng), Huihua yu wenxue, pp. 16-39.
31 "Painting and Literature" (Huihua yu wenxue), pp. 40-51.
32 "Perspective in Chinese Painting" (Zhongguohua yu yuanjinfa), pp. 52-71.
33 "Chinese Painting and Perspective", Huihua yu wenxue, p. 52. Again in this article he says, "I have previously said in 'Perspective in Literature' that, 'Chinese poets favour an artist's approach to writing about scenery'. Now I should add that 'Chinese painters' favour a poet's view in their painting', producing an intermingling of poetry and painting." (p. 67.)
34 See, for example, the essay "The Depiction of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting" written in 1949 and reprinted in Meixuedesanbu (I), Zong Baihua, Taipei: Hongfan shudian, 1984, third edition, pp. 25-52, in particular pp. 31-36. For a study of Zong's aesthetic theories on Chinese art, see Lin Tonghua's Zong Baihua meixue sizhang yanjiu, Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1987, pp. 160-223. Lin completed his graduate studies under Zong and is now a research fellow at the Shanghai Academy of Social Science.
Chinese Eye published in 1935, failing, however, to acknowledge his indebtedness to Feng. But, as for the reasons Feng was drawn to this form of painting to express himself, we should again note the influence of Takehisa Yumeji. In the essay "Painting and Literature" mentioned above, Feng discussed at length the strong impression Takehisa's paintings had made on him and how a number of them had brought lines of poetry to mind. As he said in summation:

....The reason such paintings could move me so deeply is that they combined the beauty of image (xingxiangde mei) with a beauty of significance (yiyide mei). In other words, they had both an artistic and a literary effect on me...one could say that they were poems which the artist had created with a means other than words.36

When Feng Zikai's first works were published regularly in the pages of Wenxue zhoubao, the artist did hear some criticisms of his innovative approach to traditional culture. In particular one writer questioned his painting "In silence I mount the western pavilion alone" (Wu yan dushang xilou), which was an interpretation of a line from a famous ci poem by the emperor Li Houzhu (Li Yu, 937-978) of the Later Tang Dynasty.37 It had been published in the magazine after the hiatus mentioned above,38 and it was also selected as the first painting in the volume Zikai manhua.

"The fellow in your painting is Emperor Li," said the critic. "By all rights he should be in classical garb. What are you doing painting a modern-day man in a scholar's gown?"39 [4: 5] Feng's reply was both succinct and enlightening:

I am not painting historical pictures; nor, for that matter, am I doing illustrations for a volume of Li Houzhu's poetry. What I have done is to express the feeling I had when I read Li's poem. As I am in the modern world, it is only natural that my reaction is to create a modern image....Such a painting is, to my mind, proof that Li's poem is a timeless work; my appreciation of it is little more than passive creativity.40


36 "Painting and Literature", p. 45.


38 Wenxue zhoubao, No. 184, 2 August, 1925.


40 "My manhua", p. 311.
Indeed, Feng’s appreciation for Li Houzhu was not restricted to doing paintings inspired by his poetry.

In an article on Chinese art written in October 1926, a little over a year after this painting was published, Feng defended both Li Houzhu and the poet-painter Wang Wei, both figures who were traditionally regarded as having been disloyal moral cowards who submitted to invaders. Feng, however, regarded these poets as having given full expression to their feelings of loyalty and loneliness in their poetry, and in high romantic dudgeon he asked:

Why did they have to die after denouncing the bandits, or cut their throats in their ancestral halls just to prove that they were loyal ministers or a wise ruler? "What need is there of ancestral halls, the altar of the dynasty and such filthy things as long as one’s sentiments are sincere, good and beautiful?" I'm quite willing to exhaust myself in defence of [their] disloyalty.41

It was not common for a man who had aligned himself with a progressive group such as the Literature Research Society to express such sentiments at a time of increasing national crisis (indeed, one would expect it more from an early Creationist); it is even more surprising that he continued to paint his "translations" of classical poetry and have them published without becoming the object of greater criticism.

Ironically, the first negative criticism of Feng Zikai’s paintings, and one aimed principally at his new paintings for old poems, came from Yu Pingbo, the poet whose work Feng had previously illustrated. Feng had published a handwritten codicil by Yu to the volume Zikai manhua. In that postscript the poet said that although they had never met, Feng had revealed his soul to him through his paintings. Painting may have become more akin to poetry by accepting poetry as part of its world of expression following the Song Dynasty, said Yu, and in Feng Zikai’s work he saw the first attempt to combine a Westernized technique with Chinese poetry, "retaining the space and leisure of Chinese art without sacrificing the energy and fullness of Western painting." 42 "Although these may be impromptu creations done on the spur of the moment, their genius (miao) is in that very carefree expression [of yours]."43

To base paintings on poems, or even to illustrate poems had been, Yu commented, a common practice in Chinese art for ages. "But, as far as I know, you are the first to create a Chinese poetic world by using a Western method [of

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41 "The Unique Character of Chinese Art", p. 47.
42 Zikai manhua, p. 98.
43 Zikai manhua, ibid.
Although not sure of the success of Feng’s innovation, Yu did declare himself to be a wholehearted supporter of it, humbly claiming that Feng’s illustrations had “detracted from the embarrassment” of his poems in Yi. “Your paintings” he told Feng, “are your poems.”

Yu Pingbo’s enthusiasm was not quite so unfettered when, less than a year later, he wrote “A Few Words on Zikai’s Manhua” (Guanyu Zikai manhuade jizhuhua) for Yiban, the monthly journal published by the Li Da Academy where Feng was teaching. It might be appropriate here to refer to Yu’s comments on a number of Feng’s paintings.

The first painting Yu criticized was “The curtain flutters in the west wind; She is thinner still than the yellow flowers” (Lian juan xifeng ren bi huanghua shou), and was inspired on a line from Li Qingzhao’s (1084-?1151) poem “Zuihuayin”. Yu thinks it unnecessary to even paint the woman -- to his eye her face is too elongated and unattractive -- a bamboo curtain and some withering chrysanthemums would have been more than enough to indicate the wan appearance of a woman who is longing for someone.

Yu’s second comment is far more niggardly. The painting “Lying down I look at the Cow Herd and Weaving Maiden” (Wokan qianniu zhinil xing) is based on a line from Du Mu’s (803-?852) poem “The Seventh of the Seventh” (Qixi). Yu says that the candle on the table and the screen are based on the first line of the poem, yet the artist has ignored one important fact: that the stars in the sky would be invisible from a room with a bright candle burning in it; he also points out that the alarm clock and window frame clash with other elements of the painting. But the most fundamental error in the artist’s depiction of the poem, he claims, is that the scene described is based on the perspective of someone lying down outside and not in a room. It is hard to say whether Feng took this friendly correction to heart, especially as in a volume named New Paintings for Old Poems (Gushi xinhua) which the artist compiled during the Anti-Japanese War as part of a complete collection of his paintings, Feng included a new version of this painting which differs from the original work only in that his brushwork is less “sketchy” and that the calligraphic inscription

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44 Zikai manhua, ibid.
45 Zikai manhua, ibid.
46 See Yiban, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 120-26. This article was reprinted in Yu’s essay collection Zaba er shi yi, pp. 123-26. A number of paragraphs including those dealing with Yu’s favourite pictures in Zikai manhua have been inexplicably deleted from this later version.
47 Zikai manhua, p. 37; Li Qingzhao ji, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1962, p. 11.
48 Yiban, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 120.
49 Zikai manhua, p. 38, Yiban, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 120-21; and for Du Mu’s poem, also entitled ”Autumn Evening” (Qiuxi) see Quan Tang shi, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1960, 8: 6002.
is on the left top-hand corner within the frame of the painting. Before this he had published a painting entitled "Cow Herd and Weaving Maiden Stars" (Qianniu zhinü xing) in 1935. Unlike the earlier painting, it is set under the open sky, although the scene is of a mother and child on bamboo stools fanning themselves and looking into the summer night.

These criticisms certainly tell us something of Yu Pingbo's appreciation, or lack thereof, for Feng Zikai's painting. They indicate how contemporaries of Feng were reacting to his art; although it should be noted that Yu was one of Feng's contemporaries who admired his work. It is evident that Yu had failed to grasp the essential elements of these paintings. The most obvious of these was that Feng was not troubled by the fact that he was taking lines from poems out of context. He did at times use elements from the poem as a whole, as in the case of Du Mu's "The Seventh of the Seventh", but at best this was a random decision. Yu was expecting the artist to retain the mind-set (yijing) of the poem as understood traditionally, and thereby failed to appreciate an essential element of Feng's innovation, that he was recasting popular, almost clichéd lines of poetry in terms of a personal, modern interpretation.

Yu's reaction to the poems -- the somewhat dogmatic tone of which is surprising only in that it was coming from a young man -- is due to the fact that he had failed to appreciate that Feng's works were in keeping with traditional xieyi painting: they were the result of personal inspiration. Another aspect of these paintings which Yu found difficult to accept was the inclusion of modern and everyday objects in lyrical scenes which were conjured up by classical poetry. Although the China of the 1920s was itself a bizarre mixture of the old and new, classical and modern, few of the attempts to represent the modern world through the medium of traditional ink painting had been particularly successful. The works of the Lingnan School of Guangdong, of which more is said in Chapter Eight, in particular the brush and ink paintings of Gao Qifeng, with their inclusion of such things as airplanes and cars, were most typical of these syncretic experiments. Feng had chosen the form of the sketch rather than the more formal guohua, a genre less accommodating to such innovation, and published them as illustrations in a popular literary journal. His approach to the problem of creating a syncretic form of art was therefore not hampered by either the traditional

50 Zikai manhua quanji, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1945, 1: 29.
51 See the collection Yunnii, Shanghai: Tianma shudian, 1935, p. 48. In 1972, Feng Zikai wrote an essay on the subject of the Cow Herd and Weaving Maiden as part of a series of reminiscences of his youth. In it he quotes from various classical sources on the customs concerning the Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon, the one evening of the year on which, according to popular legend, the lovers could meet on a bridge of sparrows. He comments that in his youth that the celebrations of this festival in his home town on this festive night "May have been nothing more than superstition, but on reflection I cannot help feeling it was a delightful (you quwei) custom. As the ancients said: 'If one did not engage in futile pursuits, how would we ever use up the time allotted to us?" See "Cow Girl" (Niunü), Suibiiji, p. 452.
stylistic requirements of the *guohua*, nor subject to the aesthetic standards of connoisseurs. Yu's critique is all the more surprising when one considers his own use of the casual essay as a personal means of self-expression in the 1920s and 1930s.

In his review, Yu did, however, say he was deeply impressed with eight of the twenty-seven paintings under discussion, although he gave no reasons for his preference. These included the painting used as a cover illustration of *Zikai manhua*, "The spring waters of the river flow east" (Yijiang chunshui xiang dong liu), which again is a line taken from a poem by Li Houzhu.\(^{52}\) The original poem is about the passing seasons and the aging poet's sense of loss and regret for the past. The setting is perhaps a pavilion overlooking a river. Feng has taken one line from the poem completely out of context and shows a figure with a shock of hair standing on a fairly modern-looking bridge next to a rather preposterously placed willow looking down at the flowing waters of a river. The artist has shifted the sentiment of passing time into a completely different context, yet by using a line that would have certainly been familiar to his audience he retains the traditional resonances of the poem at the same time as creating enough "space" between it and the modern reader by depicting a new scene. And it is in the use of a new dimension of space and time that Feng so successfully reinterprets the poems he quotes.

Although stimulated by the outside world, in fact many of Feng's paintings of poetry were like childhood reminiscences. There was no direct stimulation, or only a coincidence of a scene which recalled a memorised poetic line which Feng then used his new style to depict. In a sense, the poetry-line paintings acted as a medium in the early days of his painting career for Feng to express himself -- an instrument of his self-expression in the same sense as were the brush and paper. Like the brush and rice paper, the lines of poetry conveyed not merely a modern view of an old poem, but rather an entirely new message in the guise of an old medium. The poetic inscriptions on the paintings were executed in a calligraphy as willowy and casual as the strokes of the paintings themselves.\(^{53}\)

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52 See the cover illustration of *Zikai manhua*. This is also similar to a painting of two women crossing a bridge entitled "Ah Spring!" (Haru sā) to be found in Yumeji's *Haru no maki.*

53 François Cheng's comments on this subject are relevant here. "Returning to the inscription of a poem upon a picture, we see that there is no discontinuity between the written and the painted elements, both of which are composed of strokes, and drawn with the same brush. These inscribed ideograms are an integral part of the picture; they are not perceived as a simple ornament or a commentary projected from without. Participating in the ordering of the whole, the lines of the poems truly 'open' the blank space, while introducing a new dimension. This dimension we may qualify as the temporal, to the extent to which the lines, according to a linear reading, reveal beyond the spatial image the painter's memory of his inspiration, his successive perceptions of a dynamic landscape. Their rhythmic incantation, unrolling itself in time, carries a contradiction to the name 'silent poetry' for the painting. They open the space, open it to a lived time, a time ceaselessly renewed. By harmonizing poetry and painting, the Chinese poet-painter succeeds in creating a complete and organic universe in four dimensions." *Chinese Poetic Writing*, p. 14.
In an article written as a retrospective on his paintings in 1935 Feng said, "I suppose it has been my habit over the past decade or so to paint my everyday inspirations (richang shenghuode ganxing) in the form of manhua -- in other words, to use a writing brush to scribble out the images of the fearful, delightful, sorrowful and amusing things one sees in the course of one's normal life; and then to allow them to be taken away and printed for other people to look at."\(^54\)

4: 3 Passive Creativity

Feng Zikai was one of the rare artists of the time who was consciously attempting to translate a traditional art form into a modern and relevant medium for self-expression. "Why must we demand of Chinese painting, even in this modern world of ours, that it continue to lose itself in the adulation of natural beauty that can only be found in the depths of mountains?" he asked. "There is absolutely no reason why it should not venture forth into this sullied human world to depict the joys and sorrows of human life, thus bringing life and art closer together."\(^55\) Although written in 1934, some fifteen years after the May Fourth incident, Feng's concerns were at this time in keeping with the "'humane" spirit so central to the May Fourth period and the founding principle of the Literature Research Society.\(^56\) He argued that just as there had been a revolution in the literary language which had resulted in the vernacular replacing the classical language, so there was no reason why a similar change should not sweep the world of art.\(^57\) "Are we supposed to believe that with a writing brush and xuan paper you can only depict the classical world?...Why do Chinese artists in the 20th Century only attempt to paint the world as it was before the 15th Century?\(^58\)

The spirit of Feng Zikai's earliest published work was not, however, consciously "modern". From the paintings referred above we can see that Feng's poetry adaptations were stylistically simple, even naive, and although there were contemporary elements in his work, at times city scenes, modern clothing or objects made their appearance, he made no attempt to include cars, aeroplanes or chimneys in

\(^{54}\) "On my Paintings" (Tan zijide hua), written in February, 1935. See Suibiji, p. 133.

\(^{55}\) "Talking About Chinese Painting" (Tan Zhongguohua), written in March 1934, see Yishu quwei, pp. 94-95. This article was originally published under the title "Classical Painting" (Wenrenhua) in Renjianshi.


\(^{57}\) The paragraph with this argument has been deleted from "Talking About Chinese Painting" in Yishu quwei, but can be found in the original form of the essay, "Classical Painting" (Wenrenhua), in Renjianshi, 1934: 1, p. 35.

\(^{58}\) "Talking About Chinese Painting", p. 94.
pictures that were essentially lyrical. He described the manner in which he created a *manhua* during this period in terms very similar to that of traditional artists.

At times a vision would appear before me, vague and fleeting. I would take up my brush and paint and only had time to put down an outline before the vision vanished. All I would see on the paper before me was a rough sketch, the face [of the figure depicted] was incomplete. Yet for this very reason it was a representation of that vision, and there was no need to add further details. Once I happened to try and add something to a painting I had done some time before but only succeeded in creating quite a different picture from the vision I had had: the painting was ruined. I couldn't help thinking that what the ancients said is true: "To express the idea without the brush having to run its full course" (*yidao bi budao*)⁵⁹... As long as one's meaning is there it does not matter if the brush fails [to depict it]; indeed, sometimes if the brush is overused then it can be an obstacle to one's ideas....³⁰

In another essay written on the subject of *manhua* Feng again stated his identification with Chinese artistic thinking, again casting his thoughts in terms common to traditional writers.

The way (*dao*) of the *manhua* is to use sparse brush strokes to achieve a quick expression of one's inspiration. [One aims at] something like Maupassant's short stories: you determine the salient features of the subject, depict the outline of the figure, or merely illuminate one aspect or feature of the subject and then allow the reader to imagine (*wude*) the rest. By using generalized and speedy strokes your inspiration can flow forth at the moment of creation, making it possible for wondrous strokes (*miaobi*) to appear that are "as though possessed of the spirit" (*shenlai*).⁶¹

The aim of the sketch therefore was to allow the artist to give complete, intuitive expression to his impressions, creating a work that would allow the reader the full play of their imagination. "It is crucial that the part of the painting not depicted (*weihuade bufen*) can be [filled in] by the imagination of the viewer, thus a work must be rich in its subtlety, and allow for a depth of meaning."⁶² Such statements parallel

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⁵⁹ This is a quotation from the Qing artist Zha Li's "Inscriptions on Paintings of Plum Trees" (Tihuamei), see Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo hualun leibian*, p. 1163. I have followed Simon Leys' translation of this sentence, see "Poetry and Painting: Aspects of Chinese Classical Esthetics", pp. 14-15.


⁶¹ From "A Shallow Discourse on *manhua*" (*Manhua qianshuo*), quoted in Chen Xing's *Xiaosa fengshen*, p. 102.

⁶² "A Shallow Discourse on *manhua*", ibid.
some of the oldest tenets of Chinese art, in particular the concept of the artist "conveying the spirit" (chuanshen) of objects or a scene rather than merely attempting to "convey a [outward] form" (chuanxing). While the concept of emptiness or absence (kong, xu) is central to Chinese artistic thought and at the basis of xieyi painting, "the spontaneous manner of writing down an inspiring thought", or "spontaneous manner of painting", as Osvald Sirén translates the term. In a study of the question of the reform of Chinese art written in 1941, Feng Zikai spoke of "emptiness" as being the "organic" (youjihua) organization of a painting. "Every element of a picture is full of life (youshengji), there is nothing superfluous, there is nothing empty...by which I certainly do not mean that there is no empty space, but rather that even the void areas in the picture are part of the organic organization of the work." 65

Apart from these statements and the evidence of his works at this time, there is another clue that by the mid-1920s Feng Zikai was thinking of his work very much in terms of traditional Chinese art. It comes in a statement he made concerning Wang Wei, "the real representative of Chinese painting", 66 in "The Unique Character of Chinese Art" (Zhongguohuade tese), an article written in October 1926 while he was teaching at the Li Da Academy.

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63 Treatises and commentaries on Chinese art written over the past millennium provide numerous examples of similar statements. See, for example, the Huaji, an important collection of artists' biographies compiled by the Southern Song critic Deng Chun. In the "Miscellaneous Sayings" (Zashuo) section of this work he writes:

"By revolving their thoughts [sic] and preparing the brush...the painters can represent the characteristics of everything, but there is only one method by which it can be done thoroughly and exhaustively. Which is that? It is called the transmitting of the spirit....Guo Ruoxu despised deeply the works of common men. He said that though they were called paintings, they were not painting (as art), because they transmit only the forms but not the spirit."

Quoted in Osvald Sirén, The Chinese on the Art of Painting, pp. 198-99.


65 "The Reform of Chinese Painting" (Huihua gaiilanglun), Sixiang yu shidai Yuekan, 1941, No. 8, p. 45. Feng supports his argument with quotations from Yuan Mei's Suiyuan shihua and Wang Yu's Dônghuang hualan. On the question of emptiness, see also Sirén, The Chinese on the Art of Painting, p. 199, where he quotes Yun Shouping (1633-1690) to the effect that, "The brush-work in the paintings of the ancients may sometimes appear quite solid and crammed, but there is nevertheless space for (moving) life, whereas in modern paintings even the corners are crammed. If there is solidity in places which are empty, then the whole composition seems alive; and the more such places there are, the better for the whole picture." See also Ryckmans, Shitao, pp. 109-110. Zong Baihua wrote an article on xu and shi in Chinese art which often referred to as one of the basic studies of the subject. See "xu and shi in Chinese Art" (Zhongguo yishu biaoxianlide xu he shi), Wenyibao, 1961: 5, pp. 2-4; translated in Chinese Literature, 1961: 12, pp. 82-86, under the rather clumsy title "The Abstraction and Reality in Chinese Art"; also Michael Sullivan, "Orthodoxy and Individualism in Twentieth-Century Chinese Art", in Artists and Traditions, p. 202. In this essay Zong uses a number of quotes and even arguments -- for example, a passage from the early Qing writer Da Chongguang (1623-1692) -- that had appeared in Feng's "On the Reform of Chinese Painting" some twenty years earlier.

66 "The Unique Character of Chinese Art" (Zhongguohuade tese), p. 47.
As I have seen so few examples of his [Wang Wei's] paintings, I cannot comment on them at length. Yet from what one gathers from commentaries and records it is clear that he was not interested in expending effort on a faithful representation of nature, rather his genius lay in using nature to express the poetic vision of his mind (xiongzhong shiqu).... He had not the ingenuity of Li Sixun who would spend months carefully detailing the landscape of three hundred li of the Jialing River; his was the vitality of a Wu Daozi whose powerful brush could achieve its purpose in a day. The reason for this is that he was depicting a vision that lay within his bosom, and to do that it was necessary to use an impromptu method, the sketch, to express himself. A hillock would appear in his mind and he would paint it immediately...this is what is meant by "there is poetry in his painting".

In Feng Zikai's words, "In such painting where poetry is the host (zhu) and painting is the guest (bin), the picture is brought to life entirely by the efforts of the poem.... Thus in the past the majority of Chinese painters were literati or shidaifu; their art is called 'literati painting' (wenrenhua). It is therefore evident how intimate the connection between painting and poetry is in China.... and for this reason we have said that the majority of Chinese painting is 'literary art' (wenxuede huihua).

4: 4 Likeness

Rabindranath Tagore, a proponent of the spiritual values of the East as opposed to the material values of the West, and a writer who had a considerable influence on Chinese thinking both before and following his trip to China to lecture in 1924, recognized the significance of Feng's early work perhaps more immediately than many of his Chinese contemporaries. In a conversation with Wei Fengjiang, one of Feng's students from the Chunhui High School, Tagore said:

There is no prerequisite for art to be detailed, it suffices if one can capture the spirit of an object. Your teacher's paintings depict the personality of his subjects with the most sparing use of strokes.

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68 From "Painting and Literature", in Huibua yu wenxue, p. 50.
69 See Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement, pp. 193, 330, & 426 note 60. Tagore's trip to China was sponsored by the Society for Lectures on the New Learning, organized by Liang Qichao, Zhang Junmai and Xu Zhimo. He lectured at the National University of Peking and was criticized widely by leftist writers for championing "oriental civilization" and the concept of the "paradise for the soul". See Stephen N. Hay, Asian Ideas of East and West: Tagore and his Critics in Japan, China, and India, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970, pp. 146-245; Jonathan D. Spence, Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980, New York: Viking Press, 1981, pp. 175-78. A characteristic statement of Tagore's was, "The majority of Asia's youth has wiped out Asian traditional civilization and pursued the thought of Western cultures. This is a big mistake...Western civilization is particularly inclined toward the materialistic, and is greatly lacking in matters concerning the heart and the soul." Quoted in David Kwok, Scientism in Chinese Thought, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965, p. 50, note 29.
Although he paints] a face with no eyes, we can see what he is seeing; a head may have no ears, but we can hear what he hears. This is a most sublime artistic realm! This is the result of melding poetry in painting, it is an innovation in its own right.\(^70\)

The questions of inspiration and poetic resonance were not the only ones that concerned Feng when he attempted to justify his work in terms of Chinese art. Another important element of his appreciation for the xieyi tradition of painting was concerned with the question of likeness, or verisimilitude, a subject of great importance throughout Chinese art history. "Some people take one look at my paintings and cry out in alarm, 'But this person has no eyes or nose, only a mouth!' or 'The four fingers on this person's hand are all stuck together!' Those who think of themselves as highly observant even comment, 'How come you can't see any eyes behind the glasses on this fellow?' [4: 11] Such things aren't worth explaining, so I just ignore them," Feng wrote recalling his earlier work. "I was happy reading my ci poetry, capturing my visions as they appeared and painting my manhua."\(^71\)

Feng's reaction to such views of his art was not unlike that of the Song writer Su Shi who had summed up his view of the need for the meaning (yi) of a work to take precedence over formal likeness in a famous poem:

If anyone discusses painting in terms of formal likeness,
His understanding is nearly that of a child.
If when someone composes a poem it must be a certain poem,
He is definitely not a man who knows poetry.
There is one basic rule in poetry and painting;
Natural genius and originality....\(^72\)

\(^70\) From "Tagore, My Teacher" (Wode laoshi Taige'er) by Wei Fengjiang, quoted in Chen Xing, Xiaosa fengshen, p. 104. Wei was a student of Feng's who went to study in India in 1933, and he showed many of Feng's paintings based on lines of poetry to Tagore, and according to Wei, Tagore sent the artist two of his own paintings. See Chen Xing's article, "Feng Zikai, Wei Fengjiang and Tagore" (Feng Zikai, Wei Fengjiang, Taige'er), Jiaxingbao, 17 January, 1988, which is based on an interview with Wei. For Wei's reminiscences on his Chunhui years, see "Mr Kuang Husheng at Baima Lake", pp. 46-47, in which he mentions Feng Zikai's stand against political interference in the running of the school.

\(^71\) "My manhua ", p. 310.

\(^72\) Translated by Susan Bush in The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Chi-ch'ang (1555-1636), p. 26, with this section of the original poem on p. 188. Feng Zikai quotes the first line of this poem (lun hua yi xingxi, jian yu er cong lin) in "The Victory of Chinese Painting in Contemporary Art" (Zhongguo yishu zai xian dai shenghuo de zhongyi) an essay written under the name Yingxing (the Buddhist name given to Feng by Hongyi), see Chapter Six, for Dongfang zazhi in 1926-1927, later revised and printed in the volume Huihua yu wenxue, pp. 72-108, for this quote see p. 89. In his essay "On Just Like the Real Thing and Like a Painting" (Lun bizhen yu ruhua), Zhu Ziqing lists the most important quotes from Chinese essays and poems dealing with the subject of formal likeness and the role of Chinese painting (both of the Southern and Northern Schools) in representing nature. See Zhu Ziqing gudian wenxue lunwenji, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981, Vol 1, pp. 115-24.
Discussions of formal likeness in Chinese art history invariably refer back to a story in *Han Feizi*:

A friend was doing some painting for the rule of Qi.
"What are the most difficult things to paint?"
"Dogs and horses."
"And what are the easiest?"
"Ghosts. One recognizes dogs and horses for one sees them every day and it is difficult to make them seem like real ones. Nobody has seen ghosts and therefore it is easy."\(^7\)

It is this very story from *Han Feizi* that Feng Zikai used for his own discussion of the question of formal likeness in an essay simply entitled "On Painting Ghosts" (*Huagui*).\(^4\) It was in this and a number of other articles that Feng outlines his reasons for rejecting formal likeness as a goal in his own work despite the training he had received in Western art.

In "On Painting Ghosts", Feng quotes Han Feizi and comments that in fact few artisans were ever engaged in the depiction of ghosts, and in his opinion in terms of technical requirements painting ghosts could be harder than representing dogs and horses. He prefers to dismiss Han Feizi's argument that it is easier to paint what one has not seen on the grounds that this presupposes that the standard for judging art is the degree to which a painting resembles the object depicted, its degrees of verismilitude (*xingsi*) to the original object. Although such a standard is not of itself incorrect, surely, he argues, it is too limited. If this were the only standard of art then photography would be able to produce the best 'paintings' of all, and following the discovery of photography all styles of painting should disappear and all artists discard

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\(^7\) Lin Yutang, *The Chinese Theory of Art, Translations from the Masters of Chinese Art*, London: Heinemann, 1967, pp. 23-24. See also Michael Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China*, p. 16 for another translation of this dialogue. Also Osvald Siren's *The Chinese on the Art of Painting*, pp. 10-11 where he notes that the quotations from Han Feizi and Zhang Heng with which Feng opens his argument are cited in the *Feiwenzhai shuhuapu* but, unlike Feng, Siren is of the opinion that they "can hardly be said to contain anything of aesthetic significance." Deng Bai, a modern Chinese art historian in his study of traditional art theory, divides the debate over formal likeness (*xingsi*) and essential likeness (*shensz*) into three schools: the early proponents of the formal likeness school is Han Feizi and its later supporters include such figures as Han Qi of the Song, Wang Lü of the Ming and Zheng Ji in the Qing Dynasties; champions of the school of essential likeness include such painters as Gu Kaizhi, Zhang Yanyuan, Deng Chun, Su Shi, Shitao and the contemporary artist Huang Binhong; and thirdly, those who propound an equal emphasis on both formal and essential likeness in a work, include, according to Deng Bai, the critics Liu Daochun and Guo Ruoxu. See "Preliminary Observations on the Theories of Chinese Art" (*Zhongguo hualun chutan*), *Zhongguohua yanjiu*, No. 2, pp. 176-86.

\(^4\) Written in the late spring of 1936, first published in *Lunyu* and subsequently republished in the collection *Yishu mantan*, pp. 143-153.
their brushes. The reason this has not happened is that there are other, more lofty standards by which to judge works of art. Put simply, Feng says that, "the body of painting may be its likeness to the object depicted, but its soul is its spiritual quality (shenqi)." Any painting that achieves a formal likeness to an object but lacks "spiritual quality" was, in Feng's view, little better than a corpse. Michael Sullivan in his study of the origins of Chinese landscape painting actually goes so far as to say: "that the Chinese painter was actually hindered in the representation of visual reality by the basically ideographic nature of his pictorial style. Being brought up to think conceptually, he was not equipped with the attitude of mind or the technical means to deal with the world of visual forms."

It is here that Feng illustrates his point by saying that an anatomically exact representation of a dog, with the right coloration and proportions, is no more than a "scientific sketch". To achieve an artistic vision of the animal which emanates that crucial spiritual quality, it is first necessary to observe how a dog stands, sits, runs and barks and the varieties of moods that it experiences. This is all very much in keeping with traditional Chinese artistic views, and it is here that Feng emphasizes in the final artistic representation of the dog it is necessary to exaggerate the animal, and though such an exaggeration could be overdone, he feels that it is essential part of painting. For example to make the dog's mouth larger than life when painting a biting dog, or to paint the creature longer than it actually is when depicting a running dog, or to give a dog at play a smiling face. Feng says the viewer will not resent the artists obvious distortion, being instead attracted by the mood or tone of the painting. This type of

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75 In the essay "From Plum Blossoms to Art" (Cong meihua shuo dao mei), Yishu quwei, pp. 9-10, Feng gives Aristotle's view of mimesis and relates it to the question of likeness and photography.
76 Feng, Yishu mantan, p. 145. See also Michael Sullivan, The Birth of Landscape Painting in China, pp. 92-93.

Gu Kaizhi is not concerned in his essay on the Yuntaishan with formulating an aesthetic theory...All that can be said from an examination of his two essays Lunhua and Weijin shengliu huazan...is that he emphasized in painting the fundamental importance of the shen (spirit) -- that mysterious power or essence that informs all being, and of which the artist himself partakes, but which he may consciously apprehend through the contemplation of nature. Gu Kaizhi could forgive technical faults and a lack of verisimilitude, but if a painting lacked shen, all was lost. In the few paragraphs that are all that survive of his critical writings, the magical word appears in a number of compounds. There is, for instance, shenqi, which Soper in another connection translated "spiritual quality," See Soper, Alexander Coburn, Kuo Jo-Hsu's Experience in Painting (T'u-hua Chien-wen Chih) An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting Together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile, p. 116 note 66 for a discussion of the use of this term in the Six Dynasties period. Xie He wrote of the work of Jin Mingdi that "sketchy as it was in form and coloring, it had a great deal of shenqi." The term may be used also of the "character shining out from a portrait."

77 Yishu mantan, p. 16.
78 Yishu mantan, p. 145. Feng uses the expression huaqu. David Pollard in his A Chinese Look at Literature, pp. 79-80, quotes the late-Ming essayist Yuan Hongdao on the subject of qu and offers a number of interpretive translations of the word in his analysis of Zhou Zuoren's use of quwei. Of
exaggeration is evident in Chinese landscape painting as well as modern Western art and cartoons. Exaggerations, distortion, even to the extent that the painting is unrecognizable as a representation of any particular object is the way to more clearly express the "spiritual quality" of an object. Although, he admits, excessive exaggeration can result in complete fiction and formalism (xingshizhuyi), even to the loss of the important objective elements of painting, nonetheless, exaggeration is not only permissible but essential for the soul of a work to come through.\(^79\)

The way to achieve this is by the artist using his imagination to complement the object being depicted.\(^80\) To paint a dog with that real spiritual quality one needs to imagine oneself as a dog, to be able to empathize with it.\(^81\) Similarly, to paint angels or the sphinx require imagination in a way no less demanding of the artist than that required for the depiction of more down-to-earth creatures such as dogs and horses.

Echoing the Song writer Ouyang Xiu's (1007-1072) objection to Han Feizi's breezy dismissal of ghost painting as easy,\(^82\) Feng says it is for the very reason that such imagination is required that ghosts are, to his mind, so difficult to paint.\(^83\) He
recalls how as a child he would be able to imagine the ghosts he heard about with great clarity the moment he closed his eyes, yet every attempt to transfer that image in his mind to paper proved a failure. He could never quite capture the personality and pose of the ghost in the way the story he had heard had led him to imagine it. Thus he disagrees with Han Feizi and says it is probably because the artisans he was talking about would paint any old ghost, and not one from the world of their own imagination, with a life and personality all of its own. He says the ancients have said, "Reality is difficult [to depict], while there is no end to the unreal", preferring to rewrite this as, "It is easy to imitate reality, but hard to lend expression to the imagination." 84

As Feng commented in one of his early lectures for high school students: "Thus it is that art is not a enterprise based on technique, but rather on the soul (xinling). It belongs not to the realm of this world, but is rather the highest human activity that surpasses the superficial appearances of the world." 85

Elsewhere in an essay simply entitled "On Images" (Tan xiang), 86 Feng makes the point that it is through the expression of the artist's imagination in terms of the composition (form and colour) of a work that can excite a response in the viewer. In terms that are somewhat more extreme than one finds in Feng's other writings, he states, "The aim of painting is to give visual delight (kuaimei) to the viewer, not to bestow some form of knowledge or to communicate information. It is for this reason that verisimilitude cannot be the chief aim of painting, nor is it the standard by which art should be judged." 87 He even goes so far as to say that the mere pursuit of resemblance to an object in art has nothing to do with the expression of beauty and is therefore unrelated to the aims of art. 88 While not denying the fact that artists inevitably imitate nature -- their artistic themes come from the world of sensory
perception, it is by distorting and beautifying the world, not by a slavish imitation of appearance that they create their artistic vision. “Thus painting is the creation of beautiful forms and colours, it is the expression of the subjective mind, and it is for this reason painting is ‘creation’.” Interestingly enough, having stated that formal likeness in the realist school of painting is inferior to xieyi art in that it is not pleasing to the eye, Feng goes on to praise Millet’s works for going beyond realism to create an artistically distorted and beautiful world of their own.90

In another essay written in part as a lecture to a friend on the difference between photography and painting Feng elaborates on his approach to the realistic representation of the objective world in painting.91 He declares that painting is the art of the eye and the hand, a human and very physical process while photography is a more mechanical art that relies on a lense and film and is far more objective in its presentation of the world. Painting, like calligraphy, expresses the unique individuality of each artist and in fact that is the very source of the flavour (quwei) of art. Feng is by no means dismissive of photography as a new art form and in this and other essays and books he makes the point that it was a popular art form that shows signs of being more innovative and influential with a wider audience than painting itself.92 He is most probably referring to Chinese audiences here and he goes on to state that while painting is still stagnating in the morass of the simplistic even photographic representation of objects, photographers are increasingly showing themselves willing to experiment with the use of the camera as an instrument of art. Again Feng returns to a theme that runs through all of his writings on perspective, formal likeness and pre-Impressionist Western art.

Feng divides the beauties of the world into two categories, the first includes those that are by their nature beautiful, needing no human contrivance to enhance them. They can be preserved directly by photography and possess the potential to be art. The other type of beauty requires human interference and arrangement (jingying) before it can become art. Such things as shadows in the sunlight, the patterns of clouds in the sky, ripples in the sea can be captured on film. However, the buds of plums that bring the news of the coming of spring, flowers that seem to understand human speech, birds that appear to comprehend human sentiments, the wonderous landscapes created by nature as well as all ideal visions (lixiangde jingjie) require a human touch: selection, subtractions, rearrangement and positioning before they can become art. To

89 “On Images”, ibid.
90 “On Images”, p. 61. Feng says here that it is Millet’s paintings that provide the perfect model for study by art students.
91 “Photography and Painting” (Zhaoxiang yu huihua), written in May 1936 and first published in Shenbao, subsequently collected in Yishu mantan, pp. 64-69.
92 “Photography and Painting”, p. 68.
use the methods of painting to express the subject matter of photography is a wasteful and frustrating undertaking, while to use photography to replace painting is a seeming impossibility. Neither art form can replace the other. Verisimilitude is the realm of photography, to recreate the universe in keeping with man's inner vision is that of painting. Photography is used for "representation" (zaixian), painting for "expression" (biaoxian). Feng regards it as inevitable that the camera should be used for art in the industrial age. Even more importantly, photography conforms to the tastes of the mass of vulgar people. "If it [photography] can be used as a raft on which common people can enter the realm of beauty, then surely this should be seen as an aid to the development of art."

Tagore was not the only critic to find immediate delight in Feng's early work, and, as we have seen, the reaction to these paintings among his friends and colleagues was generally positive. In the view of one critic, Liu Tongguang, a fellow teacher at Baima Lake, Feng's work belonged firmly in the school of xieyi painting. In an article on Chinese painting (guohua) written in November 1926, Liu said that one of his favourite contemporary artists was Feng Zikai. "His sketches belong to the school [of Chinese art] in which one pursues a natural quality (zirande fengqu) that gives the impression of the work being a rough and careless draft (caocao ru bu jingyi)....But what is special about him is that he is able to incorporate many new things that we see in the world around us into his work."94

4: 5 The Artistic Heart and quwei

In 1929, Feng wrote two speeches on art appreciation published as essays in Zhongxuesheng in which he further elucidated his ideas on aesthetics.95 The essays led Rou Shi (1902-1931), a young revolutionary writer who was also a graduate of the Zhejiang Number One Teachers' College,96 to denounce him in a virulent article printed in the short-lived leftist literary journal Mengya.

The thrust of both essays was to introduce students to the various concepts of art and artistic appreciation. Much of Feng's writing on art in the late 1920s and 1930s was aimed at high school students, the young people whom he, as a teacher, felt

93 "Photography and Painting", p. 69.
94 See "Idle Comments on Chinese Painting" (Guohua mantan), Vol. II, Yiban, 1927: 1, p. 81.
95 These are "A Talk on Beauty Inspired by Plum Blossoms" (Cong meihua shuo dao mei), and "A Talk on Art Inspired by Plum Blossoms" (Cong meihua shuo dao yishu) reprinted in Yishu quwei, pp. 6-17, and 18-27 respectively.
96 After a short career as an educationalist in Zhejiang, Rou Shi (Zhao Pingfu) moved to Shanghai in the late 1920s where he edited Zhaohua zhoukan and Yusi, among other journals. He met Lu Xun, became an active revolutionary and joined the CPC sponsored by Feng Xuefeng. He was one of the "Five Martyrs" arrested by the KMT and shot in early 1931.
needed to be trained to understand art and, if not become artists themselves, to at least develop what he called "an artistic heart" (yishude xin). 97

Art is not a question of technique, it is a question of the soul (xinling); it is not a component of the practical world, but the most refined activity which functions outside the scope of the everyday world. In studying art the aim is not to exercise one's hand and wrist, but to cultivate the eye and heart. To look at a painting one does not need the eye, but the heart. 98

These same ideas are very much at the core of the educationalist Cai Yuanpei's call for aesthetic education (meiyu) which dated from the early years of the Republic. 99 By the 1920s these ideas had been incorporated to some extent in Chinese art education. 100 Similarly, it is also a sentiment which echoes one of the most basic elements of Chinese artistic thought, that painting, or for that matter writing, is in essence a matter of the heart, not merely a question of technique. 101 Again, Feng's ideas are more in keeping with the non-utilitarian nature of artistic cultivation in the past rather than with Cai's progressive and positivistic uses of aesthetics. As Feng

97 In 1932, Feng wrote an article entitled "The New Art" (Xin yishu), ostensibly a comment on the change in fashions of painting. The central theme of the piece, however, was the question of the "artistic heart". The artistic heart, he wrote, is born from a constant cultivation of the spirit, the eye and the hand. Merely to be possessed of a good artistic or writing technique could not ensure a person an "artistic heart". In fact, those who are possessed of "a sympathetic heart, a heart of openness and honesty, are people who are worthy of respect and love...to be possessed merely of technical talent with no artistic heart is to be no better than a machine with no feelings." See "The New Art", Yishu quwei, pp. 30-34.

98 "The Attitude for Appreciating Art" (Yishu jianshangde taidu), written in September 1929 and included in the collection Yishu quwei, see pp. 27-29. In the conclusion of this piece, Feng, obviously borrowing from Kantian aesthetics, speaks of the need for both artist and audience to approach a work in a spirit of disinterestedness. This concept is discussed further on in this chapter, and at somewhat greater length in Chapters Six and Eight. In the essay "Why Study Art?" (Wei shenmo xue tuhua), a lecture given to the Songjiang Girl's School in 1929, Feng says that everyone is born with an ability to appreciate beauty, but this must be constantly cultivated so that one can appreciate art in one's everyday life. See Yishu quwei, pp. 40-45.

99 Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 72, 74, 88-89, 98, covers the topic at some length.

100 See, for example Tang Jun's "A Critique of the Theories of Artistic Independence and Art for Life" (Yishu duliun he yishu renshenglunde pipan), Dongfang zazhi, Vol. XVIII, No. 17, September 1921, pp. 45-50; Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, p. 123.

101 This question is dealt with at length with numerous quotations from Chinese and Western sources by Qian Zhongshu in his Tanyilu, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1984, p. 205 and Supplement 16, pp. 209-12. See in particular p. 211 where Qian discusses Benedetto Croce's aesthetics and (earlier) parallels in Chinese writing. The relationship between the quality of the artist's personality (renpin) and painting (huapin) is a question that was much discussed in Chinese art theory from the time of Guo Ruoxu of the Song. See, for example, Ryckmans' Shitao, pp. 114-16, for quotations from the writings of Guo, Yang Weizhen, Li Rihua, Wang Yu and Zhang Geng on this subject. In his essay "The Value of Literati Painting", p. 10, quoted in Chapter Two, Chen Shizeng confirms the importance of personal quality in the artist's work. As we have seen in Chapter One, Li Shutong impressed on Feng the important correlation between renpin and huapin when he was a student.
wrote during the Anti-Japanese War when he was forced by financial need to take up teaching after a ten-year hiatus:

My art classes are not aimed at achieving practical results. I put an emphasis on something that's quite indirect: I don't demand of my students that they learn painting for some practical application; I hope to inculcate in them a heart that loves beauty (aimei zhi xin).102

Returning, however to that first speech given in 1929, "A Talk on Beauty Inspired by Plum Blossoms", we see that the artist was concerned in particular with reviewing certain aspects of the Western aesthetic tradition. His retrospect goes back as far as Socrates and Plato, and he discusses Aristotle's theory of mimesis before turning his attention to more recent German aesthetic theories as propounded by Alexander Gottlieb von Baumgarten, Johann Joachim Winckelmann and Gotthold Lessing.103 He leaves his personal preferences to last, and introduces Immanuel Kant's aesthetic thought, especially the concept of disinterestedness, at some length.104 He regards Kant's subjectivism as being a considerable improvement on the ancient Greeks. He sums up his understanding of Kant's aesthetic in the following way, "....during the creation of something beautiful, or in its appreciation, one should have no interest in the utilitarian value of that object...one must allow one's heart to enter fully into the object being contemplated, whether it be in terms of appreciation or wonder."105 In terms of his own preferences, he then describes Schiller's "dualistic idealism" as being an important synthesis of subjective and objective views of art. The artist requires not only an artistic heart, but also an object of beauty worthy of contemplation.106 Which of the many theories he presents is correct, however, is a question that in the end he finds no easier to answer than the Zen kōan "does the banner move or the heart?" (fan dong xin dong).107

The second essay, "A Talk on Art Inspired by Plum Blossoms" is concerned with an important aspect of traditional Chinese art and Feng Zikai's understanding of it: the use of conventional symbols such as the plum blossom to represent an idealized vision of an object. The value of such a vision is that it changes people's perceptions of the object itself. He refers to the Song Dynasty artist Yang Wujiu who is noted for

102 Jiaoshi rijî, 26 November, 1939, p. 37; Willetts, Chinese Art, 2, pp. 552, 554, on the possibility of educating the "eidetic faculty".
103 "A Talk on Beauty Inspired by Plum Blossoms", Yishu quwei, pp. 7-12.
105 "A Talk on Beauty Inspired by Plum Blossoms", pp. 15-16.
107 "A Talk on Beauty Inspired by Plum Blossoms", p. 16.
his paintings of the plum, and the poet Jiang Baishi (?1155-?1221) whose ci poems on plums, the "Hidden Scent" (Anxiang) and "Sparse Shadows" (Shuying) are among the most famous depictions of the flower in Chinese literature.\textsuperscript{108} To see the works of these men "is to appreciate a more subtle feeling than the real object could ever afford us."\textsuperscript{109} After referring to Oscar Wilde's opinion that "life imitates art",\textsuperscript{110} and citing a number of examples to elucidate his point -- one being that ever since Takehisa Yumeji started painting girls with large eyes, young Japanese women all have almond-shaped eyes!\textsuperscript{111} -- Feng claims that this is because "artists are so often more sensitive [than common man], they are so often ahead of their time. Artists can depict the future, and it is merely left to the common man to realize their vision."\textsuperscript{112} Arguing still very much in the vein of Wilde's comments on the relationship between life and art he says that, "Ever since plum blossoms were depicted by Yang Wujiu and Jiang Baishi they have been gradually becoming more beautiful. It is certain that plums are far more beautiful today than they were in the time of the Song."\textsuperscript{113}

Liang Qichao, when discussing aesthetic training in an essay on "Art and Life" (Meishu yu shenghuo), had stated quite categorically that, "You may ask, 'What do people live for?' and I can answer without hesitation: quwei."\textsuperscript{114} Liang explained three possible ways to realize quwei: the recreation of an experience; secondly, the memory of a feeling or observation of another's enjoyment of quwei; and, thirdly, the creation of an independent world of the spirit. "For the writer it is the Peach Blossom Spring [of Tao Yuanming], for the philosopher it is Utopia, in terms of theology it is Heaven or the Pure Land. In an instant [one] goes beyond the world of reality and enters an ideal universe, that is the place were man is free. One way to get there is


\textsuperscript{109} "From Plum Blossoms to Art", p. 18.

\textsuperscript{110} "From Plum Blossoms to Art", p. 20. Feng is, of course, thinking of the arguments put forward by Oscar Wilde in "The Decay of Lying", see \textit{De Profundis and Other Writings}, London: Penguin Books, 1979, pp. 57-87, in particular pp. 73-74, 78.

\textsuperscript{111} "From Plum Blossoms to Art", p. 20.

\textsuperscript{112} "From Plum Blossoms to Art", p. 21.

\textsuperscript{113} "From Plum Blossoms to Art", ibid. This again is very reminiscent of what Wilde said about fog. "Things are because we see them, and what we see, and how we see it, depends on the Arts that have influenced us...At present, people see fogs, not because there are fogs, but because poets and painters have taught them the mysterious loveliness of such effects. There may have been fogs for centuries in London. I dare say there were. But no one saw them, and so we do not know anything about them. They did not exist till Art had invented them." "The Decay of Lying", p. 79.

through quwei." Similarly, he declared that the means by which it was possible to increase the individual's sensitivity to *quwei* are threefold: through a training in literature, music and art. In what seems to be a paraphrase of this, Zhu Guangqian in the second of his twelve letters to a high school student in 1926 said, "The happiest person in the world is not merely the most active but also the most receptive person. What I mean by receptive is the ability to find *quwei* in life." Further on Zhu comments, "This receptivity is fifty percent innate, the other fifty percent is the result of training." As we have seen in Feng's comments in the above, like Zhu, Feng believed in the training of students in an appreciation of art, the aim of which was to refine their sense of *quwei*, to train "a heart that loves beauty (ai mei zhi xin)." *Yiban*, the magazine the teachers at the Li Da Academy founded in September 1926 declared in their publication announcement that they wanted to print "articles that, above all, express *quwei*".

In fact, in the 1920s and 1930s certain members of the May Fourth generation who continued to stress the importance of the development of the individual, or "humanitarianism", which was a central theme of the May Fourth period, virtually made a cult out of *quwei*. Zhu Guangqian even went so far as to say, "I've never been worried by fools, or by overly clever people, but I've always felt it to be pure torture to have to engage in polite conversation with people who have no *quwei*."

The main proponent of the "cult of *quwei*" was Zhou Zuoren who was condemned by one contemporary critic for his "literature of *quwei*". The critic was He Kai, and he wrote:

Zhou Zuoren is an extreme individualist and as a result is not nearly as energetic or daring as his brother [Lu Xun] in his opposition to all the powers that be. There is always something of the weak and reclusive in his attitude; he exudes the style of the

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115 Liang Qichao, "Art and Life", p. 39. In Chapter Six we will return to the theme of religion and discuss the place of Buddhism in Feng Zikai's life and artistic activites.
116 Liang Qichao, "Art and Life", ibid.
118 Jiaoshi riji, 26 November, 1939, p. 37; also his essay "Utilitarian Objects and the Aesthetic Sense" (Gongyi shiyongpin yu meigan), Yiban, Vol. I, 1926: 12, p. 543.
dilettante (*ningshi*), and has become a loyal advocate for the bourgeoisie.¹²²

For Zhou the word variously meant "taste", as a somewhat contrived translation of the English term, and "discernment", among other things.¹²³ One of his comments on *quwei* seems to be of particular relevance to Feng Zikai's aesthetic approach:

I believe that the national essence (*guocui*) can be divided into two parts: the heredity of *quwei* that is alive, comingled with our very blood. There is no way we can discard it; it finds expression in all of our words and deeds, and there is no need to preserve it. Then there is the dead portion, the morals and habits of the past which cannot be accomodated with the present. There is no need to preserve them, nor is there any way to preserve them.¹²⁴

Lin Yutang was another champion of *quwei*, and along with Zhou he headed an attempt to counter the didactic or propagandistic tendencies of Chinese literature from the late-1920s over the next decade by advocating "self-expression" and the "leisurely" style of prose writing to which he gave prominence in the magazines he edited: *Lunyu*, *Renjianshi* and *Yuzhoufeng*.¹²⁵ He defines the term *qu* in his *The Importance of Living* as meaning "interesting, having flavour, the quality of being interesting to look at. A scene or a man possesses or lacks this *qu*. In particular, *qu* denotes an artistic


¹²⁴ "Locale and Literature" (Difang yu wenyi), in *Tanlongji*, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1927, p. 16. Yu Pingbo was regarded as another purveyor of *quwei*, and in his introduction to Yu's volume of Hangzhou-inspired essays and poem *Yanzhicao*, Zhu Ziqing, struggling to define Yu's place in the contemporary scene said, "Recently when talking about Pingbo someone said his attitude and actions are a little like someone in the Ming Dynasty. I knew they were referring to the late Ming literati Zhang Dai and Wang Siren. I'm incapable of working out what the chief characteristics of these people are, but to attempt a definition in our modern argot perhaps one could say they 'put quwei above all else'?...I certainly do know that Pingbo has never made a point of imitating them, it is more a matter of a similarity of attitude and personality." See Yu Pingbo, *Yanzhicao*, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1928, p. 3. For his part, Zhou Zuoren said in a postscript to the book that it was only in the prose of stylists like Yu that "knowledge and quwei can combine to produce such elegant vernacular writing." See Zhou, "Codicil to *Yanzhicao*" (<<Yanzhicao>> ba), p. 3.

¹²⁵ See C.T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, pp. 131-34. For Lin's main writings on this subject see *Zhongguo xiandai sanwen lilan*, edited by Yu Yuanui, et al, Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1983, pp. 52-69. Like Zhou Zuoren, Lin emphasized the "alternative tradition" of Chinese letters, the school of "self-expression", in particular favouring the late-Ming Gongan School of writers. In this context, see his "On Writing" (Lun wen) in *Zhongguo xiandai sanwen lilan*, pp. 53-54, 58-61. More will be said of Lin's magazines and Feng's connection with them in Chapter Seven.
pleasure, like drinking tea, or watching clouds. A vulgar person is not supposed to 'understand qu'.

In Feng Zikai's writings qu, or quwei, is often interchangeable with xingqu or xingwei. In the early 1930s he became a contributor to Lin's magazines and a practitioner of the non-political essay of "self-expression" (xingling), and in 1933 he actually classified himself as an "amateur" or a "dilettante" who found xingwei in the use of literature or poetry in painting, "literary painting" (wenxuede huihua) as he called it, a modern form of "literati painting" (wenrenhua). In the essay "Leisure" (Xian), written during the drought of 1934, he said "If feelings are repressed for a long time, then a person will gradually lose their excited interest (reliede xingwei), and enter a state of 'decadence' ('tuifei' de zhuangtai)."

"Interest (xingwei) is the thing that keeps grown-ups going; in the case of children, however, the motivating force of their entire life is interest." This is very much reminiscent of the Ming essayist Yuan Hongdao's famous comment on qu, which reads in part, "As a child one has not heard of qu, yet there is nothing a child does which has not qu." Indeed, as we will see in the following chapter, Feng Zikai became less interested in his own children when he found that they had lost "the quwei of childhood". Nonetheless, he recognized that his own quwei, such as finding a lonely tea house on a mountain in the rain attractive, to be that of an adult, and one not understood by his children.

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126 "The Importance of Living", p. 421. Pollard, in commenting on Zhou's association with Lin, says Lin's school "might be described as the cult of quirky personality." See A Look at Chinese Literature, p. 72. It is only in recent years that Mainland Chinese scholars have begun to study Lin Yutang's essay in earnest, and only one work attempts an analysis of The Importance of Living. Wan Pingjin's Lin Yuang lun, Xian: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1987, pp. 139-61, where Lin's world view is discussed (and of course negated in Marxist terms) at length.

127 "Painting and Literature", pp. 50-51.

128 "Leisure" (Xian), Chexiang shehui, p. 161.

129 "Leisure", p. 163.

130 In full the passage is, "Qu owes much to nature, little to learning. As a child one has not heard of qu, yet there is nothing a child does which has not qu. Life has no greater pleasures than at this time when the facial expression is never composed, the eyes are always roving, the mouth is ever on the point of muttering something, trying to speak, and the feet dance and will not be still. No doubt this is what Mencius was referring to when he spoke of 'staying like a new-born babe', and Laozi too when he asked: 'Can you be as a babe?' This is the ultimate attainment of qu and is of the highest order." From "Xu Chen Zhengfu Huixinji", Yuan Hongdao quanji, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981, p. 463; translated by Pollard in A Chinese Look at Literature, p. 80. Dong Qiao, an essayist and editor from Hong Kong, argues the virtues of qu in a recent essay, "On Taste", translated in Renditions, Nos. 29-30, Special Issue: Hong Kong, Autumn 1988, pp. 163-65.

131 "Reading 'On Reading Essays from Yuanyuan Hall'" (Du <<Du Yuanyuantang suibi>>>, Suibiji, p. 278. For a discussion of quwei in traditional Chinese aesthetics, see David Pollard, A Chinese Look at Literature, pp. 72-84; and Pan Zhichang, "From yijing to quwei" (Cong yijing dao quwei), Wenyi yanjiu, 1985: 1, pp. 13-19.

132 In the essay "Keeping Out of the Rain in the Mountains" (Shanzhong byiu), Yuanyuantang zaibi, p. 33, he writes, "At first I felt the rain would upset (saoxing) our trip to the mountains, but then the quwei of loneliness and solemnity created by the hills blocking the rain exerted a great attraction, and I realized that this was far superior to the quwei of travelling on a sunny day."
Elsewhere, he explains the *quwei* or *xingwei* of being a vegetarian,\(^{133}\) the need to train the young to appreciate *quwei*,\(^{134}\) and even how talking of how much money one has to spend in the city can destroy the *quwei* of an outing.\(^{135}\) Indeed, when later pressed to make a self-criticism as part of the Communist "reform" of intellectuals in the early 1950s, Feng Zikai identified "*quwei* thinking" as the most outstanding aspect of his life up to 1949.\(^{136}\)

In an 1931 article on art expressly written for women, after introducing the basic theory and practice of Western art, he made a few comments on Chinese scholar painting and said "But putting theory aside, by using our emotions to appreciate Chinese art we discover that it expresses a strange and powerfully fresh force of *quwei*...it is 'non-realistic' but it is 'artistic'."\(^{137}\)

When, in 1925, Zheng Zhenduo had gone to the Li Da Academy to see Feng's *manhua* with Ye Shengtao and Hu Yuzhi with the aim of selecting some for publication in *Wenxue zhoubao*, a number of students joined in the impromptu gathering and Zheng said it was the exhibition with the most *qu* he had ever seen.\(^{138}\) Xia Mianzun had noted in an essay that was used to preface Feng Zikai's paintings on city life that the monk Hongyi could find *wei* in everything, that no matter what he ate, wore or used, he could enjoy its particular flavour (*wanwei*); this was because he treated "life as art" (*yishude shenghuo*). Only the artist who could approach life with this attitude could be called a real artist, he said, this is where art and religion intersected. It was

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children were, however, disappointed by the rain and Feng did not wish to impose his own tastes, or force them to be adult (*darenhua*), by explaining how he felt.

\(^{133}\) "After Becoming a Vegetarian" (*Sushi yihou*), *Chexiang shehui*, pp. 117-18.

\(^{134}\) "Why Study Art?", *Yishu quwei*, pp. 40-45. He say, having studied art a person will use their artistic eye (*meishude yanshi*) in whatever they do. If they fail to appreciate this then they will be condemned "to suffer in an ugly and foul society, go to school in places that are like prisons, and live in houses that are like pig sties." (p. 44.) Equally, "wealthy merchants, quite oblivious of *quwei*, do not recognize the vulgar ugliness of the red wood furniture with which they decorate their homes. Nor do the fashionable young ladies who vie with each other to dress in the latest designs have any concept of beauty; it's pitiable how much effort goes into their tasteless attire." (ibid.) He finishes the lecture with a word of advice, "No matter what you decide to study [after graduation], or what work you take up...don't forget the *quwei* you learnt in your art classes at school." (pp. 44-45.)

\(^{135}\) See "Cutting the Net Asunder" (*Jian wang*), *Yuanyuantang suibi*, p. 2. See also "Record of a Trip to a Hospital" (Fang liaoyangyuanji) in *Yuzhoufeng*, No. 14, April 1936, pp. 90-91, for another use of *quwei*.

\(^{136}\) See "My Ideological Self-Examination" (*Jiancha wode sixiang*), *Dagongbao* (Shanghai), 16 July, 1952. The relevant passage from this disturbing example of self-vilification is given in Appendix I.

\(^{137}\) Feng Zikai, "A Discussion of Views of Painting for Women" (Wei funümen tan huihuade kanfa), *Funü zashi*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, April 1931, p. 47. It should be noted, however, that just as Feng failed to exploit the sensual possibilities of the *manhua*-sketch a practised by Takehisa Yumeji, similarly Feng realized none of the raunchy dimensions of *quwei* as elucidated by Zhang Jingsheng, or "Dr Sex" as Leo Lee calls him. In 1925, Zhang published a series of articles in the *Jingbao* literary supplement entitled "A Society of Love, Beauty, and Fun" (*Qingai yu meiqude shehui*) in which he elucidated his particular brand of sexual, and through it racial, liberation. See Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, pp. 270-71, 335.

\(^{138}\) See Zheng's introduction to *Zikai manhua*, p. 5.
this same talent that he found in Feng Zikai. One 1930s critic even identified the attraction of Feng's naive and even crude paintings as being their ability to capture the essential qualities of a scene and their "lasting quwei". Feng even titled one volume of his collected essays on art The quwei of Art (Yishu quwei).

It was Feng's belief in the importance of quwei and the need he felt to try and inculcate it in his students that so angered Rou Shi. The critic opened his attack with a statement of his reaction to Feng's two essays on plum blossoms.

What he [i.e., Feng] is saying in these essays is that young students should abandon their text books and become besotted with plum flowers; he seems to indicate if they don't then they'll lose whatever it is that makes them human....Reading these things I can't help wondering whether he is one of the ancients talking to us, or if

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140 See Zhou Qi, "On Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai lun), Shenbao, Ziyoutan, 24 September, 1934. See also Lin Yü-sheng, The Critic of Chinese Consciousness, p. 140, note 75. In commenting on Lu Xun's use of the Chinese lyrical tradition, Lin quotes Jaroslav Prusek who points out something that is also germane to Feng Zikai's work. Whereas Lu Xun may have used the lyrical methods of the past to express "in a new way his revolutionary attitude to reality", Feng used them to express a highly personal quwei. Lin quotes Jaroslav Prusek's "Some Marginal Notes on the Poems of Po Chü-i, (Chinese History of Literature, Prague, 1970, pp. 80-81):

The Chinese lyric has for centuries striven by a juxtaposition of several elements selected from Nature and saturated with high emotion to create a picture capable of communicating a supreme experience, an insight, a complete yielding to, and immersion in the mysterium of Nature. The basic presumption for such a procedure was the artist's power of accurate observation, an acute perception of traits that may be small, but are characteristic, that would go to the core of the situation which the author wishes to communicate to the reader.... This method taught the artist to pick out what was typical in every phenomenon and, by reducing it to its most essential traits, to express its substance as concisely as possible. It is not difficult to imagine what this method implied when the artist applied it to social reality. Excessively refined perceptivity gave him the ability to select from the chaos of phenomena the most significant -- that dominant in the picture to which we referred to above -- and render it in a few pregnantly revealing brush-strokes. Thus does the poet build up pictures which not only give the substance of individual events, but a résumé of whole epochs. It seems to me that this method enabled the artist to render more incisively and cogently the horrors of social evil than could any epic procedure. In the individual story, light and shade must necessarily alternate and often the subjective factor excuses and obscures the workings of frightfulness. With the removal of all additive detail, everything vanished that might modify the horror of the phenomenon presented.... That is also the reason why this artistic method -- the rendering of the substance of a certain social situation in a single, typical picture, vibrating with emotion and stripped of all that is secondary and accidental -- was employed by modern artists such as Lu Xun, in his attempt to express in a new way his revolutionary attitude to reality.

141 Published by Kaiming shudian, Shanghai, 1934.
Lin Pu and Jiang Baishi have suddenly learnt how to write in the vernacular.\(^{142}\)

Rou Shi declared that in an age in which "the bourgeoisie is on the road to oblivion" students who were willing to abandon their textbooks should be encouraged to find out more about the world around them and the society they live in.

After visiting the suffering people who have to live in boats on the river they might take the time to see the American sailors in the white caps who are on the streets, who twirl their batons and use them to beat rickshaw boys on the head when they think they're going too slow. I think that such activities would be far more beneficial and thought-provoking than gazing at plum blossoms...at least they wouldn't end up as woolly-headed as Feng was when he wrote those essays.\(^{143}\)

Such a vitriolic onslaught was characteristic of the increasingly militant style of critical prose from the 1920s onwards, and it is typical of the ideological criticisms to which Feng Zikai was subjected throughout his life, as we will see below. Although there is no evidence that he changed the direction of his work as a result of Rou Shi's vituperations, by 1929 Feng's interest in doing paintings inspired by poems waned and, as we will see in Chapter Seven, he now found his themes more readily in experiences he had as a teacher and resident of Shanghai and later as a recluse in Zhejiang.\(^{144}\)

4: 6 Later Paintings from Poetry

This is not to say, however, that Feng Zikai abandoned poetry as a vehicle for and inspiration of his art. He continued to do paintings with poetic inscriptions throughout his life, although not with quite the same energy or unstudied grace of his earlier works.

\(^{142}\) "Feng Zikai's Woolly Attitude" (Feng Zikai jun de piaorande taidu), Rou Shi, in Mengya yuekan, Vol. 1, No. 4, April 1930, p. 238. Harbsmeier, in The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 32, translates this title as "Feng Zikai's spineless attitudes". Lin Pu (967-1026), a Song Dynasty recluse who lived in Gushan, Hangzhou, devoting himself to growing plum trees and raising herons.

\(^{143}\) "Feng Zikai's Woolly Attitude", p. 239.

\(^{144}\) Another quotation from a speech he wrote during this period adds to our understanding of Feng's thinking at this time. "In the normal course of events our eyes are easily submerged in the profane world. All we can see is the fine detail of objects and fail entirely to see the art that is far beyond the vulgarity of dust of the world (chensu wuzhi). We must lift our spirit into the Void (taiyi) and cast our gaze over the myriad things, for only then can we see the true aspect (zhēn miānmù) of 'art.'" See "The Attitude for Appreciating Art", Yishu quwei, p. 27. This statement resonates with ideas similar to Shitao in the chapters "Far from the Dust of the World" (Yuanchen) and "To Escape from the Common" (Tuosu) in his Notes on Painting. See Osvald Sirén, The Chinese on the Art of Painting, p. 191; and Ryckmans, Shitao, pp. 111-16 & 117-23.
One of the best known works that he did in this style in the early 1930s was "Morning Breeze, Waning Moon" (Xiaofeng canyue), published in the collection Yunni in 1935. This painting is based on a theme provided by a ci poem by Liu Yong of the Northern Song. In two later reproductions of this painting Feng inscribed the line of poetry in full, "Willows on the bank, morning breeze, waning moon." The original poem is about the sorrow a couple feels at parting; in Feng's picture two farmers bent over planting rice have taken the place of the lovers. While a modern critic has commented that the use of this poem to accompany such a painting "Shows the striking contrast between the lifestyles of two different classes. It is a work deep in allegorical significance!" Feng's attitude to farmers labouring in the fields, however, was not quite as ideologically sound as such writers would have us believe.

In early 1934, Feng wrote that the January Twenty Eighth Incident of 1932, the Japanese attack on Shanghai which among other things nearly saw the destruction of the Li Da Academy, had inspired him to do a series of paintings on war to be entitled Collected Paintings Against War (Feizhan huaji), a plan he put off due to illness until, in late 1933, the philosopher Ma Yifu gave him a new impetus to realize the project. He collected lines from classical poetry and essays relevant to the topic which he was preparing to use as themes for paintings. The book was never produced.

In the early 1940s, interestingly enough, Feng returned to painting scenes based on lines of poetry, and produced a whole volume of such works in 1941, including a number of reproduced paintings from his earliest period. Many of these paintings were landscapes, inspired by his travels in the south-west during his family's

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145 Yunni, p. 16. Feng repainted this picture for Minjianxiang, reprinted in his Zikai manhua quanji, 4: 2, and dated 1935. Yet another version of this painting, this time in colour and possibly done after 1949, can be found in Zikai fengjing huaji, Peking: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1983, p. 23. In both of these later reproductions the full line of poetry is inscribed on the painting.

146 See Long Yusheng, Tang Song mingjia cixuan, p. 76.

147 See Fei Zhiping's "Feng Zikai's Poetic Paintings" (Feng Zikai de shiyihua), Yitan, 1983: 4, p. 17. Fei has managed to misread the original poem entirely, commenting that it is about two decadent scholar-gentleman enjoying the moonlit landscape in the early morning.

148 Another writer, Shao Luoyang, casts Feng's entire artistic effort of these early years in a Maoist guise by citing this painting as an example of Feng's ability to "make the past serve the present" (gu wei jin yong). This is the cardinal dictum of Mao Zedong's utilitarian approach to traditional Chinese culture. See "I Will Remember his Elegant Spirit Forever" (Xiaosa fengshe yong yi qu), Shao Luoyang, Shanghai meishu tongzhi (internal distribution), No. 25, 15 December, 1985, p. 14.

149 Feng suffered from a serious eye infection in the early 1930s.


151 See Zikai manhua quanji, Vol. I, Gushi xinhua. This volume is prefaced by a long poem by Ma Yifu written on the Chongyang Festival of 1938 in which he likens the artist to Gu Kaizhi. In a commentary on the last line of the poem, Ma says that "I often tell you [i.e., Feng Zikai] that the duty of artist is to correct the evils of the world with the beauty of the ideal." Feng's relationship with Ma and their friendship during the war is discussed at length in Chapter Six.
flight from the Japanese invasion. The style of these works is far more "traditional" than his earlier interpretations of poetry, elements of his study of Chinese painting manuals coming strongly to the fore in a way that was never evident in his pictures of children, school life, or his urban and country scenes.

The changes in Feng's style are immediately obvious if we compare the paintings he originally published in 1925 with the new versions he painted for inclusion in this wartime volume. As he noted in the introduction to this "complete works", he was forced to repaint the pictures as the originals and plates of his earlier books had been destroyed in the fighting.152

All together fifteen of the original twenty-six paintings are reproduced. Of those we have chosen five of the best known paintings for comparison, the original works come, in each case, before the repainted versions. They are: "Jade touches the heads of passersby" (Cui fu xingren shou);153 "Everyone has departed/ The new moon a hook, sky like water" (Ren san hou yi gou xinyue tian ru shui);154 "The moon hangs on a willow branch" (Yue shang liu shaotou);155 "Are they coming tonight, I am to stand here in the shadow of the plane" (Jinye guren lai bu lai, jiao ren Ii jin wutong ying);156 and, "I go silently to the western pavilion, the moon is like a hook" (Wuyan du shang xilou yue ru gou).157 [4: 13]

Even in a volume of paintings produced during the Anti-Japanese War called Images of Wartime (Zhanshixiang), Feng sometimes returned to using lines of poetry.158 One of the earliest memories he had of Takehisa Yumeji's paintings was of a work entitled "War and Flowers".159 [4: 14] It was of a soldier in the field looking fondly at a flower in his hand. The painting reminded him of the poem "Thinking of my old garden on the ninth day of the march" (Xingjun jiuri si Chang'an guyuan) in which the Tang poet Cen Shen juxtaposes the chrysanthemums of a garden with a battle-field.160 Feng did a number of paintings along similar themes. [4: 15] He also used poetry for a group of works in the collection, [4: 16] and even repainted two pictures from his earliest collection using the same lines of poetry but depicting a very different, far less romantic scene. [4: 17]

152 "Introduction to Zikai manhua quanji" (Zikai manhua quanji xu), Zikai manhua quanji, p. 1.
153 Gushi xinhua, Zikai manhua quanji, 1: 20; Zikai manhua, p. 41.
154 Gushi xinhua, Zikai manhua quanji, 1: 21; Zikai manhua, p. 43.
155 Gushi xinhua, Zikai manhua quanji, 1: 23; Zikai manhua, p. 46.
156 Gushi xinhua, Zikai manhua quanji, 1: 24; Zikai manhua, p. 47.
158 Zhanshixiang, in Zikai manhua quanji, Vol. VI.
159 "Sensō to hanabō" is a painting in Yumeji gashō: Natsu no maki (no pagination).
160 "Painting and Literature", p. 44.
In 1943, he produced another volume of paintings entirely inspired by poetry which he entitled, appropriately enough, *There is Painting in Poetry (Huazhong youshi)*. In the introduction to this volume he restates his reason for favouring this form of painting:

> When reading the poetry of the ancients I often feel that some of the best lines are equally a description of the lives of modern man; or that they have spoken on my behalf. It is true that poetry expresses feeling, and human feelings have not changed throughout the ages. Therefore, good poems are forever new, no matter how old they are. They are what people are referring to when they speak of "undying works" (*buxiu zhi zuo*).

After the war, in early 1947, after some months in Shanghai Feng moved to Hangzhou to paint and exhibit. From March 1947 to September 1948 Feng saw a great deal of the editor Shu Guohua, and regularly contributed paintings to Shu’s newspaper. The artist was so impressed with Shu’s poetry that he illustrated two volumes of poems for him. During these months in Hangzhou Feng also contributed paintings regularly to the *Tianjin minguo ribao*, many of which were illustrations of lines of poetry. In March 1948, the first volume of these collected works was published in Tianjin under the title *Feng Zikai huacun*. These were the last collections of paintings inspired by lines of poetry Feng produced in volume form before 1949.

4: Conclusion

Lines of classical poetry provided the first mental images which Feng Zikai expressed in his new *manhua* style. He chose first to “translate” classical poems because he found in poetry a sensibility that was immediately relevant to him, one which he could transform into visual images. To use some of the most famous and

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162 "Introduction to *Huazhong youshi*" (*Huazhong youshi xu*), written on New Year’s Day, 1943, at Shaping in Chongqing. *Huazhong youshi* was published in Chongqing by the Wenguang shudian, 1943.
163 See Li Zhongyuan, "The Contact Between Feng Zikai and Shu Guohua" (*Feng Zikai yu Shu Guohua de jiaowang*), *Shehui kexuebao*, 15 April, 1988; and, "A Rare Paintings by Feng Zikai" (*Feng Zikaiye yifu xizhenhua*), Wei Xiucheng, *Renmin ribao* (overseas edition), 29 October, 1988. Neither of these illustrated collections of poetry are listed in bibliographies of Feng’s work. But, as Wei Xiucheng points out, both volumes were printed by Shu’s newspaper, the *Zhegan xuexiao*, and distributed privately to friends. One of Feng’s illustrations is reproduced with Wei’s *Renmin ribao* article and it is typical of the artist’s detailed and somewhat stodgy later work.
164 *Feng Zikai huacun*, Vol. I, Tianjin: Tianjin guomin ribao, 1948. A second volume was also printed, but I have been unable to find a copy of it. I am grateful to Xia Zongyu of *Renmin ribao* for making a photocopy of the first volume of *Feng Zikai huacun* for me.
popular lines of classical poetry gave his art an immediate popular appeal, but it also confounded his critics. Yu Pingbo took the attitude of the traditional connoisseur and failed to understand the significance of much of Feng's early work; Rou Shi, a doctrinaire leftist writer, found Feng's attitude totally reprehensible. Both of these reactions were typical of responses Feng's work would elicit for many years, even after the subtle grace of his inspired poetic paintings had been replaced by a more practiced, mature and deliberate style.
Chapter 5:  
The Cult of the Child

My children, I am so enthralled by your lives that I have been foolish enough to want to preserve your Golden Age for you forever in the pages of this book. Yet, in all truth, my exertions have been no more successful than those of a "spider catching falling spring flowers in his web" \[5: 1\] for like him I have only captured the merest traces. By the time you can appreciate my labour, you will no longer be children and there will be no hint of your past apart from this book. What a tragic thing this is.  

5: 1 Introduction

Feng Zikai made a cult of infancy, devoting much of his early writing and painting to childhood, the "Golden Age" of man. As he approached his thirtieth year he became increasingly nostalgic for a youth spent in what he remembered as being the idyllic environment of Shimenwan. It was a nostalgia coloured by the sense that as an adult he had lost the innocence, simplicity and courage of youth. The birth of his own children -- he had five by the age of thirty -- reinforced this sense of lost innocence, and for a time during their own infancy they provided him with a relief from the adult world.

At a time when many of his contemporaries in the Literature Research Society were becoming increasingly involved in politics and had been radicalized by the tension between the KMT and the Communist Party, Feng chose to retreat into childhood. It was a decision that was to stigmatize him for the rest of his career. Many of the paintings he did in the 1920s took children, his children, as their theme, as did a large number of his essays. This led him to be characterized as a children's writer who had little to say to an adult audience. Ironically, when his work was recognized as being directed towards adults rather than children, he was quickly condemned as an escapist and socially irresponsible. In fact, Feng's fascination with children and the "childlike mind" was his way of reacting to the confused and disturbing realities of the world around him. He was not like the authors of romantic

1 *zhizhuiwang luohua*, see last picture in *Zikai manhua*, section one.
2 From "For My Children" (Gei wode haizimen), an essay written as an introduction to Feng's second volume of paintings, *Zikai huaji*, published by Kaiming shudian in 1927. See *Suibiji*, p. 15.
childhood literature of the 1920s and 1930s. For although his work contained elements of Buddhist world-weariness, in general his thought was too robust and his art too honest for him to qualify as an escapist. His writings and paintings show him to have actively rejected the new orthodoxies of the day in favour of the traditional school of self-expression, an "orthodoxy" of much longer standing. In this he shared the interest of such writers as Zhou Zuoren, Yu Pingbo and Lin Yutang in what they perceived of as an alternative tradition of Chinese thought, and this led him in the 1930s to become aligned with their school of essay writing and their publications.

The nostalgia Feng felt for his past and even the feelings he had for his own children underwent a number of changes as he became older, especially after he became a lay Buddhist in 1927. The decision to become a practising Buddhist, although the culmination of a long process that dates from his school days in Hangzhou, may also be seen as a result of his adoration of children and the distress he felt at the impermanence of things. His admiration for children lay in his appreciation that they were blessed with the ability to express "true" (zhen) feelings, and as we will see in this and the following chapter he placed the "true man" (zhenren) or "great man" (daren) -- either the child or the sage -- at the centre of his personal pursuit of a deeper understanding of the individual and society.

5:2 Return to Childhood

In late 1924, after a dispute with Jing Hengyi and the local authorities over various aspects of educational policy at Chunhui High School, Kuang Husheng led a group of teachers to hand in their resignations and join him in establishing a new school in Shanghai, the Li Da High School (Li da zhongxue). Feng Zikai sold his house on the shore of Baima Lake and used the proceeds to help his colleagues rent some rooms in Hongkou in the International Settlement to set up the new school, although they were soon forced to move because the rent was too high. The school

3 See Pollard, A Chinese Look at Literature, pp. 55-56, where he quotes Xu Fuguan on the question of the "true" (zhen) and "proper" (cheng).

4 One of the most informative records of the history of Li Da is Zhang Kebiao's "Miscellaneous Memories of the Li Da Academy at Jiangwan", pp. 147-59. He recalls that Feng was also a talented caricaturist and he remembers a manhua he did of Wu Zhihui when he lectured at Chunhui. On pp. 149-56, Zhang provides biographical details of the founding teachers of the school. Zhang himself went on to become one of the editors of the Ziyoutan supplement of Shenbao in the mid-1930s in which Feng published many paintings. See Chapter Seven below.

5 Zhuan, p. 39, and Feng's essay "Thoughts on the Fifth Anniversary of Li Da" (Li da wu zhounian jinian ganxian), Suibiji, p. 44. According to Feng (Zhuan, p. 42) the name of the school was based on a passage in Lunyu, VI: 28 which Arthur Waley translates as, "As for Goodness -- you yourself desire rank [da] and standing [li]; then help others to get rank and standing." See The Analects of Confucius, translated and annotated by Arthur Waley, New York: Vintage Books, 1938, p. 122. In Yang Bojun's Lunyu yizhu, p. 65, this quotation is given in VI: 30.
was established on egalitarian principles, influenced by the New Village movement (Atarashikimura) led by the novelist Mushakoji Saneatsu in Japan. The movement had impressed Zhou Zuoren when he had visited villages in 1919 and he wrote about them a number of times. No headmaster was appointed and the students were to be treated as friends or even the children of the teachers rather than as their charges. As the school attracted increasing numbers of students, after only six months they were able to build their own school buildings at Jiangwan in the suburbs of Shanghai, and following this move the name of the school was changed to the Li Da Academy (Li da xueyuan). On the occasion of the first anniversary of the school’s establishment, the members of the Li Da Association (Li da xuehui) published their programme outlining the nature and aims of the academy. Signed by fifty-one teachers, including writers, artists, educationalists and translators, the programme pointed out that the organization was not an alliance born of political ideology but "With the aim of cultivating the individual, undertaking scholastic research and for the transformation of society." It was open to the public and in addition to the school the Li Da Association now ran a magazine and series of books, and research groups. They further announced that as of 1925 the school had 139 students.

Feng had been put in charge of classes in Western art which were eventually subsumed by an arts department, and when the school journal, Yiban, was started in September 1926, he was made art editor. The magazine was a new publication for Kaiming shudian, which members of the Li Da Academy along with the Literature Research Society supported. The job as art editor allowed Feng to design the magazine and gave full scope to the interest in graphics which had been inspired by Takehisa Yumeji’s sashi-e. During the two-year life of Yiban, Feng painted most of the illustrations in the magazine and the illustrated headings for articles.

Following his move to Shanghai Feng Zikai embarked on a career that involved him in teaching (he usually had two or even three teaching jobs at the same time), painting, writing and translating. One of the reasons for this frenetic activity was that

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6 Zhang Kebiao, “Miscellaneous Memories of the Li Da Academy at Jiangwan”, p. 147; David Pollard, "Chou Tso-jen: A Scholar Who Withdrew", in Furth, The Limits of Change, p. 342 and note 29; Chow Tse-tsung, The May 4th Movement, p. 190, note g and 55, where Chow comments on the influence of Mushakoji’s idealism on May Fourth intellectuals.

7 Zhuan, p. 41; Xia zhuangji, p. 63; Zhang Kebiao, "Miscellaneous Memories of the Li Da Academy at Jiangwan", p. 148.

8 "The Li Da Association and its Enterprise" (Li Da xueyuan jiqi shiye), Yiban, 1926, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 154-56.

9 "The Li Da Association and its Enterprise", p. 154-55. This statement is highly reminiscent of John Dewey’s message to Chinese audiences in the early 1920s.

10 "The Li Da Association and its Enterprise", p. 155.

he had to support a growing family. Although he enjoyed the vocation of teacher -- he was happy to translate books on art and music for the training of the young -- he seems to have positively disliked classroom teaching. It was a job that he saw as part of the process of destroying the spontaneity of children, one which destroyed their imagination. [5: 3] He later wrote that, at the time, he wanted very much to return to the untrammelled and uncomplicated existence of his childhood in Shimenwan, yet he had no choice but to stay and work in Shanghai. Although his family moved a number of times, they always ended up living in typical "alley houses" (longtang fangzi). Once the Li Da Academy was established, they moved into rooms in Jiangwan along with a number of other teachers and their families. [5: 4] It was there in 1925 that Zheng Zhenduo contacted Feng through his friend Hu Yuzhi, an editor of Dongfang zazhi, and asked him to provide some paintings for use in the new independent Wenxue zhoubao.

The city environment was very different from that which Feng had enjoyed in Shimenwan, since families from various parts of Zhejiang which were thrown together in cramped apartments of Shanghai shared little in common. Perhaps because of the mutual isolation of family units, each ended up pursuing a lifestyle which was much the same as it would have been in the country. Feng said that as they had little to do with their neighbours, his own family enjoyed "a world which was little more than a miniature of Shimenwan".

In the 1920s, the civil disturbances around him also disaffected Feng increasingly from his environment and contemporaries. He declared himself to be quite uninterested in politics, and must have surprised his readers when he revealed that he only started reading the daily news when it became obvious that the Northern Expedition of the KMT was about to oust Sun Chuanfang, the warlord who was in control of Shanghai until March, 1927. He wrote of his family's hurried evacuation from Jiangwan in a matter-of-fact manner, and described in surprisingly poetical terms the scene that night when they had finally relocated themselves in a university which was presumed safe as it was run by foreigners.

In the dusk I sat on the grassy bank of the Huangpu River. As I looked out over the water and at the clouds in the sky thinking

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12 See Nianbiao, p. 12.
13 Hu Yuzhi, "On the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Founding of Kaiming shudian" (Jinian Kaiming shudian chuangjian liushi zhounian), Wo yu Kaiming, p. 39.
14 See Zheng's introduction to Zikai manhua, p. 3. Nianbiao, p. 12, states that Zheng first approached Feng for some paintings in the autumn of 1925, although this is impossible as Wenxue zhoubao started printing Feng's works in May of that year.
16 "From the Mouths of Babes" (Cong haizi dedaode qishi), written in 1926, see Feng Zikai sanwen xuanji, p. 7.
nostalgically of our old home, I was surrounded by children picking flowers, lying on the grass, shouting to each other to look at the countless sampans and steam boats which were passing by. They were delighted for they had a whole new world in which to play.\textsuperscript{17}

In the midst of the political chaos, Feng conjures up the pastoral idyll of childhood and the untrammeled nature of children. This episode is recorded in one of Feng's earliest essays, "From the Mouths of Babes" (Cong hai zi dedao de qishi), which was in itself inspired by a conversation with his youngest son, Zhanzhan. In response to a question from his father the boy says the thing he enjoys most of all is "being a refugee", after all "last time...[we all] got to go in a car to see steam boats." Feng muses, "for them the crowds of people rushing about on their business, the hustle and bustle of the city is nothing more than some meaningless game, a play; all human creations, all phenomena, are simply a decoration on nature."\textsuperscript{18} Using an obviously Buddhist frame of reference, he reproaches himself for being incapable of "cutting asunder the web of cause and effect that ensnares everything in the world to see through to the true nature of things. Although lost in dust of the sentient world I should learn this art so that I too may sometimes see things as they really are. I must learn this from my son."\textsuperscript{19}

This is hardly the type of thinking that could appeal to the more politically conscious writers of the time, and, as we will see, Feng was soon attacked for his "frivolous escapism". Yet these criticisms would only confirm his own beliefs. As he pointed out a number of times, much of his work in depicting children, both through art and writing, was a direct response to the callous and confused political environment in which he found himself. "I had always been nostalgic for childhood, but this was particularly true at that time [having just moved to Shanghai] when I first came into contact with the hypocrisy and self-importance of society. I felt as though adults had lost their original nature, while children were innocent romantics, complete people, indeed the only real 'people' (\textit{ren}). Thus I became a worshipper of children and I found myself constantly praising children in my painting and essays. In retrospect I can see now that this was a way of cursing the adult world in reverse."\textsuperscript{20} [5: 5]

Childhood, both his own and that of his children, became then an idealized time, one that was made increasingly attractive by the horrors of the world around him. It was also an idyll from which he was permanently exiled, both because he had grown up, and because as an adult he was forever separated from the realm occupied by his children. His painting was a means by which he came to appreciate the unique

\textsuperscript{17} "From the Mouths of Babes", p. 8.
\textsuperscript{18} "From the Mouths of Babes", p. 9.
\textsuperscript{19} "From the Mouths of Babes", ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} "My manhua ", p. 311.
qualities of childhood anew, and one through which he tried to see the world through the eyes of a child. He saw not the image of the mature adult in the child, but rather the shadow of childhood in the man. "At the time [he was nearly exclusively painting children] I was of the opinion that a child growing into an adult could be compared to a caterpillar becoming a butterfly....I was a butterfly who attempted to tuck in my wings so that I could crawl around like a caterpillar. I came to understand how children thought and felt and painted them with enthusiasm."21

For Feng, the most typical scene of this period was to be greeted by his wife and children on his return from work each day. They would be standing at the entrance to the alley, his wife carrying the two-year old Zhanzhan on one arm while holding Ah Bao, their six year-old daughter, by the hand. Zhanzhan would be asking restlessly, "Where is daddy?", and as soon as he appeared with a pile of books and a parcel of food in his arms, both children would both start jumping excitedly. Amidst the playful scolding of their mother, Feng felt himself somehow divorced from the scene, as if split into two completely different people: one, husband and father experiencing the happiness of being reunited with his family, the other a distant and dispassionate observer who was witness to live theatre, a performance in which the whole range of worldly joys and sorrows was played out before his eyes. The picture of this scene is one of Feng's earliest paintings of children, included in his first volume of paintings and described in his essay "On My Paintings".22

5: 3 Transition to Painting Children

Although there was no time when Feng stopped doing paintings based on lines of poetry and started the pictures inspired by his children -- he was to continue doing works using both subjects for many years -- it was around the time that he moved to Shanghai to take up a teaching post at Li Da that his children began to feature more prominently in his work. This was a development that led Feng to earn the name of a "children's artist" or a painter of children. In fact his own perceptions of these works as given in scattered references throughout his essays shows that, as in the case of his paintings from poetry, he was still interested in recording his sentiments for an adult audience.

You might say reading books about the meaning of life, and indeed discussing the topic, had become one of my habits. Even as a child I was always more interested in art and literature than science; I felt that science books always dealt with things that were too

21 From "An Introduction to Selected Paintings by Zikai", written in 1955, see Suibiji, p. 322.
22 "On My Paintings", pp. 134-35; and, Zikai manhua, p. 69.
divorced from life, while books of literature, even the most common things like *Three Hundred Poems of the Tang* or the *Baixiang Collection of Ci Poetry* were full of lines that touched on the most basic questions of life and gave one considerable cause for reflection. But I see the adults of this world completely dazzled by the minutiae of daily life, and they have forgotten the important things. Only children retain their innocence, are possessed of the wisdom eye, and what they say and do are a constant source of enjoyment. As the Eight-fingered Monk wrote,

I adore the form of children, they are as lotuses unpolluted by filth.

They only laugh when one berates them, and are not angry when beaten.

Their hearts are always in repose, their speech is fresh when they talk.

Alas that as they grow, worldliness does their innocence cloud.23

As Feng said about the evolution of his *manhua*, "My painting went from being passive re-creation to active creation when I started sketching images of my own children."24

5: 4 The Childlike Mind

The concept of "the childlike mind" occupies a central position in Feng Zikai's early thinking, deeply influencing his philosophy of life, aesthetic views, and his artistic practice.

One of the first Chinese writers in modern times to discuss the concept of the childlike mind was Wang Guowei (d. 1927). As early as 1904 Wang had embraced the metaphysical theory of art propounded by Schopenhauer, "the artist's philosopher of the nineteenth century".25 In his *Renjian cihua*, Wang's well-known work on poetic criticism, he made use of the German philosopher's views on genius, play and childlike innocence, casting them, however, in terms of traditional Chinese thought. Schopenhauer, in discussing the qualities of the genius, "described him as a man with a childlike heart. Wang Guowei applied this term in his judgement of the Five Dynasties poet, Li Yu..."26 Ci writers can be considered among those who have not lost

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23 "Talking About My Paintings" (Tan zijide hua), in *Suibiji*, p. 138. The Eight-fingered Monk (*Bazhi toutuo*) was the monk Jing'an (1851-1912) a Buddhist activist born in Xiangtan, Hunan. The poem quoted by Feng is entitled "Tongzi", and can be found in *Bazhi toutuo shiwenji*, punctuated and selected by Mei Ji, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1984, p. 40. Feng quotes a line from this poem, "They only laugh when one berates them, and are not angry when beaten", in another essay on the subject of children, "A Seesaw For Poor Children" (Qiong xiaohaide qiaoqiaoban), *Chexiang shehui*, p. 41.

24 "My manhua", *Suibiji*, p. 311.

their childlike heart (chizi zhi xin).”  

Wang was indebted to the German philosopher for the notion that genius possessed a childlike quality, although he also emphasized that for an artist to realize the potential of his genius, personal cultivation (xiuyang) was required.  

Wang’s aesthetic theories, which subsequently also came under the influence of Kant and Schiller, made many of Schopenhauer’s ideas accessible to Chinese readers through his often compressed translations. In “On Genius” Schopenhauer had written of the “naïveté and sublime simplicity” of the child, saying that the genius is the man who retains this quality in adult life. His view of the genius and his comparison of the artistic genius to a child at play, translated by Wang in 1904, were paralleled nearly exactly in Feng’s writings some twenty years later. “The genius,” Schopenhauer wrote, “....looks out into the world as into something strange, a play, and therefore with purely objective interest. Accordingly he has just as little as the child that dull gravity of ordinary men, who, since they are capable only of subjective interest, always see in things mere motives for their action”. This is exactly the sentiment Feng expressed when describing his reaction to the scene of his wife and children waiting for him to return from work each afternoon mentioned above. Of course, this is not to say that Feng was consciously echoing these ideas so as to foster an image of himself as a genius; we merely raise this example to show a certain reflection in Feng’s thinking of European ideas introduced to China in the early part of the century.

Through his translations Wang made Western philosophical and aesthetic thinking available to Chinese intellectuals at a time when Western science and politics were seen as a panacea to China’s ills. These works attracted the interest of many of his contemporaries who had contact with the West. Although there is no documented evidence that it was the case, it is more than possible that Li Shutong, a somewhat dissolute although intellectually active youth in Shanghai at the turn of the century, had read Wang Guowei’s translations before the founding of the Republic. Yet while Li, a man who was so crucial in the development of Feng’s artistic sensibilities, may

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26 Adele Austin Rickett, Wang Kuo-wei’s Jen-chien tz’u-hua: A Study in Chinese Literary Criticism, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1977, pp. 17-18, also p. 46. Rickett adds that when writing this Wang may well have had a famous statement by Mencius in mind, “The great man is one who has not lost his child-like heart” See Mengzi, IVB: 12. The cover illustration of Feng Zikai’s first volume of paintings, Zikai manhua, takes for its theme a line from Li Yu’s ci to the tune of “Yumeiren”: “I ask you how much sorrow can a man bear?/ As much as a river of spring waters flowing eastwards.” See Rickett, Wang Kuo-wei’s Jen-chien tz’u-hua, p. 45, note 29, and Li Jing Li Yu ci, p. 73.


have guided Feng towards Wang and through him to European aesthetic thought, Feng's reading in Japanese would have also given him access to Western thought.

The May Fourth period itself marked a "discovery" of childhood, and numerous studies on children's behaviour, psychology and literature were written and translated in the pages of the leading journals of the period.\(^{30}\) Lu Xun, in his famous article "What is Required of Us as Fathers Today" (Women xianzai zenme zuo fuqin) published in 1919, called for a recognition of the nature (tianxing) of man and the need to understand children.\(^{31}\) Although he did not employ the expression "childlike mind", Lu Xun did recognize the independence of the "child's world".\(^{32}\) However, he made no direct references to the childlike mind in his writings, and in 1934 when making some observations about the lack of suitable literature for children he expressed a somewhat sober view of the relationship between the sympathetic adult and the "child's world". A view that was, as we will see, in striking contrast to Feng Zikai's thoughts on the subject.

As soon as anyone, regardless of whether they're in their middle years or even old age, comes into contact with a child, they will immediately be transported to the borderlands of a long-forgotten children's world.... Yet children occupy that realm as fish do the water, they swim in it freely, quite unconscious of their state. But for adults it is like trying to keep afloat in water, although they may too experience the soft and cool sensation of the liquid around them, it is a tiring exercise, difficult, and always ends with them having to come ashore.\(^{33}\)

Ye Shengtao, the author of the first collection of fairytales for children, *Daocaoren (The Scarecrow)*, which was written in the early 1920s, was, along with Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren and Bing Xin, one of the first advocates of adults

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\(^{30}\) See Mary Ann Farquhar, *Children's Literature in China*, a doctoral thesis submitted to the School of Modern Asian Studies, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, 1983, pp. 25-26. As Farquhar notes, the *Supplement to the Morning Post (Chenbao fukan)* published a miscellany of articles on the "children's world" between the years 1921-1929 as an aid to readers' understanding of children. (p. 39.)

\(^{31}\) In 1933, Feng wrote an essay entitled "On Being a Father" (Zuo fuqin) in which he describes how he taught his children to haggle over the price of chicks with a hawker. The children are reduced to tears because the hawker still won't lower his price, and Feng is distracted from his work. He feels ashamed for having encouraged deviousness in the children, "How could such a beautiful and sunny spring day as this possibly give shelter to a father who teaches his children such a thing?" See *Suibiji*, p. 71.


understanding and delving in the "child's world". Yet, he was far from confident of being able to achieve this. In March 1921 he wrote that, "I do not believe we are able to enter the child's mind (ertongde xin), nor can we recall our own childhood minds (ziji tongniande xin). This is deeply regrettable...." Bing Xin was more confident of her grasp on childhood, and in her early poetry and prose, especially her *Letters to Young Readers (Ji xiaoduzhe)* (1923-1926), she idealized the past, indulged her nostalgia for childhood and celebrated as no other writer had done, the theme of motherly love. Bing Xin approaches the question of the childlike mind as a Romantic; in these early writings she maintains a "belief that children, in their natural innocence and sensitivity, possess an *a priori* wisdom that decreases with age." Rather than simply writing for children, Bing Xin writes of herself in an attempt to escape into the past, much in the same way that some years later Feng Zikai was to paint his own children and write about them: while seeing no hope in a retreat into his own past, one irretrievably lost due to the bankruptcy of the countryside, he finds in the innocence of his children a means to aid him, the exile from childhood in the adult world, for a time in his sojourn among the adults who had lost their childlike mind.

Apart from the writings of these prominent literary figures, it is also more than likely that Feng's aesthetic views were influenced to an extent by the works of colleagues at the Li Da Academy such as Zhu Guangqian. Zhu first published his *Twelve Letters to Young People (Gei qingniande shi'er feng xin)* in 1926 in the

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34 See Farquhar, *Children's Literature in China*, pp. 96, 98, 100-101, and 104. Farquhar comments on these writers that, "It is difficult to escape the conclusion that both the romantic idea of children and the nature of the fairytale were topics for discussion in The Society for the Study of Literature [or, the Literature Research Society], particularly when two of its members, Ye Shengtao and Zhou Zuoren, were writing about both at this time. And yet another member, Bing Xin, adopted the same romantic idea as a foundation of her fiction." (p. 98.)

35 "The Imagination and Sensibility of Children" (Ertongde xiangxiang he ganqing), published originally in *Supplement to the Morning Post*, 22 March, 1921, reprinted in *Ye Shengtao sanwen (jiaji)*, Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1983, p. 2. In this essay Ye describes the special perception of his own three year-old son -- that he sees many hands in the flames of a fire, or that he takes his shadow for a partner and attempts to teach it callisthenics -- which are much like the innocent and "artistic" perception of children that enthralled Feng, and which he represented in his early paintings. Despite his doubts about the artist or writer regaining a childlike state, Ye said that "Artists must examine their [children's] characteristics, strengthen them with their art, and the work that results will inevitably able to touch the heart of a child...children's literature must contain elements of the child's imagination and sensibility." (p. 3.)


37 *Children's Literature in China*, p. 117.

38 Farquhar sums the relationship of Lu Xun, Ye Shengtao and Bing Xin's writing for and about children in the following way:

...Where Lu Xun and Ye Shengtao adopted the romantic qualities of childhood as symbols of the future, growth and hope, she [Bing Xin] used the same qualities to point to the past, with regret, and the tragedy of growth. Where Lu Xun and Ye Shengtao confronted the black night of old China with a sunlit future, she fought the greyness of reality with a golden past. Where they looked forward, she looked back.

*See Children's Literature in China*, p. 119.
academy journal Yiban, and in these, as well as his later *Discussions on Beauty* (Tanmei) published in 1932, Zhu touched on aspects of European aesthetic thought such as the childlike mind, empathy and disinterestedness which definitely found a parallel in Feng’s own ideas. 39

Indeed, the ninth chapter of Tanmei is devoted to art and play and used the quotation from Mencius on the childlike mind as a title: "The great man is one who has not lost his childlike heart". 40 Zhu, whose thinking at this period (the early 1930s) was much influenced by post-Kantian idealism, discusses the origins of art in play and the relationship between the two. 41 Zhu classified the similarities between a child’s playing and art: both objectify an impression or an idea; they are the result of intense concentration that does not distinguish between reality and imagination; identification or empathy with the objects both sentient and insentient is common both among children and artists; and, both create an independent and idealized world. 42 As we shall see below in discussing Feng Zikai’s paintings and writings on children, he came to much the same conclusions as Zhu on the subject, and although he failed to give expression to his thoughts in a similarly rigorous theoretical framework, from the earliest period of his paintings of children he gave voice to his colleague’s ideas in the form of art.

In the early post-May Fourth era, Zhou Zuoren, like his brother Lu Xun, was one of the writers who was sensitive to the fact that China not only lacked a children’s literature worthy of the name, but that few adults were even capable of understanding or appreciating the need for one. 43 In a review recommending Chao Yilan-jen's Chinese translation of *Alice in Wonderland*, Zhou wrote that, "Too many adults have entirely lost their 'childlike mind' (chizi zhi xin)," and, using the metaphor which Feng was later to avail himself of, he said, "it is as though the caterpillar having turned into a butterfly has absolutely nothing to do with its former self. This is a very sorry state of affairs. They have forgotten what it is like to be a child, and not only are they incapable of appreciating the sensibilities of children, they lack an ability to nurture or protect their children and end up by doing them harm." 44 In a review of a Japanese book entitled *Literature that Sings for Children* illustrated by Takehisa Yumeji, Zhou

41 See McDougall, "The View from the Leaning Tower", pp. 85-86.
43 See, for example, "Children’s Literature" (Ertong wenxue), written in October 1920; and, "Children’s Books" (Ertongde shu), June 1923, reprinted in *Ziji de yuandi*, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1987, pp. 109-12.
44 Zhou Zuoren, "Alice in Wonderland " (Alisi manyou qijing ji), in *Ziji de yuandi*, p. 55.
commented that apart from a few scant lines of poetry Tao Yuanming’s poem "Admonishing my Children" (Zezi) were the only children’s poetry in Chinese literature worthy of the name. "The outmoded thinking that informs our attitudes toward children and their literature has made it impossible for this state of affairs to change...."46

Feng's paintings, or rather illustrations, for Yu Pingbo’s third volume of poetry, Yi, a collection of verse related to childhood, are the first example of the artists' expression of his childlike mind. [5: 7] It was a fortuitous beginning to the period in Feng's life during which painting children and the pursuit of innocence were to play such an important part. Yu's poems revolved around the theme of memory, in particular memories of childhood. It is a book about the torture of seeking what the author calls "the road to memory"; the agony of reflection and the frustration experienced when all that can be regained are shadows of the past. On the frontispiece of the book Yu inscribed a famous line from a poem by the late-Qing scholar official Gong Zizhen (1792-1841), "The vase of flowers is in its place, and incense burning;/ searching I have been for my childlike mind for twenty-six years."49

46 "Literature that Sings for Children" (Geyong ertongde wenxue), Ziji de yuandi, pp. 95-96. As we will see in the appendix, a quarter of a century after this was written, Zhou Zuoren's interest in children's literature and the childlike mind led to a collaboration involving children's poetry and painting with Feng Zikai in the pages of the Shanghai daily Tibao at the time of the Communist revolution.
47 Yu's first collections of poetry were Dongye, Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1922; and Xihuan, Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1924.
48 The book consisted of thirty-six free-verse poems with eighteen illustrations by Feng, with nine poems in the classical style appended at the end of the volume. See Chen Xing's article on Feng and Yu Pingbo, "Art, Friendship from Afar and Like-minds" (Yishu, shenjiao, zhiyin), Xihu, 1984: 4, reprinted in Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 20-23. Chen gives the impression that Yu asked Feng to illustrate Yi after Zikai manhua was published in December 1925, where in fact Feng's paintings for the book were completed and in Zhu Ziqing's hands in August 1924, before Feng had even started publishing his work in the Wenxue zhoubao. Chen does, however, quote a recent comment that Yu Pingbo made in a letter to Feng's daughter, Feng Yiyn, concerning the book: "Your father did me the honour of painting illustrations for my little anthology of poetry Yi, and through his painstaking use of ink he added inestimably to the value and fame of the book. For that I remain grateful to this day." See Xiaosa fengshen, p. 22. The original of this letter is in the possession of Feng Yiyn, although a handwritten copy was made by Chen, which he subsequently photocopied and gave to the writer. Chen also includes one of Feng's illustrations from the book along with his essay. See also Huang Ke's "A Colourful Pearl of Children's Poetry and Painting - reading Yu Pingbo's collection of poems Yi, illustrated by Feng Zikai" (Ertong shihuade yike caizhu -- du Feng Zikai chatude Yu Pingbo shiji <<Yi>>), Sanwen, 1981: 10, pp. 31-32.
49 Yi; no pagination. Yu Pingbo was twenty-six when this book was published. For Gong’s poem, see "Kueiwei shi: Wumeng chujue, changran shicheng", Gong Zizhen quanji, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1975, p. 466. On the subject of Gong and the "childlike mind", see Fujimura Hiroichi, "On Gong Zizhen -- "aigen" and "tongxin" (Kō Jichin ron -- 'aikon' to 'dōshin' ni tsuite), Nihon Chugoku gakkaiho, No. 36, 1984, pp. 235-47, especially pp. 242-46 where Fujimura analyzes Gong's use of the "childlike mind" as an antidote to his career as a bureaucrat. He also gives a number of references to other poems by Gong in which childhood is mentioned.
Feng had been introduced to Yu's poems by Zhu Ziqing and commissioned to paint illustrations for the collection probably in early 1924. Yu wrote an introduction to the book in 1922, over three years before publication. He said that:

As for the childlike mind, it is something that no adult can understand, nor even re-experience. All that remains in one's memory are the most insubstantial shadows. Nonetheless, even though they might be only wispy shadows, as long as they appear in a flash within one's mind's eye, like the fury of breakers at sea or the flaring up of a fire, then they may be depicted clearly.... Only by relying on memories and nothing more can I find some solace as I forever wander uncertain in the "third world".  

Zhu Ziqing wrote a codicil to the book written on 17 August, 1924, only three days after he received Feng's illustrations. In it he said, "Just think of that childlike mind [one once had], both completely naked and capable of loving all things. One can still make it out through the mists of time, but if you make a sign for it to come forth into full view, it stays forever out of reach...." Commenting on Feng's paintings, however, he said "who was to know that later Zikai would really be able to 'paint clearly' the poems [in this volume]....Zikai has put colour and body to those shadows [that Pingpo wrote of in his introduction]...given form to their insubstantiality."  

The three men, the poet Yu Pingbo, the painter Feng Zikai and the essayist Zhu Ziqing, were all in their mid-twenties at the time of the publication of Yi. The book was a means for the three artists to come to terms with the fact that not only was their childhood little more than a memory, but that their youth was being inexorably overtaken by an encroaching middle-age. Zhu said that "Pingbo regrets that he will not be able to repossess the good times of his past,...but he has given to us his 'childhood time', and Zikai has painted its outline for us. When we truly accept [what they have given us] then it is as though their sentiments can be made our own...in a sense this book has given me a feeling of fulfillment."

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50 See Yi, also Yu Pingbo yanjiu ziliao, edited by Sun Yurong, Tianjin: Tianjin renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1986, pp. 132-33. The last paragraph of this preface was deleted in the revised version Yu Pingbo included in Zaban er zhi yi, a collection of essays published by Kaiming shudian in 1928, reprinted Nanchang: Jianxi renmin chubanshe, 1982, see p. 129.  
51 "Codicil to Yi" (<<Yi>> ba), Zhu Ziqing (Peixuan), reprinted in Womende liuyue, p. 212.  
52 Womende liuyue, p. 215.  
53 Womende liuyue, p. 216. Zhu also said of Yu in this codicil that "The country of night, the land of dreams, that is the country of children; it is the country that Pingbo occupied at the time [he wrote these poems]." Ibid., and also in Yu's essay "The City Station" (Chengzhan), Yanzhicao. On page 29 of this book there is a painting of the Lei Feng Pagoda in Hangzhou by Feng Zikai entitled "Memory of Lei Feng". The painting is reproduced in blue and red.
Yi was remarked on as being one of the most elegant publications of its time: it was produced as a traditionally bound book in a cloth case which was printed on fine paper with eight of Feng Zikai's eighteen illustrations reproduced in colour.\(^{54}\) Zhou Zuoren was so impressed by the quality of the publication that he wrote an essay on the subject.\(^{55}\) But the childlike mind of these men, or rather the pursuit of it, was not universally admired, and the book was attacked in a review printed in Deluge (Hongshui), the fortnightly journal of the Creation Society, in February 1925, shortly after its publication. In keeping with the politically progressive tone of the Creation Society at this time, a group of writers who believed themselves to be ideologically opposed to the Literature Research Society and its call for an "art for life", the reviewer said that as the book was so expensive the only people who could afford it were rich and effete ladies and gentlemen. Yet, he says, Yu Pingbo was sadly mistaken if he thought such people would actually buy a book to read, especially one like Yi. "They are more interested in showing off with prostitutes or driving around in cars and broughams from which they may occasionally throw some coppers to beggars on the way in a display of magnanimity."\(^{56}\) Continuing in this mood of high dudgeon, the reviewer declared that, "I despise the shamelessness of the usual herd of Chinese literati. Although exploited by the capitalists themselves, they try in turn to exploit the average poor student and man in the street. They care not a whit if they sacrifice all sense of decency and try to make a profit out of the most rubbishy publications." "I really don't understand how they can make such a big thing out of some petty memories and ask such an outrageous sum for the book."\(^{57}\) The criticisms were confined to the price of Yu's book, but the subtext of such comments was that books like Yi and the ideology that they represented were frivolous, unsuited to the times and self-indulgent. The tone of this attack is one that Feng Zikai became familiar with during his creative career as he was denounced in print a number of times for his work. It is significant that the first book he was associated with was the subject of an attack couched in terms of class-struggle.\(^{58}\)

\(^{54}\) A number of Feng's paintings, such as the illustration to poems 17, 22, 30, & 34, presaged his later paintings inspired by lines of poetry.

\(^{55}\) See Zhou Zuoren, "The Book Design for Yi ", op. cit. See also Mei An's article "Thread Sewn Anthologies of Poetry" (Xianzhuang shiji), Shuhua magazine, Peking, 1962: 6, reprinted in part in Yu Pingbo yanjiu ziliao, p. 270, wherein there is a detailed description of the book; also Huang Ke's Huang Ke's "A Colourful Pearl of Children's Poetry and Painting", p. 31.


\(^{57}\) Yu Pingbo yanjiu ziliao, p. 269

\(^{58}\) Xia Zongyu, a friend of Feng's from the Anti-Japanese War, has, since his retirement from the international news desk of the Renmin ribao, devoted his time to editing deluxe volumes of Li Shutong, Feng Zikai and Ma Yifu's calligraphic and artistic work (which are published by Huaxia chubanshe in Peking). His project for 1989 is the reprinting a deluxe facsimile edition of Yi for collectors and book-lovers. See Appendix II.
Feng Zikai's fascination with children and the portrayal of them in his paintings was not merely a case of a father doting on his own offspring. The child's world was supposedly closer to truth, and naturally belonged to the world of beauty, the very world which Feng wanted to capture and even escape into through his work. The "unsullied world of the child's imagination" was one of endless creative potential and moral honesty. "Only children are innocent and romantic, they are fully-developed people, only they are really 'people' (ren)." This attitude contrasted markedly with Lu Xun's early "evolutionary" view of children, for example, which concerned itself with nurturing a new breed of Chinese adult which should be raised from emancipated and well-educated children. Feng was not concerned with painting and writing for children, and although much of his translation work was educational, his audience was primarily meant to be an adult one. His paintings aimed to record the lives of his children, yet because he published them he was also encouraging a greater sympathy for the world of the child among his readers. It is significant that the first journal that published his work regularly was Wenxue zhoubao, organ of the Literature Research Society, which, as we have seen, was a group committed to making literature and art relevant to the public. A further aim of Feng's paintings of children, and one that becomes more significant in light of his formal conversion to Buddhism in 1927, may be seen as an attempt to induce people to recover their own lost "childlike mind".

When Feng published his second volume of paintings in 1927, Zikai huaji, which took children as its theme, he asked Ma Yifu to write an introduction. Ma was a prominent Confucian scholar who had considerable influence on Feng's thinking. He was also a good friend of Li Shutong, and the man who encouraged Li's interest in Buddhism. In his essay Ma said that, "those who truly excel in an art invariably achieve something beyond mere feeling (qing) and knowledge (shi), coming close to the [state of a] child. For a child is unburdened by connections with the vulgar world and acts according to its nature, this is the marvellous thing that I see in Zikai's paintings....The way Zikai perceives of them, children are possessed of the true

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59 "My manhua", p. 311.
60 See Dong Cao, Lu Xun lun er tong jiaoyu, pp. 72-73; and, Gladys Yang and Yang Xianyi, Lu Xun, Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 64-65.
61 See Feng's essay "In Memory of Mr Li Shutong" (Huai Li Shutong xiansheng), Yangliu, Hong Kong: Shanghai shuju, 1961 reprint, p. 78; and Talking About Master Hongyi to the Young", Suaizhenji, p. 42. More will be said of Ma Yifu in the following chapter.
properties of the superior man (zhen ju daren xiang),\textsuperscript{62} while the pettiness and arrogance of adults (daren) shows that they have lost their original heart (benxin).\textsuperscript{63}

Another traditional influence on Feng's thinking may have been the pre-modern champion of the childlike mind Li Zhi (1527-1602), the iconoclastic late-Ming philosopher.\textsuperscript{64} Li was one of the foremost thinkers of his time and a man who directly influenced the Gongan School of writing. He was "rediscovered" in the late 1920s and was popular with such writers as Zhou Zuoren and Lin Yutang who found his works "anticipated" their own ideas on self-expression in literature.\textsuperscript{65} As Feng Zikai became increasingly associated with these writers and their publications in the 1930s, and it is more than likely that he was familiar with one of Li's most celebrated essays. Although he never seems to have referred directly to Li Zhi's famous essay "On the Childlike Mind" (Tongxinshuo), Feng's own comments on the subject mirror Li's sentiments nearly exactly.\textsuperscript{66} Li wrote that:

\begin{quote}
The child is the chrysalis of the man; the childlike heart is the original state of the mind. Yet how does it come about that the original state of the mind, the childlike heart can be lost? It starts when one sees and hears things that dictate one's mind, thus is it lost. When one is growing up, one is told about and shown various principles which come to rule one's mind, thus is the childlike heart lost. With the passing of time one sees and hears more of the principles [of the world] and one's knowledge increases daily...These principles take the place of one's heart and what one says is nothing but [a repetition of] these principles, they do not issue from one's childlike heart. No matter how clever one's words may be they are not sincere, and thus is it not that false men speak false things, do false things and write
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{62} Feng was to use the word daren as a title of an essay written in April 1936 and printed in the collection Yuanyuantang zaibi, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1937, pp. 75-83. It is an essay that talks of the superior man, or great man, in terms of a Buddhist-Confucian syncreticism preached by Ma Yifu, and may be taken to refer to Master Hongyi, if not also Ma Yifu himself.

\textsuperscript{63} Zikai huaji, Shanghai: Wenxue zhoubao she, 1927, pp. 2-3, reprinted as the introduction to Ertongxiang, Volume II in Zikai manhua quanj, Guilin: Kaiming shudian, 1945. "Losing one's original heart" (shi qi benxin) is a quotation from Mengzi, VI, 6A: 10, see Lau, Mencius, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{64} See Wm. Theodore de Bary's article "Individualism and Humanitarianism" in Self and Society in Ming Thought, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary, New York: Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 188-225; and Mizuguchi Yūzo's study of Li in Chūgoku senkindai shisō no kussetsu to tenkai, Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppansha, 1980, pp. 53-121.


\textsuperscript{66} See Du Wei, "An Essay on Feng Zikai's Ideas on Aesthetic Education" (Shilun Feng Zikaide meiyu sixiang), Hangzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexueban), 1984: 3, p. 34.
false works? As soon as a person is false, will not everything they do in turn be false?67

While Li declared that the received wisdom of the classics was the thing that clouded the pure mind of the child, Feng, an artist living in a time when those canons were no longer the sole content of education, declared that the pristine state of the child was not lost to the adult forever. "Childhood truly is a Golden Age, and although we have all passed through it, we can recapture it with artistic training; we can experience that loving and peaceful world once more."68 For, he argues, "the artist's heart can feel a warm sympathy for all objects in the world equally....Thus, the normal values and classes of the world become irrelevant in his work."69

By 1927 Feng Zikai had clearly formulated his own view of the relationship between the child and the artist, and during 1928 he published a number of essays and translations which dealt specifically with the subject.70 One of his most succinct comments on the subject, however, can be found in a lecture he gave to high school students in 1929, which was subsequently published under the title "Beauty and Empathy" (Mei yu tongqing).

In the context [of feeling sympathy for the world around them] my greatest praise goes to children, as they are generally the most empathetic of all. Their sympathy is not limited to human kind, for it also naturally extends to cats, dogs, plants, flowers, birds, butterflies, fish, insects, toys -- in short, all things...their hearts are far more sincere and natural than the artist's....The essence of a child's heart is art...it's only when they grow up that they are overwhelmed by worldliness and it blocks and destroys this heart. Only a few clever people survive this process, and even though they may suffer fully the trials of the world, they manage to preserve their minds in that pristine state. These people are artists.71

More will be said about the importance of empathy in Feng's aesthetic view in the next chapter. Yet it is clear from this quotation that, in Feng's view, for an adolescent or adult to dwell in the childlike mind was not merely a question of

67 Li Zhi "On the Childlike Mind" (Tongxinshuo), see Zhongguo lidai wenlun xuan, edited by Guo Shaoyu, Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1979, Vol. II, pp. 332-33; de Bary, Self and Society in Ming Thought, p. 195; and Mizuguchi's analysis of tongxinshuo, "Dōshinsetsu' to sono shūhen", in Chūgoku zenkindai shisō no kussetsu to tenkai, pp. 190-208.
68 "Beauty and Sympathy" (Mei yu tongqing), a lecture given in September 1929 at the Songjiang Girls' High School. See Yishu quwei, Hong Kong: Gangqing chubanshe, 1979, p. 51.
70 See, for example, the essay "Throw Out Art Classes" (Feizhi yishuke), Jiaoyu zazhi, 1928, Vol. XX, No. 2, pp. 2-3, which was written as a "prelude" (xuqu, to use Feng's expression) to a series of translations on the subject of art classes and art education published in Jiaoyu zazhi that year.
71 "Beauty and Sympathy", p. 50.
recovering the lost innocence of childhood, but rather of purposefully cultivating a particular state of mind.

The artistic and aesthetic education that Feng was referring to would "teach students to view the world in just the same way they approach painting or look at art; it is aimed at teaching people how to break the bonds of causal relationships (jue yuan), teaching them to be children. Once a person has learned that it was essential to nurture the flicker of "the childlike mind", it would not be extinguished even when they [Feng's students] grew up." 72

Feng went on to say that what he meant by "breaking bonds" was "to cut an object off from all of its worldly connections or casual relationships and to see it in complete isolation." 73 One of the essays written after his conversion to Buddhism in 1927 was entitled "Cutting the Net Asunder" (Jianwang), and after reflecting on how so many pleasurable things in the world are spoiled if one thinks solely of practicalities: to discuss art with young people or children could be such an enjoyable experience if it were not for the fact that one is expected to play the role of teacher and act like a drill sergeant, calling rolls and giving formal classes. "All of these 'relationships' constitute a barrier that clouds the real meaning of things." 74 Such relationships enveloped everything around the individual in a finely-woven net. Its weave ensnared even the most minute detail of a person's everyday life, and any attempt to see or understand things in isolation would be frustrated by the encroachment of these cloying relations. "Art and religion," he declares, "are the very thing, the knife, which I have been in search of that enables me to cut asunder the bonds of this 'net of the world'." 75

When in a less lyrical mood Feng explained to his readers that his attempts to cut the net of the world and see things in isolation had a place in traditional Chinese thinking as well as a parallel in Kantian aesthetics, in which the concept was spoken of as "disinterestedness". 76 As his interest in Buddhism grew, he found in the Buddhist

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72 "Concerning the Education of Children" (Guanyu ertong jiaoyu), quoted in Du Wei, "An Essay on Feng Zikai's Ideas on Aesthetic Education", p. 34.
73 "An Essay on Feng Zikai's Ideas on Aesthetic Education", p. 36.
74 "Cutting the Net Asunder" (Jianwang), Yuanyuantang suibi, Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1941, ninth edition, p. 2.
75 "Cutting the Net Asunder", p. 4.
76 See "The Victory of Chinese Art in Modern Art" (Zhongguo meishu zai xiandai yishushangde shengli), Dongfang zazhi, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, pp. 9-17; the second half of this article is entitled "Empathy and qiyan shengdong". It is Feng's most coherent attempt to parallel traditional Chinese art theory with modern Western aesthetics. His aim is to prove the superiority or at least preeminence of Chinese artists. This had earlier been discussed by the educationalist Cai Yuanpei, and later by both Xia Mianzun and Zhu Guangqian. See, for example, Cai Yuanpei's 1921 lecture "The Evolution of Aesthetics" (Meixue de jinhua), Cai Yuanpei xuanji, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1959, p. 169.
concept of affinites (*yuan*) and alternative pattern of connections that gave an added significance to his life and work. 77

With his own children growing older, his conversion to Buddhism and the changes in the society around him, now an artist nearing middle-age, Feng discovered he could find little comfort in the world of other children. It was also clear, as it had been in the case of the *manhua*, that children were also becoming an object of increasingly virulent politicization. From the late 1920s, as Mary Ann Farquhar notes in her study of Chinese children's literature:

> In Chinese soil, the child is a symbol of growth, progress and a future and not a symbol of untrammelled imagination and sensitivity.... 78

This did not change Feng's basic belief that people need to foster their childlike mind. Even years after the war and on the eve of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, he wrote about the subject during a trip to Hong Kong: 79

> I firmly believe that a person must not lose their childlike mind; and if everyone were to nurture it then the family, society, state, and the world itself, would be warm, peaceful and harmonious. I have voluntarily made an "old child" of myself, and I don't care what anybody says. 80

In his work up to that time Feng had used his art to meld Western Romanticism and a particular tradition of Chinese thought in a synthesis which focussed on the "childlike mind" as a new aesthetic and philosophical concept.

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77 For an essay devoted to the word *yuan*, see Feng's "Affinities" (*Yuan*) written on May Day 1929, and published in the June 1929 issue of *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, later collected in *Yuanyuantang suibi*, pp. 82-85. In the essay "Half a Record of a Trip to Mogan Mountain" (Banpian Mogan shan youji), *Suibiji*, pp. 156-64, written in 1935, Feng ascribes most of the events of the day to affiliations of one kind or another. For an excellent study of the types of *yuan* recognized in Chinese culture and their significance, see Yang Kuo-shu's "The Concept and Role of *yuan* Among the Chinese" (Zhongguoren zhi yuan de guan yu gongneng) in *Zhongguorende xinli*, edited by Yang Kuo-shu, Taipei: Guiguan tushu gongsi, 1988, Vol. II in the *Zhongguoren congshu*, pp. 123-54. 78 Farquhar, *Children's Literature in China*, p. 101.

79 For details of this trip see Epilogue: On the Eve.

80 "*Xinertong* and I" (Wo yu <<*Xinertong>>), written on 8 April, 1949. See *Suibiji*, p. 319. A debate developed in China during the 1950s concerning "the theory of the childish mind" (*tongxinlun*). The children's writer and educationalist Chen Bochui, author of the influential book *Ertong wenxue jianlun*, Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1958, was at the centre of the furore and in 1960 he was denounced for his Reactionary Bourgeois Thinking. He was attacked for proposing, in the style of John Dewey, that children be placed at the centre of the education and literature aimed at them. The overthrow of Chen Bochui was part of the extreme politicization of Chinese education and thought that continued throughout the 1960s and most of the 1970s. A large portion of a specialist magazine on children's literature was devoted to rehabilitating the childish mind as a theory to be used in education in 1980. See *Ertong wenxue yanjiu*, 1980: 4, pp. 155-86.
The realm of childhood provided Feng Zikai something he felt sorely lacking in his own adult environment. That he was growing away from a state of excited innocence with every passing day was something that lay heavy on him. "Life is like drinking wine: you drink another draught every year... the more you drink the more inebriated you become, the drunker you are the more ignorant (or slow, chi), the more dazed by the world is your state of mind." It was the personality of his first son Huazhan (Zhanzhan), who was born in 1924, that attracted him most back to the world of children. By 1926, when Zhanzhan was two, he became one of the main subjects for Feng's paintings.

Having lost forever my own lustrous childhood, and seen an end to my energetic adolescence, I had just entered a bleak middle-age. But I rediscovered my own joy through observing the honest simplicity of my children, I found in them a shadow of my own childlike heart (tongxin). I marvel at the guilelessness of children; I experienced a sense of nostalgia for their vast world. Children are all possessed of the quality of "the great man" (dazhangfuqi), and compared to them adults are, each and every one of them, hypocritical and timid. To my mind none of the great tasks of the world can be accomplished by these hypocritical and timid adults, but instead must be the work of people possessed of the qualities of the true man that we see in children.

In his first collection of paintings, *Zikai manhua*, there were already examples of Feng's adoration of the innocent wilfulness of his children, a sentiment that was to characterize most of his children's paintings in the 1920s, and which was to reappear in the early 1940s following the birth of his smallest son Xinmei.

Zhanzhan, as the youngest member and the only son in the 1920s, was the centre of attention in the family. Feng compared his home life to a world that was controlled completely by his three children, Zhanzhan, his elder sister Ah Bao (Chenbao) and the four-year old Ruanruan (a niece raised by Feng and his wife). It

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81 From the essay "On Reaching the Age of No More Perplexities" (Buhuo zhi li), in *Zizhuan yizhang*, edited by Tao Kangde, Guangzhou: Yuzhoufeng chubanshe, 1938, pp. 118-22, written when Feng turned forty in 1937. He said, 'I've drunk forty cups of wine, so I should be completely insensitive. Fortunately, mine has been a good wine, and I can tell that I am drunk...but as long as I keep drinking the day will come when I will no longer be able to sense that I'm drunk. By then it will be too late to do anything about it!' (p. 120.)

82 The dazhangfu that Feng was thinking of here may well be related to Mencius' uses of the expression in the Teng Wengong chapter of *Mengzi*, IIIB: 2. "He cannot be led into excesses when wealthy and honoured or deflected from his purpose when poor and obscure, nor can he be made to bow before superior force. This is what I would call a great man [ci zhi wei dazhangfu]." See Lau, *Mencius*, p. 107.

83 "On My Paintings", *Suibiji*, p. 135.
created a situation, he said, somewhat akin to the rule of the Triumvirate in Imperial Rome. Of these three, however, Zhanzhan was the undisputed master of the situation. "I was their father in name only," Feng wrote, "for in reality I was their servant, an audience watching their escapades."\(^8^4\)

"Because it is constantly delineated and limited by practical considerations and habitual practices, the world of adults is extremely narrow and stifling," Feng wrote in 1935 turning the Confucian view on its head, and much in keeping with the May Fourth idealization of youth. "A child's world is not subject to such restrictions, and thus it is vast and free. In the triumvirate of our family Zhanzhan is the most powerful for he was the youngest and thus his world was one in which he enjoyed the greatest freedom."\(^8^5\) Feng follows this statement with the examples of Zhanzhan's omnipotence:

On seeing the moon from their window he would cry out for his mother and father to capture it for him. Feng did a picture of this scene in 1932 with Zhanzhan in his mother's arms looking at a crescent moon from the window crying out "I want!"\(^8^6\)[5: 9] It is an interesting picture for it has a certain similarity to a famous engraving which William Blake did in For Children: The Gates of Paradise, published in 1793. In Blake's engraving a child is setting foot on a ladder that leads to the moon while his parents (?) look on. The illustration is entitled "I want! I want!"\(^8^7\)[5: 10] Blake's picture is one of childish aspiration that faces frustration: the ladder must fall and the child's quest fail. Feng's, on the other hand, is an unqualified celebration of the child's unabashed wilfulness.

He also celebrates childhood sorrow: the child puzzled when faced with death. Feng did a picture of Zhanzhan looking at the stiff form of a bird laid out in front of its open cage, giving the picture the title "!". It is based on Feng's observation of Zhanzhan when he discovered a pet bird was dead and could not be revived even after he called out to the creature repeatedly.\(^8^8\)[5: 11] Other paintings of Zhanzhan at this time which Feng mentions in his own writings include the famous picture of the child riding a "bicycle" made by holding two large banana-leaf fans in imitation of wheels

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\(^8^4\) Ibid.
\(^8^5\) "On My Paintings", p. 137.
\(^8^6\) Zikai manhua quaji, Ertongxiang, 2: 59.
\(^8^7\) See William Feaver, When we were young: two centuries of children's book illustration, London: Thames and Hudson, 1977, frontispiece and p. 6.
\(^8^8\) Ertongxiang, 2: 46. The same inscription had been used by Takehisa Yumeji in a painting of his of a desolate scene in which all one can see is footprints trailing off into the distance. See the first picture in Yumeji gashu: Haru no maki. Feng commented that the calligraphy of the title "!" was "extremely powerful, much like the strength of the grass script of Jin Dynasty calligraphers, immediately attracting the observer's eye to it." See the essay "Painting and Literature", pp. 44-45. Feng says the sense of loss and heartbreak that he experienced upon seeing that painting by Yumeji was very similar to the feeling of sorrow inculcated by good Chinese poetry.
Feng marvels at the pristine nature of children, at what is their almost "religious" state of mind, again indicating his combination of Eastern philosophical thought with Western Romanticism. He even says that when children play together or concentrate on some object they "enter something like a samadhi of 'selflessness'; they pay absolutely no attention to things in the actual world or social conventions." It is exactly this "childlike mind" (tongxin) that enthralled Feng so much during this stage in his artistic career. This was certainly not the Beautiful Child of the 19th Century European Romantics, nor indeed the moral chrysalis of China's own May Fourth "Confucian Romantics" in particular Bing Xin. Feng may have praised his children for their innocence, but it was their undisguised egotism that he most often celebrated in ink. There is definitely a great sense of delight in his portraits of Zhanzhan's wilful antics that may have no parallel in China at the time, but which is certainly not unlike the poems of A. A. Milne in *When we were very young*. He accepted the self-centred and extravagant world of his children as being completely free of bombast, hypocrisy and deception. These paintings are also in sharp contrast to the winsome but generally stereotyped representation of children in traditional art, whether in academic works or popular New Year's woodblock prints (nianhua).

One of the pictures from this time has an English title: "First Step". It is quite possibly a picture of Feng's wife, Xu Limin, holding Zhanzhan while he takes his first unsteady steps. It is obviously inspired by Millet's "First Step", a work by one of Feng's favourite European artists, for which he later expressed considerable admiration. "The genius of Millet was twofold: his ability to popularize art; and, his..."
talent for making life the subject of his work." 96 Unlike Millet’s carefully shadowed pastoral scene of mother and child, however, Feng’s painting [5: 15] is a sparse picture with a mother whose simply outlined form hangs over an all but featureless blob of a child, holding its arms up as its small feet take their first hesitant steps. The contrast of the two figures, the looming mother and her large black shoes and the small child who is the focus of the scene and its white and delicate feet is striking. 97

Something of the development of Feng’s style between the 1920s and the war period can be seen if we compare this painting with “The fate of one’s delicate child is hard, for even its first steps are treacherous” (Jiao’er zhen ming ku, chubu ji qiqu), a work done during the war and published in a later volume of children’s paintings, the Youyou huaji. 98 It is also a picture of a child learning to walk, dated 1947. While being held by its mother as in “First Step”, in this work the father is shown squatting some feet away holding out his arms to encourage the child. The ground is uneven and rocky. [5: 16] 99 Feng did a third version of this painting for the “Women and Family” supplement of the Hong Kong Sing-tao jih-pao for May, 1948 which shows a mother holding a child under the arms as it takes its first steps in the direction of a girl, presumably its sister. [5: 17] 100

In the collection Images of Children (Ertongxiang), published during the Anti-Japanese War, Zhanzhan features as one of the main protagonists. He first appears as a child of three posing on a step for a sketch by his father in “Being Sketched” (Bei xieshengde shihou), a querulous child with a hint of mischievousness in his sidelong glance. [5: 18] 101 It is one of a number of portraits of Feng’s children which have the child’s name and date of painting in a special frame apart from the title. Then, just over the page, is a painting done the same year of a bald Zhanzhan stumbling around playfully in his father’s vest. This picture has the year 1927 written next to the

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96 “A Paean for Millet’s Art” (Miye yishu song), Chexiang shehui, p. 126. This essay was written in the early 1930s, a period when Feng was increasingly interested in depicting the poverty and suffering around him, an artistic response to the debates in “mass art” during and after 1928. As a result of this, he placed a great deal of emphasis on Millet’s interest in “the people”. The importance of painting and other popular forms of art is something Feng wrote about in a number of essays. See Chen Xing’s essay “A Sublime Tune in Harmony with the Masses -- Feng Zikai’s Artistic View” (“Qugao hezhong” -- Feng Zikaide yishuguan), Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 109-115. Some of Millet’s best known paintings were reproduced with critical articles in Luotuocao edited by Fei Ming and Yu Pingbo’s in 1930.

97 Zikai manhua, p. 89. One of Feng’s first “Art Stories” (meishu gushi), written for New Youth (Xinshaonian) in the mid-1930s used Millet’s painting as a theme and was entitled “First Step” (Chubu). See Xinshaonian, Vol. I, No. 5, March 1936, pp. 54-57.

98 The title of this collection was taken from Mengzi, IA: 7. Lau, Mencius, p. 56, translates the passage as follows: “...treat your own young [you] in a manner befitting their tender age and extend this to the young [you] of other families.”


100 See Xianggang wenxue, 1985: 9, p. 18.

signature "TK". Although both pictures as they appear in the war-time work retain the original date they are, actually, new versions of earlier paintings. If we compare these two works with the versions first published, made readily accessible once more in works by both Ming Tsuen and Christoph Harbsmeier's book, *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, [5: 19] we immediately notice the striking differences between Feng's earliest work and his later mature style.

In the painting "Being Sketched", the lines of the original work are quite rough, literally sketchy, and the expression of Zhanzhan is somehow less innocent and more distrusting than in the later version. Again, in the later work Feng's brushwork is much dryer and the lines of the child's clothing show, if anything, a greater emphasis on the versatility of the Chinese brush. In the case of "Wearing father's clothes" (Chuanle babade yishang), the original work gives the child a far more amorphous even somewhat liquid appearance; the brushstrokes are thick full-inked lines revealing little of the peculiar traits of the brush yet communicating perhaps a more powerful image. During the war this picture was a source of a moment of nostalgic reflection when Zhanzhan, now Huazhan, appeared wearing Feng's own Guangxi uniform (now generally known as the Zhongshan jacket or Mao jacket). It needed no alterations for it fitted the sixteen year-old boy comfortably. "Seeing him standing there I couldn't help feeling surprise at the quick passage of time, and I let out a sigh at the thought of the impermanence of all things. Among my old works is a picture of Huazhan when he was three...wearing the vest of my suit which was so long it covered his knees. He'd been practising walking, supporting himself by holding onto the bed; it was a very humorous scene and I painted a picture of it. Thirteen years had passed in an instant, and it was so common for him to dress in his father's clothes there was no longer anything amusing about his appearance, certainly nothing worthy of being painted." [5: 20]

Most of the pictures Feng did of Zhanzhan at this time have been collected with a commentary by Ming Tsuen. These include a four-part series of paintings entitled "Zhanzhan's Dreams". The pictures are enclosed in heart-shaped frames with a narrative explanation written by the artist underneath, two things that make the series

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102 *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, pp. 66-67. The dates given by Harbsmeier differ from those in the later Ertongxiang. Zikai manhua xuan, ed. Wang Chaowen, Peking: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1955, pp. 2, 31, contains these pictures, although the book has been unavailable since publication.


104 Ming Tsuen, *Feng Zikai manhua xuanvi*, Hong Kong: Tongyi chubanshe, 1976, pp. 86-123. For a more prosaic appreciation of Feng's children's paintings, see Huang Ke's "Depicting the Childlike Mind in Thick Ink and with Sincere Feelings -- on Feng Zikai's manhua of Children" (Nongmo shenqing hua tongxin -- du Feng Zikai de ertong manhua), *Xinmeishu*, 1982: 3, pp. 71-75. This article was first written in 1964 -- and it certainly shows its age -- revised for publication in 1981.
unique in Feng's work. Like the essay "Huazhan's Diary" (Huazhande riji), these pictures were done in 1926-1927 at the height of Feng's fascination with Zhanzhan.

The paintings of Zhanzhan's dreams reflect the world as observed by a small child. They feature aspects of childhood also idealized in the abstract in the China of the 1920s. In the first dream is that all the enticing playthings that adults keep out of the reach of a three year-old child on tables and cupboards -- scissors, a teapot and cups, father's spectacles, the mantelpiece clock, a violin, and so on -- are suddenly set out on the floor for Zhanzhan to play with to his heart's content (an illustration of a child's curiosity). On the second night Zhanzhan dreams that all of the delights of the garden -- grass, flowers, butterflies, frogs -- are transported inside onto mother's bed where Zhanzhan has been put to sleep (an image of the child's pastoral world). On the third night Zhanzhan dreams that the roof of their house has disappeared so that he can now see people flying kites, aeroplanes, birds in the air and the evening moon from inside their house by just looking up (symbolic of the child's imagination and aspirations). And in his fourth dream Zhanzhan converts the empty yard outside their house into a busy market place with the hawkers who normally pass by selling their wares setting up shop there all day long (an expression of the child's abilities). [5: 21]

Feng Zikai's fascination for this childish perspective was not the result of a cloying adult's love for his own child, the pristine, innocent Beautiful Child so popular in Europe and America in the late 19th Century. Feng was attracted instead by Zhanzhan's imagination, his ruthless honesty, his energetic self-centredness and unalloyed energy. The artist tried to explain his attitude to Huazhan in the introduction to his second collection of paintings, Zikai huaji, an essay entitled "To My Children" (Gei wode haizimen) written on Christmas Day, 1926.

Zhanzhan! I admire you most of all. You are a true person (zhenren) whose heart and soul are completely open. You devote every iota of your energy to whatever you do....The sorrow you experience when you cry is more real and heartrending than the pain grownups feel when they go bankrupt, are disappointed in love, have broken heart, lose their parents, or when an army is wiped out in battle....You wanted me to take you to the train station and then had me buy as many bananas as you could carry. You grasped them in your arms but by the time we reached home you had fallen asleep with your head on my shoulder and dropped the bananas somewhere along the way. What a marvellous honesty (zhenshuai), naturalness and energy (reqing) there is about you. Compared with you the so-

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105 See Suibiji, pp. 7-11.
106 Ertongxiang, 2: 15-18; and Ming Tsuen, Feng Zikai manhua xuanyi, pp. 90-95.
107 *zhenren* is, of course, originally a Daoist term for a person who is accomplished in the *dao* or who has achieved immortality. It appears in *Zhuangzi* (Tianxia chapter), and the *Chuci* (Jiusi, aisui), and was later a title bestowed by some emperors on outstanding Daoist practitioners.
called virtues of adults, their “reserve” (chenmo), “subtlety” (hanxu) and “gravity” (shenke) are merely unnatural, diseased and meretricious.  

Feng repeats this sentiment in an essay written two years later in 1928, when the family had returned to live in Shimenwan. “I can’t help feeling melancholy in the presence of my troupe of children, for it is so obvious that compared to their innocent, full and energetic lives, all of my pointless sitting [working], my quiet contemplation, or my researches and scholastic pursuits, as well as the fulfilling of social obligations, amount to nothing but perverted, diseased, even handicapped lifestyle.”

This essay was published by Ye Shengtao in Xiaoshuo yuebao in 1928 along with a work by Feng’s former colleague Zhu Ziqing which used the same title. Both men had just turned thirty and each had five children. Whereas Feng sang the praises of children as being the people with the “most hale hearts” and possessed of the ability to see “most clearly and most completely” “the true face of the world”, Zhu Ziqing said that to be burdened with a pack of children was “like being skinned alive.”

“My situation is exactly the same as that described by Lu Xun in his story ‘A Happy Family’,” he wrote. “I once said in a letter to Shengtao that I couldn’t stand my children torturing me any more; sometimes I felt that it would be best to kill myself.” Zhu admitted that as middle age crept up on him he was becoming more tolerant and understanding of his children, he also admired his friends who seemed to enjoy their children. He singled Feng Zikai, praising him for writing a “diary” for his young son Huazhan, “the composition of a loving and benevolent man”. Yet in the end he admits that the main reason he struggled to be a kind father was because he rememberd how his father treated him. Not only were Feng’s sentiments about his children vastly different from Zhu’s, as we have seen, but his interest in children was not merely limited to the child as a mirror image of himself, or a means by which the family line could be propagated.

“What can my relationship with [my children] be?” Feng asked, "...for they belong to a completely different world from mine...that I should be their father is an absolutely absurd proposition. I am quite incapable of understanding those parents who think themselves fortunate to be surrounded by children, seeing in them a
permanent continuation of themselves. In my opinion the most natural and reasonable relationship between individuals is that of friends...'Friends are those who are like minded' (peng, tonglei ye)."  

As for adults, they have forever abandoned the realm of childhood, slowly and inexorably growing further away from it with every passing day. "Without even noticing it the most natural and romantic children 'gradually' (jianjian) turn into ambitious adolescents; outgoing and daring young people are 'gradually' transformed into callous grownups; lively and industrious adults 'gradually' become obdurate old men."  

Feng was interested in children for he found in them inspiration, solace and even a temporary release from the brutal adult world around him. The adult world, he wrote, "has its immutable natural laws, and man-made rules that can never be broken; in the world of children none of these fetters exist."  

Taking, at times, a positivistic Darwinian approach he wrote, "Perhaps people will deride me for seeking to escape from reality and dismiss the pains I take to search out the fantastic utopia of the unsullied child's imaginary world; yet it is I who must laugh at them, for they have allowed themselves to be subjugated by the world of reality, they have forgotten man's original nature. It is my belief that if man were not possessed of this childlike desire for fantasy, then we would have no buildings, communications, medicine or machines to help us ward off the natural world; we would most probably still be wearing skins and drinking blood." Thus it was that at that time [in the mid-1920s] my heart was taken over by children. My inspiration consistantly came from [my] children's activities. Reflecting on inspiration resulted in my depicting it and to do so became a habit."  

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114 "Children", Suibiji, p. 30. This comment about children being like friends is reminiscent of a passage in "Biography of My Second Daughter Qiongzhang" (Jini.i Qiongzhang zhuan) written by Shen Yixiu, the wife of Ye Shaoyuan, in the late-Ming. Shen who shared many of Qiongzhang's interests, quotes herself as having once said to the child who died at the age of seventeen, "In fact, you're not my daughter, but rather my small friend." See Jiaxing rizhu, Ye Shaoyuan, punctuated by Bi Min, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1986, p. 175.

115 From the essay "Gradually" (jian) published in 1925, see Suibiji, p. 1. This work reflects the strong influence of religious thought on Feng at the time. It deals with the questions of impermanence and mutability; Feng concludes with the comment that only great men (da renge) are not caught up in the net of time.

116 "The Adultifying of Children" (Ertongde darenhua), quoted in "On Feng Zikai and Children's Literature" (Tan Feng Zikai yu ertong wenxue), Chen Xing, Hangzhou shiyuan xuebao (shehui kexueban), 1987: 2, p. 91.

117 See the speech "From Plums to Art" (Cong meihua shuodao yishu), made in 1929, in which, after discussing Oscar Wilde's essay "The Decay of Lying", Feng comments that artists create fashions, and, in fact, "have such foresight that they create the world of the future, a world which the masses merely realize in practice." See Yishu quwei, p. 21.

Feng wrote, "My children, it's your life which most enthralls me, every day I make this discovery anew many times. It grieves me to put it like this, but I do wish you to know. The pity of it is that by the time you'll be old enough to understand this, you will be people devoid of any ability to enthrall me any more." 119

5: 6 Ah Nan

In 1925, Xu Limin gave birth to another boy. It was a premature birth and the child died. One year later Feng Zikai wrote an essay in memory of the baby whom he named Ah Nan (the one who caused difficulty or pain). After the birth the child moved for a moment in the doctor's hands, which led Feng to meditate on the value of life and reflect on the question of childlike innocence. After contemplating the meaninglessness of human life, whether it lasts for a century or just an instant, Feng wrote the following:

Ah Nan! There is no reason for me to mourn you; now I realize rather that I should take delight in your life, for it was both innocent and wise. After all, the "I" that is writing this is in fact not me at all. The phenomenal world around me has been manufactured by man and it has blinded my heart, concealed my true nature, causing me gradually to become accustomed to the rushed and harried life of this world of ours. What I should regard as strange and ridiculous I see as normal. My true nature, the self I possessed when I entered this world, has vanished entirely.... 120 In the past I used to sing the

119 "To My Children", p. 12. In 1934, when his children had left their Golden Age behind, Feng wrote an essay that chronicled his disappointment in their worldly concerns. The essay was entitled "Examinations" (Songkao) and it is a record of his trip to Hangzhou with his children for their various school entrance exams. He writes of the morning glories growing in his yard. The plants grow taller and taller, and it seems they will only be satisfied once they have reached the heavens. He has grown tired of their ambitions and escapes them by taking this trip to Hangzhou. The author implies that his children are like the flourishing morning glories. See Chexiang shehui, pp. 49-57.

120 Here Feng quotes the introduction to a mid-Qing notebook he had recently read. The work was Shi Zhenlin's Xiqing sanji and he refers to the introduction which he says moved him deeply. The quotation is:

When I was a child, I was frightened by the sudden alternations of light and darkness and was told that it was night and day. I was mystified by the sudden appearance and disappearance of beings and was told that it was birth and death. People told me to distinguish the stars and said, "That one is the Sieve, and that one the Dipper." I learned to distinguish the birds and was told this one was a raven and that a magpie. This was how my knowledge began.

When I grew older, I gradually lost the wonder at the sudden alternations of light and darkness and appearance and disappearance of beings. Sometimes in the maze of confusions I let my spirit soar upward to space. Looking down at the sudden changes of light and birth and death of things, I felt a twinge of sorrow.

See Shi Zhenlin, Xiqing sanji, Shanghai: Guangzhi shuju, 1907, reprinted Peking: Zhongguo shudian, 1987, p. 1. This translation is taken from Lin Yutang, The Importance of Understanding, London: Heineman, 1961, p. 89. In the introduction to a book on children's music written in 1927, Feng paraphrased Shi Zhenlin when he wrote "Only religion and art can let the spirit soar upward to space. Looking down at the world one can only then see its true face, and find the correct path through life." (my emphasis.) Quoted in Zhuan, p. 56.
praises of your sister Ah Bao and your brother Zhanzhan. I thought that in their childhood there was innocence and naturalness. I thought, how clear are their eyes, how superior they are to mine. Yet how could they ever compare with you? a thin film of worldly knowledge has already clouded their innocence and purity; you have lived completely untouched by the dust of the world. Your life was but a single spasm, ending your connection with this sphere in one second; your birth was followed immediately by release. How much do I, one wandering in the vortex of the world, envy you...

When I saw what an idyllic childhood your sister and brother Ah Bao and Zhanzhan had I felt distressed that they were about to pass out of the Golden Age; I often give myself up to the strangest thoughts: Wouldn't it be ideal if a child could die at about the age of ten, without illness and having had a meaningful and valuable life. Yet compared to your life everything I've said about "children's paradise" and "secret gardens" is nothing more than a pale and pathetic attempt by a man lost in the frustrations of the floating world to find some solace.

Feng included a "portrait" of Ah Nan in his book Ertongxiang. [5: 22]

Although Feng was to be known for the rest of his life for his paintings of children -- after 1949 he was constantly relegated to the ranks of the purveyors of saccharine children's art and literature by the cultural cadres -- his interest in painting children was limited, and it declined rapidly as his own children grew up. "I didn't start out with any fixed ambition of using my own children as models for my depiction of childhood; yet it is ironical that as I observed them gradually turn into self-conscious and stiff adolescents, demonstrating before my very eyes that their Golden Age had passed forever I completely lost interest in showering my affection on the evanescent world of childhood." In the early 1930s the grim reality of the widespread poverty and destitution of both the countryside and the cities increasingly encroached on Feng's world. Having lost his own children with the inexorable passage of time, he had nothing with which to shelter himself from "being constantly 'assailed' by images of the society".  

122 Ertongxiang, 2: 12. Part of the essay is translated in Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, pp. 29-30, along with a reproduction of this painting.
123 "Talking About My Paintings", p. 139. In the same essay he quotes the classical poem, "The children of yesteryear have now all grown up, half of the friends and relatives of my past are now in the grave" (quri ertong jie shang da, xinian qinyou ban diaoling), commenting that "these two lines fittingly describe the vacuity and loneliness one experiences in middle-age." (p. 139.) In Jiaoshi riji, written some five years later, Feng looks at Zhanzhan, now a young man, quotes this poem once more and says, "Reciting these lines today I feel as though I wrote them myself." See Jiaoshi riji, pp. 127-8.
Although Feng Zikai used children as models for much of the painting and writing he aimed at an adult audience, he also wrote a number of stories for children, one of the first, "The Adventures of a Banknote" (Xiao chaopiao lixianji), was serialized in New Youth (Xinshaonian), a monthly started by the Kaiming shudian on the occasion of its tenth anniversary in January 1936.125

In the early 1930s children's literature flourished, especially in the magazines produced in Shanghai, attracting some of the famous writers of the May Fourth period. Mary Farquhar has noted that the stories written between 1930 and 1936 are generally fairytales divorced from contemporary settings which have some allegorical significance. The stories published in 1936, however, make a more direct social critique. Among those who wrote major children's stories in that year are Ye Shengtao, Zhang Tianyi, Lao She, Ba Jin, Ling Shuhua and Mao Dun.126 Like the works of these writers, Feng's story is something of a social comment. "The Adventures of a Banknote" follows the career of a banknote much in the style of the popular "leftist" film "New Year's Cash" (Yasuiqian), which starred Hu Rongrong, China's Shirley Temple.127 The story is narrated in the first person; the banknote starts out life pure, clean and innocent, but before long its adventures lead it to some of the most unlikely places, such as an outdoor toilet, and it ends up a torn, tattered and filthy piece of paper which, finally having found respite in the hands of its original owner, an artist, is pinned to the wall of his study along with a number of sketches. The moral of the tale is that "No one who comes into this world of ours can avoid filth and the scars of life."128 Yet even when Feng was following the fashion of writing a "social realist" story, he was in the end less interested in Marxist social analysis than the dichotomy between the corrupt and degrading adult world and that of the pure and innocent realm of the child. Whereas this was quite in keeping with the tradition of the

126 See Farquhar, Children's Literature in China, pp. 150-51, and 153-54. As Farquhar comments, "The 1936 stories...are a turning point in children's literature. The social analysis is openly Marxist; the settings are realistic and contemporary." p. 158.
127 "New Year's Cash" was written by Xia Yan, who was clearly following some foreign model, and directed by Zhang Shichuan in 1936. It was released during the Spring Festival holidays of 1937. See Cheng Jihua, Li Shaobai, Xing Zuwen, Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi, Hong Kong: Wenhua ziliao gongying she, 1978, Vol. I, pp. 434-39. Between pp. 422-23 of the book there is a still from the film showing the bumptious Miss Hu posing with a friend after doing a song-and-dance number on the stairs in her grandfather's house. Hu is the one with the big butterfly bow in her hair. After 1949, she went on to become the CPC Party Secretary of the Shanghai Ballet Academy.
128 See Xinshaonian, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 72. The general ideological bent of Xinshaonian is indicated in issue No. 4 which features on its cover a picture of a statue of Lenin relating stories of the revolution to wide-eyed youngsters.
romanticism of the May Fourth period it also reflects the religious beliefs Feng was to maintain for the rest of his life. 129

As Farquhar has observed in her study of the development of Chinese children's literature up to 1936, it is possible to "trace the gradual assimilation of a Marxist social analysis [by the majority of writers]... The cost to children's literature was the exploration of self and the 'inner world' of children as a basis for the mature individual's integration with society." 130 It is perhaps of some significance then that following the appearance of this single rather unpromising story -- one enlivened only by his twenty-four illustrations [5: 23] -- Feng Zikai did not publish any more stories for children until the mid-1940s, and when he did he still favoured what Maxim Gorky dubbed "passive romanticism" rather than the "blood-stained fairytale" which had become increasingly popular among his contemporaries since the late 1920s. 131

Writers in Mainland China generally maintain that among Feng's 1920s essays we can find examples of children's literature, that is writing aimed at children. The most oft-cited example is the essay "Zhanzhan's Diary", which we have mentioned above, a work that is, in fact, very much a adult's attempt to simulate a child's world for the entertainment if not also edification of his adult readers. 132 However, one of their number, Tian Bijie, does admit that "it was only when he [Feng Zikai] became an editor of Xinshaonian [in 1936] and Zhongxuesheng [in 1930] that he consciously took to writing for children." But apart from a few tales such as "The Adventures of a Banknote", Feng's writings for children and adolescents in the 1930s were restricted to lectures on art and music, including his series of "Art Stories" (Meishu gushi) for Xinshaonian. These stories were short essays in art appreciation aimed at a young audience and delivered in the form of somewhat forced conversations between children in the style of Xia Mianzun and Ye Shengtao's famous book The Literary Mind

129 While passing through Nanjing in December 1946, shortly after the end of the Anti-Japanese War, Feng wrote "Five Dollars Speaks" (Wu yuande hua), a tale very much along the lines of "The Adventures of a Banknote". In it a five dollar note describes its travels during the war and its gradual devaluation. In the end, like the banknote in the 1936 story, the five dollar note returns to its original owner, a pock-faced concierge, but is by then so worthless that he uses it to patch up a hole in his rice-paper window. See Yang Mu's Feng Zikai wenxuan, Taipei: Hongfan shudian, 1982, Vol. III, pp. 157-64.


131 See Farquhar, Children's Literature in China, p. 144.

132 Opposite views have been expressed by: Zhou Xiaobo in "Feng Zikai and Modern Chinese Children's Literature" (Feng Zikai yu Zhongguo xiandai ertong wenxue), Zhejiang shifan xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexueban), 1984: 4, p. 48; Tian Bijie in "An Outline Study of Feng Zikai's Writing for Children" (Qianlun Feng Zikai de ertong wenxue chuangzuo), Keshan shizhuan xuebao, 1985: 2, p. 47, in which Tian says that "Zhanzhan's Diary" is Feng's first work of children's literature; and even by Chen Xing, an otherwise reliable scholar of Feng's life and work, in "Talking About Feng Zikai and Children's Literature" (Tan Feng Zikai yu ertong wenxue), Hangzhou shiyuan wenxue (shehui kexueban), 1987: 2, p. 92. Although Chen admits that "Zhanzhan's Diary" was not a conscious attempt by Feng to write for children, it does nonetheless "basically conform to the requirements of children's literature".
(Wenxin), which was written in 1934. They were usually about Western or Chinese paintings, works by Millet and Wu Changshuo being among the first he used.

Even when Feng took to writing children's tales in the 1940s -- he published some twenty stories from 1945-1948 -- they had the same didactic qualities of the earlier essays. While most of the stories were thinly-veiled and facile satires of life under the KMT, the moral lessons were far from being "revolutionary" and were generally not even "progressive" in terms of Communist propaganda. Typical of the later stories is "The Land of Transparent Hearts" (Mingxinguo) written shortly after the Anti-Japanese War. It is Feng Zikai's version of Tao Yuanming's "Record of Peach Blossom Spring" (Taohuayuanji). A high school music teacher gets lost in a cave - the Many Happiness Cave (Duofudong) -- in which he has taken shelter during an air-raid on Chongqing. After walking into the depths of the cave for hours he comes out into daylight to find himself in a sylvan paradise. All the people in this hidden land have a clear heart-shaped window in the middle of their chests. They are a long-haired, primitive race who live in caves. Although they cannot understand anything he says, they are kindly and feed him. Isolated from the outside world they quickly seal the cave that led him into their land with a boulder. The teacher gradually learns their tongue and discovers that the windows on their chests reflect exactly what

133 Wenxin, Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1983 reprint, is a collection of essays on literature and writing composed in the form of a high school student's diary. In the mid-Ming dynasty illustrated versions of prose story books, the Daily Stories (Riji gushi) as they were called, appeared. These, like Feng's "Art Stories", were "texts for 'enlightening the ignorance' (qimeng) of the very young." See Farquhar, Children's Literature in China, p. 27. As Zhu Xi, the Confucian commentator of the Song, wrote of the early Daily Stories, "whether old or new, [they] must first teach such qualities as filial piety, fraternal love, loyalty, truth, propriety, duty, honour, and honesty..." (Farquhar, ibid.) in short, the Confucian moral canon. This genre of moral tale continued throughout the Republican period in a somewhat new guise, that of Chinese Stories (Zhonghua gushi), twelve volumes of illustrated tales on popular Confucian themes published from 1915-1945. See Farquhar, pp. 127-28. Although in terms of historical lineage Feng's "Art Stories" may belong to the tradition of Twenty-four Illustrations of Filial Piety, their content was aimed at "enlightening the ignorance of the young" in regard to art, a pedagogical aim that also has an unmistakable moral dimension.

134 See Xinshaonian, Vol I, No. 5, pp. 54-57; No. 6, pp. 31-34; and, Vol. X, pp. 50-53. One of the most delightful of these essays is "Dad's Fan" (Babade shanzi), No. 11, pp. 37-41. There is a reproduction of one of Feng's own fan paintings on page 39. In 1937, Kaiming Publishers produced a volume of these stories entitled Shaonian meishu gushi.

135 In 1948, Feng published a volume of twelve children's stories, Boshi jiangui, Shanghai: Ertong shuju. In an introductory essay entitled "On Eating Cake", Feng said that as a child his mother had often bought him sweet cakes with fuling (ports cocos) -- a Chinese herb taken for health and longevity -- in them. Only when he was older did he learn that it was an attractive way for a child to take medicine. "In both my paintings and essays I often take the role of the fuling cake as my model...My stories are supposed to be idle, humorous tales...however, among them I have included a number of fuling cakes, within them there is a moral. I hope my readers find this as attractive a proposition as I found eating fuling cake when I was a child." This introduction is quoted in full in Yang Mu's Feng Zikai wenxuan, Vol. III, p. 231.

136 See Yang Mu, Feng Zikai wenxuan, Vol. III, pp. 177-83. The story also contains hints of Samuel Butler's Erewhon, which Feng may well have read.

the person is thinking. In the land of transparent hearts deceit is impossible. "This is the most ideal society on the earth," the teacher says to himself. Just then one of the natives asks to see his heart-window and they discover that, in fact, "he has no heart at all!" The realization shocks and mystifies them, while the teacher ponders on how dark, treacherous and evil is a society in which people can deceive each other. "Although there were only four or five hundred of them living in caves with nothing but sweet potatoes for food and palm fibre clothes, their hearts were open to each other. They had a society that was far more civilized and fortunate than our own." Finally, the teacher discards his clothing for theirs and puts on a heart-window only to discover that his heart is opaque. After falling asleep he found himself in a skiff floating down a river on which he is eventually picked up by a boat from the outside world. [5: 25] He tells his story to his rescuers but they think him mad.

5: 8 Conclusion

Immediately following the war and during the late 1940s the activities of a newly-established Federation of Chinese Children's Writers determined the future course of writing (and in the same token art) for children. In the last months of 1948 a fatal blow was dealt to the type of apolitical, imaginative children's writing that had made a fleeting appearance in the past. It took the form of a resolution made by a special meeting of select members of the federation which declared that, "...children's literature must expose the poverty and darkness created by the previous government and no children's writer should hide from this responsibility. At the same time it must show the masses of children the way to struggle (unity and correct leadership) as well as the brightness of victory before them...." There was no room for Feng's humanistic tales in the dawn of the new age, and indeed, his children's writings were not reprinted in Mainland China after 1949, although twelve of them were printed in a selection of Feng's works published in Taiwan in the early 1980s.

140 Ibid.
141 The first three volumes of Yang Mu's Feng Zikai wenzuan contain twelve children's tales taken from the volume of stories Feng's Boshi jiangui. Yang remarks in his Editor's Postscript to Volume III of his selection that all twelve stories have been translated into English by Brenda Foster, one of his graduate students. Foster presented the translations along with an appended study of the modern Chinese children's story as an MA thesis. See Feng Zikai wenzuan, Vol. III, p. 230-31.
In 1946, commenting on the novelist Tanizaki Junichirō’s review of a Japanese translation of his essays, Feng had written:

I’m painfully aware of the fact that I have a split personality. On the one hand I am an old man, a hypocritical, callous, pragmatic man (I have no hesitation in saying that all adults are, without exception, hypocritical, callous and pragmatic) nearing the age of fifty; a man with three grown boys and four grown girls. On the other hand, I am a naïve, enthusiastic, curious and impractical child. These two personalities often do battle within my heart. Although there are momentary victories for one, and defeats for the other, a rise to prominence or a falling into abeyance, they are still both of equal strength, neither can claim the final victory, and they remain at a stand off in my soul. The invasions and struggles of these two forces has cause me great spiritual anguish.

...Not only do I "adore children" as Tanizaki has said, I myself remain a child -- a forty-nine year old child. And it is for that very reason that I do particularly delight in writing "quite impractical, not particularly profound, trivial and irrelevant things", therefore I "have compassion for all things", hence my "sincerity" (zhenshuai). Kuriyagawa Hakuson, a late Japanese literary critic, said that art and literature are symbols of frustration. The arts are like a dream, and the agonies of reality can be vented in the realm of dreams. If this is so, then my essays are the symbols of frustration of my split personality.143

After commenting on the sad fate of the Chinese who had been variously reduced to poverty and politicized before and during the Anti-Japanese War, Feng expressed grave doubts about the future of his fellow man:

There are too few children in China. Adults too readily concern themselves with the pursuit of fame or gain; their minds are occupied with social, political, economic and industrial problems...they have no time for the trivial things that are so close at hand; they have neither the time nor the energy to truly live; they have no right to be counted as children....If things continue as they are I fear China will only have adults and no children, and even infants will be turned into pragmatic old men and women!144

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143 From "On Reading 'On Reading Essays from Yuanyuantang' " (Du <<Du Yuanyuantang suibi>>, Suibiji, pp. 277-78. See also Feng Huazhan’s article "Feng Zikai and Japanese Art and Literature" (Feng Zikai yu Ribende wenxue yishu), Riben wenxue, 1986: 3, pp. 231-33, in which he comments, albeit superficially, on the influence of Kuriyagawa’s thought on Feng’s art in the early 1930s.

144 “On Reading ‘On Reading Essays from Yuanyuantang ’", p. 278. Part of this quotation was used when a critic by the name of Liu Xiangyang wrote an article entitled "The Childishness of Artists" (Yishujia de haiiziqi), Renmin ribao, 27 April, 1988. Interestingly, after quoting Feng, Liu also refers to Li Zhi’s essay on the childlike mind, as well as the writings of both Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren mentioned in the above. He manipulates these literary authorities to argue in favour of writers cultivating a positive and sincere tone in their work. Liu’s aim is to decry those modern writers who indulge too much in "irony" (fanfeng), and the faddish habit of "irreverence" (wanshi bu gong). In conclusion, he asks his readers, "Why don't we try to live a little more purely?"
In this context it is interesting to recall that some two decades earlier Zhou Zuoren had written of a similar sense of "bipolarity" in his life, "the split in his personality between the gangster and the man of the gentry, or in other terms, between the rebel and the recluse." In the case of Zhou, the struggle continued for most of the 1920s until, in 1928, the "recluse" fully emerged and ruled for the rest of his life. Feng’s childlike mind, while never entirely submerged as we will see, was gradually undermined both during and after the 1930s.

Chapter 6:
Husheng, Protecting Life or Preserving the Self?

6: 1 Introduction

From the late Qing a number of leading Chinese intellectuals, among them Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong and Zhang Taiyan evinced an interest in Buddhism. Some of these eclectic thinkers tried to use Buddhist doctrine as an ideology that could combine a traditional Chinese value system with the disparate theories and ideas which were being introduced from the West. As some scholars have argued, their interest in Buddhism was pragmatic and political in nature. Buddhism, regarded by these intellectuals as having been sinified, represented to them a religion capable of competing with Christianity and providing a philosophical basis for China's self-renewal.

Following the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Buddhism as a unifying belief system was quickly abandoned by younger, iconoclastic intellectuals who condemned the entire Chinese tradition in what Lin Yü-sheng calls their "cultural-intellectualistic approach" to culture, engaging in a "totalistic" negation of China's past.¹ By the 1920s Buddhism was regarded by many with open hostility and in the Anti-Religion Debates of both 1922 and 1927, Buddhism was along with Christianity a main target of attack.

Feng Zikai was in certain respects typical of the May Fourth generation of young Chinese intellectuals -- he shared with his Chunhui and Li Da colleagues an intense interest in using education to change China, a theme of his work that is adumbrated by his translations of books on art and music, and his attempts to combine Western and Chinese art are typical of syncretic tendencies of the time. Yet, both artistically and philosophically he reacted to the events of the 1920s in a way strikingly

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different from the majority of his fellows, including his friends. His *manhua*, although a new art form, was as we have seen, both in style and inspiration very much within the traditions of Chinese art. His conversion to Buddhism and the essays that he wrote with a "dharma flavour" (*fawei*), to use his own expression, puzzled and even repelled his contemporaries. Perhaps the reason for both his artistic and religious activities can only -- and should only -- be understood in an appreciation his individual temperament. Feng reacted to his environment and his age in a very special way, creating painted and written works that are both relevant to his age and which have a broader and more universal appeal. This was an achievement of which very few other artists of the period were capable.

The theme of this chapter is the influence of the two major spiritual mentors in Feng's life, Li Shutong (later Dharma Master Hongyi) and Ma Yifu, the Confucian philosopher, and their connection with the six-volume series of paintings, the *The Collected Paintings to Protect Life (Husheng huaji)*, which was published over a fifty-year period from 1928 to 1979. These collections link Feng's pre- and post-1949 life and touch on a central theme of his artistic and philosophical view: empathy and the sympathetic heart. The sympathetic heart is, in turn, in turn is a mature reflection of his earliest interest in painting as the representation of the childlike heart.2

6: 2 Late-Qing Intellectuals and Buddhism

In the late Qing, intellectuals developed Buddhism for a number of reasons, ranging from personal religious or philosophical needs to the more calculated and utilitarian approach of wanting to understanding Buddhism so as to discrediting it.3 The thinkers Tan Sitong, Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan emphasized the positive, committed side of Mahayana Buddhism, rejecting the accusation of their contemporaries that it was a world-denying, self-abnegating religion. Indeed, Tan Sitong and Zhang Taiyan argued that the selflessness of Buddhist doctrine should give heart to all revolutionaries: since there was no self there was no need to fear death. Buddhist intellectuals also argued that as they had taken the Bodhisattva vows to save all living beings from Hell, their sufferings and efforts in the troubled world of China at the turn of the century were merely a prelude to the realization of a utopia, be it the

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2 The significance of the *Husheng huaji* in Feng's post-1949 career is discussed in Appendix I.
3 In *Zhongguo fojiao jindaishi*, Taipei: Zhonghua fojiao wenhuaguan, 1974, p. 549, Shi Dongchu lists four groups of intellectuals who made a serious study of Buddhism in the late-Qing and early Republican period. 1. Kang Youwei, Tan Sitong and Zhang Taiyan who, though grounded in Confucian thought, found in Buddhism a philosophical dimension that would help them better explicate their Confucianism. 2. Liang Shuming and Feng Youlan who strengthened their Neo-Confucian thinking with Buddhist philosophy. 3. Cai Yuanpei and Hu Shi whose philosophical approaches originated in the West, and who studied Buddhism to repudiate it. 4. Those like Liang Qichao who studied Buddhism for its intrinsic value.
Pure Land of the West, the *datong* or *nirvāṇa*. As Zhang Taiyan remarked in his essay "On Establishing Religion", Buddhism negated only the "vessel world" (*qishijie*) not the "world of sentient beings" (*yoqing shijie*). The Buddhist was engaged with the world only in so far as he was trying to lead all beings away from the three realms of sensuous desire, form and pure spirit.

The devastating effects of the Taiping rebellion and the mounting evidence of dynastic decline with its attendant characteristics of social disorder and corruption actually led to a revival of Buddhism. There was a rapid increase in the number of Buddhist devotees in the late Qing, a natural development in consideration of social and political unrest and the decay of support for Confucian order. As Liang Qichao noted, many scholars of the New Text School were familiar with or influenced by Buddhism, and Liang himself was confident that if Buddhism could rid itself of superstitious practices and the odium related to them, it could become an important philosophy or rather a powerful tool in the Chinese renaissance. He called for "a new Buddhism" as the foundation for the intellectual revolution. The atmosphere of intellectual despair typical of the end of a dynasty had been exacerbated by the challenge of Western thought and Christianity. Thus the attraction of Buddhism for many late-Qing intellectuals had a utilitarian aspect as a reaction to these Western inroads. Many writers went to great lengths to show that Buddhism was superior to Christianity and could be used as a weapon in the struggle for national salvation. They identified with Buddhism for its "Chineseness".

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4 Chan Sinwai, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985, pp. 110, 144-45, 148. Tan Sitong in his exposition *Renxue* and Zhang Taiyan in his "Yanshuolu" both use the concept of the compassionate Buddha as expounded by the Huayan sect of Buddhism to encourage an attitude of revolutionary fearlessness and the pursuit of universal happiness. There is a hint of this thinking in one of Feng Zikai's essay, "The Sorrow of Impermanence" (*Wuchang zhi dong*), see Yuanxu xianzai, pp. 215-16, in which he gives his views on the reasons for the decay of religion, after which he comments that although the ancients were sorely aware of the impermanence of all things, quoting lines from classical Chinese poetry to back up his argument, in the present day people lack this awareness and thus heroic and self-sacrificing deeds are rare.


8 Liang Chi-ch'iao, *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period*, translated by Immanuel C. Y. Hsiü, Cambridge: University Press, 1959, pp. 116-17; and Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, pp. 73-74, 205. Liang was not whole-hearted in his support for the religion and he said that if the superstitious practices associated with Buddhism could not be uprooted then it could "become a great obstacle in our intellectual world."

9 Chan, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought*, pp. 8, 41, 46.

10 *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought*, p. 156.
This renewed interest in Buddhism was not restricted to a small group of patriotic intellectuals. A widespread revival of Buddhism had begun in the Lower Yangtze, in particular Zhejiang, when laymen undertook the reprinting of sacred texts destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion.11 On this more popular level there is an element of nationalistic reaction to the Western missionaries who had made such inroads on behalf of Western religion and the foreign powers. The missionaries also taught the Buddhists how effective proselytizing could be, as well as the value of the textual analysis of scriptures. These trends had begun with laymen, especially such famous activists as Yang Wenhui (1837-1911) and Ouyang Jingwu (1872-1944), and which at the end of the Qing spread to the sangha, or monastic community, itself. The collapse of the dynasty led to the confiscation of monastic property and to depredations at the hands of mutinous and revolutionary troops, but the social and intellectual disruption of the time also attracted an increasing number of people to the religion.

After 1911, the sense of despair and disorientation grew, and even Western observers noted the trend to embrace Buddhism among the Chinese. "Many officials, disheartened by the present confused political situation, have sought refuge in the monasteries," wrote one traveller.12 In fact, one of Li Shutong's earliest friends in the monastic order, Hongsan, a man who had taken monk's vows shortly before Li in 1918, was originally a military commander during the "Second Revolution" (1913) aimed at toppling Yuan Shikai. After an unsuccessful campaign against Nanjing he had "woken to the way" (wudao) and retired to Yuquan Temple in Hangzhou.13 With limited statistical information available, it is difficult to gauge the extent of the revival of popular Buddhism. One foreign observer, J. B. Pratt, commenting on the state of Buddhism in eastern Zhejiang from Jiujiang to Ningbo in 1923-24, said he found "a very living Buddhism. New temples are being constructed, old ones repaired and pilgrimages carried on, young monks are studying and old monks meditating, throughout all this region."14 Holmes Welch also notes that between 1864-1912 many monasteries in the Zhejiang-Jianguo area despoiled by the Taiping Rebellion "were

11 Buddhism had flourished in Zhejiang since the Five Dynasties in the 10th Century. SeeKristin Yu Greenblatt, Yün-ch'i Chu-hung: The Career of a Ming Buddhist Monk, Ph. D. thesis, Columbia University, 1973, pp. 149-50. The Lower Yangtze had been the cradle of Chinese Buddhism, and lay Buddhist revivals such as in the time of the great Ming dynasty monk Zhuhong in the 16th Century were centred in Zhejiang. These revivals were very much a localized phenomenon which were directly linked to the activities of eminent monks like Zhuhong, himself a native of the province.

12 Lewis Hodous, Buddhism and Buddhists in China, New York, 1924, p. 66, quoted in Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, p. 74, see also p. 260.

13 See Feng Zikai's essay "Flavour of the Dharma" (Fawei), in Hongyi wenji, Taipei: Wenshu chubanshe, 1988, edited by Hong Qisong and Huang Qilin, p. 9. Hongsan was also known as the Old Man of Zhaoxian Temple (Zhaoxian laoren) which was situated on West Lake in Hangzhou, though later it was destroyed. Feng rented a house next to this humble temple in the 1930s.

rebuilt on a lavish scale, some larger than before, and they were soon filled with monks. The wealth of a monastery was an index of its religious vitality as a pious monk and a sangha with a high repute naturally attracted devotees and votary offerings. In the late-Qing and early Republican period such monasteries abounded in both Zhejiang and Jiangsu.

Feng Zikai grown up in Tongxiang County, the home of the monk Taixu, the most renowned leader of the 20th Century Buddhist revival. The environment in which studied during the most formative years of his life was one where Buddhism was active, even flourishing. It was when he was a student in Hangzhou that his mentor Li Shutong became a Buddhist convert, and subsequently a monk. It was something that profoundly influenced the course of Feng's adult life and his relationship with his contemporaries.

6: 3 The Dharma Master Hongyi

While Feng Zikai was at high school in Hangzhou two teachers had a particularly profound influence on him. One was Xia Mianzun, the Chinese language teacher and the dormitory monitor for boarders at the school whom we have discussed in Chapter Three. He was a man whose strength, according to his students, lay in his warm, "motherly style" of teaching. The other his art and music instructor, Li Shutong, was, in Feng's own words, "like a stern father".

Li was born into a large and wealthy salt merchant family in Tianjin, although, like Feng, he was of Zhejiang origin. His father died in his youth and the family

16 Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, p. 251, provides statistics to show that in 1930 the two provinces of Zhejiang and Jiangsu also had the highest number of Buddhist monks and devotees (Jiangsu: 91,400 monks, 1,139,540 devotees; Zhejiang 64,300 monks, 1,367,800 devotees) and he comments that this situation may have been the same for decades, if not centuries. (p. 252.)
17 Feng Zikai, "Mr Li Shutong's Educational Spirit" (Li Shutong xianshengde jiaoyu jingshen), written in May 1957 for Hongyi dashi jiniance, reprinted in Yunnuyantang jiwaitiwen, edited by Ming Tsuen, Hong Kong: Wenxueshe, 1979, see pp. 248-49; also recently reprinted in Mainland China. See Hongyi dashi yimo, edited by Xia Zongyu, Peking: Huaxia chubanshe, 1987, pp. 223-24. Li's influence as an art teacher has been discussed at length in Chapter One.
18 Nianpu, p. 8; also, "My Relationship with the Master" (Yu yu dashi zhi guanxi), Yuan Xilian, Xianggang fojiao, No. 269, Peking: Wenshi ziiiao xuanji, No. 34, Peking: Wenshi
fortunes began to decline. Nonetheless, Li was given a thorough classical education in preparation for the official examinations, and he showed a particular talent for poetry and seal carving during his adolescence, which was encouraged by special tuition. He took a wife in 1897. According to biographical accounts which refer to rumours current among his contemporaries and cite the story of Li possessing a seal he had carved for himself which read "Kang Youwei is my teacher" as evidence, Li fled to Shanghai from Tianjin with his mother in fear of being persecuted for his pro-Reformist sympathies. His duties as a filial son did not prevent him from becoming an active figure in the social and literary life of Shanghai, and much of the extant poetry he wrote at this time was inspired by famous Shanghai courtesans. Between the lines of these often romantic verses he reveals considerable bitterness about the political situation and frustration at his own powerlessness. Shortly after arriving in the city he joined the South City Literary Society (Chengnan wenshe), organized by Xu Huanyuan and Yuan Xilian and, in 1900, Li and his friends started the Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Society (Shanghai shuhua gonghui) which produced a weekly pamphlet and provided the members with a venue to drink tea and read. Huang Zongyang, the Buddhist activist, and leading members of the Shanghai School...
of artists (Shanghaipai), were among those who joined the group.24 In the same year Li produced a volume of his own seal carvings (yinpu) and a collection of his poems, his introduction to which reflects a deep depression caused by the decline of the dynasty.25 In 1901, Li entered the South Seas Public School (Nanyang gongxuexiao)26 to study economics, and he was instructed in Japanese by the radical educationalist Cai Yuanpei.27 As both he and the other active members of the society were busy with their studies or official duties, the calligraphy and painting society was disbanded, although Li did find time to sing in Peking opera performances.28 He was a candidate in the local Zhejiang imperial exams in 1902 which were held after the interruption of the Boxer Rebellion, and back in Shanghai he tried his hand at journalism by writing for a local newspaper. In early 1905, his mother died,29 and Feng Zikai, who accompanied his teacher to visit his old house in Shanghai in 1926,

24 Yuan Xilian, "My Relationship with the Master", ibid. Yuan claims the famous artist Ren Bonian (d. 1898) also joined the group. Ding Xiyuan, "A Brief Account of the Shanghai School" (Shanghaipai jianlun), Yingchunhua, 1982: 2, p. 3; and, Josef Hejzlar's study of the Shanghai School, Chinese Watercolours, London: Gallery Press, 1987, pp. 40-41.

25 Li Lu yinpu and Li Lu shizhong respectively. See Nianpu, p. 15 and p. 16 for Li's preface to the volume of seals, and p. 17 for his introduction to the poems. Li was noted for his seal carvings and in this too influenced Feng. Recent articles have noted that Feng was an active member of the Leshi Society (later named the Jishe) at his school, and a number of his early seals have been found. See Zhikan, "The Seals of Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai liuxiade zhuansan zucpin), Shufa, 1980: 6, p. 25; Zhikan "The Date of Feng Zikai's Conversion" (Feng Zikai de guiyi niandai), Shupu, 1984: 6, p. 14; Yuan Honghou, "Feng Zikai and Seal Carving" (Feng Zikai yu zhuansan), Renmin ribao (overseas edition), 30 October, 1986; and a number of Feng's early and later seals are reproduced in ZHUANKE, 1986: 1, an internal publication produced by the Calligraphers' Association of Tongxiang County, Zhejiang.


27 Cai had resigned his post as supervisor (jingdu) at the East-West School (Zhongxixue tang) after clashing with school authorities over his criticisms of the monarchy and attempts at educational reform. See William J. Duiker, Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei Educator of Modern China, Pennsylvania State University, 1977, pp. 8-9. According to Gao Wenzian, a lay disciple of Hongyi, Cai Yuanpei thought of Li as was one of the most talented students in his year. Quoted in Nianpu, p. 18. Zhixin in "Dharma Master Hongyi and Celebrated Women", p. 109, says Cai told him the same thing. Xie Wuliang (one of Ma Yifu's closest friends, see below), Shao Lizi and Xiang Xiang were all classmates of Li.

28 See "A Chronology of Li Shutong" (Li Shutong nianpu) by Zhu Jingshe, Wenshi cankao ziliao huibian, Vol. VI, p. 12. Li learned to sing and act in his youth in Tianjin. Lin Ziqing makes no mention of this early blossoming of Li's thespian talents in the text of his Nianpu, although on pp. 6-7 of the book there are reproductions of pictures of Li in operatic costume with a note that he took roles in Peking opera performances in his spare time.

29 Feng Zikai records in his essay "Flavour of the Dharma" that "in talking of his mother's death it seemed as if the Master still reproached himself. He said, 'She passed away while I was out buying a coffin. I wasn't even there to say goodbye...." See Hongyi wenji, p. 18. Feng wrote this essay on 4 August, 1926 while in Shimen. Printed first in the Li Da Academy magazine Yiban, it was recently reprinted (without a year of publication) in Hongyi dashi yonghuailu, a volume distributed for merit by the Kaiyuan Temple in Quanzhou, Fujian, where Hongyi spent considerable time in his last years.
records his impression that his mother's death left Li free to study in Japan. He told Feng that the six years he had spent in Shanghai before his mother's death were his happiest, "from then until I left the world [i.e., became a monk], I experienced nothing but sorrow and unhappiness." In Tokyo, Li went to the Ueno Art Academy (Ueno bijutsu senmon gakkō) where he was instructed by the artist Kuroda Seiki. He is reputed to have been the first Chinese student to enter a Japanese art school. He began writing on the subject of art and also took up music, learning to play the piano and editing and publishing his own music magazine in 1906. In the following year, with Zeng Xiaogu, he founded the Spring Willow Society (Chunliushe), famed as China's first spoken drama theatre troupe, taking the lead role of Marguerite in "La Dame aux Camélias."

30 "After loosing his mother he was like a thread of silk or the fluff of the willow wafting in the wind without any attachments. What possible longing could he have for either family or native place?" See "Flavour of the Dharma", ibid. In his short biography of Hongyi, quoted in Nianpu, p. 26, Jiang Danshu, a friend from Li's early years, makes a similar statement. Jiang also quotes a poem Li wrote at the time he left China which is very much in the style of the patriotic scholar overcome by anguish that he was, unable to find any way to express his loyalty to the dynasty.

31 "Flavour of the Dharma", ibid. Li took the personal name ai or "sorrow" following his mother's death. See Hongyi fashi, p. 308.

32 See Chapter One. A recent history of 20th Century Chinese art comments on Li's painting and the influence of Kuroda Seiki in the following way, "In the final analysis, he remains one of the new artists of China and as such should not be forgotten. Even though virtually all of his oil paintings have been lost -- works that bear the imprint of Kuroda Seiki's instruction and show the influence of Post-Impressionism -- the works that remain reveal that he had a solid grounding in Western painting, and are precious artefacts of the early history of early Western art in China." See Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi, p. 29; also Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 76-77.

33 Nianpu, p. 26. It is also noted here that Gao Jianfu, the Guangdong painter and father of the Lingnan School of reformist Chinese art, entered the same academy, although it is presumed that Li was there before him. The novelty of Li's attendance at the art school can be gauged by the fact that a local Tokyo newspaper, the Kokumin shimbun, carried an article on him entitled "Qing Man Enamoured of Western Art". For a Chinese translation of this article see Hongyi fashi, pp. 243-44. This report describes Li as a round-shouldered young man with short hair (he had cut off his queue shortly after arriving in Japan) who dressed in Japanese attire.

34 Nianpu, pp. 27, 32-33. The Little Music Magazine (Yinyue xiaozazhi ) was printed in Japan by Mikkōdō and distributed in Shanghai. Only a few issues were published of what was envisaged as a bi-annual magazine, and I have only been able to find the first issue, produced in the first month of the year Bingwu (1906). Most of the material was written by Li under the name Xishuang, his hao at the time. In the editorial of this first issue Li says that the music of the West can be used to raise the moral standards of a society, refine the emotions and enhance the quest for beauty. Originally the magazine was to be a by-product of a larger art journal which failed to eventuate as his comrades split up. An introductory essay on Beethoven, "the saint of music" (prefaced by a charcoal sketch by Li), is followed by a short history of modern music by a Japanese writer, and three songs composed by Li with musical notation, some other miscellaneous essays and a selection of ci poetry. See also Sun Jinan's article, "The Earliest Chinese Music Periodical" (Zhongguo zuizaode yinyue qikan), Renmin yinyue, 1985; 3, pp. 57-58. Li also edited a volume of poems and songs, the Guoxue changgeji, at this time. See Lin Ziqing's shorter and revised chronology in Hongyi fashi, p. 308. Zhu Jingshe, in "A Chronology of Li Shutong", records that Li joined the Tongmenghui in 1906 (p. 12), although there is no evidence to corroborate this claim.

35 Zeng Yannian (1873-1937), a Sichuanese classmate of Li's at the art academy who returned to China to become a revolutionary. Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, p. 76.
one of the group’s first productions.36 Uchiyama Kanzô, the book dealer and active friend of the Shanghai literary world in the 1930s, says that in both dress and his personal habits Li accommodated himself entirely to the lifestyle of old Edo,37 and his activities brought him into contact with leading figures in art, music and drama.38 Despite his reputation as something of a man-about-town, his associates recalled he was not in the least interested in the good life made possible by his family’s wealth, devoting his energies to artistic pursuits instead. Li’s serious and self-denying attitude -- one that would attract him to the Disciplinary School (Lüzong) of Buddhism a decade later -- was more than apparent to those around him. In fact, in the eyes of his contemporaries Li seemed to be positively eccentric.39 There is scant information on his other activities and studies in Japan, although two of his poems dating from this

36 Nianpu, p. 27-31. Lin Ziqing (pp. 29-31) quotes extensively from Ouyang Yuqian’s chapter on the Spring Willow Society in his autobiography Ziwo yanzhijilai written in 1933. The same material is included in Hongyi fashi, pp. 282-83. Ouyang says Li only liked playing female roles and had a very expensive woman’s suit tailored for himself. Since he was from a prosperous salt merchant’s family, Ouyang recalls, and the richest student among his contemporaries he could easily afford it. See also Xu Bannéi’s recollections in this same work, pp. 280-81, and Binsheng “The Founder of Chinese Drama -- Dharma Master Hongyi” (Zhongguo huajude chuangshiren -- Hongyi fashi) and Shi Shuqing, “The Revolution in Theatre Initiated by the Students Who Studied in Japan” (Liuri xuesheng daqide xiju geming) in Xianggang foxue, No. 269, pp. 35 and 36-37 respectively. Many works dealing with Li’s early years reproduce pictures of him in his theatre costumes. See Nianpu, pp. 9, 11-14. On the first page of illustrations in Zhongguo huaju yundong wushinian shiliaoji, reprinted Hong Kong: Wenhua ziliao gongyingshe, 1978, the famous retouched picture of Li as a willow-waisted Marguerite is reproduced along with what appears to be an illustration of the third act of the play. At the bottom of the page there is a reproduction of a copy of the program for “Black Slave’s Cry to Heaven”, a play based on Lin Shu’s translation of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the first production of the Spring Willow Society. On pages 13-47 of this book, Ouyang Yuqian gives a detailed description of the early productions of the society and its subsequent history in Shanghai. Ouyang comments that Li and Zeng produced “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” because the theme of protesting against the injustices perpetrated on the blacks in America was meaningful for Chinese students in Japan who saw their country being abused by the imperial powers. See Zhongguo huaju yundong, p. 14. The response to the Spring Willow Society in China was almost immediate and in 1907 a number of drama groups were established in Shanghai. See also Zheng Fangze, ed., Zhongguo jindai wenxueshi chubanshe, 1983, pp. 258-59; and, William Dolby, A History of Chinese Drama, London: Paul Elek, 1976, pp. 202-203, 278-79. Leo Lee in The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers, pp. 44-46, discusses Lin Shu’s translation of “La Dame aux Camélias” and his romantic attachment to it.

37 “Vinaya Master Hongyi” (Hongyi lashi) quoted in Nianpu, p. 27, and Hongyi fashi, p. 274.


39 Ouyang Yuqian, Hongyi fashi, pp. 282-83. Ouyang comments that even as a student Li would only see guests at appointed times and he never socialized with friends. People had the impression from his theatrical performances that he was a debonnaire character, in fact, Ouyang says, he was “extremely eccentric” (yichangde gupi). (p. 283.) Ouyang recalls that on one occasion he was five minutes late for an appointment with Li and was told when he arrived after travelling from the other side of the city that he would have to arrange another time as Li was now otherwise occupied.
time record his sorrow over the plight of China and his sense of hopelessness. 40 Li returned to China in 1910 at the age of thirty with a Japanese wife. 41

At first he undertook duties as an art teacher at the Zhili Normal Technical Institute (Zhili mofan gongye xuetang) in Tianjin but when the family fortune was all but wiped out by a bankruptcy in 1912, 42 Li accepted a position teaching at a girl's school in Shanghai. A job editing the arts page of The Pacific Times (Taipingyangbao) only lasted for a few months as the paper was closed due to financial problems. 43 He was also active in the Southern Society (Nanshe), a loose organization of patriotic writers and artists, and helped the prominent Southern Society leader Liu Yazi to edit a magazine on aesthetics. 44 Later in the year he moved to Hangzhou where he taught music and art at Zhejiang Number One Teachers' College 45 at the invitation of the progressive educationalist Jing Hengyi. 46 It was as an instructor in this school that he taught Feng Zikai. Like many of his colleagues, Li was hopeful of realizing his ambition of being involved in the reformation and renewal of China by channelling his energies into educational work. "Our youthful literati fancies had faded with age and

40 Nianpu, pp. 37-38.
41 Xu Banmei had a similar experience to Ouyang, see Hongyi fashi, p. 280, and he also found Li's conduct towards his Japanese mother-in-law – he had taken a second wife in Japan – quite unusual. Xu witnessed an exchange between the woman and Li one rainy day. Li's mother-in-law had been visiting and as she prepared to leave she asked for the loan of an umbrella, only to be refused by her son-in-law. "When I married your daughter nothing was said about loaning you an umbrella," Li pointed out. Xu comments that, "There's no place for such a person in [normal] society, in the end he had no choice but to become a monk."
42 Nianpu, p. 39. In Li Duan's account the family nurse Wang is referred to again as being of the opinion that Li quit Tianjin in 1912 because of clashes between him and his elder brother, Li Tonggang. See "Scattered Memories of My Father Li Shutong", p. 24.
43 Yuan Xilian, "My Relationship with the Master", ibid., Nianpu, pp. 39-44, Liu Yazi, "In Memory of the Monk Hongyi" (Huai Hongyi shangren), Hongyi fashi, p. 257, and Chapter Three. Hu Pu'an, a fellow editor at the paper, said of Li that "seeing him day in day out as I did, I often heard him talk in a way that indicated an other-worldly attitude." See "Master Hongyi and I" (Wo yu Hongyi dashi), Hongyi fashi, p. 262. The monk Kuanyuan, Hongyi's amanuensis, recalls visiting Li's favourite noodle shop in Shanghai near the Qinglong Bridge at Dadong Gate in 1929 and as they ate the monk in a rare mood of nostalgia talked about the flat above the shop that he and his Japanese wife had rented when he was teaching in the city. See Cao Yunpeng, "Dharma Master Kuanyuan Remembers Master Hongyi" (Kuanyuan fashi huiyi Hongyi shangren), Shanghai wenshi ziliao xuanji, No. 53, edited by the Shanghai PPCC, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1986, pp. 229-30.
44 See Nianpu, pp. 39-42; Hongyi fashi, p. 308; Zheng Yimei, Nanshe congian, pp. 132-34. The aesthetics journal, Wenmei zazhi, was a short-lived enterprise. See also Zhang Xiaoshan, Zhongguo xiandai huihuashu, p. 48. Mary Backus Rankin in her Early Chinese Revolutionaries, pp. 122-25, discusses the society, which she says was the "organization which came closest to symbolizing the Shanghai intelligentsia" at the end of the Qing, and the nature of its membership.
45 See Nianpu, pp. 42-43. Jiang Danshu, the author of the information on Li's move to Hangzhou, says that up to this time Japanese art instructors were generally employed at the school, and prior to Li's arrival, he was the only Chinese art teacher. As we have commented in Chapter One, after returning from Japan in 1909, Lu Xun was employed as a Japanese translator in the school's department of biology where he also taught for a short time.
46 See Chapters One and Three.
reflection, and we hoped to achieve something practical in the realm of education," as his colleague Xia Mianzun said.47 Li soon impressed those around him as an exceptional if not idiosyncratic individual. He now abandoned his traditional Japanese and fashionable Western dress in favour of a simple cloth scholar's robe, although he grew a moustache and later a goatee which he sported up to the time of shaving his head.48 Even prior to his interest in ascetic Buddhism, Li was stern and demanding both of himself and others. Despite his cold manner, he was widely respected by both his fellow teachers and students.49

Many years later Feng Zikai was to say the following about the effect of Li Shutong's charismatic personality and method of teaching on his students:

We'd spend an hour practising our painting and over an hour on the piano every day. It seemed normal to us, not at all strange. But why? Because our hearts and minds were completely ruled by Mr Li's personality and his learning. He never abused students or even criticized us; he was always humble and respectful, as he was after he abandoned the world. Nevertheless every student was in awe of him, wanted to emulate him and worshipped him....Mr Xia Mianzun once said that, "Mr Li has the aura (houguang) of a teacher about him."...I worshipped him more than anyone.50

47 Xia Mianzun, "On Dharma Master Hongyi's Becoming a Monk" (Hongyi fashi zhi chuujia), Hongyi fashi, pp. 247. Xia and Li worked closely together for the seven years he was at the school. In this essay Xia gives the most detailed account of Li's attitudes and activities from 1911 up to the time he became a monk in 1918.

48 "Remembering Master Hongyi" (Zhuaiyi Hongyi dashi), by Li's colleague and neighbour Jiang Danshu, see Hongyi fashi, p. 265. Jiang says that after shaving his beard to become a monk, Li divided the hair between his Japanese wife and close friends as a keepsake. In "Mr Li Shutong's Patriotic Spirit" (Li Shutong xianshengde aiguo jingshen), written in 1957 and reprinted in Yuanuyantang jiweiyiwen, pp. 237-41, Feng Zikai recalls that Li abandoned foreign clothing in response to the call to "support Chinese products" (aiyong guohuo) which was energetically propagated at the school. He even rejected the use of a belt because it was of foreign manufacture. Interestingly, after joining the monkhood Li deigned to use British-made vermillion, reasoning that this was acceptable as he wanted it to write out Buddhist sutras to help propagate the faith. (pp. 238-39.)


50 "Dharma Master Hongyi and I" (Wo yu Hongyi fashi), a lecture delivered at the Buddhist Study Society in Amoy, reprinted in Hongyi fashi, p. 251. See also Feng, "Mr Li Shutong's Educational Spirit", pp. 247-48. Cao Juren says that "I've always detested people who say they've 'left the world', and I'm against all other-wordly passivity; however, I think of Dharma Master Hongyi as a man of moral character as high as a mountain (gao shan yang zhi)...Not only did his artistic genius dazzle us, but his quiet and subtle ways changed us as well." Hongyi fashi, p. 264. In his autobiography, however, Cao Juren is at times somewhat more disparaging of Li Shutong. See Wo yu wode shijie, pp. 141-42. Li Hongliang, another student of Li's, wrote a far lengthier account of his teacher in 1962, see "My Teacher Dharma Master Hongyi, Li Shutong" (Wo de shi Hongyi fashi Li Shutong), Zhejiang wenshi ziliao xuanji, No. 26, Zhejiang PPCC, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1983, pp. 98-117. Of Li Shutong's students Li Hongliang, along with Feng Zikai, Pan Tianshou and Wu Mengfei went on to become established and respected artists and educators. See Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan in Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi, p. 29.
The excitement over the establishment of a Republic turned into disillusionment with Yuan Shikai's despotic-style presidency and then despondency after Yuan's acceptance of the Japanese Twenty-One Demands and his abortive attempt to found a new dynasty in 1916. Zhang Xun's ill-fated restoration of the Qing house in 1917, continued fighting in Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan and Anhui, led to a crisis for many who had thought that political reform would be the salvation of China. For those intellectuals with an active interest in politics up to the 1911 Revolution, especially for romantic members of the Southern Society like Li Shutong, these developments coupled with a recognition that revolution had done little to alleviate the problems of political fragmentation or uproot the power of tradition. The resulting sense of disorientation led many intellectuals to choose individual action as an alternative to collective agitation, while in some cases moral regeneration on a personal level was seen as a viable alternative to social and political change. Li Shutong, a man actively interested in politics since the Hundred Days Reform, was not untouched by these developments, and he despaired of the future. In a mood of helplessness he turned to religion for an answer. After experimenting with fasting as a means of "self-renewal" (shenxin gengxin) during the winter vacation of 1916 at Hupao Temple outside Hangzhou, he sought solace in Taoist philosophy and Neo-Confucian

52 See the comments of Li Hongliang in "My Teacher Dharma Master Hongyi, Li Shutong", pp. 114-17.
53 Nianpu, pp. 50-54. Xia Mianzun happened upon an article in a Japanese magazine which claimed that fasting was an ancient method of self-renewal practiced by both the Buddha and Jesus Christ. Furthermore, fasting "could rid [the practitioner] of the old and renew the self, eradicating evil propensities and give birth to mighty spiritual energy." See Nianpu, p. 52, and Xia's "On Dharma Master Hongyi's Becoming a Monk", p. 284. The article also provided a practical course in fasting, and although the two men were planning to try it out together, Li slipped away to Hupao Temple in Hangzhou during the winter vacation instead of returning to Shanghai to spend it with his usual practice, reappearing at the school one week into the new term. Li kept a detailed diary of his experience, and Feng records his unsuccessful attempt to buy it from a man by the name of Zhu Kongyang in the 1960s in a letter to the monk Guangqia dated 20 December, 1963. See Feng Zikai zhi Guangqia fashi shuaianxuan, p. 128. As yet I have been unable to locate the present whereabouts of the diary -- presuming that it survived the Cultural Revolution. Li and Xia were by no means exceptional in wanting to sublimate their frustrated ambitions. Perhaps the most eloquent statement of this state of mind can be found in the journalist Huang Yuansheng's "Confessions" (Chanhui), published in Dongfang zazhi in November 1915, and reprinted in Yuansheng yizhu, Peking: Shaoguang yinshuguan, 1984 (photographic reproduction of the 1920 edition in two volumes), Vol. I, pp. 123-34, and his "Self-Criticism" (Fanxing), pp. 135-40. Liang Shuming, a friend of Huang's, comments in his recollections that "this essay [Confessions] expounded the Indian philosophy of leaving the world, pointing out that the only choice one has in life is to become a Buddhist." See "Remembering Mr Cai Yuanpei" (Jinian Cai Yuanpei xiansheng), in Wode null yu fenxing, Guilin: Lijiang chubanshe, 1987, p. 327. Li Hongliang, "My Teacher Dharma Master Hongyi, Li Shutong", pp. 116-17, had the impression that Li Shutong fasted in the hope of curing a chronic digestive complaint, although he notes his teacher's fascination with religion at the time. He also notes that about this time Li Shutong even presented him with a short tract produced by the new Japanese religious group Tenrikyō.
The experience of a three-week fast was "like a rebirth" (tuotai huangu), and quoting Laozi he said he felt as though he had "regained the state of a child", thereupon changing his name to Li Ying (ying as in "infant"). After this spiritual experience Li's interest in Buddhism was most probably sparked by the recluse-philosopher Ma Yifu who had taken up residence in Hangzhou some years earlier. Li knew Ma well enough to visit him after his fast to describe the temple. As Xia Mianzun recalls, Ma had a friend by the name of Peng who wanted to find a quiet place to pass the Chinese New Year in solitude so, with Li's enthusiastic description still fresh in his mind, he recommended Hupao Temple. Li also spent the Chinese New Year in the temple with Peng who suddenly decided to become a monk. Li was so moved by the initiation ceremony that he also took Refuge in the Three Precious Ones (guiyi sanbao, that is, the buddha, the dharma and the sangha), becoming a Buddhist layman under Dharma Master Liaowu. He took the religious name Yanyin, and the hao Hongyi. Li returned to the school a vegetarian, and he was often seen fingering a rosary and reading sutras. He set up a Buddhist altar in his room, and although he still occasionally leafed through Neo-Confucian tracts, he had lost all interest in Taoism.

In the autumn of 1918, as Li was approaching his fortieth year -- the age at which by Confucian expectations one "no longer suffered from perplexities" -- Li availed himself of the summer vacation to enter a monastery. This came as something of a shock to the school authorities, and Xia Mianzun castigated himself for having encouraged Li in his religious enterprise, the outcome of which was this

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54 "On Dharma Master Hongyi's Becoming a Monk", p. 284. Xia says Li still evinced no interest in Buddhism. In Nianpu, p. 51, Li’s inscription on a painting by Chen Shizeng is recorded in which he says, "I am about to go into the mountains to meditate and foster wisdom karma, winter 1916."

55 "On Dharma Master Hongyi's Becoming a Monk", ibid; Nianpu, p. 54. In his introduction to the second volume of Husheng huaji written in October 1940, Xia Mianzun says that before entering the sangha, Li was sickly and convinced he would not live long. Believing he would die in the Bingchen Year (1916) he carved a seal for himself which read "Bingchen is the Year Old Man Xi Will Depart", often using it to sign personal correspondence. See Nianpu, p. 54; and Husheng huaji, Vol. II, Hong Kong: Shidai tushu youxian gongsi, 1979, p. 3.


57 Jiniance, ibid.

58 "On Dharma Master Hongyi's Becoming a Monk", p. 249, and Nianpu, pp. 55-56.

59 "On Dharma Master Hongyi's Becoming a Monk", ibid., and Nianpu, p. 56.

60 sishi er buhuo, from Lunyu, II: 4. See Yang Bojun, Lunyu yizhu, p. 12. I have followed Arthur Waley's translation, The Analects of Confucius, p. 88. Feng Zikai refers to Li turning to the religious life as "he approached the year when one no longer suffers from perplexities" in his 1957 "Introduction to Master Hongyi Commemorative Volume " (<<Hongyi dashi jiniance>> xuyan), reprinted in Yuanyuantang jiwei jiwen, pp. 252-53.

61 Nianpu, pp. 57-63. On page 60 Hongyi is quoted to the effect that it was from a study of Buddhist texts recommended by Ma Yifu that he became a monk. See also Jiniance, pp. 1 and 12-13.
extreme move. Jing Hengyi, the school principal, obviously mindful of the extraordinary sway Li had over the students, called a special assembly and told the school, "Whereas the sincerity of Mr Li's motives is undeniable, we should none of us attempt to emulate him." Li's example was to influence a number of his students, however, for in later years two of them were to enter monasteries, and Feng Zikai eventually turned to Buddhism as a lay disciple.

From 1898 to 1918 Li's poems and miscellaneous writings revealed a growing dissatisfaction with his life and the world around him. After spending his youth as a debonair and aimless literary gadabout in Shanghai, the death of his mother gave him an impetus to seek both a new lifestyle and knowledge in Japan. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that his turning to religion was inspired as much by his mother's death as his frustrated patriotism (or even a romanticism that had run its course). He returned to China just as the dynastic system collapsed, hopeful like so many of his generation who were still influenced by traditional Confucian thinking that education -- both the communication of new learning and the moral influence of one's personality -- were in the new circumstances the most efficacious way to realize the aims of the revolution. Yet with the failure of the "Second Revolution" to overthrow Yuan Shikai and increasing political turmoil, Li felt drawn towards new ways of transforming himself. His entering the Buddhist monastic order in 1918 marked the end of his search. In commenting on the reason for Li's retirement from the world nearly half a century later, Feng Zikai, one of his most devoted students, would put it in an unmistakably (and somewhat uncharacteristic) patriotic light. "I think the reason [for him becoming a monk] may perhaps be like Qu Yuan's drowning himself out of

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63 Shen Benqian, a member of Feng's art group, records this in an article, "Dharma Master Hongyi, the Outstanding Monk of a Generation" (Yidai gaoseng Hongyi fashi), Zhejiang wenshi ziliao xuanji, No. 26, p. 119. According to an article by Zhu Jifa, "Pan Tianshou's Buddhist Leansings" (Pan Tianshoude fojiao guannian), in Zhejiang ribao, 12 December, 1987, Pan, a student and disciple of Li Shutong, was tempted to become a monk in the 1930s but was dissuaded by Li Shutong who told him that the sangha was just as complex and treacherous as the lay world, and at times even more so. The author of this article remarks that following the "birth of New China", Pan abandoned his earlier pessimistic view of life and entered a new period of "inspired creativity".
64 As we have seen above, Hongyi said he found no happiness in the years following his mother's death until he became a monk. See "Flavour of the Dharma", p. 18, and Nianpu, pp. 76, 121, 127. Hongyi surprised a gathering of Buddhists in 1930 by sobbing uncontrollably on one occasion during a two month series of lectures on the Ksitigarbha sutra by Tiantai Dharma Master Jingquan. Tears ran down Hongyi's face as the lecturer equated the contents of the sutra with the Chinese tradition of filial piety. Thereupon, Hongyi wrote an oath in which he said he was ashamed of his past and was determined to reform and renew himself. See Nianpu, p. 121. If the death of his mother was one of the major contributing factors to his turning to the monkhood then it certainly would be in keeping with the Buddhist tradition of abandoning the world due to personal despair. Gong Zizhen (1792-1842) had been devastated by his mother's death in 1822 and it led him to take up a study of Buddhism, while Kang Youwei's (1858-1927) affiliation with Buddhism seems to have had its origins in the death of his grandfather in 1877. Similarly, a string of unexpected deaths in his family made Tan Sitong (1865-1898) susceptible to a religion which taught the impermanence of all things. See Chan Sin-wai, Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought, pp. 32-33, 37-38, 53-55, 58-59.
loyalty to his state and depression at the King of Chu's unrighteousness. I think if he were to meet Qu Yuan...he would twirl a flower and smile in understanding.”

Shortly after becoming a monk, Hongyi became interested in reviving the Vinaya or Disciplinary School (Lûzong) of Chinese Buddhism, the transmission of which had been broken since the Tang.66 His activities as a monk were virtually exclusively concerned with the revival of the sect. Not only did he lecture widely on discipline in Zhejiang and Fujian in his later years,67 but he also became a strict observer of the numerous rules and regulations of the sect in his own daily life.68 A study of his own writings and biographical material on his life shows that he would not eat after midday, was scrupulous about eschewing personal property, and avoided

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65 “Mr Li Shutong’s Literary and Artistic View”, Suibiji, pp. 356-58. This essay was written in 1957 shortly after the Qingming Festival for the book Hongyi dashi jiniance, and as such the tone is more self-conscious and forced than Feng’s usual style. This is characteristic of most of Feng’s heretofor published post-1949 works. The present official Mainland Chinese view of Li Shutong’s later career is succinctly summed up in Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan’s Zhongguo zhandai huipanshi, p. 29, “...just when one would expect [Li] was reaching the height of his creativity he went off quietly to become a monk in 1918, right on the eve of the May Fourth Movement. Even this early member of the Tongmenghui, driven as he was by his concern for the nation and the people, was incapable of overcoming the restrictions of his time or of changing the defunct habits of the traditional scholar-gentry.”

66 For an outline of this sect’s history and activities in China, see Lûxue, by the monk Miaoyin, Hong Kong: Faji xueyuan, 1964, a volume dedicated to Hongyi. The school was founded by Daoxuan (596-667), and took its name, Nanshanzong, or School of the Southern Mountain, from Zhongnan Mountain near Chang’an where Daoxuan lived. See also Holmes Welch, The Revival of Buddhism in China, pp. 71, 196, 237; and Kenneth K.S. Ch’en, Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, p. 301.

67 Hongyi’s speeches and writings on the vinaya have been collected by his disciples Miaoyin and Miaojing in Nanshan liuyuan wenji, Singapore: Zhanpuyuan, 1964; see also Hongyi wenji, pp. 1-52; and Daguang’s Danxufashi yingchen huixilu, Taipei: Zhonghua dadian bianyinhui, 1969, pp. 203-18. Feng Zikai’s comment on Hongyi’s adherence to the Disciplinary School is, “At first he practised Pure Land [Buddhism] but later turned to the Disciplinary School...one in which every act is prescribed by fixed rules, it requires a very serious attitude on the part of the practitioner, and it is the most demanding of all the schools. There had been no transmission [of this school] for many centuries, until Dharma Master Hongyi revived it. This is why Buddhists call him The Reviver, Eleventh Patriarch of the Disciplinary School of Nanshan.” See “Talking of Dharma Master Hongyi to the Young” (Wei qingnian shuo Hongyi fashi), published in a collection of essays compiled by Feng Zikai, Ye Shengtao, Shi Zhicun and others on the fifth anniversary of Hongyi’s death, Yonghengde zhushi, Shanghai: Daxiong shuju, 1948, p. 10. It is interesting to note that the New Life Movement which Chiang Kai-shek launched in February, 1934, expressed in an authoritarian fashion sentiments that were not so different from those of the Disciplinary School. The Hinayana Buddhist emphasis on self-restraint, the spirit of which pervades the philosophy of the Disciplinary School is not unlike the Confucian call to “restrain oneself and submit to ritual” (keji fali, Lunyu, XII: 1). See Lloyd E. Eastman, “The Kuomintang in the 1930s”, in Charlotte Furth, ed., The Limits of Change, pp. 200-202. But as Eastman notes, “It was a Confucian base, but it was a Confucianism that possessed no philosophical richness. It was rather a sloganized Confucianism, encapsulated for mass consumption in simple dicta regarding personal conduct and hygiene.” Also Eastman’s The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974, pp. 66-70.

68 In “Talking of Dharma Master Hongyi to the Young”, pp. 10-11, Feng Zikai, gives examples of Hongyi’s scrupulous attitude in regard to his personal conduct; he even noticed that Hongyi shook the rattan chair in Feng’s house so as to dislodge any insect that might otherwise be crushed by him sitting down. Uchiyama Kanzô, the Japanese bookstore manager based in Shanghai until the late 1940s, recalled Feng himself as being scrupulous in his own conduct and saw in this the influence of Li Shutong. See Appendix I.
all privileged treatment. Although Li abandoned the arts entirely upon becoming a monk, and gave his ink-stone and brushes away, he took up calligraphy again at the suggestion of a friend who felt that he could profitably use his talent in this field to propagate Buddhism.

Feng Zikai turned thirty *sui* in 1927, and it would appear that his despondency at crossing the symbolic barrier between youth and middle age had a greater impact on his life than the calamitous political events of that year. The violent suppression of student protests, the KMT purge of Communists and the general political instability of the times most probably also coloured Feng's perceptions. Certainly these events deeply affected many of his friends and colleagues, yet this point that should not be over- emphasised when considering the artist's increasing world-weariness. Even in Feng's earliest essays, such as "Gradual", written in 1925, there is a strong philosophical note, a passive acceptance of the world as it is and a reluctance to become engaged in the competitive struggles of society. But the loss of his children to adulthood in the late 1920s coupled with his approaching middle-age resulted in something of a crisis that led him to embrace Buddhist philosophy.
hardly be seen simply as the result of a youthful crisis of identity, it did coincide with a turning point in his career, as after 1927 he gave up teaching and began to pursue the lifestyle of a semi-recluse. Feng's self-portrait, "An Old Man at Thirty", which was included in *Zikai manhua* in 1926, shows a bald and tired figure who looks as though he has been wrung dry of any energy and enthusiasm. [6: 2]

In an essay "Autumn" (Qiu) written in 1929, Feng described his feelings on reaching thirty, traditionally "the year of establishment" (*er lì zhì nián*). The essay was written as a *memento mori*, and one in which he publically declared that the lyrical youth of the artist who had occupied the "Small Willow House" on the Baima Lake in Shangyu, had ended.

In years past I was solely enthralled by the spring. My favourite things were willows and sparrows...and I often did paintings of them...On such a day [the traditional Hanshi or Qingming Festival] I always thought I should do something in keeping with the spirit of the occasion. I'd put myself in the frame of mind to write poetry, paint, get drunk or wander at leisure outdoors. Often little would come of these plans, or the results would be a failure: I'd become so drunk I'd make a scene and be left with nothing but bad memories. But I would never be discouraged, for I was convinced that the spring was lovable....

In the two years since I have entered the autumn years my emotional world has undergone a complete change; now it, too, belongs to the autumn. But I am not enamoured and inspired by autumn as I was by the spring. When autumn arrives I feel that my being is in complete sympathy with the season....The way I feel about spring now is different too; it's quite unlike the indifference I used to experience when thinking of the autumn. I detest spring. 75

He even said, "If I was called on to expend some time on writing about birth and growth, death and destruction, I'd have to admit that I have nothing to say about birth and flourishing, while I could gladly indulge myself in admiration of all death and destruction." 76 "One of the special things about being thirty", he wrote, "is that now you appreciate death." Then his thoughts take a philosophical turn. He denies his former passion for spring by saying that he feels like telling every budding flower, "Each year it's the same old story! I've seen countless numbers of your ancestors coming into the world like you, energetically growing, trying to outdo each other with their beauty, then not long after growing wan and turning into dust once more. Why

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73 *Zikai manhua*, p. 91; and *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, p. 25.
75 "Autumn" (Qiu), in *Suibiji*, p. 31-32.
76 "Autumn", p. 33.
77 Ibid. Such ruminations are by no means unique to Feng Zikai. Yu Pingbo wrote an essay entitled "Middle Age" (Zhongnian) when he reached the age of thirty. It is a somewhat more sardonic piece than Feng's "Autumn", although in it Yu also expresses a weary acceptance of the inexorable process of aging. Originally published in Yu's collection *Zaba rt zhi er*, see *Yu Pingbo sanwenji*, edited by Wang Baosheng, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1983, pp. 185-88.
do you bother? You're doomed. Shortly you'll be flowering coquettishly, but that will only bring you pain and suffering, for you attract destruction: people will pick you and throw you away. Then you will follow in the footsteps of your predecessors and turn to dust!" He has come to realize that death is the inevitable corollary of life, a truth that has been measured out thousands, millions of times in the lives of others. Having understood death, he now appreciates the underlying reality of the happiness and suffering, joys and sorrows of life. "All I hope for is that I may live out my life in peace and then escape from all of this. I am like a man suffering a bout of insanity. What cause can I have to complain about the exaggerated follies of my illness. All I can hope for in the end is a cure." 78

This "night of the soul" that Feng went through in the late 1920s was by no means unique to him. As we have noted earlier, many of his contemporaries, including Feng's friend and colleague Zhu Ziqing, experienced a similar sense of bewilderment and doubt, while Zhou Zuoren "retired from the world". Although Feng may not have found a cure to his illness immediately, the reappearance of his former teacher Li Shutong, now the monk Hongyi, was the beginning of a resolution to his crisis. Feng had bid farewell to Hongyi in 1920, prior to his departure to study in Japan, and he had not seen him again for six years. Nor, indeed, had he seen any more of Hongyi's friend Ma Yifu to whom he had been introduced in 1918. The years 1920-1927, in fact, marked the most secular period of Feng's life. Nevertheless, from the sentiments and tendencies revealed in such early essays as "Gradual", "An Evening in Tokyo", and "Huazhan's Diary", there is little doubt that philosophical or religious speculation played an important role in his inner life throughout these years.

In the spring of 1926, Hongyi wrote a card to Feng from Hangzhou. Not having seen his old teacher for many years, Feng decided to visit him with his teacher and colleague Xia Mianzun. The reunion left Feng deeply impressed with the otherworldliness of the monk and he returned to Shanghai unsettled. "It was as though I had seen the reflection of the last ten years of my life in the clear mirror of Dharma Master Hongyi. I felt as though I had woken after a seemingly endless series of disturbed dreams. Finally, I could stretch and relax; I had experienced a momentary freedom. On reflection that meeting was more like a wayside stop in the course of my floating life (fusheng); it allowed me a few minutes of respite." 79

78 "Autumn". pp. 33-34. In "On Reaching the Age of No More Perplexities" (Buhuo zhi li), an essay written on his fortieth birthday ten years later, Feng said, "Ten years ago when I turned thirty, I felt as though a thin silk parasol was hanging over my head, covering my whole body in a faint shadow, now that I've attained the age of forty, that parasol has become a thick water-proof umbrella and it casts a dark grey cloud over me." (p. 118.)

At the time of his thirtieth birthday (his thirtieth *sui*) in September 1927, Feng asked Hongyi to officiate as he took the Three Refuges and became a lay convert to Buddhism.\(^8^0\) He was given the religious name "Yingxing" (literally "infant action"),\(^8^1\) one he rarely used in public life, although it may be significant that he used it when republishing one of his earliest philosophical musings dealing with change and decay.\(^8^2\) The ceremony of taking the Refuges was not necessarily an important one in the career of a Buddhist -- there was even a simplified version of it, the "expedient Refuges" (*fangbian guiyi*) -- Feng took his decision very seriously, and a change in both his writings and personal life became evident after 1927.

In a lecture on Hongyi to a Buddhist audience in Amoy many years later, Feng Zikai explained the importance of his relationship with Hongyi and his understanding of the role of religion in his life. He likened life to a three-storied building. Those who are too lazy or incapable of mounting the stairs to the next floor remain on the first (or ground) floor busying themselves with material concerns and making their lives as comfortable as possible, satisfied to play the role of filial son and grandson. The majority of mankind consists of such people. A second type of person is energetic or enthusiastic enough to climb to the next storey, for either a short period of diversion or

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\(^8^0\) The usual formula repeated by the layman is: "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the dharma, I take refuge in the sangha." Holmes Welch says: "When the Refuges were administered by a monk to a layman, the effect was to make the layman the monk's disciple, that is his Refuges' disciple (*guiyi diao*) and hence formally a Buddhist (*fojiaotu*). Taking the Refuges might be compared to baptism and confirmation together....The layman prostrated himself as he recited the Refuges and received a religious name from the monk exactly as he would if he were entering the sangha." See Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900-1950*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967, pp. 357-61. Feng's friend Ye Shengtao, a writer who maintained a sympathy for Buddhism despite his leftist political stance, wrote of his meeting with Hongyi during his trip to Shanghai in 1927 in the essay "Two Dharma Masters" (*Liang fashi*), see Ye Shengtao sanwenji (*jiaji*), pp. 183-90. \(^8^1\) Nianbiao, p. 15; and *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, p. 27. Harbsmeier translates this name as "child-like action", although the word "ying" indicates a baby or infant rather than a child. It should be noted that Li Shutong declared that after his fast he had "regained the state of a child", and changed his name to Li Ying (*ying* as in "infant"). Perhaps "Yingxing" could also be taken to mean "following Ying"? As Feng fails to give an exact date in his essays there has been some confusion over the exact date when he took the Refuges, *Zhuang* puts it on Feng's birthday in 1928, while *Nianbiao* has it on his birthday in 1927. Yin Qi, Shanghai scholar of Feng's life, has made a careful study of the material on the subject and concludes it was on his birthday in 1927. She published her findings in an issue of *Xianggang wenxue* which devoted a large section to the Yuanyuan Hall at the time of its reopening in 1985. See Yin Qi, "Concerning the Date of Feng Zikai's Conversion to Buddhism and the Naming of 'Yuanyuan Hall' " (*Guanyu Feng Zikai guiyi fojiaotu "Yuanyuantang" mingmingde shijian*), *Xianggang wenxue*, 1985: 9, p. 11. In a short essay on the subject, "When Did Feng Become a Buddhist" (Feng Zikai heshi guiyi), *Jingji shehuobao*, 3 March, 1987, Chen Xing utilizes the material provided by two seals carved by Feng on the day of his conversion which have recently come to light to show that it was on his birthday (the twenty-sixth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar) in the year Dingmao (i.e., 1927). Yuan Daohou in "Feng Zikai and Seal Carving", op. cit., records that Feng carved a seal for Hongyi on this day with a small image of the Buddha stating that he had taken the Buddhist refuges that day, signing himself "Yingxing".

\(^8^2\) "Gradual" (*Jian*) published in *Yiban*, 1928: 6; also Yin Qi, "Concerning the Date of Feng Zikai's Conversion to Buddhism and the Naming of 'Yuanyuan Hall' ", p. 11; and *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, pp. 28-29. It was written in 1925. The essay "The Victory of Chinese Art Over Modern Art" (Zhongguo meishu zai xiandai yishushangde shengli), which appeared in *Dongfang zazhi*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, pp. 1-18, in 1926-1927, was the earliest article signed Yingxing.
to take up permanent residence. These are the people who devote themselves to the study or pursuit of art and literature. They concentrate all their energies on creation or the appreciation of the arts. Feng includes intellectuals, scholars and artists in this group. But, he comments, there is one other group whose zest for life (renshengyu) is so strong that they are satisfied neither with the material delights of the ground floor, nor the aesthetic delights of the next -- dissatisfied with the "otherness" of material wealth and family and unfulfilled by the transient distractions of beauty -- they refuse to be slaves to nature and seek instead to find answers to the great questions of life. These people are the disciples of religion. 83

Feng says that many people were surprised when Li Shutong "abandoned the world for religion" (dunru kongmen) and they speculated that some personal disappointment or loss must have triggered it off. But, Feng says, "I understood just how he felt; I thought it only natural that he become a monk." 84 Li's "zest for life" was so great that he could be satisfied with neither family and material comfort, nor the solace of art; in the end he could only find self-fulfillment in religion. Having classified both Hongyi and the famous Buddhist reformer Taixu (1889-1947) as men who found fulfillment in the third floor of religion, Feng said that "My legs are not strong enough to allow me to follow Dharma Master Hongyi up to the third floor, I am ashamed to say that I still expend my energies on the minor arts involving words and brushwork. Yet I often do force myself to climb up the stairs and gaze into that top story." 85

This division of human experience into that of matter, spirit and soul is by no means unique to Feng. In fact, it bears a striking resemblance to Liang Shuming's famous classification of the societies of the West, China and India, into those of the will, harmony and quietism. 86 Westerners stimulate desires, the Indians (read also Buddhists) repress them, while the Chinese steer a middle course and achieve

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83 "Dharma Master Hongyi and I" (Wo yu Hongyi fashi), a lecture delivered at the Buddhist Study Society in Amoy, see Hongyi fashi, p. 252.
84 "Dharma Master Hongyi and I", ibid.
85 "Dharma Master Hongyi and I", p. 253. Feng's other most important essay on Hongyi is "Daren", originally printed in Yuzhoufeng in 1936, see Yuanyuantang sai, pp. 173-81, where he also praises Taixu. As for "Daren", Lin Yutang mentions this word in reference to "The Big Man" (Daren xiansheng zhuang) by the Jin dynasty writer Ruan Ji in A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936, pp. 42-43. Lin says, "In the spirit of romantic abandon, he wrote a picture of the ideal 'big man' who roamed about in freedom and compared the narrow-minded Confucian scholar walking in his path of righteousness to a bug creeping along the seams of a man's trousers. A beautiful defence of indifference was contained in this famous essay on 'The Big Man' by Ruan Ji (Daren xiansheng zhuang)." For the text of "Daren xiansheng zhuang", see Ruan Ji ji, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978, pp. 63-73. In "Gradual", pp. 3-4, Feng talks of the "great personalities" (darenge) being able to overcome the limitations of life and transience.
contentment. After a youthful dalliance with Buddhist Weishi philosophy, Liang turned to Confucianism and championed the cause of Chinese culture. Feng would certainly have been aware of Liang’s book *Eastern and Western Cultures and their Philosophies (Dongxi wenhua jiji zhexue)* published in 1921 during the debate revolving around the cultures of the East and the West which had started in 1915 and continued well into the 1920s. Liang’s book confused many at the time and it remained controversial decades after the debate which initiated it had been forgotten. Feng Zikai, although not involved directly with the debate, revealed in a number of his writings a close concern with the questions involved in it, and he is one of the few people who appears to have been able to profitably use Liang’s analytical schema in conceptualizing the basic questions of his own life.

But the Buddhism of Hongyi, and subsequently Feng Zikai, was not a system for personal salvation and escape, rather, to adapt an expression used by Benjamin Schwartz, it was "muscular Buddhism". Hongyi was attracted to the Disciplinary School, and through lectures, writing and above all his own example, Hongyi tried throughout his monastic career to revive in popular practice. Feng Zikai certainly did not see Hongyi as a passive escapist. Indeed, he was critical of the people "who abandon the world and become monks...because they have nothing else to do with their lives, forced by circumstance. This is the reason why the worldly masses think of Buddhism as a shelter for failures." Hongyi pursued a Buddhism of action, and Zhu Guangqian, Feng’s colleague and friend who had himself advocated "involving oneself in the world [while] maintaining an otherworldly attitude" in his youth, regarded Hongyi as a paragon of this ideal. "There are many ways of involving yourself in the world, and", he wrote, "Dharma Master Hongyi placed an emphasis on the most fundamental question of cultural thought. He upheld Buddhist discipline...

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87 Alitto, *The Last Confucian*, pp. 52-62, 72-75.
88 Alitto quotes Okasaki Fumio who interpreted the book for Japanese readers as saying: "The Chinese intellectual world is bewildered by the book and does not know how to respond to it." *The Last Confucian*, p. 79.
89 Alitto, *The Last Confucian*, p. 80.
90 See Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 15. Schwarz uses the expression "muscular Confucianism" to refer to the belligerent strain of Confucian thought that had first become evident in the person of Yue Fei in the Southern Song, a combination of militancy and Confucian morals.
91 "The Great Man" (Daren), *Yuanyuantang zaibi*, p. 81.
(vinaya) tirelessly, and his spotless life of integrity...is a monument to the spiritual culture of our nation."\(^93\)

6: 5 The Convert

In the years following Feng's conversion his appearance changed considerably, and John Blofeld's description of the lay Buddhists he met in China could well be a pen-portrait of Feng Zikai at this time:

The jushi [devotee] is usually a cultured person. He prefers to wear the dignified Chinese gown of blue, grey, or bronze-coloured silk, and by his habits and gestures, exhibits his fondness for and understanding of the traditional culture of his country. He is often a poet or painter as well as a philosopher and metaphysician and may be something of a historian or possess knowledge of Chinese herbal medicine in addition. One can appreciate how essentially Chinese the Indian religion has become when one sees its devotees cling to the Chinese past more than almost any other group of educated people.\(^94\) [6: 3]

Neither Feng's appearance nor his attitude pleased all of his friends, and in an essay on Feng the literary historian Zhao Jingshen commented on the marked change he noticed in the artist between the time when they first met at the Li Da Academy in 1925 and on a third meeting after 1928.\(^95\)

Zikai came to the Kaiming Bookstore to relax. I was quite taken aback for he seemed like a completely changed person. He sat in a rattan chair with his back as straight as a ruler, very different from the way he used to puff away at a cigarette thoughtlessly leaning back in his seat. His hands were placed on his knees in a studied manner, again a change from the way he used tap is fingers on his chair as though beating time to some inaudible tune. His gaze was turned down and his eyelids half-closed, like an old monk in a trance. Formerly, his lively eyes would have studied the customers as they entered the shop. Certainly he would reply whenever spoken to, but he did not initiate conversation.\(^96\) His voice was extremely soft and bereft of the dramatic

\(^93\) "Involving Oneself in the World Maintaining an Otherworldly Attitude", ibid.
\(^95\) Zhao saw him for a second time in 1928 when he searched out the artist to ask for his help in painting a jacket design for his book A Short History of Chinese Literature (Zhongguo wenxue xiaoshi). The impression he had of the artist that time was that "his attitude was very elegant and relaxed (xiaoxa), like an autumn cloud drifting at ease." See "Feng Zikai", in Wenren huaxiang, edited by Lin Yutang, Shanghai: Chenguang chuban gongsi, 1947, p. 143.
\(^96\) It would seem that Feng caught his sobriety from Hongyi. Huang Yanpei, a classmate of Li Shutong's at the South Seas Public School, recalls Li's Chinese wife coming to Shanghai and asking
variety of the past. I recalled now that Mianzun would often comment, "Zikai has always been entranced by Li Shutong!" My contact with Zikai, to use his own words, has all been the result of "affinities" (yuan).97

Hongyi was the author of a speech entitled "Elucidation of the Essential Vinaya for Laymen" (Zaijia liiyao zhi kaishi), in which he outlined disciplinary rules for the layman. Although I have only been able to locate a fragmentary reproduction of it,98 from Zhao Jingshen’s description of Feng in the above, it would seem that the artist had taken Hongyi’s instructions very much to heart, at least for a time. In it Hongyi called on the layman who has taken the Three Refuges also to keep the Five Vows (wujie),99 or as many of the five as possible.

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97 “Feng Zikai”, Wenren huaxiang, ibid.
98 See Hongyi, Nanshan liyuan wenji, pp. 20-21, and Hongyi wenji, edited by Hong Qisong and Huang Qilin, pp. 7-8.
99 Prohibitions against killing, sexual misconduct, lying, drinking intoxicating beverages and stealing. Feng’s temperance in regard to wine did not last, however, and in the early 1930s he was in his cups again, although perhaps not drinking quite as prodigiously as he had at Baima Lake where he was generally regarded as a keen disciple of Liu Ling. A number of Feng’s essays touch on his wine drinking, such as “A Lesson from my Children” (Cong haizi dedao de qishi), Yuanyuantang suibi, p. 36, in which he records drinking three glasses of wine after dinner. In "After becoming a vegetarian" (Sushi yihou), Cheziang sheshuo, p. 118, he says that to the time he was thirty he drank Shaoxing wine twice a day, and had only gradually got used to going without it. However, ten years after his conversion he records that he engaged in a discussion about the sorrows of life with a student in Guangxi when drunk, see Jiaoshi riji, p. 141. He declared that the basic problems of life no longer really troubled him as they had in his youth. The other details of his wartime drinking are well-recorded in Jiaoshi riji, pp. 13, 86, 126, 136, 137, 139, 141. And in "Air-raid at Yishan" (Yishan yuzhaji), a war-time essay, see Lunyu, Second Series No. 1, p. 7, he wrote, "In regard to air-raids the members of my family can be divided into two factions: the courageous, such as my wife, her mother and the young people who are sixteen or seventeen. The others are cowardly: such as my elder sister and the two girls. I belong to neither faction, indeed I'm caught between them: I'm a fence-sitter, a butterfly, I'm at home in both camps. The reason for this is that after I've been drinking I'm as courageous as the rest of them, but without a drink I'm cowardly." One of the central themes of an essay about his reunion with Zheng Zhenduo in 1948 is drinking, see Subiji, pp. 314-17; and in the essay "The Fine Wine of Shaping" (Shapingde meijiu), published in Jinghu zhoukan, Vol. II, No. 35, 5 September, 1948, he declared that, "Wine drinking is a matter of spontaneity (xingwei), it is not limited by conditions, it’s art itself", and he said that his habit of drinking at dusk had revealed to him the meaning of Tao Yuanming’s words, "I try a draught and all feelings are remote; a second cup and immediately I forget Heaven." See Davies, Tao Yuan-ming (AD 365-427) His Works and Their Meaning, Vol. I, p. 63, and Vol. II, p. 52. There are two essays on the subject of wine in Feng’s last writings of 1972, see "Wine Games" (Jiuling) and "Drinking" (Chijiu) in Subiji, pp. 456-57 & 476-79 respectively. On Feng’s wine drinking see also Hu Zhijun’s article "When Mr Feng Once Swore Off Wine" (Yi Feng xiansheng yici jiejiu), Xianggang wenxue, 1985: 9, pp. 12-13, in which Hu, a good friend of the artist's in his later years, talks of Feng drinking a considerable amount in his old age. Also "Feng Zikai and Shaoxing Wine" (Feng Zikai yu Shaoxingjiu), Chen Xing, Shaoxing
Not all of his acquaintances were sympathetic to Feng's "climacteric". After all, since his return from Japan, he had followed the path of many other May Fourth Period intellectuals to promote the new, Western-oriented culture as a teacher, translator and writer. If his melancholic and moderate temperament had previously isolated him from some of his contemporaries in the past, his active involvement in Buddhism left other friends bewildered. Xu Qinwen, a left-leaning essayist, was, in the 1930s, at pains to dismiss the impression people had formed of Feng as being what he calls a "Buddhafied" (fohua) artist. Certainly, Xu writes, Feng was known to have been a vegetarian of many years standing, yet this was "nothing more than a form of physiological and psychological discipline, something clearly explained by Mr Cai Jiemin [Yuanpei] in his writings."\(^\text{100}\) Now, no one could call him Buddhafied?... artists need such discipline, and even if vegetarianism is closely linked to Buddhism, to avail oneself of a Buddhist method of self-discipline is hardly the equivalent of being Buddhafied oneself.\(^\text{101}\)

How was the fact that Feng frequently lodged in monasteries and had numerous contacts with monks to be explained then? Xu dismissed the problem with similar alacrity. In the first place, he argues, the reason for Feng's numerous recent trips to Hangzhou was that he had a daughter studying there. "It is due to his connections with his teacher Mr Li Shutong that he now has many friends in monasteries, and he only frequents such places to see them. His contact with monks has absolutely nothing to do with a desire to become a Buddhist. Moreover," Xu explains, "he is not a wealthy man, so when he travels he is not at liberty to stay in expensive hotels. It's far more convenient to stop in monasteries."\(^\text{102}\) To Xu the fact that Feng had not taken a monk's vows was proof enough that he was not a Buddhist. "Anyway," he wrote, "he is devoted to caring for his mother and deeply loves his children",\(^\text{103}\) as though it never struck him that none of these things could possible coincide with Feng being a devoted lay Buddhist.

Xu, who titled this essay "Yu Dafu, Feng Zikai", actually found a basic element of similarity between these two superficially antithetical personalities, the "decadent" Yu and Feng the "Buddhist". Both men cared deeply for both their mothers and their children, and Yu Dafu had expressed solicitous interest in Xu's own relatives. "To show sympathy for another is only possible if you are a person with great emotional reserves...both by their expression of emotional warmth and

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\(^{\text{riha}}\), 2 April, 1987; Chen's "Feng Zikai and Wine" (Feng Zikai yu jiu), \textit{Wenhua yule}, 1987: 5; and \textit{The Cartoonist Feng Zikai}, p. 30. See also Appendix I.

\(^\text{100}\) See the section On Protecting Life below.


\(^\text{102}\) "Yu Dafu, Feng Zikai", p. 138.

\(^\text{103}\) "Yu Dafu, Feng Zikai", ibid.
considerable wealth of sympathy for others, [have revealed] that they are the same type of man.\footnote{104}

6: 6 Ma Yifu

Another important influence on Feng's private philosophy, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, was Neo-Confucian thought. Although Buddhism provided the philosophical mainstay of Feng's adult life, there were periods, particularly during the war, when there is evidence that Confucian thought played a greater role in his thinking and activities. In this regard, the most conspicuous influence on Feng was that of the Confucian master Ma Yifu,\footnote{105} a recluse-scholar to whom he was introduced as a student by Li Shutong.

Ma Yifu (1883-1967), although originally from Shaoxing, Zhejiang, was raised in Sichuan. After studying overseas he moved to Hangzhou in 1906 where he lived until 1918 with the exception of a few frustrated weeks as Cai Yuanpei's assistant in the Ministry of Education in the early Republic. He resigned from the job with the remark, "I don't know how to play the bureaucrat. All I'm good at is studying, so it's best I return to the West Lake." In 1913, the political turmoil of Yuan Shikai's interregnum lead him to become a recluse where he pursued his interests in Taoist and Buddhist texts. Even so he was visited by a stream leading cultural and intellectual figures. In 1917, at the age of thirty-five, he devoted himself to Buddhism and took the name "Yifo" ("one Buddha").\footnote{106}

Ma was conversant with Western philosophy and had been an avid translator of Western literature before turning his attention to the study of Chinese thought, in particular Neo-Confucian philosophy. His concerted study of Buddhism during the

\footnote{104} "Yu Dafu, Feng Zikai", ibid., p. 141. Xu concludes, "In fact, the ability to sympathize with others is something that was originally shared by all people. There is, therefore, nothing strange about these two men; all they have done is kept their real hearts (zhenxin) and retained the original nature of life. It is just that now all men have lost the most common emotions that one feels they are exceptional. They have made no particular effort to be like this, although one can't help saying it is rare indeed [to find such qualities]." An element of Yu Dafu's "original nature" on which Xu comments is his enthusiastic discussion of cervical caps in the presence of young women. Nearly fifty years later, Xu wrote an article on Li Shutong, "The Great Artist Li Shutong" (Yishu dashi Li Shutong), Zhejiang wenshi ziliao xuanji, No. 26, Zhejiang PPCC, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1983, pp. 124-28, in which he is somewhat more complimentary about Buddhism.\footnote{105} In a memorial couplet composed for Ma, Liang Shuming (1893-1988), the modern Confucian scholar-activist, wrote, "[In him was] the national essence of one thousand years, [he was] the Confucian master of his generation" (qiannian guocui, yidai ruzong). See Jiniance, p. 2. Tu Wei-ming includes Ma, whom he calls a Confucian master, along with Xiong Shili, Liang Shuming, Feng Youlan and Zhang Dongsun in his list of "intellectually sophisticated 20th Century Confucian thinkers." See Tu Wei-ming, \textit{Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought}, Berkeley: Asian Humanities press, 1979, pp. 222, 226. He Lin in \textit{Dangdai Zhongguo zhexue}, Shanghai: Shengli chuban gongsi, 1947, p. 16, comments that "it can be said that [Ma Yifu] represents the residual achievement of traditional Chinese culture."\footnote{106} Jiniance, pp. 12-13.
early years of the Republic and his reflections on the subject had played a role, possibly a crucial one, in Li's entering the religious life. 107 Feng was only seventeen when he met the philosopher. Years later he recalled the day when his teacher, who had only recently converted to Buddhism, led him down a "humble alley" (louxiang) in Hangzhou to the home of a short, plump and bearded gentleman. He had difficulty following the conversation as it ranged over the difficult terrain of Eastern and Western philosophy, but he left the meeting deeply impressed by a man he came to think of as a latter-day Yanzı. 108

Ma had been engaged in solitary research to develop his own system of thought in which, like many other Chinese thinkers, he attempted to combine the three major philosophical traditions of China, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. 109 He had found value in the native metaphysical thinking of the Taoists, as he had in the Buddhist systems, but in the 1920s and 1930s he gradually turned his attention to Confucian thought. 110 The next contact Feng had with the philosopher came about because Hongyi asked Ma to write a preface to the first collection of the Husheng huaji

107 Li was in awe of Ma's scholarship, and commented to his students that Ma was one of those rare beings who was "born with knowledge" (sheng er zhi zhu). He said if a person read two books every day from the time he was born to Ma's age, he still would not have read as widely as Ma. On closer contact with the philosopher, Feng came to agree with this, and he certainly did find Ma to be a remarkably fast reader. See "Conversations at Tonglu" (Tonglu fuxuan), Suibiji, pp. 270-71.

108 Feng entitled the essay he wrote on his early relationship with Ma in 1933 "Humble Alley" (Louxiang), see Suibiji, pp. 58-62, and in it he quotes from the description of Yanzi, Confucius' favourite disciple, in the Lunyu, IV: 11: "A handful of rice to eat, a gourdful of water to drink, living in a mean street (louxiang, which I translate as "humble alley") -- others would have found it unendurably depressing, but to [Yan] Hui's cheerfulness it made no difference at all." See Waley, The Analects of Confucius, pp. 117-18; Yang Pojun, Lunyu yizhu, p. 59. Feng said, "Every time I walk down one of these alleys [in Hangzhou] I wonder whether a modern-day Yanzı is living as a recluse behind the battered and crumbling walls." (p. 58.) Ma's "humble alley" is, in fact, Yandingxiang in the centre of the old city of Hangzhou (it was formerly called Eyaqiaoxiang, or "Goose and Duck Bridge Alley"), not Ma Suoxiang as Chen Xing writes in Xiaosashen, p. 121, or Baojiguanxiang, as is recorded in the chronology of Ma's life in Jiniance, p. 13. Hongyi provides the name of the alley as Yandingxiang in his letter to Feng of August, 1929, see Hongyi fashi, p. 155.

109 An important review of Feng's relationship with Ma has been written by Feng Huazhan, see "Feng Zikai and Ma Yifu" (Feng Zikai yu Ma Yifu), Mingbao, 1982:11, pp. 98-101; whereas a biography of Ma was published recently by one of his disciples, see Gong Cishou "A Confucian of the Age, My Teacher Ma Yifu" (Yidai ruzong wushi Ma Yifu), Gufintan, 1985: 1 (trial issue), pp. 1-6. Yu Ying-shih classes Ma along with Liang Shuming and Xiong Shili as "one of the few Chinese thinkers who specialized in a study of cultural and philosophical systems [this century]." See Yu's article "The Artistic Spirit and Psychological Attitude of Chen Yinque in his Later Years" (Chen Yinke de yishu jingshen he wannian xinjing), Mingbao monthly, 1983: 1. p. 19. For one of the only, albeit short, studies of Ma's Neo-Confucian thought and its place in the history of 20th Century Chinese philosophy, see He Lin's Dangdai Zhanqungu zhexue, pp. 16-19; also Wing-tsit Chan, Religious Trends in Modern China, New York: Columbia University Press, 1953, pp. 31-32. See also Chen Xing's essay on Feng and Ma in Xiaosashen, pp. 119-30.

110 He Lin, in Dangdai Zhanqungu zhexue, p. 16, says that Ma's syncretic views had a great deal in common with those of Lu Xiangshan (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming (1472-1529), but he was able to use the writings of both Taoists and Buddhists with ease to elucidate the basic principles of Confucianism, at no time distorting or forcing his comparisons.
in 1929, which was published in commemoration of Hongyi's fiftieth birthday. Following this Ma did not see Feng again until 1931, shortly after the death of Feng's mother. This was a crucial period in his life. Although he had refused to go into mourning or even wear traditional mourning vestments for his mother, Feng let his beard grow and began to withdraw from his teaching commitments, a prelude to his return to the countryside in 1933. A year after his mother's death the artist was still in a deep depression; he felt suffocated by the oppressive sense that everything was impermanent, and that life was meaningless. "All I wanted to do was to find a momentary escape from my suffering by going into the mountains or to the sea to have a picnic with my children, the last thing I wanted was to hear people talking about the basic questions of life." Feng Huazhan, in discussing the relationship between his father and Ma Yifu, comments that Feng was in a melancholic depression throughout the 1920s, a main contributing factor to this was the premature death of a number of his children, his sister and then his mother. Although Buddhism may have helped him come to terms with these losses, it was Ma Yifu's more positivistic philosophy that became a central feature of his middle years.

Around the time of their third meeting in early 1933, Feng was particularly receptive to Ma Yifu's influence. It was three years after the death of his mother, he was having a house of his own design -- the Yuanyuan Hall -- built in his home town where he would shortly take up residence, and he had come out of a long bout of depression feeling himself "prepared to carry out a long-term fight against the impermanence of the world". He had previously sent Ma some paintings inspired by lines of poetry on the theme of transience, and now he was toying with the idea of painting a series he would call *Collected Paintings on Impermanence* (*Wuchang huaji*). Ma responded to his project enthusiastically and supplied him with numerous references on this theme from Buddhist sūtras and Chinese literature which he recited from memory. He concluded on a note of caution, however, telling the artist that, "Behind impermanence (*wuchang*) there is the constant (or immutable, *chang*). It is

111 There is some confusion over the genesis of the first in the *Husheng huaji* series and its publication date. While the imprint on the book is 1929, Hongyi's fiftieth birthday fell in 1930. The second, third and fourth volumes were published in 1940, 1950 and 1960 respectively. See Feng Yiyin, "A Study of the Publication Dates of *Husheng huaji*" (*Husheng huaji* chuban niandai kaozheng), *Yangliu*, No. 15, 1987: 3, pp. 4-6.


113 *Zhuan*, p. 47.

114 "Humble Alley", p. 60.

115 Feng Huazhan, "Feng Zikai and Ma Yifu", p. 98.

116 "Humble Alley", p. 61. For further details of Feng's retirement to Yuanyuan Hall, see Chapter Seven.
easy to express impermanence in painting, but not so easy to depict the constant."  

It was this positive note in Ma's conversation that immediately attracted Feng and certainly would have made a strong contrast to the more negative doctrines of Buddhism. "It had been ages since I had heard anyone talk like this," Feng commented in delight. "No wonder life had become so depressing. These words saved me from the burning house of impermanence, making me feel cool and revived."  

He decided that after Wuchang huaji he would do another volume on the theme of the immutable: it would be a collection of blank pages.

The relationship with Ma grew closer through the 1930s, and the recluse even did the calligraphic for the name of Feng's new house, and the plaque with Ma's inscription had pride of place in the main room of the building. When staying at his rented house in Hangzhou the artist would look forward to visiting Ma. Apart from Feng's interest in Ma as a philosopher and teacher, he was also drawn to the older man's skill as an artist, for he was both a calligrapher and poet of note.

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117 The immutable being the underlying dao or li of the universe. Feng's essay "The Sorrow of Impermanence" (Wuchang zhi dong), see Yuanyuantang zaibi, pp. 207-16, lists quotes from Chinese poetry on the theme of impermanence.


119 See "To the Spirit of Yuanyuan Hall in Heaven" (Gao Yuanyuantang zai tian zhi jing), Suibiji, pp. 198-99, and "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall" (Ci Yuanyuantang), Suibiji, p. 230.

120 The visits were not as frequent as Feng may have liked as he was reluctant to disturb Ma. "I would wait for cloudy and rainy days to visit him as I felt that during the good weather a visit would only disturb his inspiration to write poetry (shixing) or go on outings (youxing)," he wrote. "But every time I came back from Mr Ma's residence, I felt as though I had been breathing a more rarefied air, and each visit would keep me in good spirits and healthy for a number of days." See "Conversations at Tonglu", Suibiji, p. 254.

121 In his record of the early days of the Japanese invasion of Zhejiang in November 1937, "Conversations at Tonglu", pp. 267-68, Feng describes the family's departure from Tonglu on a boat used by Ma to transport his large personal library which flew a large white flag inscribed by Ma himself reading "Protected by the Tonglu County Government". Despite the haste and excitement of the move, Feng's eye was caught by this banner. "I treasure Mr Ma's calligraphy, in particular the writing he does in haste, in other words, his 'speed writing'. That is not to say that the calligraphy he does at leisure is not as good as his casual [or, impromptu] calligraphy; but here [my preference] is based on my own theory of art. In my opinion, detailed brushwork (gongbi) cannot express the individuality, energy or inspiration [of the artist] as readily as impromptu work (suxie). In works of art done in careful brushwork, individuality, energy and inspiration are concealed within the work, and are not readily perceived; while in the case of impromptu works these things are revealed boldly, their energy (shengqu) overwhelms you immediately. It is for this reason that I don’t like Western painting which is done in workmanlike oils, while I delight in Chinese paintings, executed as they are with ink and brush. I don't like major works that take five or ten years to complete, instead I delight in impromptu paintings done after a meal...Applying this to other things, I prefer the brush to the pen, flowers growing in the wild to bonsai, Chinese houses to Western buildings. It is for this reason that I like Mr Ma's casual calligraphy. Previously, I cut out the calligraphy on a letter he addressed to me, reduced it in size and had it made into a namecard. I wish I could have stolen that white flag and kept it, but I didn't have the artistic courage to do so." He Lin, in Dangdai Zhongguo zhexue p. 16, says Ma "is one of the best Chinese poets alive today." See also Jinian, pp. 19ff. Exhibitions of Ma's calligraphy have been held in Peking, Shanghai and Hangzhou (the last was held in the Zhejiang Museum in June, 1987), and in 1986 the Venerable Guangqia, an old friend of Ma’s, published two
own interest in calligraphy was reinforced by the example of both Hongyi and Ma, and if not painting he would devote himself to calligraphy. 122 [6: 4] With the Japanese occupation of Shanghai and the subsequent invasion of Zhejiang in 1937, Feng and Ma were both forced to flee, and over the next nine years, Feng followed Ma to many towns and cities in inland China and then back to Hangzhou. Ironically, apart from a short period at the beginning of the war, the two men did not live in the same place until 1947. In "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall" (Ci Yuanyuantang) and "Conversations at Tonglu" (Tonglu fuxuan), written in September 1939 and February 1940 respectively and two of the longest essays he wrote, his wartime diary, Jiaoshi riji, along with the excerpts of eight letters written to the artist by Ma from February 1938 to January 1939, we have the most detailed record of his relationship with his Confucian mentor. Indeed, taken as a whole, these essays, the diary and letters, constitute the most complete record of any period of Feng's life. 123

Just a few days before he and his family began their flight from the invading Japanese in late November 1937, Feng received a letter from Ma Yifu in Shimenwan. It was the last article of mail he would ever receive at Yuanyuan Hall. In it Ma, who had already moved to Tonglu south of Hangzhou, included a poem bidding farewell to his friends and expressing confidence in his own ability to find new challenges and strength during the period of enforced exile. Up to that time he read this poem Feng had been in a mood of self-indulgent nostalgia: he was already missing the quiet and reclusive life he had enjoyed for the past four years. But, he wrote, "the letter and poem had an extraordinary power that gradually eased my heart away from my birthplace." 124 His first move was to follow Ma's progress through the province, going first to Hangzhou and then joining the philosopher at Tonglu. 125

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122 Examples of both Ma and Feng's calligraphy are provided in the illustration section. Feng's piece, his introduction to Yishu manian (published by Renjian shuwu in 1936), a volume of essays on art. The hand-written introduction appeared in the mid-November 1936 issue of Yuzhoufeng with a photograph of Feng taken outside Tian Family Gardens, his Hangzhou residence, on 10 October the same year. For a reproduction of the photography, see illustration 6: 3. Feng's calligraphy later found official recognition, and after 1949 he was invited to do the hand-written titles for a series of calligraphy copy books used in schools.

123 It is possible that Feng's Cultural Revolution diaries will prove to be a lengthier journal of the artist's late years, but the one sample page I have seen on display in the reconstructed Yuanyuan Hall in Shimenwan, is guarded and laconic in the extreme, providing none of the physical or emotional detail of his war-time writings. This diary entry dated Sunday, 31 March, 1968, is given in the article "Feng Zikai During the 'Long Night'" (Feng Zikai zai 'changye' zhong), by Gu Wei, published in the Jinghai supplement of Macao Daily (Aomenribao), 1986, No. 26. See also Appendix I.

124 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 243; also "Conversations at Tonglu", Suibiji, p. 247, in which Feng describes the letter and poem as "dispersing the stench of sulphur, gunpowder, violence and murder that hung over the dying town of Shimenwan".

125 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 244. The family had little time to prepare for the trip and it was only at the last minute that Feng found they had no money. His six children, however, pooled
accompanied by two of his closest disciples, Zhang Limin and Wang Xingxian. In his writings Feng now compared him to Confucius himself.

After lodging with Ma for a few days, Feng and his family moved on into the countryside, shortly to be joined by Ma and Wang Xingxian. For a time they all lived in close proximity, and free of the usual constraints of propriety, Feng visited Ma frequently. They would sit drinking thick Pu'er tea and talking in an atmosphere heavy with the smoke from Ma's water-pipe. In these conversations and Ma's subsequent correspondence with Feng, the philosopher elucidated his views on art and religion, making Feng feel "as though I could see [the Russian literary theorists who were popular with 1930s leftist writers] Tolstoy and Lunacharsky fleeing the scene to avoid conflict (tuibi sanshe)."

The central theme of Ma's thinking was that, "All things which man's heart is capable of expressing are encompassed in the Six Arts [of Confucianism]."
Culture, whether it be expressed in terms of the Six Arts, or a search for Truth, Goodness and Beauty, is not reliant upon material conditions, but issues directly from the heart. "As long as Heaven and Earth exist and the heart-mind (xin) does not perish, then the Six Arts will continue. If mankind wishes to extricate itself from the darkness and proceed towards the light, then this is the only way."\textsuperscript{132} In discussing the question of culture with Feng, Ma referred approvingly to Gu Hongming's use of the word "arts" when translating the Chinese term \textit{li}, rites or propriety, into English. "Rites and music" (\textit{liyue}) are likened to the harmony of scenery and music, and the heart that can express itself artistically is founded in "humanity" (\textit{ren}) which in turn is in its essence "virtue" (\textit{de}), thus "rites and music conform with virtue" (\textit{liyue she hede}).\textsuperscript{133}

Shortly after this, following a day spent enjoying the mountain scenery of their place of exile, Ma sent Feng a copy of a poem he had recently composed which began with the line, "Although all under heaven is at war, my heart is still at one with rites and music" (\textit{tianxia sui gange, wu xin reng liyue}).\textsuperscript{134}

The influence these ideas had on Feng was considerable. Shortly after the war began we can see how Feng adapted these abstract thoughts in one of his most interesting wartime speeches, "Art Can Rebuild the Nation" (\textit{Yishu bineng jianguo}), which he made in Guilin in early 1939. In it he defends the role of non-propagandistic art and its importance both for the cultivation of the individual and for the sake of "protecting the heart" (\textit{hu.xin}).\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{132} From Ma's \textit{Teachings at Yishan} (\textit{Yishan huiyu}), quoted in He Lin, \textit{Dangdai Zhongguo zhexue}, p. 17; and Brière, \textit{Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy}, pp. 56-57. Zhejiang University was evacuated from Jiangxi to Yishan in Guangxi in October 1938, Ma continued his lectures there. See "A Chronology of Mr Ma Yifu" (Ma Yifu xiansheng nianbiao), compiled by Ma's nephew Ma Jingquan, in \textit{Jiniance}, p. 13. Also Ye Shengtao's wartime correspondence in \textit{Wo yu Sichuan}, Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1984, pp. 110-111, 118-119, 126, 129, 131, where he comments on Ma's teachings and his plans for an academy. He says that Ma Yifu was the last Neo-Confucian who would actually lecture on his teachings (\textit{jiangxue}). (p. 119.) After Ma's passing, Ye felt sure this outmoded practice was sure to die out.

\textsuperscript{133} These remarks are based on Wang Xingxian's record of a conversation Ma had with Feng on 7 December, 1937. See "Conversations at Tonglu", p. 271.

\textsuperscript{134} "Conversations at Tonglu", p. 272.

\textsuperscript{135} The exact date of the speech is uncertain, although it was published in \textit{Yuzhoufeng} No. 2, 16 March, 1939. See \textit{Yuanyuantang jiawen jiwen}, pp. 135-39. In the speech Feng refers to Gu Hongming's use of the word "arts" when translating the word "\textit{li}" in \textit{Lunyu}, 1: 12, and he goes on to explain that \textit{li} is not to be understood as meaning everyday etiquette. He equates it first with \textit{ren}, then the "Principles of Heaven" (\textit{tiandi}), and then in a less religious tone he speaks of it as "righteousness" (\textit{zhengyi}) and "humanity" (\textit{rendao}). (pp. 136-37.) "Art is the [representation of] feelings as virtue", and as such, he argues, it is \textit{li}. (p. 138.) This speech also contains an uncharacteristically fiery attack on Cao Juren, a former and not always sympathetic college classmate who shortly before this had suggested that Feng's Buddhist paintings all be destroyed. The conflicting details of this incident are recorded by Feng in his essay "A Bad Taste in the Mouth" (\textit{Yifan zhi en}) , Shaonian xianfeng, 1938-6 (published on 5 May), pp. 28-30, and by Cao in \textit{Wo yu wode shijie}, pp. 529-31. After admitting that as an historical materialist he never had any sympathy for Feng's Buddhist ideas, Cao claims that the reason the falling out was an article he published in \textit{Zhongxuesheng}. In it he quoted Feng as having said to him that, "The concept of 'compassion' (\textit{ciben}) does not apply to the enemy". Feng felt this to be a distortion of his words and a betrayal of his Buddhist beliefs. In his reply to the
Feng and his family left Tonglu on 21 December, 1937, following which he maintained contact with Ma by mail. From the eight letters, or excerpts from letters available to us, that Ma wrote to Feng over the next year (the first dated 9 February, 1938, the last was written on 15 January, 1939), we can see the closeness of the relationship of the two men. They also reveal the details of the advice and encouragement Ma gave to Feng both personally and as an artist, encouragement which Ma often chose to express in Buddhist terms. The first letter contains a sentiment that Ma repeated both in his public lectures to university students and to Feng in his subsequent correspondence. "My humble meaning," he says, "is that in your future writing I hope that you will do your utmost to produce non-combat literature (feizhan wenxue), leaving a gleam of hope for the world and humanity."136

In his lectures at Taihe, Ma lay particular emphasis on the "Four-Sentence Teaching" (sijujiao) of the Song Confucian philosopher Zhang Zai (Hengqu, 1020-1077).137 The teaching was, "Establish the heart for Heaven and Earth; Establish life for the living people; Revive the lost learning of sages past; Open the way to peace for ten thousand generations."138 Ma found in Zhang's sentences a spirit that was completely compatible with the Four Universal Vows of a Bodhisattva,139 and in his second

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136 This is a quote from the first of eight letters, or excerpts from letters, photocopies of which were given to me by Chen Xing. It is dated 9 February, 1938. The originals are, I believe, in the possession of Feng Yiyin.

137 See Ma Yifu xiansheng xuezan, Wu Yifeng, June, 1987, an unofficial publication printed in Anhui, 1987, serial no. 87: 2045, p. 3. Wu is one of Ma's few living disciples. See also "A Chronology of Mr Ma Yifu", p. 13.

138 wei tiandi li xin, wei shengmin li ming, wei wangsheng ji juexue, wei wanshi kai taiping.

139 Or si hong shiyuan. These are: to save all living beings without limit; to put an end to all passions and delusions however numerous; to study and learn all methods and means without end; and, to become perfect in the supreme Buddha-law. See Ding Fubao, Foxue dacidian, p. 380; and Soothill
letter to Feng, written on 13 April, 1938, he asked Feng to enlist the aid of a friend and put the four sentences to music.\textsuperscript{140} Ma felt a song would communicate this message most effectively and even be able to compete with the bellicose war songs that were so popular. Perhaps, he mused, it could be a new inspiration to students who "are entranced by superficial modern theories" with the message of China's "unique culture which no other race can surpass".\textsuperscript{141} Feng thought the resulting song far more stirring than any of the war tunes he had heard.\textsuperscript{142}

Ma’s other letters to Feng reiterated a point that he had first made in his introduction to the first \textit{Husheng huaji} in 1937: the essential meaning of trying to preserve the life of other creatures is to realize that you are at one with all things, and only by understanding the importance of protecting or nurturing one's own heart can one protect other living things.\textsuperscript{143} This concept of identification with all things is basic to the six volumes of paintings, and is behind Feng’s many comments on the question of empathy.

Certainly, in the war, Feng, a man for whom art and religion were to a great extent two sides of the same thing, expressed his belief that art or the arts were a combination of man’s moral and artistic life and as such had an abiding role to play in the life of the nation.

\textbf{6: 7 On Protecting Life}

The link between Feng Zikai and his two mentors Hongyi and Ma Yifu was forged in 1928, when Feng painted fifty pictures on the theme of "protecting life" (\textit{husheng}) to commemorate Hongyi’s fiftieth birthday (and tenth year as a monk) in late September.\textsuperscript{144} Hongyi selected fifty poems or passages of prose to go with the

and Hodous, \textit{A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms}, p. 174. Although like many other Neo-Confucianists, Zhang Zai was a strong critic of the Buddhist emphasis on Emptiness and annihilation, in his philosophy he expanded the concept of ren, benevolence, or love, which until then had generally been limited to the mundane world to encompass the entire universe, in fact to what the Buddhists would call the whole "sentient universe" (youqing shijie). See Wing-tsit Chan, \textit{A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy}, London: Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 495-99, and Fung Yu-lan, \textit{A History of Chinese Philosophy}, translated by Derk Bodde, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953, Vol. II, pp. 488-96.

Feng quotes this letter extensively in "Hengqu’s Four-Sentence Teaching and Appended Explanation" (Hengqu sijujiao fushuo), written on 1 June, 1938 and originally published in \textit{Yuzhoufeng}, No. 69, reprinted in \textit{Yuanyuantang jiwai yiwen}, pp. 100-106.

"Henggu’s Four-Sentence Teaching and Appended Explanation", p. 101.

"Henggu’s Four-Sentence Teaching and Appended Explanation", ibid. Feng wrote other pacifist “war” songs with Xiao Erhua around this time. See Pan Songde’s record of the details in "Feng Zikai’s War of Resistance Songs" (Feng Zikaidexiangri geci), in the Sichuan journal \textit{Kangzhan wen yiyian}, 1982: 3, pp. 12-13.


\textit{Nianbiao}, p. 15; \textit{Zuan}, p. 98; \textit{Nianpu}, p. 109-11; and \textit{The Cartoonist Feng Zikai}, p. 88. Hongyi's birthday was on the twentieth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar, Feng's was only
paintings and he copied them out in his own hand. The first edition of the book published by Kaiming shudian also had a long tract on non-killing and vegetarianism by Li Yuanjing, a Shanghai merchant and active Buddhist layman, appended to it.\textsuperscript{145}

With the third volume of the \textit{Husheng huaji}, as the series of books was entitled, Feng Zikai pledged to continue the series adding ten pictures every ten years up to the time of the centenary of Hongyi's birth.\textsuperscript{146} Buddhists would traditionally "redeem a vow" (\textit{huanyuan}) by undertaking a pilgrimage or visiting temples to burn incense and pray, thereby hoping to deflect bad karma or achieve some worldly end.\textsuperscript{147} Feng Zikai was outspoken in his condemnation of such practices and people who wanted to "barter with the Buddha" in this mercantile fashion.\textsuperscript{148} Yet by pledging to carry out this project over what he expected would be a period of fifty years,\textsuperscript{149} becoming affiliated (\textit{jiyuan}) with Hongyi in such a permanent fashion.\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See Shi Dongchu, \textit{Zhonguo fojiao jindaishi}, Vol. II, pp. 713-14. Li, a native of Zhejiang, was a long-time resident of Shanghai. His "Heartfelt Words to Protect Life" (\textit{Husheng tongyan}), the essay appended to the first volume of the \textit{Husheng huaji}, was also printed in two parts in the Buddhist monthly \textit{Haichaoyin}, 1929, Volume X, Nos. 1 & 2. Little else is known about his life, although he had occasional essays championing religion printed in Buddhist journals, for example "The True Spirit of Mahayana Buddhism" (Dacheng fohua zhi zhen jingshen), \textit{Haichaoyin}, 1929, Vol. X, No. 8, pp. 12-20, in which he defends the constructive and positive nature of Buddhism against critics who condemned it for being escapist.
\item The plates of the first edition of \textit{Husheng huaji} were destroyed in Shanghai in the early months of the war, and Li Yuanjing wrote to Xia Xianzun suggesting Feng and Hongyi reproduce the book. At the time Li was himself preparing to enter the sangha. See \textit{Jiaoshi riji}, p. 95. Li also wrote an introduction to the second volume in the series in 1946, the paintings for which Feng also redrafted because the original set was lost during the war, see \textit{Husheng huaji}, Vol. II, pp. 1-2, 5. The manuscripts of all six volumes were presented by their guardian Guangqia, the Singapore-based monk, to the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in 1985 at the opening ceremony of the new Yuanyuan Hall in Shimenwan. See Appendix II.
\item This was in response to a request from Hongyi. See Feng's introduction to \textit{Husheng huaji}, Vol. III. For information on the fulfilment of Feng's vow after 1949, see Appendix I.
\item Welch, \textit{The Practice of Chinese Buddhism}, p. 371.
\item His essay "The Buddha Has No Soul" (Fowuling), written in 1938, see \textit{Suibiji}, pp. 315-18, is devoted to condemning such "materialists." Harbsmeier, \textit{The Cartoonist Feng Zikai}, p. 28, comments on this that "In the only outburst of real anger I found in all of Feng's writings he describes the superstitious majority of Buddhist apparatchiks as stupid madmen and anti-Buddhist. He wishes he were not a vegetarian himself, so that he would not be associated with this superstitious egoistic bunch of Buddhist merchants of luck, he adds in a fit of rage." I would suggest however, that Feng's comments on Cao Juren, a former classmate who in a mood of high leftist dudgeon suggested at the beginning of the war that the artist's Buddhist paintings be burnt, if not made in anger then are at least an example of rare pique. See "Art Can Rebuild the Nation", pp. 135, 139; and \textit{Jiaoshi riji}, p. 95; also pp. 39-40, where he criticizes the superstitious practices associated with Buddhism which "not only have nothing to do with the Dharma, they confuse people...and create obstacles to people understanding it." Also \textit{Zhuan}, p. 99. Even Feng's friend Ye Shengtao was doubtful of the artist's ability to create meaningful and relevant war art. See Ye's early wartime correspondence in \textit{Wo yu Sichuan}, pp. 46, 60.
\item In \textit{Zhuan}, p. 98, details of the publication of the six volumes are given; see also Feng Yiyin's \textit{Feng Zikai}, p. 282; and Zheng Yimei in "Feng Zikai, Master of Yuanyuan Hall" (\textit{Yuanyuamang zhuren Feng Zikai}), \textit{Dacheng}, No. 159, 1987: 2, p. 26, an unreliable but useful summary of the
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Feng had actually bound his very life to both Hongyi and the principle of "protecting life" (or "protecting the heart-mind" as Ma Yifu saw it), a remarkable act for a young intellectual of the May Fourth period.

The doctrinal basis in Buddhism for both non-killing and the release of living beings can be found in the Sūtra of Brahma's Net (Fanwang jing). This sutra which outlines the fifty-eight precepts (ten major and forty-eight minor) of the Bodhisattva and is a key text of the Disciplinary School, is addressed to lay disciples of Mahayana Buddhism and had considerable influence in China for over 1500 years.151 The precept of non-killing admonishes that one should not kill, cause others to kill, offer others means to kill, help others in killing, or kill by uttering a spell.152 The late-Ming monk Zhuhong (1535-1615) led a popular revival of Buddhism in Zhejiang based on non-killing, wrote a lengthy commentary on the sutra and was an active advocate of protecting living things and releasing and saving sentient beings. Hongyi himself wrote an introduction to the Bodhisattva precepts of the sutra and advised "all those who read the sutra to read this preface [his own comments] first".153 The sutra emphasized the importance of the Vinaya Master and his role in lecturing on the doctrine and the rules of the Bodhisattva precepts.154

Non-killing and releasing life had a long history in China at least going back as far as the Sui Dynasty (581-618) when "fast days" were promulgated and a ban placed on killing living beings.155 Ponds for releasing life (fangshengchi), which were to become a feature of most Buddhist monasteries, were established as early as the reign of Emperor Yuan of the Liang dynasty (552-555), and they proliferated during the

relevant publication details. Xi Murong, a popular woman essayist from Taiwan writes of being deeply moved by Feng's pledge and gives her own history of the series, see "An Eternal Oath of Alliance -- Reading Feng Zikai's Husheng huaji " (Yonghengde mengyue -- du Feng Zikai <<Husheng huaji>>), Jueshi (no publication details). See also an article by Lin Ziqing, the author of Hongyi dashi wenchao, entitled "Mr Feng Zikai, A Man Who Respected His Teacher" (Zunshi zhongdao Feng Zikai xiansheng), Renmin ribao, 12 November, 1988, in which he talks of Feng's devotion to Hongyi and the Husheng huaji. It is interesting to note that Lin uses the example of Feng's devotion to criticize the present state of crisis in Chinese education.

150 The importance of the concept of yuan in Feng's life has been discussed above. The following chapter deals with the name of Feng's house, the Yuanyuan Hall, and its significance.


152 Yū, Yün-ch'i Chu-hung, p. 110.

153 Hongyi dashi wenchao, edited by Chen Huijian, Taipei: Tianhua chubanshe, 1982, p. 43. See also pp. 44, 46 for two inscriptions on versions of this sutra which had been preserved in Japan.

154 Yū, Yün-ch'i Chu-hung, p. 111, quoting "the prohibition against the non-practice of releasing and saving (sentient beings)" (buxing fangjiujie).

155 Yū, Yün-ch'i Chu-hung, p. 117.
Apart from the ethical dimension of non-killing, it was felt that the destruction of another living creature somehow broke the bond between all beings, and meat eating was also seen as a form of complicity, an act of insensitivity towards sentient beings, not to mention one that accrued bad karma.

The **Husheng huaji** itself was part of a tradition of publications on the subject that can be traced back to the Song dynasty when numerous "tracts exhorting people to refrain from killing animals for food and to keep a vegetarian diet started to appear".

In his essay "On Releasing Sentient Beings" (**Fangshengwen**), Zhuhong gives examples from history, popular stories, legends and contemporary hearsay to illustrate the benefits of non-killing. Such a use of cautionary stories is common among Buddhist and Taoist popular writings on sin and merit and Hong Yi emulated this time-honoured formula in his lecture "Retribution: the Releasing of Sentient Beings and Killing" (**Fangsheng yu shasheng zhi guobao**) in 1933.

Although highly critical of Buddhism and the deleterious influence of its superstitious practices on China, Cai Yuanpei, a former teacher of Li Shutong's at the South Seas Public School, developed views about Mutual Sympathy on the basis of Paulsen's teleological energism. Going against the general trend of social Darwinist thought in China in the early Republican period, he envisaged a harmony of wills of all living creatures, including animals, leading to something akin to the traditional view of the Great Harmony (**datong**), a vision similar to that of Kang Youwei. Cai's beliefs emphasized the inclusion of all living beings in this future harmony and this led him to become a vegetarian. He forswore meat until his

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156 Yü, Yün-ch'í Chu-hung, pp. 118-19.
157 Yü, Yün-ch'í Chu-hung, pp. 120, 124.
158 Yü, Yün-ch'í Chu-hung, pp. 121-22.
159 Yü, Yün-ch'í Chu-hung, p. 124.
162 Hongyi dashi yanjiang guanji, edited by Chen Huijian, Taipei: Tianhua chubanshe, 1982, pp. 144-47. This lecture was given at the Dakaiyuan Monastery in Quanzhou. Hongyi uses anecdotes to explain that the karma accrued by releasing sentient beings could ensure the practitioner long life, health, avoidance of ill-fortune, the birth of sons, and rebirth in the Pure Land of the Western Heaven. He calls on his listeners not only to give up meat eating but also to encourage their family members not to kill any living thing. "If you care for your loved ones, how can you bear to see them create bad karma by killing?" he asks. (p. 147.)
163 Nianpu, p. 18.
164 See Druker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei*, pp. 21-27.
165 One account of Cai's vegetarianism claims that it was inspired by a rather bloody description of a hunting scene penned by Tolstoy. Cai explained to a correspondent that he was a vegetarian for three reasons: it was hygienic, spared lives and meant less waste. He did not accept the Buddhist view that
doctor advised him against vegetarianism for health reasons,\textsuperscript{166} and among a series of his exhortative speeches there is one entitled "Love animals."\textsuperscript{167}

Zhuhong, who was a Buddhist scholar of considerable ability, was noted for his popular and markedly non-philosophical writings. Reacting against the decay of Buddhism and popular morality in the late Ming he addressed himself to the lay population.\textsuperscript{168} Cai Yuanpei's interest in and elucidation of Mutual Sympathy was linked to his reaction to the moral decay and confusion of the early Republican era, and Hongyi's activities to revive the Vinaya School of Buddhism in the 1920s and 1930s was in response to both the decline of monastic discipline and popular morality.\textsuperscript{169}

While Hongyi lectured on the evils of killing to general lay audiences, he was equally interested in Feng Zikai's project to promote the concept of "protecting life as a means to protect one's heart". Thus, non-killing and releasing life were, as in the case of Zhuhong, a form of moral cultivation; by practising these one would establish sympathy with all living beings and recognize the intricate nature of the fabric of life.

As we have seen, in his accolade for the collaboration of Feng Zikai and Hongyi in producing the first volume of the \textit{Husheng huaji} Ma Yifu emphasized this unity of all living creatures and agreed that by protecting life (\textit{husheng}) one was, in fact, protecting or cultivating the heart-mind (\textit{huxin}).\textsuperscript{170} Ma did not speak of non-killing in Buddhist terms of kannic retribution, but as a Confucian concerned with the nurturing of the "one heart" (\textit{yixin}). Although Feng had converted to Buddhism, and

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  \item by not killing one would avoid bad karma. He also rejected the ethical dimension of vegetarianism. See Shi Dongchu, \textit{Zhongguo fojiao jindaishi}, p. 567-68.
  \item \textit{Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei}, p. 34.
  \item \textit{Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei}, p. 36. See \textit{Cai Yuanpei xiansheng guanj}, Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1968, pp. 197-98 and notes on pp. 224-25. This essay consists of quotations from Mencius, Han Feizi, Liezi and the \textit{Jinshu} on the subject prefaced with Cai's introductory remark that "the ancients readily recognized that one can extend the love one has for other humans to all creatures (\textit{wu})". (p. 198.) In the four points he makes in the essay Cai parallels traditional Chinese views of animal loving with modern scientific discoveries concerning evolution, animal psychology and medicine. His argument in favour of vegetarianism -- meat from animals that have been killed violently is unhealthy -- is repeated by Li Yuanjing in his essay in the first volume of the \textit{Husheng huaji}. Cai expressed the hope that with the ever-increasing awareness of the scientific and humanitarian reasons for non-killing "love for animals will spread throughout the world". (p. 199.)
  \item Yü, \textit{Yün-ch'i Chu-hung}, pp. 132-33.
  \item In commenting on Zhuhong's revival of Buddhism Yü says in her study \textit{Yün-ch'i Chu-hung} that, "For Zhuhong the compelling question was how to save Buddhism from the deadening effect of routinization. Under the charismatic inspiration of strong Chan masters, Buddhism was able to retain its vitality even if it did not stress moral cultivation. But, in the postcharismatic age of the Ming (which Zhuhong, along with other Buddhists, called the 'degenerate age of the Law'), it would be dangerous for one to continue to neglect moral discipline. Indeed, moral discipline was the only effective means by which to bolster flagging energies and infuse vigor and direction into religious life." (p. 134.)
  \item Feng reiterates Ma's explanation of the importance of "protecting or cultivating the heart-mind" in his 1949 introduction to the third volume of paintings, pp. 3-5, saying that the aim of the paintings was to encourage people to value the lives of others and to protect their own humanity. Feng gives a similar explanation in "A Bad Taste in the Mouth", p. 30.
\end{itemize}
certainly retained an intellectual interest in its philosophy throughout his later life, his writings reveal a revulsion towards popular "superstitious" Buddhism. As I have argued above, from the 1930s onward, at times he showed more sympathy for Neo-Confucian thought, although this by no means interfered with his commitment to Buddhism. In regard to the question of his own vegetarianism he claimed that it was more a matter of inherited family dietary habits than anything particularly religious. 171

He said of the book he and Hongyi had put together on the subject that, "the paintings in Husheng huaji are no more than the artistic representation of the sentiments I have had since becoming a vegetarian." 172 He certainly did not encourage others to give up meat-eating, and noted with considerable sympathy that the number of "passive vegetarians" -- people who were forced to give up meat because of poverty or due to the lack of meat for sale in the cities following the drought of 1933-1934 -- was on the increase. 173 Although this meant vegetarians like himself were no longer in a minority, the large numbers of enforced vegetarians was hardly something he welcomed. 174 Attacked by some young people for not eating meat and declining to kill insects, Feng refused to defend himself and dismissed their zeal by saying, "The disciples of utilitarianism see everything in terms of commercial transactions. But my vegetarianism is not a type of business, therefore they oppose it. As for the significance and delight (liqu) of not eating meat, all I can say to them is that it 'can't be expressed in words'." 175

Feng did not restrict himself solely to the rather dour expression of non-killing that we see in the Husheng huaji, however, for he also wrote an amusing essay on the

171 "I inherited it from my father, and apart from eating a little ham in my youth, I never ate fresh meat. If I did I'd vomit it up. Turning thirty I gave up meat all together out of admiration for the Buddhist life-style, and I also stopped drinking." See the 1934 essay "After Becoming a Vegetarian" (Sushi zhihou), Chexiang shehui, p. 117. This essay, dated simply Guanyin's Birthday, was written at the behest of the Venerable Daxing (1899-1952), Taixu's disciple and then editor of the Buddhist monthly Hachaoyin to which Daxing encouraged Feng to contribute both cover illustrations and mastheads. Elsewhere Feng showed contrition for having found his greatest pleasure as a child in the suffering and death of other creatures. In his essay "Memories of Youth" (Yi ershi) written in 1927, the same year he became a Buddhist, he confessed guiltily that his favourite memories of the past were keeping silkworms, watching his father eat crabs, and going fishing with the son of the bean curd maker who was a neighbour. See Subiji, pp. 21-26.

172 In a fifteen anniversary special issue of the chief Buddhist journal of the Republican period Hachaoyin, Feng Zikai is not only listed as a Buddhist lay devotee, but details of his contributions to the journal and the Husheng huaji are also given. See "The Activities of Lay Devotees Over the Past Fifteen Years" (Shiwu nianlai zhi jushijie), by Zhizang in Hachaoyin, 1935, Volume XIV, No. 1, p. 180. The entry on Feng erroneously claims that the Husheng huaji had been translated into English. It is impossible to determine whether Zhizang's statement that "Many people have sworn off taking life and become vegetarians as a result of reading this book," is reliable. In Hachaoyin, 1935, Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 194, it lists that four books on "releasing life and non-killing" (fangsheng jiesha) had been published by the Foxue shuju in the fifteen years since 1920.

173 "After Becoming a Vegetarian", p. 120.
174 "After Becoming a Vegetarian", p. 121.
175 "After Becoming a Vegetarian", p. 120.
subject appropriately entitled "Releasing Life" (Fangsheng), based on an incident that occurred while he was boating on West Lake with a young friend and four children.  

A large fish jumped into the boat causing much consternation. The boatman called on the young man to put the fish in the bow, but the children cry out to throw it back into the lake (they call out "Fangsheng! Fangsheng!" -- daresay a result of their father's training). He complied, but Feng noticed that "an unnatural atmosphere descended over the little skiff once the children's cries had ceased. It was as though our boat was cut off from the vast field of water and sky by a screen of glass, and nothing could alleviate the situation." Of course, this is because without the cries of the children, the fish "doubtlessly would have ended up as part of the boatman's dinner." Feng, while satisfied that the fish had been saved, sympathized with the fellow as the market value of a fish of that size was about one yuan, the equivalent of three trips from the Inner Lake to the Baiyun'an. He offered some words of commiseration and said that it was a carp jumping through Dragon's Gate and that by landing in his boat it showed the boatman's son would become an official. The boatman responded that their good deed of releasing the fish would make them all rich. This exchange of light-hearted pleasantries helped them recover their good mood, and they part cheerfully. This essay reveals once more Feng's talent for finding a trace of human sympathy even in the most trivial situation and is also an indication of his attitude to releasing life. Obviously just the gesture of letting the fish go did not mean much, for the intention behind it, and the effects of the act on others were just as important. This provides an interesting sidelight to his other work on this subject.

6: 8 Empathy

Feng Zikai's understanding of the need to "protect the heart-mind" may be attributed to Ma Yifu's influence. As an artist he also spoke of the necessity for a painter to empathize with the object(s) he depicted. He readily recognized the similarity of Chinese and Western aesthetic theories of empathy, which, in terms of traditional Chinese thinking, he spoke of as qianxiang, or as a Western concept as

176 Written in Hangzhou, 2 March, 1935, see Chexiang shehui, pp. 111-16.
177 "Releasing Life", p. 115.
178 "Releasing Life", ibid.
179 Another example of Feng's wry but sympathetic attitude towards releasing life can be found in the 1936 essay "Crabs" (Xie), published on 17 January, 1937 in Yuzhoufeng, No. 33, pp. 456-58. The Ming essayist Zhang Dai (1597-1679), a writer who enjoyed great popularity with Zhou Zuoren, Lin Yutang and Yu Pingbo in the 1930s, has an entry on the West Lake's "Pool for Releasing Life" (Fangshengchi) in his Xiuh mengxun, Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, annotated by Sun Jiasui, 1984, pp. 173-76.
"Einfühlungstheorie" (ganqing yiru). He was no doubt familiar with the latter term from Chen Shizeng's "Wenrenhua zhi jiazhii", and in his own translations of books on art he had come across Theodor Lipps' work, and he had commented in passing that Kant's theory of disinterestedness was similar. Indeed the concepts of object and subject melding into one (wu wo tongyi), the convergence of spirit and heart (shen yu xin hui), and "all objects being present in me" (wanwu jie bei yu wo) are common in Chinese art, having as they do origins in Confucian thought.

Feng was by no means the only writer at the time to discuss the importance of empathy (ganqing yiru) in Chinese and Western art theory. His Chunhui colleague Zhu Guangqian devoted a chapter to the question of empathy and the anthropomorphic nature of the universe in his book Tan mei, and Lü Zheng, the disciple of Ouyang Jingwu and a writer on art, devoted a section to the subject in his essay "What is the Sense of Beauty?" (Shenme shi meigan).

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180 To quote one of Feng's definitions of empathy, "To approach the world as a pantheist and see nature as being sentient [the youqing shijie of Buddhism], that is to say, to find life in all objects, to perceive everything one sees as living. This is nothing less than infusing one's heart into all things, to experience their life. Western aestheticicians describe this mental state in terms of the Einfühlungstheorie, in Chinese art theory, it is called qianxiang." See "Sketching in Literature" (Wenxuede xiesheng), Huihua yu wenxue, p. 25; also Feng's "The Effects of Art" (Yishu xiaoguo), Feng Zikai wenxuan, Vol. I, p. 230 where he uses Gu Kaizhi's expression qianxiang miaode; Xu Fuguan in his Zhongguo yishu jingshen, Shenyang: Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 1987, pp. 81, 166-67; and quotes on empathy in the article "Quotations from the Ancients" (Guren yulu), in Xinmeishu, (Zhejiang Arts' Academy), 1984: 4, p. 24.

181 "The Victory of Chinese Art" (Zhongguo meishude yousheng), Huihua yu wenxue, pp. 88, 90.

182 wanwu jie bei yu wo is from Mengzi, VII A: 4. See "Art and Sympathy" (Mei yu tongqing), Yishu quwei, p. 49. In "The Victory of Chinese Art", p. 100, Feng makes one of his few references to a Neo-Confucian philosopher when discussing art, paraphrasing Cheng Hao's definition of qi. See James Cahill, "Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting", in The Confucian Persuasion, edited by Arthur Wright, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966, pp. 115-40. Similarly, Feng's 1930 article "Sketching in Literature" (Wenxuede xiesheng), pp. 17-25, quotes Deng Chun and other pre-modern writers on Chinese art theory to illustrate the traditional "pantheistic" view of nature (p. 18). In general Feng felt that Western art lacked such an approach, although the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists came close to the Eastern ideal of the artist identifying with nature. In this context he was particularly enamoured of van Gogh (p. 18), of whom he had written a biography: Guhe shenghuo, Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1929. As we have seen, Feng was also drawn to the work of Jean François Millet, in particular to his Barbizon period. Such artists, he wrote, "have all discovered the life in nature, coming to a wordless understanding with the Spirit of Nature, thus their brush strokes are inspired (jingdong), full of the qu of life (shengqu), and therefore approaching the style of Eastern art." (p. 19).


184 In Meixue qianshuo, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1931, pp. 20-27, reprinted in Zhongguo xiandai meixue congbian (1919-1949), pp. 48-52, see pp. 49-50 for his discussion of empathy. Lü was one of the first writers to call for a revolution in art during the May Fourth period, see his letter to Xingqinglian, Vol. VI, No. 1, p. 85, and Chen Duxiu's reply on pp. 85-86. For his activities as a lay Buddhist, see The Buddhist Revival in China, pp. 119, 178, & p. 320, note 34.
Aligned with empathy, and occupying a constantly more prominent place in Feng's writings, however, is the concept of the "sympathetic heart" (tongqingxin). In fact, Feng was never particularly anxious to make a clear distinction between empathy and sympathy, that is if we take the former as being "an involuntary projection of ourselves into an object" (either animate or inanimate) and the latter as "a conformity or agreement of feelings and temperament, and an emotional identification with a person." One of the clearest statements he made on the subject of empathy-sympathy, in which he shows an unwillingness to strictly differentiate between the two, is to be found in "Art and Sympathy" (Mei yu tongqing), a lecture given in 1929. "The average person is only capable of extending sympathy to other humans or at most to animals; however, the artist has a breadth and depth of sympathy that is as great as the Maker of all Heaven and Earth (tiandi zaohua zhi xin), and can encompass all things, sentient and insentient." He says that all worldly values and concepts of social class fall away when one enters the world of painting. The artist must be able to enter the innocent world of the child when painting children, to feel the sickness and suffering of a beggar when depicting beggars. "To be a real artist one must be in complete emotional commune with the object depicted, to share its joys and sorrows, its tears and laughter. If you attempt to take up the brush while lacking this all-embracing sympathetic heart then you will never be a real artist." He goes on to

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185 This has been discussed at some length in Chapter Two. "All Mankind is His Family" (Quan renlei shi tade jiazu), one of Feng's most explicit statements on the importance of maintaining a sympathetic heart, and one with obvious Confucian overtones, was written during the early months of the Anti-Japanese War. See Manwen manhua, Hankou: changliu shudian, 1938, p. 36. He says that the individual with a sympathetic heart must extend his compassion to those around him, other families, his village, district, nation, race and all mankind. Those with a more finely honed sense of sympathy can extend the compassion to all sentient beings, including the vegetable world. There is a hint of The Great Learning (Daxue) in this, although nothing of the Confucian desire to "order the world".

186 See J. A. Cuddon, A Dictionary of Literary Terms, London: Penguin, 1976, fourth edition, p. 218. According to Cuddon, the word empathy was introduced into English by Titchener in 1909 when translating the German word Einfühlung. The idea was developed in Germany by Lotze in Mikrokosmus (1858).

187 See Chapter Four; and "Art and Sympathy" (Mei yu tongqing), Yishu quwei, p. 47. In the same lecture, he says, "One can say that for the artist the world appears as one of fairness (yishi tongren) and equality (pingdeng). The artist's heart goes out with deep-felt sympathy (rechengde tongqing) to all things (shiwu) in the world." (p. 48.)

188 "Art and Sympathy", p. 48. He discusses this question at somewhat greater length, extending the argument to poetry, in his article "The Law of Contradiction in Art" (Yishushang de maodunli), published in Yuzhoufeng, No. 29, 1936: 11, pp. 267-69. Discussing the "dialectical" relationship between objectivity and subjectivity he gives the following example:

When doing a painting of refugees escaping a man- or heavenly-made disaster, or writing a poem about them, even if the artist is one of the refugees, he must distance himself from the experience and see the larger picture before he can concentrate on particular details. Otherwise, if you get caught up in the experience you will be overwhelmed by detail and fail to create anything of value. This is what is meant by the need of "disinterestedness" in artistic creation. At the same time, while observing and depicting a scene, the artist, regardless of
emphasize that this identification of subject and object (wuwo yiti) is germane to traditional Chinese art, and that the ancients recognized the importance of preparing the mind for such a communion. An ancient master sat "at a bright window before a clean table and burned incense right and left. He took a fine brush and the most excellent ink, washed his hands and cleaned the ink stone as if to receive and important guest. He let his thoughts settle in his soul, and then he worked." 189 Feng Zikai himself adopted this approach to art as something of a "liturgy", 190 and one of his self-portraits shows him seated at his desk reading with a stick of incense smoking in an incense holder. 191 In keeping with the traditional Chinese view of art as primarily a moral activity, Feng told his students, "art is not an enterprise concerned with technique, but one dealing with the heart (xinling)...it is the one of the most sublime human activities...the practice of art is not a matter of training the hand and wrist, but of training the eye and the heart. You must learn not only to use the eyes in your head, but also the eye of the heart." 192

Similarly, Feng's essays are full of examples of the artist's own sympathetic heart. In "Morning" (Qingchen), for example, he gives a minute description of the

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189 In the lecture Feng actually paraphrases this quotation from Guo Xi's "The Great Message of Forests and Springs" (Linguang guozhi). In discussing empathy in the essay "The Victory of Chinese Art", p. 95, he quotes Guo in full. I have used Osvald Sirén's translation as given in *The Chinese on the Art of Painting*, p. 46; for the original Chinese, see Yu Jianhua's *Zhongguo hualun leibian*, p. 634. In "The Victory of Chinese Art" Feng also quotes the Qing writer Wang Yu's *Dongzhuang lunhua*:

> Before one starts on a painting the inspiration must be nourished either by looking at clouds and springs, or by contemplating flowers and birds, or by strolling about humming songs, or by burning incense, or by sipping tea. One must wait until something has been grasped in the bosom and the desire for expression is overwhelming. When the inspiration rises, spread the paper and move the brush, but stop as soon as it is exhausted; only when it rises again, you should continue and complete the work. If you do it in this way, the work will become alive with the moving power of Heaven and far superior to the things of the dusty world.


190 I take this expression from Pierre Ryckmans who writes in his commentary on Chapter Fifteen of Shitao's *Kugua heshang hua yulu*, "...l'acte de peindre se présente-t-il tour à tour comme une morale et comme une liturgie...Une liturgie: l'acte de peindre, avec tout ce qu'il exige de l'homme et tout ce qu'il apporte à l'homme au moment d'être entrepris, exige non seulement la pureté intérieure, mais aussi une purification extérieure, symbole et garant de la première." See Shitao: *Les Propos sur la peinture du moine Citrouille-amère*, p. 115. On pp. 115-16, Ryckmans quotes Guo Si, see the previous note. In the essay "Aesthetic Education" (Meide jiaoyu) which Feng translated from Japanese, Akai Beikichi contrasts the casual disorder of the Western artist's studio with the dignified serenity of the Eastern artists preparations for painting, again paraphrasing Guo Si. See *Yishu quwei*, p. 37; also *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, p. 88.

191 Yang Mu uses this painting as the cover illustration of his four volume *Feng Zikai wenxuan*.

192 "The Attitude for Appreciating Art", *Yishu quwei*, p. 29. This essay is also based on a lecture given at the Songjiang Girl's High School in 1929.
torturous labours of a group of ants transporting a lump of rice dropped on the ground, talking of them as though they were human beings. 193 [6: 5]194 He is joined by his daughter Ah Bao, who shares his interest in and concern for their travails. The manager of the dye shop next door comes in and makes an effort to avoid treading on the line of ants, crying out in relief when they are safe. Seeing how engrossed Ah Bao is in all this Feng tells her what he means by sympathetic heart, using the shop manager as an example, he sums up his views as follows:

...he's not against killing as such, and he enjoys eating meat, he'll even kill chickens himself. [His actions just now] were a discovery of the value of "sympathy" within human nature. It is not against the law to kill ants, nor does it take any effort, moreover there is no one who will come and revenge them. But to witness their thirst for life, their energy and unity, and the resolve they put into their struggle should make anyone who sees them feel a sympathy for them, to feel protective of these little creatures. By no means are we calling for a ban on the murder of ants; we don't want to encourage their proliferation. Yet for a person who has witnessed this scene to purposefully go out of their way to destroy them shows that that person is a heartless and crazed individual (sangxin bingkuang zhi liu), for he has lost something [innate] to human nature. What I am concerned for is not the lives of those ants, but the sympathetic heart of man.195

Ah Bao told her father of an occasion when a number of children where watching some ants at work when a naughty boy came along with a thermos of boiling water which he poured over the ants, scaring all the other children away. Feng says, "this made my skin crawl, for [the ants] it must have been like a flood and a fire together, like the [Buddhist] hell of boiling oil! Just imagine if such a child were to become a leader, he would kill people with just as little thought! The tyrants Jie and Zhou were most probably like this in their childhood too."196

As we have seen from the discussion of protecting the heart above, Feng Zikai was influenced by Ma Yifu's emphasis on the individual's subjective attitude of mind, and he generally stressed this as being more crucial than the dogmatic restrictions on the actual actions of the individual. This approach is stated clearly in his introduction to the third volume of Husheng huaji, referred to above, and is also obvious in his discussion of vegetarianism and protecting life with Ma Yifu's disciple Wang Xingxian during the war. Wang pointed out that the Confucian was against vegetarianism on the

193 Feng describes a similar scene in one of the entries of his "Labourer's Songs" (Laozhe zige), see Chexiang shehui, pp. 187-88. After a meal he notices ants surrounding a grain of rice forming what looks like a cysanthemum. They are crushed by a careless foot.
195 "Morning" (Qingchen), Yuanyuantang zaibi, p. 240.
196 "Morning", pp. 240-41.
grounds that he laid great store on ancestral sacrifices for the performance of which meat was necessary. Secondly, Confucians advocated filial piety. As Mencius had said that "after the age of seventy one cannot get one's fill without meat"\(^{197}\) to encourage vegetarianism would be tantamount to being unfilial. Feng explained that for him the important thing was that one should "avoid cruelty and maintain a heart sensitive to the suffering of others"\(^{198}\) although people should not be too dogmatic about this in practice." He also said it is important not to be caught up in pettifogging detail and "forget the principles [behind vegetarianism], one should pursue an internal awareness and not merely think of superficial ends."\(^{199}\)

\(^{197}\) *qishi fei rou bubao*, is a quote from *Mengzi*, VII A: 22; similar sentiments are expressed in *Mengzi*, IA: 3 and IA: 7.

\(^{198}\) *bao ceyin zhi xin*, as Feng puts it, using the expression *ceyin zhi xin*, "a heart sensitive to the suffering of others" as D. C. Lau translates it, and found in *Mengzi*, IIA: 6. For another use of *ceyin zhi xin*, see also see *Mengzi*, VI A: 6.

\(^{199}\) This exchange took place on 25 April, 1939, see *Jiaoshi riji*, p. 128. Numerous other examples of the artist's empathy with the sentient world can be found in Feng's work. See "Speaking Things" (Wuyu), in *Yuanyuantang zaibi*, pp. 1-13, where he describes the revolt of plants, and talks of the independence and equality of all things (plants and animals), debunking the concept that man is the master of all creation (*wanwu zhi ling*); in "Faces" (Yanmian), *Yuanyuantang suibi*, p. 25, he talks of the artist as a man who understands and sees all in nature; "Children" (Errti), in *Yuanyuantang suibi*, p. 31, is on the theme that all men are brothers; while in "The Grand Ledger" (Dazhangbu), *Yuanyuantang suibi*, pp. 86-92, Feng's concern is for such inanimate objects as a childhood toy (a *budaoweng*) lost in a river, a walking stick, and paper with writing on it that is burnt. He is worried about impermanence and feels all the irrelevant details of the world must be recorded in a giant, universal ledger. In "Poor Children's See-saw" (Qiong haizide qiaoqiaoban), *Chexiang shehui*, p. 37, his sympathy is once more expressed for two impoverished children who are quite innocent and unaware of their deprived and pitiful position. Among his essays on art "Wenxuede xiesheng", *Huihua ya wenxue*, pp. 18-19, in particular is devoted to the question of an artists' empathy/sympathy with his subject. Again, one of his children's fables, the "Youqing shijie", *Feng Zikai wenxuan*, IV, pp. 163-69, discussed in Chapter Five, deals with this theme.
Chapter 7:
Town and Country

7: 1 Introduction

The years 1926-1927 marked a watershed in the activities of the writers and artists of the May Fourth Period. The violent break between the Nationalists and Communists in 1927 following the April Twelfth Massacre caused a rift in the intellectual and cultural life of China that was to influence the careers of generations of writers.

The polarizing of writers' factions into political camps during the late 1920s and 1930s led to varied reactions among Feng's contemporaries. Ye Shengtao foundered in the new radicalized atmosphere and stopped writing children's literature for a considerable period after 1930, and his other work took on a new dimension that indicated a commitment to the left. Zhu Ziqing was repelled by the leftists. In "Where Now?" (Nali zou?), one of the most impressive manifestos of the dilemma of young intellectuals at the time, Zhu rejected the political advances of four "progressive youths" and declared that, "I have lived as a petty bourgeois for thirty years of my life," going on to say that unlike many of his fellows, including his elders, he lacked the necessary "genius" to be able to join the forces of the proletariat overnight. Rather than being forced to make a choice between revolution and reaction, Zhu decided to "fritter away [his] energies by engaging in scholarship, art and literature...hiding away in the escape routes provided by these three pursuits...."

1 Farquhar, Children's Literature in China, p. 151.
3 These quotations are from the essay "Where Now?" (Nali zou?), completed in February 1928. See Zhu Jinshun, ed., Zhu Ziqing yanjiu ziliao, p. 323-34. The essay was originally published in Yiban, Volume IV, No. 3, 1928. Schwarcz makes an interesting use of the case of Zhu and in particular the essay "Where Now?" (which she translates variously as "Which way?" and "Nowhere to go"), see pp. 282, note 51 and 283, note 2) in her study From Renaissance to Revolution, pp. 108-109, 127-30, 134, 136, 138, 142. However, Schwarcz fails to recognize the tone of weary sarcasm that runs through Zhu's fascinating confession and instead uses it to support her argument that some of China's
Lu Xun entered a period of dark despair and self-doubt which he chronicled in his collection *Eryiji*; while it was at this time that Zhou Zuoren rejected the concept that there was a solution for the social and political dilemma in China and retired to his Studio of Bitter Tea (*Kucha'an*). Associated with Zhou Zuoren and the other writers who contributed to the magazine *Luotuocao* and denounced by "proletarian critics" as being in his desuetude, Yu Pingbo increasingly concentrated on scholastic pursuits and the composition of essays in the style of late-Ming prose. Lin Yutang came to abandon his earlier militant pose in favour of the light satire of the casual essay, and in the 1930s he founded and edited a series of journals to which Feng Zikai became a frequent contributor. In a preface to a new edition of the works of the late-Ming writer Yuan Hongdao written in the 1930s, Lin summed up the situation that he saw facing himself and a number of his fellow writers. "To the East we have a family of Proles; on the West it's a nest of Fascists. But we're unimpressed with the lot of them. If you want to tie me down to some 'ism' or other then all I can say is that I just want to be a human being." It was at this critical juncture in the intellectual life of the country, one Mao Dun called the "period of depression" (*kumen shiqi*), that Feng Zikai after a ten-year-long interest in Buddhism was initiated as a layman by his former teacher, the Dharma Master Hongyi. Hongyi also helped him select a name for his study, the Yuanyuan Hall. Feng's decision to embrace religion was his personal solution to the dilemma of the age. Although downplayed by his family in Mainland China today, a number of members of which double as scholars of his life, and by critics, Feng's religious
beliefs were of crucial importance throughout his life and, to a great extent, mark him off from his fellows. Ironically, his religious "homecoming" was to marked a new stage in his alienation from both those around him and the society at large, a new phase in his exile from the age.

As his children began to grow up and abandon the Golden Age, Feng Zikai turned his gaze to the life of the city in which he was working, Shanghai, and to the personal trials of his students. This is conventionally described as the beginning of Feng's career as an artist with a "socialist realist" bent, although this Stalinist artistic theory can hardly do justice to Feng Zikai's work. In fact, his works increasingly became a record of the world around him, a documentary of the passing days and the images that impinged on his imagination. Unlike the inspired works of his early artistic career, full of poetic subtlety or childlike delight, these mature paintings as he said himself, were "the result of the images of the world attacking my vacant and desolate heart", a heart left empty by the aging of his children.

Feng had been teaching at the Li Da Academy in Shanghai since 1926, but political interference had taken its toll on the idealistic aims of the schools founders and caused considerable disaffection among its teachers. During the Japanese attack on Shanghai that began on 28 January, 1932, the school was badly damaged. Following this Feng retained a position at the school in name, but did little teaching. With royalties from his various translations and payments for his paintings and illustrative work, Feng's financial situation gradually improved and he decided to give up teaching altogether and abandon Shanghai in favour of his birthplace Shimenwan in Jiaxing. In accordance with his late mother's wishes (she had died in 1930), he had his family house there torn down in 1933 and built a large and roomy residence of his own design, giving his study, the Yuanyuan Hall, which had until then been little more than an imaginary place of repose, a concrete form. For the five years from 1933 to late 1937 when he fled Jiaxing County with his family in the face of the Japanese invasion, Feng lived in retirement from the world at Yuanyuan Hall, painting, writing and translating, spending the spring and autumn months in a rented house in Hangzhou. This was the most productive period of his life. He took part, at a distance, in the Shanghai literary boom of the 1930s, contributing with many of his old friends to the essay magazines founded by Lin Yutang, but he had little enthusiasm for the increasingly acrimonious wrangling between the left and the right. Although he wrote for the leftist press he evinced little interest in becoming a revolutionary writer, and before the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War there was little evidence of strong sentiments of nationalism in his essays, although, as we will see in Chapter Eight, his view of art was from the mid-1920s markedly sino-centric.

10 "Talking About My Paintings", written in 1935, see Suibiji, p. 140.
Both the paintings and essays he did during his years as a recluse reveal Feng to have both observed and sympathized with the society around him. While active in the Shanghai scene from a distance, he was by no means in sympathy with the "Shanghai Types" (haipai wenren). His work still featured elements of the "humane literature" first proposed by Zhou Zuoren and championed by the Literature Research Society. Unlike many other of the popularity-seeking cultural figures of the day, Feng chose to retire from the centre of literary activity as soon as it was financially possible. Ironically, by so doing he was keeping faithful to the May Fourth tradition (one Shen Congwen would daresay have claimed as that of the "Peking School"): a belief in art for life, expression of the individual and education as a means of changing the national character.

Feng had never stayed away from Shimenwan for very long. It was, after all, not far from Shanghai. His return to Shimenwan in 1933 had partly been motivated by the hope that he would be able to recapture something of the innocence of his childhood. What he found, however, was rural bankruptcy and bitter poverty. Yet his writings and paintings of the mid-1930s are a continuation of his refined and at the same time realistic view of human life. He would later recall that he had had a premonition of the disaster that awaited Zhejiang in the war, and apart from energetic bouts of writing, translating and painting, he enjoyed his moments of leisure to the utmost. With the destruction of his home in 1937 he was forced to confront national tragedy.

7: 2 Teaching

Many of Feng's colleagues and friends including Ye Shengtao, Zhu Ziqing and Zheng Zhenduo were profoundly affected by the May Thirtieth Incident and its aftermath. While a number of them, such as Ye and Zheng, became politicized by these events, Feng kept at arm's length from the increasingly radical undercurrents of contemporary intellectual life at the time, and in terms of his career as a teacher it became evident he wanted to withdraw. However, two cover illustrations Feng painted for the Communist Youth League organ Zhongguo qingnian in 1926 show his connections and sympathy with the leftists. The first appeared on the 1926
anniversary of the May Thirtieth Movement which Zhongguo qingnian commemorated with a series of articles. The picture is of an arrow shooting towards the top of a pagoda. It is based on an episode from the Tang Dynasty, and the magazine’s editors wrote that it represented “a hope that revolutionary youths will all shoot ‘an arrow of commitment’ (shizhi de jian) at the pagoda of the ‘Red May’ for the liberation of oppressed peoples.” But this was not the only work Feng did in commemorating May Thirtieth, and his romantic “Song of May Thirtieth” (Wu-sa zhi ge) was published in the Shenbao Ziyoutan supplement nine years later.

The second cover illustration he did for Zhongguo qingnian showing a young man on a horse with a spear in his hand plays on this theme of personal aspiration and determination. This painting was used by the magazine for six months. Bi Keguan has noted that from its inception in 1923 up to the time of its forced closure by the KMT, Zhongguo qingnian only used these two paintings by Feng on its cover. These are now presented as evidence of Feng’s nascent interest in the Communist cause, despite the fact that in his writings at the time there is little to substantiate such a claim. From the style of the illustrations themselves it would even be possible to

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15 The editorial postscript of this issue of the magazine states in part that:

*We have purposely selected a number of significant things for our readers on the occasion of the first anniversary of May Thirtieth, bringing you a valuable and serious commemorative issue. We want our readers to appreciate the work of struggle carried out by the revolutionary masses over the past year, so that they can come to a comprehensive understanding of the May Thirtieth Movement, and appreciate just where we should be going from here.... We have commissioned Young Feng Zikai to paint the cover of this issue, for which we would like to thank him.*

16 Quoted Bi Keguan, “Two Precious Cover Designs by Mr Feng Zikai”, ibid. The story is of Zhan Xun, the magistrate of Qiuyang, who was surrounded by enemy forces. He sent a young officer by the name of Nan Jiyun to break through the encirclement and get help. Although Nan failed in his mission, he shot an arrow into the bas relief stonework of a Buddhist temple in the city to which he had gone for reinforcements indicating his determination to win the battle.

17 Shenbao, Ziyoutan, 30 May, 1934. His philosophical view of the value of life, and not just human life, led him to make a comment on the incident that was hardly in keeping with the martial spirit of commitment expected of progressive cultural figures. "The murder of people during the May Thirtieth Incident is certainly cause enough for public outrage, while the ceaseless murder of cocoons, crabs and fish is treated as a natural adjunct to enjoyment. Just how different is the value of the living souls of man and these creatures?" See “Remembering My Youth” (YiTershi), written in 1927, Yuanyuantang suibi, pp. 62-63.

18 That is, from issues 126 to 146.

19 Bi writes that "During this period Zhongguo qingnian was a fiery publication with a strong commitment to struggle. It was in this atmosphere of struggle that Mr Feng's cover illustrations played their role as weapons of agitation." "Two Precious Cover Designs by Mr Feng Zikai", p. 14. Bi's enthusiastic appraisal of the significance of these two illustrations must be seen in the light of the early post-Cultural Revolution years. As an avid fan and self-proclaimed student of Feng's, Bi Keguan was, in the early 1980s, anxious to see Feng's rehabilitated in fact as well as in name. He was
make the case that Feng did them on request, for there is nothing of the inspired wistfulness of his other works at this time; they looked like they were done on commission. It is a trait that becomes increasingly noticeable in his paintings: the work he does "on order" or as illustrations for friends' books (such as the pictures for Xia Mianzun's translation of Cuore, the illustrations he did for Lin Yutang's popular The Kaiming English Reader, or The Story of a Stone Hero by Ye Shengtao), or those with a socially meaningful content, are generally lifeless and uninspired. They seem to be executed in an almost perfunctory manner. 20

This is not to say that Feng did not take an active interest in the major questions of human rights of the time. Not to do so would have been out of character with his religious and artistic beliefs. In 1927, he joined the Writer's Union organized by Zheng Zhenduo, Hu Yuzhi and others, 21 although this was hardly as significant as his conversion to Buddhism discussed in the previous chapter.

As a student Feng had admired the striking individuality of his classmate Yang Bohao. Now that he was a teacher he found many of the conventions of the classroom irksome and inhibiting, both for the students and himself. Infused with the spirit of sharing knowledge with his students in an atmosphere of equality and camaraderie, a style of instruction that was championed by teachers at the Li Da Academy, Feng still felt uncomfortable in the role of pedagogue. 22

"To be able to study something with a group of young people or to talk about some facet of learning with children is such a meaningful and delightful thing!" he wrote in the essay "Cutting the Net Asunder" (Jian wang). "To my ear the school bell calling students to class or signalling the end of a period is nothing less than a gruff order. [7: 4] 23 Thereupon follows the military-like ritual of 'roll call'. Whenever I think that I'm 'paid a wage' to teach I feel that I am nothing more than a merchant. It

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20 The illustrative paintings Feng did in the late 1920s and early 1930s all share these limitations. In September 1929, Gu Zhongyi published a highly critical review of Feng's illustrations for Lin Yutang's book in Xinyue, Vol. II, Nos. 6-7 in the section Shubao chunqiu. Gu wrote that, "Feng Zikai's manhua are quite unsuitable as textbook illustrations. In my opinion Feng is artistically immature, although he does have a certain talent for instilling a poetic element in his paintings. However, such paintings are best published in isolation, at for most they only infer some meaning. To have him paint illustrations for something as stolid as school texts is like asking a tanner to become a seamstress." See Ming Tsuen, Addenda to Feng Zikai xiansheng nianbiao", p. 48.


22 The authors of Zhuan, p. 41, state that, "The system of Li Da was different from other schools at the time. The Academy had no principal and introduced the concept of "the unity of teaching and monitoring" (jiadao heyi), as well as applying a policy of "convinced students through persuasion" (shuofu zhiyi) [presumably as distinct from corporal punishment]. The teacher student relationship was as close and warm as that between parents and their children."

23 See Zhongxuesheng, No. 19, p. 36.
makes me depressed, and I become disgruntled with the very thought of 'going to class'.”

The years from 1925 to 1933 were Feng’s busiest as a teacher. Apart from giving art classes at a number of high schools, he wrote regularly for magazines aimed at students on art appreciation and music, and continually working on translations of articles and books on the subjects of music, art and education.

Feng does not seem to have enjoyed teaching as a profession, and, apart from the few references he makes to how he chaffs under school regulations, he rarely wrote about his job, an interesting fact considering that for years most of his time was taken up rushing to and from the various schools at which he was employed. Whereas his paintings based on classical poetry and of his children were heartfelt and lyrical, the scenes of school life and students leave little doubt as to what he thought of formalized education. In one of the essays he wrote after retiring to the countryside he spoke of a neighbour who tried to make sure the fruit from her grapevine would be sweet by dousing the plant with sugar water. The woman concerned could not be convinced that this was preposterous, and her friends agreed with the treatment. "It seems to me that a similar approach to nourishment is common in the realm of education”, Feng wrote.

Nonetheless, this was a period in his life which provided him with endless opportunities to observe school life and students, which in turn inspired a series of paintings. Like his earlier paintings for Wenxue zhoubao, many of these new paintings were done as illustrations. In the second issue of Zhongxuesheng, a magazine which was launched in February 1930, the first in a series of what were

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24 “Cutting the Net Asunder” (Jian wang), Yuanyuantiang suihi, p. 2. In the essay “The Sorrow of Achievement” (Shixingde beiai), Feng talks about the disappointment one experiences when a long-cherished goal is attained, or when a wish is fulfilled. Among his examples he mentions the excitement both teachers and students experience on a Saturday afternoon just before breaking up for the day off on Sunday. Infected by the joy of impending freedom in the air the teachers relax school regulations and let the students play up. See Yuanyuantiang suihi, pp. 24-25. This essay was written during the Spring Festival of 1936 and originally published in Yuzhoufeng.

25 He taught Western art at Li Da from 1925 to 1928 after which the course had to be abandoned due to a lack of funds. According to Zhuan, p. 42, Feng felt so responsible for the students who had not finished their course that he asked Lin Fengmian to accept them in his West Lake Art School (Xihu yishu zhuanye xuexiao). Feng was also offered a job there but declined, although he recommended his student Tao Yuanqing, a woodblock artist, and Huang Hanqiu, a friend from his time in Japan, to go and work there instead.

26 The three main institutions where he was employed in the late 1920s were the Li Da Academy, which we have already mentioned, the Songjiang Girl’s High School, and the Chengzhong Private High School. These schools were featured by Zhongxuesheng in the first three issues of the magazine respectively. Even when requested to write an essay for Zhongxuesheng in 1935 admonishing students to concentrate on their studies and not to fritter away their youth, Feng could not help recalling how much he disliked school and as a youth had regarded each new term, and every new school week as a prison sentence, the insubstantial delight of the weekend or holidays was the only thing that kept him going. See "Regret for the Spring" (Xichun), Chexiang shehui, pp. 102-10; Zhuan, pp. 186-90.

27 "Labourers’ Songs" (Laozhe zige), written on 24 July, 1934, see Chexiang shehui, pp. 186-87.
entitled "Manhua of High School Student Lives" (Zhongxuesheng shenghuo manhua) appeared. The pictures were all by Feng and they became a regular feature of the magazine from the seventh (August 1930) to the twentieth issues.\(^{28}\) Zhongxuesheng was founded and run by Xia Mianzun in 1930 to serve, as Xia wrote in the magazine’s first editorial, "the countless young people who are hesitating at the crossroads, suffering from thirst in the boundless wastelands."\(^{29}\) Feng became a regular contributor of both paintings and articles. Many of his illustrations, however, were never collected, even in the volume devoted to students and school life, Xueshengxiang, which was initially published in 1931 and again in 1941, when the artist repainted the collection after the original plates were destroyed in the early years of the Anti-Japanese War.\(^{30}\)

The graphics in Zhongxuesheng were nearly without exception printed on the blank spaces at the end of articles, usually occupying a third or one half of a page. None of the paintings had the black line border characteristic of much of his other work and many, especially those in the second issue, were large elongated pictures that appear to have been done in order to fit the space in the magazine. Although it is impossible to date these pictures exactly, one very interesting fact does emerge. The six paintings in the second issue of Zhongxuesheng are all signed "TK",\(^{31}\) while the five pictures in issue seven, the three in issue eight and two in issue nine are all unsigned. Following this, except for a few isolated examples, all of the paintings that appear in issues ten to twenty are signed with the character "Kai" written in a circle, an imitation seal.\(^{32}\) As we have noted, Feng Zikai’s earliest published works were regularly signed with the roman letters "TI(“, and this remained his signature for most of his published work before 1949.\(^{33}\) What is interesting is that the paintings marked with the seal "Kai" are somewhat different in style from the works signed "TK". The two volumes of paintings Xuesheng manhua and Er tong manhua that he published in 1931 and 1932 respectively contained many of these works which had originally been

\(^{28}\) These illustrations were initially printed under the simple heading "Manhua " and from the tenth to the fifteenth issue they used the original heading "Manhua of High School Student Lives" (Zhongxuesheng shenghuo manhua) subsequently changed to "Manhua of Student Lives" (Xuesheng shenghuo manhua).

\(^{29}\) "A Chronology of Mr Xia Mianzun", Pingwu zhi ji, p. 16. See also Wo yu Kaiming, pp. 296-98.

\(^{30}\) The repainted Xueshengxiang, although generally dated according to the originals, were done as part of Zikai manhua quanj.

\(^{31}\) Takehisa Yumeji signed many of his koma-e, or paintings done with a (thick) border in Yumeji genshu, Feng’s favourite, simply "TY".

\(^{32}\) It should be noted that one picture signed in this fashion, "Your Own Work" (Zijide zuopin), does appears in issue nine of Zhongxuesheng, October 1930, p. 123, however it is not listed in the table of contents.

\(^{33}\) After 1949, Feng regularly signed his paintings "Zikai hua", or "painted by Zikai", often adding a red seal as well.
In general these pictures are characterized by much finer brush strokes than Feng's other manhua. In fact, they seem to shy away from exploiting the ability of the Chinese brush to produce lines with textured and contrasting wet-dry effects. Indeed, of all of Feng Zikai's works these paintings seem to be most akin to Western illustrations and line drawings. Presumably these pictures are of a later date than the Zikai manhua paintings of 1925-1926, a supposition supported by a comparison of the two types of work, one unstudied and positively lyrical in mood and style, the other more consciously drawn and affected. However, since Feng was to reproduce many of his famous and favourite paintings for friends and republication in later years, is it not also possible that the many of works he gave to Zhongxuesheng were first done when he was working at Chunhui High School, when he was little more than a student turned teacher himself? Certainly, the general tenor of these works, one which is consistently sympathetic to students, supports such an hypothesis. Moreover, Feng had started depicting scenes of school life the day he sketched a teachers' meeting and stuck it on the door of his study at Chunhui.

He did a number of pictures entitled "Education" (Jiaoyu) or "One Type of Education" (Mouzhong jiaoyu) which certainly reflected his feelings about the type of rote learning which still formed such an integral part of Chinese education at the time. He likened schools to a type of crude production line. [7: 5] Similarly, the pictures "The Elevator of Learning" (Shengxueji) and "Diligence" (Yonggong), [7: 6] offer a view of the negative aspects of education which both Chunhui and Li Da had attempted to redress. His paintings of teachers or school monitors were equally unflattering. [7: 7]

This is not to say that Feng was not impressed by devoted teachers. In two essays, "A Record of a Trip to a Country Primary School" (Ji xiangcun xiaoxue suo jian) and "Conversations at Tonglu" (Tonglu fuxuan), he expressed his admiration for frugal and self-effacing educators. Nevertheless, one wonders just how popular a

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34 In an article "New Discovery of an Old Work by Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai jiuzuode xinfaxian), Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao, 19 October, 1973, Yin Hui notes that another book, Ertong shenghuo manhua, was published by the Ertong shuju in Shanghai in the early 1930s with an introduction dated 10 August, 1931. Yin Hui's copy is a revised edition from 1948. The pictures produced with this article, however, are all affixed with the "Kai" seal and are in the style of similarly signed works.


36 Zikai manhua quanji, 3: 1 and 24 (or Zhongxuesheng, No. 7, p. 124 for the original).


38 "A Record of a Trip to a Country Primary School" was written in March 1935 and first published in Lunyu, later included in the collection Yuanyuantang zaibi, pp. 65-74; and "Conversations at Tonglu" was the second of a projected series of five essays Feng wrote about his flight from the Japanese. For his reference to the teacher Wang Xingxian, Ma Yifu's disciple, in this essay, see Suibiji , pp. 266-67. In "A Record of a Trip to a Country Primary School", Feng delights in the
teacher Feng Zikai may have been himself. It is significant that despite the fact that memoir writing has become such a major element of the literary industry in Mainland China over the last decade, few of his former students have written about Feng as a teacher. This is despite the fact that nearly every other aspect of his life an work has been touched on in newspaper and magazine articles.

There is no doubt that Feng was an exacting and diligent instructor, however, for notwithstanding the dearth of evidence from his students, Zhongxuesheng provides more than adequate proof of his pedagogical energy. There was a section devoted to questions from readers aimed at the editors and contributors to the journal at the end of each issue. 39 Feng Zikai's opinion and advice on both art and music was constantly sought after: where musical scores could be bought in Shanghai be they for Beethoven or the harmonica, whether such and such an art school had a good reputation, or which books were most suitable for the study of music. 41 But apart from such practical questions, which he could often satisfy by directing readers to articles or books written by himself, Feng also used this forum to make succinct observations concerning the art of manhua, the universal relevance of Western music, or even speculation that Aubrey Beardsley's prints could be regarded as a type of manhua. 44

Pedagogy on paper was all well and good, but dealing with large groups of pupils in a classroom was a different matter altogether. The inherent contradiction between using art as a form of self-expression and being employed to instruct students both in the appreciation and practice of painting was something Feng gave voice to in an article on sketching in the countryside. "There is nothing more ridiculous than an
art teacher marching a troupe of thirty or forty students with all of their painting equipment on their backs off into the countryside to sketch," he wrote. He advised students who are interested in painting natural scenery to ignore the urge to outfit themselves like professional oil painters with easel, paintbox and stool, and to start off with a simple sketch book which will be neither a physical nor an emotional burden on painting excursions. For, once equipped with the accoutrements of the professional one feels obliged to paint something no matter what before returning home. Many of the articles or speeches on art which he wrote for high school students in the late 1920s and the early 1930s were full of similarly sensible and practical advice. They were collected in the volume *Yishu quwei* which was published by Kaiming shudian in late 1934.

The essays in *Yishu quwei* sum up the aesthetic outlook that Feng had developed since his high school years, and one which had seen little essential change before the early 1950s, when he made a self-criticism of his past thinking and attitudes. Of these we have already mentioned "Beauty and Empathy" (Mei yu tongqing). In his study of 20th Century Chinese philosophy, O. Brière sums up Feng's outlook at this time when he says in reference to *Yishu quwei* that Feng "lays it down that art is not a mere craft or technique, but a superior activity of man which expresses a transcendent world; for in the grasping of beauty the eyes of the soul are more important than the eyes of the body." Brière notes that Feng, like Xu Zhimo and Lin Yutang emphasized the prime importance of beauty in the three "pursuits of life", that is of "truth, beauty and goodness", and he quotes an important passage from *Yishu quwei*:

> Intellectual research proves the desire to create truth. One tries in his conduct to create goodness. One cultivates art by desiring to create beauty. To bring about a better, truer, and more beautiful world, is the goal of human life. Unfortunately man's understanding of beauty is far from equalling his comprehension regarding truth and goodness. And yet if man cannot perfect his aesthetic culture, he cannot expand his "personality"....Aesthetic education is a very profound education of the heart which is bound to affect all life.
In his general aesthetic approach Feng's thinking closely paralleled that of Zhu Guangqian, "the great master of aestheticism". 49 Zhu, who had become famous counselling the young in articles sent from Europe for publication in Yiban, had written "When our efforts are crowned with success, we should bend our energies to the triumph of the real. But when our force proves insufficient, it is then necessary to leave the real temporarily. The life of artists is an evasion: works of art help us to flee reality and offer us consolation in the world of the ideal." 50

Inasmuch as formalized education could equip people with an ability to join such artists in their escape from the oppressiveness of reality, Feng argued that the cultivation of quwei, that unique sense that every person enjoys as a child, could allow even the least artistic person to find fulfillment. 51 Similarly, in the essays Feng wrote or translated for Jiaoyu zazhi in 1928, he stressed that artistic or aesthetic education was itself an art form which was essential to the training of a sensitive and complete personality. "Aesthetic education aims at teaching people how to live artistically." 52

Feng's personal attitude was similar to that of Zhu Guangqian. Feng was a man who felt himself to have been permanently exiled from the world of children and increasingly alienated from the politicized intellectual life of China, expressed not only before the war, but even in one of his last essays written in 1972, "A Temporary Escape from the Dusty World" (Zanshi tuoli chenshi). 53

From 1928, Feng Zikai devoted more and more time to writing and translating, especially after Western art classes at the Li Da Academy were stopped due to a lack of funds. 54 In 1929, he accepted a job at the Songjiang Girl's School (Songjiang nüzi zhongxue) to the south-west, 55 where he taught painting and art theory, travelling between Songjiang and Shanghai. Shortly after his mother's death in early 1930, he moved to Jiaxing, a county seat in Zhejiang just outside Shanghai from where he commuted to work. Although he was still connected to the Li Da Academy and had

49 Briere, Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy 1898-1950, p. 96.
50 Quoted in Briere, Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy 1898-1950, p. 97.
51 See "Throw Out Art Classes", pp. 4-5; also the discussion of quwei in Chapter Five.
52 "Throw Out Art Classes", p. 3.
53 Suijii, pp. 454-55.
54 See the chronology of Feng's life in Zhuan, p. 188. His translations at this time include Robert Louis Stevenson's The Suicide Club and Turgenev's First Love -- translated in 1922 but rejected by his publisher as "pornographic", revised and published by Kaiming shudian in 1929. Feng arranged for the teachers Tao Yuanqing and Huang Hanqiu as well as a few dozen students to study at the West Lake Art and Technical School in Hangzhou run by Lin Fengmian. Lin offered Feng a job which he declined, preferring to remain in Shanghai to write and teach.
55 Songjiang is now included within the Municipality of Shanghai.
rooms there, he no longer taught.\textsuperscript{56} In 1933, KMT political interference in running the school occasioned him to remark angrily, "Li Da has been corrupted!"\textsuperscript{57} Recurring illness in the early 1930s led him to restrict his movements even further.

\section*{7.3 Cityscape}

As we have noted in Chapter Two, having been forced to settle in Shanghai for economic reasons, Feng and his family did their best to create a "little Shimenwan world" of their own. Even from his earliest days in Shanghai Feng sorely felt the stark contrast between the cold and impersonal nature of human relations in the city and the warm intimacy of his home town. The landlord from whom he rented his first room after moving to the city and the family who lived directly opposite acted as though he did not even exist. He was told sharply to pay up his twelve yuan rent on time and any attempts at socializing were brusquely rejected. As a boy he remembered once watching his mother praying to the Buddhas at the family shrine, and as he watched the incense smoke waft up to the ceiling he heard someone urinating in a pot upstairs. He told his mother, but she upbraided him with the words, "Remember, a ceiling is as good as being separated by a hill" (\textit{ge chonglou ge chongshan}).\textsuperscript{58} The relationship between city neighbours certainly proved the truth of this statement and Feng encapsulated the sentiment in a famous picture entitled "Neighbours", [7:8]\textsuperscript{59} in which he depicts the cool indifference with which people living next to each other in the city.

Feng's paintings of the city were collected in a volume entitled \textit{City Sights} (\textit{Dushixiang}) reproduced for the publication of his "complete works" during the war.\textsuperscript{60} Many of these paintings were originally published as illustrations in the pages of

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{Zhuan}, p. 190; Feng Huazhan's article "Longing for My Hometown" (Guyuanqing: huainian jiaxiang), \textit{Jiaxingbao}, 8 November, 1987.
\item \textsuperscript{57} \textit{Zhuan}, p. 191; \textit{Nianbiao}, p. 20. Xia Mianzun had lost interest in the school some years earlier, having increasingly taken on duties as an editor and publisher in the late 1920s. See "A Chronology of Mr Xia Mianzun", pp. 15-16.
\item \textsuperscript{58} "Floorboards" (Louban), \textit{Yuanyuantang suibi}, p. 48.
\item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{Dushixiang}, Zikai manhua quanji, 5: 7, "Neighbours" (Linren). See also Feng Zikai huaji, pp. 30-31, and Harbsmeier, \textit{The Cartoonist Feng Zikai}, pp. 192-93, in which a post-1949 picture of neighbours exchanging copies of the PLA newspaper \textit{Liberation Daily} (\textit{Jiefang ribao}) and the \textit{People's Daily} (\textit{Renmin ribao}) is contrasted with the painting from the 1930s (dated 1935, and slightly different from the 1932 version in \textit{Dushixiang}). Harbsmeier offers an interesting although perhaps somewhat imaginative analysis:
\begin{quote}
...The neighbours have become good communists. The man on the right reads \textit{Liberation Daily}, presumably he has joined the army. The man on the left keeps the \textit{People's Daily}. Probably he is a member of the party. Both men are quite pathetically enthusiastic. The soldier on the right has the obligatory inane smile. One can sense the politicians breathing down Feng Zikai's neck as he was making this cartoon. It must have been thoroughly humiliating for him, an act of abject artistic self-abnegation. A tribute to the anti-rightist movement of the time. (p. 193.)
\end{quote}
\item \textsuperscript{60} Zikai manhua quanji, Vol. V.
\end{itemize}
Ziyoutan in 1934-1935, and they are characterized by an interest in the poignant fate of the impoverished denizens of the city. Some of the pictures may have been done during Feng's years in Shanghai; many, however, were the result of short trips to the city after he had settled in Shimenwan. The fact that he was now an outsider observing city scenes probably provided a fresh perspective for his work. Although these sketches reveal little of the revulsion that was commonly felt by urban-based intellectuals towards the cities, they were definitely part of the general rejection of city life that had grown among the May Fourth generation during the mid- and late-1920s.

His attitude to the city was one shared by many Chinese intellectuals in the early 1930s. Shanghai was the epicentre of imperialist activity and commercial influence, it was also, because of the concessions, a haven for radical activists. As it was the centre of publishing and finance in China most hopeful writers and artists found their way there, and for the literary figures of the Lower Yangtze region it remained, as it had been since the late 19th Century, an ideal place for their activities.

The May Fourth period was, for certain intellectuals, followed by a gradual reaction against the city and a "discovery of the countryside". This trend burgeoned in the 1920s into a movement to "go to the people" (dao minjian qu) and gained considerable popularity with some urban-based, although often country-born, intellectuals. It also dovetailed happily with the romanticism of an age when education and positive action were seen as a way to reform the country. As we have seen in

61 The Ziyoutan was the arts supplement of the Shanghai daily newspaper Shenbao which spanned the years 1911 to 1949. The Ziyoutan supplement reached its apogee in the 1930s (1 December, 1932 – 31 October, 1935) under the editorship of Li Liewen, who took over from the incumbent "mandarin duck and butterfly" writer Zhou Shoujuan. Under Li's control, the supplement became a forum for such leftist writers as Lu Xun and Mao Dun, as well as such anti-leftist and uncommitted writers as Zhang Binglin, Wu Zhihui and Lin Yutang. Pressure from rightists forced Li out of the job in May 1934, yet the new editor Zhang Xinsheng continued Li's editorial policy until late 1935 when the supplement was closed down. It reappeared in October 1938 edited by Wang Renshu (Ba Ren), a former teacher at Chunhui High School. See Tang Tao's introduction to Shenbao <<Ziyoutan>>: 1 December, 1932 – 25 April, 1934, Shanghai: Shanghai Tushuguan, 1981, Vol. I, pp. 1-10; also Chūgoku gendai bungaku jiten, edited by Maruyama Noboru, Ito Toramaru and Shinmura Toru, Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1985, pp. 147-48. Feng Zikai had paintings published in the Ziyoutan from May 1934 to May 1935 (following Li Liewen's resignation), and again for a period in 1938 upon its revival.

62 Some of his most amusing sketches with an anti-city bias, however, were published in Yuzhoufeng in 1936 in a series entitled Manhua of Life (Rensheng manhua). The pictures were usually printed in sets of four, somewhat in the style of Japanese koma-e cartoon strips.

63 Even towards the end of his life, Feng would recall the inequalities, cheating and general divisiveness of "old Shanghai" with a disdain that does not seem particularly political in origin. See "Old Shanghai" (Jiu Shanghai), written in 1972, Suibiji, pp. 480-85.

64 See Chang-tai Hung, Going to the People: Chinese Intellectuals and Folk Literature, 1918-1937, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 10-15. Hung concentrates in particular on the popular literature movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Also Leo Ou-fan Lee's "The Romantic Temper of May Fourth Writers", in Reflections on the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium, p. 81. For his part, Feng Zikai wrote of the need to "go to the people" in an effort to learn about the art they appreciated. However, he said he was personally attracted to a narrower definition of art and its value, and he pointed out, prophetically as it happened, that the fashionable slogans calling for "mass art
Chapter Three, it was this very spirit that had informed the attitudes of the teachers at the Chunhui High School at Baima Lake where Feng had taught and which had led to a number of Chinese imitations of Mushakoji Saneatsu's "New Village" spirit, such as the Li Da Academy. The city was now conceived of as something evil, in both its scale and by reason of the fact that its inhabitants fell under the influence of imperialist culture and were increasingly divorced from their rural roots. The already radical impoverishment of the countryside had been hastened by the Great Depression of 1929. The silk industry, of which West Zhejiang was the centre, was particularly hard hit, and this led many writers from the Lower Yangtze to turn their thoughts homeward. In the countryside poverty and political instability created a situation ripe for revolution, and local leaders were strongly anti-urban. This thinking is found expressed most strongly expressed by such (then still marginal) revolutionaries as Mao Zedong and Liang Shuming. And some activists were already engaged in rural reform, even in Tongxiang in Zhejiang, Feng's home. Same time, there was a more romantic, even utopian, view of the country among urban writers. It was something of a collective hometown nostalgia that found expression in dozens of articles in the

(dazhong yishu) would, if put into practice, lead to one of two results: "if the ability of the masses to understand art isn't enhanced, then the level of art itself will be brought low." See his article on the subject, "Delving into Popular Art" (Shenru minjian yishu), written in 1936 and included in the collection Yishu mantan, pp. 128-42, in particular p. 132. In keeping with his own artistic view Feng suggested that there had to be some middle ground where fine art and popular taste could meet. As we have seen from the discussion of the manhua in the above, Feng believed this artistic form to be the product of an eclectic approach.

65 Liang Shuming commented on the city that, "Shanghai tangibly brings together into one place both Chinese and Western corruptions; it is the most condemnable place! Fortunately China has only one Shanghai, and has not yet become completely Shanghai-ized." Quoted in Guy Alitto, The Last Confucian, p. 196. Zhou Zuoren spoke of the evils of the "Shanghai stench" (Shanghaiqz), Mao Dun despaired "urban literature", while Tao Xingzhi, the educationalist, despaired of the general drift towards "Shanghainization" (Shanghaihua). See Hung, Going to the People, p. 14, and notes 54-56.

66 In the 1920s, Liang Shuming identified the reason for the decay of traditional Chinese morals as being Western education and the cities, the cankerous influence of which seeped from the coastal foreign enclaves into the surrounding countryside. See Guy Alitto, The Last Confucian, pp. 139-40, also pp. 193-96, where Alitto notes the similarities between Liang and Mao's early (and life-long) anti-urbanism.

67 Alitto, The Last Confucian, p. 227; and Kong Xuexiong, Zhongguo jinri zhi nongcun yundong, Shanghai: Sammizhuyi yanjiuhui, 1934, pp. 330-31. Huang Yanpei, Li Shoutong's old classmate from the Nanyang Public School, was also active in the field of vocational education as a part of rural reconstruction in the 1920s and 1930s. See The Last Confucian, pp. 165 and note 29, 166, 167, 168.

68 This found expression in poetry, prose and, in the 1930s, cinema. Such films as "The Road" (Dalu, 1934) and "Fisherman's Song" (Yuguangqu, 1934) are typical of the romantic view of the countryside -- even though highly critical of the economic and political chaos affecting the peasants' lives, while "Sister Flowers" (Zimeihua, 1933), "The Goddess" (Shennu, 1934), and "Street. Angel" (Malu tianshi, 1937) are strongly anti-urban (Shanghai) in their bias.
Shanghai press in the early 1930s. Many of these were written by people who had journeyed back to their native places and reported on the situation there or simply lost themselves in childhood reveries.

These pictures, which Harbsmeier includes in his discussion of Feng's "social realism", are generally emphasized by Mainland Chinese writers on Feng and his work as evidence of an unconscious commitment to progressive politics. Harbsmeier argues that "Feng's 'social realism' was essentially not political but artistic." And that, "In the last resort there is no practical or political perspective in it." But he tends to over-emphasize the influence of the childlike mind in this stage of Feng's career when he says, "His indignation at the social injustices and atrocities of his time is like that of a powerless child...he speaks with the unquestionable authority of a thoughtful child."

A small number of Feng's paintings of the city reflect the lyrical interests of his earlier work, although in these there is an increasing sense of confinement, even claustrophobia. One of the pictures, a work painted towards the beginning of his life in Shanghai, is "Spring in the City" (Duhui zhi chun) which Feng originally published in Zikai manhua. [7: 9] Repainted for inclusion in Dushixiang, "Spring in the City" shows someone looking out from a balcony in a garret to a kite flying over the city.

69 From early 1933 until 1935 the Ziyoutan supplement of Shenbao published dozens of articles on this subject. See, for example, issues of the paper for 1933: 18 January; 25 February; 12, 19 March; 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30 April; 27 May; 4, 21 June; 9 August; 13, 15 October; 4, 11, 14 November; and, 11 December, Shenbao <<Ziyoutan>>: 1 December, 1932 -- 25 April, 1934, Vol. I. These articles included nostalgic vignettes of country life, descriptions of the rural utopia, as well as polemics on the need for the intelligentsia to go into the country to work and lead in reform, and/or revolution there. Cao Juren, a pre-war friend of Feng Zikai, was particularly vocal in criticizing utopian views of the countryside, and in the early 1930s he called for young educated city-dwellers to return to the country to organize the peasants and help them improve their lot. He followed his own advice and returned to his hometown in Zhejiang.

70 Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, pp. 31-32. I find the use of this term objectionable, especially since the specifically Stalinist-Maoist doctrine of "social realism" embodies a theoretical approach to art which is, I believe, enimical to the spirit of Feng Zikai's work. Hu Feng's criticism of Feng quoted Harbsmeier on page 31 of his book is a good indication of how much Feng failed to comply to the requirements of "social realism". His works of social criticism were rather the product of sympathy for his fellow man.

71 See, for example, Zhan, pp. 73-74; and Feng Huazhan, "Feng Zikai's Manhua on the Eve of Liberation" (Feng Zikai jiefang qianxide manhua), Yitian, 1982: 2, pp. 76-77.

72 Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 32.

73 The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, ibid.

74 The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, ibid.

75 Zikai manhua, p. 63. The original version of the painting is entitled "Duhui zhi chun" (or "tokai no haru") using the Japanese word duhui (tokai) for city instead of the Chinese dushi. See also Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 58, who writes of this painting:

Here in the city, the kite reminds the person on the constricting balcony of the freedom, beauty, and humanity of the countryside. [sic ]

In his writings, Feng Zikai frequently comments on the inhumanity of city life.

Again, similar works can be found in Yumoji's Haru no maki.
smokestacks and a lone willow squeezed between buildings. Another was done towards the end of his sojourn in the city: "Autumn in the City" (Dushi zhi qiu). [7: 10]

A weary rickshaw puller is giving a plant a ride. A number of interpretations of this painting are possible: to the politically sensitive it could well be an attack on the wealthy who can afford to hire a separate vehicle for the transportation of their plants; although a likely alternative is that it is a sympathetic view of a rickshaw-puller who despite his menial work retains a love of nature, ferrying a plant home at the end of a hard day's work. But the art of Feng's best meaning-laded works is that they are open to a number of interpretations, or rather no fixed reading at all, and it is impossible to describe the story behind a picture with complete certainty.

In the essay "Music Language" (Yinyu), Feng writes of the sense of loss he feels with the encroachment of modern, mechanistic life, "a sorrow for the disappearance of the subtle flavour of one's life and emotions (shenghuo qinggande meimiaode quwei)". He found the sounds of the city had overwhelmed the musical hawkers' calls and the street sounds of the past.

"The Sick Car" (Bingche) [7: 11], another early painting based on a city scene, reveals something of the ironical contempt Feng had for modern urban conveniences. He makes a more pointed attack on the difference between the wealthy inhabitants of the highly developed concessions and the impoverished denizens of the Chinese city in one of the series "Labourer's Song" written on 28 July, 1934. [7: 12] The popular art spawned by the city was something that Feng found positively repulsive and he singled out the inexpensive calendar illustrations (huazhi or...
yuefenpai) sold throughout Shanghai and used to decorate homes in both the coastal cities and even the inland for criticism.\footnote{"Labourer's Song, 6" (Laozhe zige, liu), 27 July, 1934, \textit{Suibiji}, p. 111. See also "The Past and Present of Shanghai 'calendar' illustrations" (Shanghai 'yuefenpai' nianhuade jinx), by Zhu Shiji and Huang Zhenliang, \textit{Meishu}, 1984: 8, pp. 4-7; Kao, \textit{China's Response to the West in Art}, pp. 52-55. Calendar paintings were introduced in the late-19th Century and used to sell imported goods. They symbolized the semi-colonial treaty port culture and in the 1920s spread throughout the hinterland. Kao comments, "...calendars with traditional New Year picture themes and Chinese beauties gradually replaced imported prints, becoming the most powerful salesmen of Western goods....Printed in gaudy colours...the calendars have found great popularity among the Chinese....When some artists in the 20th Century came into contact with real Western art, they discovered to their dismay how 'successful' the calendars had been in conditioning public taste. After studying the masterpieces of Western art in art schools or abroad, the artists were unanimous in their condemnation of the vulgar and degenerate taste of the calendar painters and their superficial grafting of Western techniques."} Feng was distressed that these illustrations were what passed for "mass art" (\textit{dazhong yishu}) in the city, an art that was "marked by a poverty of both form and content."\footnote{"Labourer's Song (6)", \textit{Suibiji}, p. 111. The mass art and literature movement of the 1930s became a central element in the debate of leftists before and during the Anti-Japanese War. Schwarz, in \textit{From Renaissance to Revolution}, pp. 177-83, discusses this movement, which she calls the 'Massification of Art', at length, giving a positive assessment of its results. The main arguments from the leftist camp on the movement, authored by such writers as Feng Xuefeng and Mao Dun, were collected in the volume \textit{Kangzhan wenyi lunji}, edited by Luo Shiwen. Wenyuan chubanshe, 1938, reprinted Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986, pp. 133-216. See also Amitendranath Tagore, \textit{Literary Debates in Modern China, 1918-1937}, pp. 141-60. After 1949, the CPC-directed "mass art movement" thrived, borrowing heavily from the aesthetic of the popular calendar paintings described above.} He also railed against "commercial art", billboard advertisements and product names painted everywhere in the city and country, which destroyed the harmony of the environment.\footnote{"Commercial Art" (\textit{Shangye yishu}), written in 1933 and anthologized in \textit{Yishu conghua}, Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1935, pp. 20-42.} 84

7: 4 Escape from the City

The ostensible reasons given by Feng's biographers for his decision to settle in the new house in Shimenwan are that after a decade on the move with his family he wanted a fixed and settled home. The other reason given is that he needed a larger house in which to accommodate his aunt and elder sister who often came to visit.\footnote{Zhuan, p. 49; also "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 229.} Although Feng was based in Shimenwan for five years, he also rented a house on the shore of Hangzhou's West Lake and spent spring and autumn in the city.\footnote{"Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 232.} This is something of an indication that his decision to leave Shanghai was not solely because he craved a sedentary existence.\footnote{Zhang Gui, a distant relative who worked as an apprentice in the Feng family business, records that for much of the time between 1934 and November 1937, he and Feng resided in Hangzhou to avoid the depredations Shimenwan suffered as a result of war. They first lived at No. 6 Huangqin Alley, and later moving to No. 2 Tianjia Gardens. Ma Yifu was also living in Hangzhou at the time, as was Ma and Hongyi's friend Jiang Danshu, a musician and poet who was known for his expertise in...} Certainly, the heavy fighting between Chinese and
Japanese forces in 1932 had something to do with it, Jiangwan being caught in the middle of the conflict. The Li Da Academy was variously bombed and occupied by government troops, and put out of action for some time. The death of Kuang Husheng, the head of the school knocked down by a car when he was rushing around the city trying to borrow funds to reopen the academy, eventually led to open political conflicts within the school itself.

But beyond these more practical considerations for leaving Shanghai there was the question of personal preference and spiritual need. Life in the city, so well observed by Feng in the paintings he did during his years in Shanghai, was oppressive and constricting, and the ambience of the place had led Feng to becoming increasingly critical of the world around him. His peripheral involvement in politics may have been as much a reaction to city life itself as well as a result of camaraderie with his progressive fellows and despair at the situation. His decision to live once more in a rural, or traditional environment once more was in part motivated by his personal aesthetic; or at least he cast his emotional and intellectual objections to Shanghai in aesthetic terms.

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playing the guqin. Zhang acted as Feng's amanuensis, and features prominently in his war-time Jiaoshi riji. See "Unforgettable Times - Memories of the Days with Uncle Kai" (Nanwangde suiyue - huiyi zai Kai shu shenbiande riji), Tongxiang wenyi, No. 25, 1985: 9, pp. 25-28. Feng called his Hangzhou residence his "detached palace" (xinggong), see "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 233. He says people found his occupancy of a house in Hangzhou, "a branch of Yuanyuan Hall" (Yuanyuantang zhibu) as he called it, a city where he made no attempt to earn money, inexplicable and wasteful. But, he retorts in this essay, the attraction of Hangzhou was purely artistic, and this was possible because he could enjoy the place without being emotionally or financially involved with it (wu lihai guanxz). Tianjia Gardens was said to be the former residence of a prominent Qing official. Tao Kangde, one of the editors of Lunyu, Renjianshi and Yuzhoufeng, visited Feng there and said it was an elegant and quiet spot with a pond and wooden fence around it. The walls of the house were "covered in poems by Tao Yuanming written in his own hand." See "A Poor Girl Washing Gauze in the River" (Pinjian jiangtou zi wansha), reprinted in Wenren bixiade wenren, by Lin Yutang, Zheng Zhenduo et al, edited by Qin Luren and Sun Yurong, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1987, p. 298.

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Zhuan, p. 190; Nianbiao, p. 18. Xia Mianzun took a fragment of a bomb from the rubble of the school after the incident and kept it on his bedside table. Three years later he wrote a meditation on this souvenir entitled "An Ornamental Hill of Steel" (Gantie jiashan), see Pingwu zhi ji, pp. 196-98. See also Ye Zhishan -- Xia's son-in-law, the son of Ye Shengtao -- "In the Hope of Cultural Exchange -- a Note on Mr Xia Mianzun and Uchiyama Kanzō sensei" (Qi wenhua zhi jiaohu -- ji Xia Mianzun xiansheng he Neishan Wanzao xiansheng), written on 24 May, 1986, Xia zhuanji, p. 56, & Xia Hongfu's article on page 71.

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Zhuan, p. 190; Nianbiao, p. 18. Ba Jin, a friend of Kuang's, recalls the aftermath of the January Twenty-eighth Incident as follows, "...there was no roof [on the school building], and an unexploded 250 lb. bomb was sticking out of the floor in one room, and I saw a half-eaten human leg that had been discarded by a dog in another. I had gone to Jiangwan in search of evidence of the invasion; Mr Husheng was there in pursuit of his plans to rebuild the school." See "In Memory of an Educator" (Huainian yiwei jiaoyujia), Suixianglu IV: Bingzhongji, Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1988, pp. 64-65. On pages 9-12 of the July 1932 issue of Zhongxuesheng, No. 26, there is a series of photographs of the damage done to the school during the fighting. On pages 5-7 there is an article on Kuang Husheng's self-sacrificing spirit.

The essay "Home" (Jia), written on 28 October, 1936, see Suibiji, pp. 180-85, describes quite explicitly his sentiments about "going home" to Shimenwan even after a short trip away or a stay in Hangzhou. "The bajiao banana would bow as the master of the house returned, the cherry [trees] would nod, while the grape vines would release a few leaves to show that I was welcome. My two small
The very geometry of the streets of a city like Shanghai was unnerving for the artist. Returning to Hangzhou after an expedition to the metropolis in late 1934 he found the scale and atmosphere of the old city a welcome relief. "The configuration of the Shanghai streets is vertical, while that of Hangzhou is horizontal. Perpendicular lines make a stern impression, while things arranged on a plane make you feel at peace....The perpendicular is hierarchical; the horizontal the measure of equality. The vertical is perilous, while the horizontal expresses eternal stability....Of late there has been a steady increase in the number of highrise buildings in Shanghai, and although they might not be as dense as a forest, they do appear to have sprouted like trees. Walking in the shadow of the massive structures that tower up out of sight makes you feel that in comparison you are but a small and insignificant figure. Naturally, you experience a sense of terror...."\(^{91}\)

Feng may express his dislike for the threatening scale and inhuman lines of modern Shanghai in terms of line and perspective, but the sentiment behind this passage is very much one of the traditional Chinese aesthetic. It is an aesthetic that seeks a relationship with the outside world on a human, manageable scale, one in which space is personalized. Zong Baihua, a contemporary of Feng and one of China's most influential art historians, was to write some years later that the overriding element of Chinese artistic perspective is the concept of a reflexive or "warped" space; elsewhere he calls it "rhythmical space," a space that turns back on itself. Zong sees this as being essentially different from the notion of "infinite space" found in Western art and thinking, and one which is expressed in the modern architecture that Feng found so threatening. Zong said that the Chinese concept of space was characterized by a high degree of subjectivity, and that it had led Chinese art to eschew the use of realistic representational techniques such as linear perspective.\(^{92}\) To Zong the quintessential expression of the Chinese artist is that he "imbibes infinite time and

\(^{91}\) From the essay "Street Patterns" (Shijie xingshi), written in Yuanyuan Hall, Shimenwan, 17 December, 1934, originally collected in Chexiang shehui, although missing from the edition I have, and reprinted in Feng Zikai wenxuan, Vol. II, p. 34.

\(^{92}\) Zong Baihua, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", Meixuede sanbu (I), pp. 28-29. Zong offers quotations from numerous philosophical and poetical works to support his thesis on the "personalization" of space in the Chinese world view. The arguments in this article, which was originally written in 1938, parallel closely what Feng Zikai had to say on the subject some years earlier, see Chapter Four.
space in himself and encompasses the mountains and rivers of the wide world in his own room. 93

The harsh and menacing aspect of the modern city provided Feng with a reason for a critique both of capitalism and contemporary urban art. "Highrise buildings are the main subject for modern art, and they are developing at an extravagant rate in capitalist cities throughout the world. Architects are presently devoting their energies to the construction of skyscrapers, and it is their aim to turn all horizontal cities into vertical ones, to turn the peaceful and intimate style of streets into one that is malevolent and intimidating." 94

In the essay "The Boats of the West Lake" (Xihu chuan) Feng shows that for him it was the poverty of the provincial capital rather than the depredations of modernization in Shanghai that marred the familiar scenery of Hangzhou. 95 He records the decay of Hangzhou and the way of life offered by the scenic West Lake by commenting on the pleasure boats on the lake and how they have changed since he first went to the city as a student. 96 Above all, the increasing poverty of the boatmen "murdered the scenery" (sha fengjing) of the lake. Although this essay is included in contemporary anthologies of essays as proof of Feng's "progressive" attitude towards the labouring masses, in fact, it is more a reflection of a traditional aesthetic view in which simplicity and comfort in an harmonious environment were regarded as the essence of the "pleasure of sightseeing" (youwan). 97 He is repulsed by the modern attitude of the wealthy city (generally Shanghai) tourists, the desire for creature comforts, a desire which has driven the impoverished boatmen to try and outdo each other providing their customers with luxuries. When he travelled to Hangzhou after an absence of some years he was shocked to find this change in seating arrangements.

...they [the boatmen] have simply put couches in their boats so that [the wealthy] can lie as they float around the lake, like water-born corpses. It is in all of this that I see the traces of a fin de siècle affliction: the decadent spirit of the late-19th Century assisted by modern science and material civilization has given rise to a lusting

93 Zong, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", p. 34.
94 Feng, "Street Patterns", ibid.
95 Written on 27 February, 1936 and published in Yuzhoufeng, this essay was collected in the volume Yuanyuantang zaibi, pp. 92-98.
96 The simple rattan box-seats on the boats, which were cool, comfortable and in both style and colour completely in harmony with the pleasure craft, were replaced first by rattan chairs, then couches(a sort of chaise longue called "Drunken Old Man Seats", zuiwengzi), and finally upholstered chairs (shafa). Interestingly, in the mid-1980s, Feng Zikai's home county of Tongxiang,formerly Chongde, now produces chaises longues which are upholstered in red velveteen. The Feng scholar Chen Xing has one in his Hangzhou home.
97 In this context see Lin Yutang's chapter "The Enjoyment of Travel" in The Importance of Living, especially his translation of the Ming dynasty essayist Tu Long's "The Travels of Mingliatse", pp. 327-49.
after comfort and self-indulgence among the so-called civilized people of today.  

In a tone reminiscent of many other Confucian and Buddhist writers, Feng bewails the fact that the search for ever more convenient appliances and lifestyles, "although done in the name of increasing efficiency, conceal, in reality, the gradual destruction of the virtues of solid work and hardiness."  

7: 5 Yuanyuan Hall, A New Home  

As we have noted in the previous chapter, at the time of his thirtieth birthday in September 1927, Feng Zikai had asked Dharma Master Hongyi to officially induce him as a Buddhist layman. This was an important occasion in another way for Feng also asked the monk, who was staying with Feng in his Li Da Academy residence in Yongyili, Jiangwan, Shanghai, to help him choose a name for his study. The actual process of the selection of the name for the study, "Yuanyuan Hall", is described in "To the Soul of Yuanyuan Hall in Heaven" (Gao Yuanyuantang zai tian zhi ling), written in 1938, shortly after the house was destroyed. The artist wrote a series of his favourite characters, ones that could be combined to form a name, on slips of paper, rolled them up and then scattered them on the altar in front of a statue of Shakyamuni Buddha. The two balls of paper he selected both had the character yuan, or affinity, written on them. For this reason he decided to call his study Yuanyuantang, or Yuanyuan Hall.  

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98 "The Boats of the West Lake", p. 96.  
99 Ibid.  
100 Zu'an, pp. 45-46, 188; Nianbiao, p. 15; Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 27. The details of Feng's conversion has been discussed in the previous chapter.  
101 See Yin Qi, "Concerning the Date of Feng Zikai's Conversion to Buddhism and the Naming of 'Yuanyuan Hall'" (Guanyu Feng Zikai guiyi fojiao ji 'Yuanyuantang' mingmingde shijian), Hong Kong Literature (Xianggang wenxue), 1985: 9, pp. 9-11.  
102 Suibiji, pp. 198-204. As Yin Qi (see previous note) has gone to great pains to point out, Feng says in his essay that the study was named in 1926 (the fifteenth year of the Republic), although all the other evidence indicates that it was in 1927. Yin suggests that as this essay was written over ten years after the event, Feng remembered the wrong date.  
103 Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 28, translates Yuanyuantang as "Hall of Reasoned Contemplation", basing this, it seems, on an interpretation of the two yuan in the name as referring to the Buddhist terms suoyuan and nengyuan, the contemplating (mind) and the contemplated (object). This is in keeping with the interpretation Ma Yifu offers in his poem for the hall, see "To the Soul of Yuanyuan Hall in Heaven", p. 199. Andrew Lo, in his review of Harbsmeier's book in China Quarterly, No. 101, 1985: 3, p. 169, offers "The Hall of Undifferentiated Affinities" as an alternative translation; it is a far less felicitous and even doubtful rendering. I prefer the more simple Yuanyuan Hall. It would appear that Feng first referred to Yuanyuan Hall in an essay written at the time of the death of Ah Nan in September 1927. See Chapter Five, "Ah Nan" was written on 17 September, 1927, and published in the November issue of Xiaoshuo yuebaos. See Yin Qi, "Concerning the Date of Feng Zikai's Conversion to Buddhism and the Naming of "Yuanyuan Hall"", p. 11.
wrote, "and regardless of where I moved, whether it be Jiaxing, or Shanghai, you and I were inseparable for eight years." 104

Yet for those first years, indeed, until Yuanyuan Hall was built in Shimen in 1933, Feng had little chance of actually having a study at a fixed address. But, like Liu Yuhua, the Master of the imagined Garden of the Nothingness (Wuyouyuan), 105 he could create the atmosphere of a Yuanyuan Hall wherever he went. Indeed, he described his ability to create his study in a tone that is highly reminiscent of the Ming xiaopin essay style:

What my eyes crave for are not the refined and profound art works of the gentry, but rather suitable, harmonious, natural and pleasing forms. However, in the present environment, this is the very thing we lack. Sometimes I shut myself up in my room and pretend I am in my own little world, surrounded by that suitable, harmonious, natural and pleasing arrangement of objects, achieving through them, for a time at least, some visual relief. Moreover, losing myself in a pile of white paper I make it too into a little world, finding in it a composition that is suitable, harmonious, natural and pleasing-to-the-eye. I seek out succour for my vision in vain. Yet when I become bored with this little world of mine and I begin to feel starved for food for the eyes, I have no choice but to venture out to find satisfaction in the vastness of natural beauty. But this is a food I do not often eat, because it is too rarefied (qingdan), like jade syrup or fairy nectar; it lacks the flavour of humankind, something we mere mortals need. Before the day comes when the human environment can provide us with the visual nourishment we need, I have no recourse but to satisfy myself in this fashion, using this utopian and bland method to get my fill. 106

In the spring of 1933, Feng Zikai had enough money to give form to Yuanyuan Hall, 107 and after moving into his rickety, old family home 108 he had a large two-
storey house of his own design constructed next to it. The building was a realization of his aesthetic vision, a reaction to the modern foreign aesthetic as well as an attempt by Feng to claim a space for himself and to define it within the walls of a building of his design. He was keenly aware of the need for harmony in his environment and the increasing clash between urban styles and values and the norms of country life with which he had grown up. Yuanyuan Hall was, as Feng put it himself, "a work of art in which flesh and soul were in complete harmony".

...in giving you a physical form [Feng wrote after Yuanyuan Hall had been destroyed], I was particularly mindful to make you a harmonious whole. This is because you were to be situated in an ancient township, so it was natural that I did not wish dress you up in Western clothing, preferring instead the most suitable style of Chinese apparel, making sure that you were in harmony with your environment. And it was because of this that I made sure not to give you any modern furniture. I drew up designs myself and had carpenters make all the furniture so that you would be of a piece both inside and out.

reprinted Canton: Huacheng chubanshe, 1982, pp. 205-206. Kong was the brother of Kong Dezhi, Mao Dun's wife, a former student at the school Feng's elder sister had set up in Shimenwan.

Writing some years later, Feng expressed great nostalgia for the old house, the Hengde Hall, in which, he says, "for three generations our family had celebrated and mourned, living together." In a way its loss meant more than the final destruction of Yuanyuan Hall. This is another example of his "regret for things past". See "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 228.

Feng had sent his wife and children to Shimenwan to be with his mother, and the family lived in the cramped quarters of the old house. In fact, it was Feng's mother who initially had the idea of building the new house in the late 1920s, and she saved the money Feng was able to send her each year to this end. However, she died before her wish could be realized. The move into the new house occasioned a period of self-reproach and regret for Feng. On one hand, he had not been able to provide a comfortable home for his father, who had died at the age of forty-two from pneumonia in the cramped and humble quarters of the old house. "Everytime I think of this", he said, "I feel as though it was a complete waste of time to build Yuanyuan Hall; life is so meaningless!" Secondly, his mother, the one who had bought the land in the first place, had not been able to live to see them move. "[She] was resting peacefully by herself now under evergreen pines and withered grasses five li away, not caring to join us in our excitement. It was as though she knew that soon our happiness would be destroyed by violence; for this reason she did not have the heart to come." See "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", Suibiji, pp. 229-30.

"To the Soul of Yuanyuan Hall in Heaven", p. 200. More details of the construction of the house are given in "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 230. It is interesting to compare the Yuanyuan Hall with the details of the garish mansion Yu Dafu had built in Hangzhou in 1935. See Lee, The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers, pp. 104-105.

"To the Soul of Yuanyuan Hall in Heaven", pp. 199-200. A friend offered him a wooden statue of a black man holding a tray for use in the living room of the house but he refused it. "I felt it would be quite against the spirit of Yuanyuan Hall [to accept it]...Your [Yuanyuan Hall] spirit is one of peace and happiness, and to make you suffer the presence of a black slave would be cruel and inhumane." (p. 200.) In "Labourers' Song, 7" (Laozhe zige, qi), he described this type of statuette which was on sale in the Shanghai department stores in the following way, "I'm convinced that such an item of furniture would cause me the greatest discomfort. Just think about it: we would be sitting at ease in our seats smoking, drinking tea and chatting, while forcing a puppet to stand by at attention respectfully holding a tray waiting for us to put our tea cups or cigarette butts on it. It would be most disconcerting. He may not in fact be human, but the thing is in the shape of a man, and we'd constantly feel embarrassed by our treatment of him." He concluded, "Such wooden items of furniture are imports from the West, the remnants of their feudal age." See Suibiji, p. 112. For a
Even during its construction the two-storey building was a subject of local interest for Feng had the builders tear down the framework and rebuild when he found it was crooked. A firm believer in the influence of the environment on culture, he said, "I believe this spacious and bright [building] suited my temperament and could act as a stimulus on the innate tendency towards Truth, Goodness and Beauty of the children." Although no match for the splendours of Shi Chong's fabled Jingu Garden (Jinguyuan), or Qin Shihuang's Epang Palace (Epanggong), nothing could have induced him to part with it. In the small township of Shimenwan, Yuanyuan Hall was, to use Feng's own words, like "a crane among chickens" (he li jiqun), the very expression Yoshikawa Kōjirō, the Japanese Sinologist and translator of Feng's essays used when talking about him: "he gives one the feeling of being a crane among the quarrelsome and hypocritical chickens of Shanghai-style littérateurs (haipai wenren)."

The capricious (to use Feng's own word) and fussy nature of the young artist who was never satisfied with the tasteless and ill-arranged elements of his environment had, with age, given way to a greater tolerance, or at least a desire to avoid conflict and even excessive contact with the outside world. "In the first place, it's not that I'm any less capricious than before, it's simply that I am weary, tired even of my habit of constantly rearranging things. Secondly, as I grow older I have become bored with the ready made works of art you see everywhere, and since I feel incapable of creating

painting by Feng of just such a statuette and the type of person he imagines would want one in his living room, see Zikai manhua quanji, Dushixiang, 5: 30.
112 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 230.
113 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 231.
114 Ibid. For Shi Jilun, or Shi Chong, see Michael Sullivan, The Birth of Landscape Painting in China, pp. 83-84; also Maggie Keswick, The Chinese Garden, London: Academy Editions, 1986, pp. 76-78, and Illustration 74, which shows the Ming artist Qiu Ying's vision of Shi Chong's Jingu garden, the "Golden Valley Garden" according to Keswick, which Qiu represents as an elaborate 16th Century pleasance. Perhaps the most famous imaginative description of the Qin palace is Du Mu's "Ode to the Epang Palace" (Epanggong fu).
115 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 238.
116 Quoted by the novelist Tanizaki Junichirō in his appreciation of the Japanese translation of Yuanyuantang suibi, the Enendō zuihitsu. See Xia Mianzun's translation of "Reading Enendō zuihitsu" (Du <<Yuanyuantang suibi>>), Suibiji, p. 279. The debate concerning what I call "Shanghai-style littérateurs", or Shanghai Types as Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang translate the term haipai wenren, raged in the Shanghai press in 1934. See, for example, the articles in the Ziyoutan supplement by such writers as Cao Juren and Tang Tao from 17 & 26 January, 3 & 10 and 17 March. Shen Congwen (1902-1988) was one of the instigators of the discussion and highly disparaging of the influence of the Shanghai Types. See Jeffrey C. Kinkley, The Odyssey of Shen Congwen, pp. 194-202 & 338-39, notes 21 & 23. These differences dated back to the 1920s and the rivalry between members of the Literature Research Society, then mostly based in Peking, and the Shanghai-centred Creation Society. See Lee, The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers, pp. 25-26. In the Anti-Japanese War, Feng expressed his own displeasure with the more patriotic Shanghai Types who criticized him for refusing to take a more militant attitude to his exile. He called his critics "a pack of idle Shanghai literati". See Jiaoshi riji, pp. 53-54.
anything more artistic myself, art [for me] has become an impossibility that cannot be created on order nor produced at will. From now on, he declared, he would not waste his time trying to change his environment; if he felt dissatisfied he would close his eyes and dwell on the "imaginary structures of the mind" (xinzhongde xugou). "On the surface it may appear that I have changed," he concluded, "but inside I am the same as ever."

Feng's new house, and the ideas it expressed along with the comments on arranging furniture in the essay "The Art of the Room" (Fangjian yishu), from which the above quotations are taken, are very much in the tradition of traditional writers like Li Yu (hao Liweng, 1611-1679) who, in Xianqing ouji, a handbook on civilized living, outlined the ideal living environment.

7: 6 In the Country

Feng's view of Shimenwan was, to say the least, idealistic, and he contrasted his feelings for the town with his attitude towards the cities.

Mencius said that we may "live in adversity but die in ease and comfort". To enjoy ease and avoid labour is man's natural propensity. The subjugation of nature is [the standard of] the progress of civilization. Otherwise, why would people in the inland expend so much energy on building roads, laying down railway lines and cultivating new land? Yet it does not necessarily follow that to suffer in adversity and still make no progress will mean one can really live; and to remain in ease and comfort while avoiding pride and slothfulness will certainly not mean death. For this reason I have always felt spiritually drawn to my hometown, that place of ease and comfort.

For Feng Zikai Shimenwan was a place where "the flavour of poetry and the essence of painting (shiqu huayi) were everywhere you looked". However, the

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117 "The Art of the Room" (Fangjian yishu), written on 31 October, 1936, see Feng Zikai wenxuen, Vol. IV, p. 37.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 See Li Liweng on houses in his Xianqing ouji, Hangzhou: Zhejiang guiji chubanshe, 1985, Book IV, on houses and interior decoration, pp. 143-44, quoted in Lin Yutang, The Importance of Living, pp. 257-58.
121 "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 226. In the essay "Comments of a Guest" (Zuokezhe yan), written in May 1938, see Chexiang shehui, pp. 14-29, Feng records the details of a young man's visit to the home of a wealthy friend and the incredible discomfort involved in the whole incident. This is one of Feng's most openly satirical writings and throughout it there is a strong sense that Feng is describing his own discomfort in dealing with conventional society. The young guest (Feng?) escapes the encounter with a stomach upset by the banquet and a tangible sense of relief at being able to catch a boat home.
122 Ibid. Hereafter follows a lyrical description of Shimenwan and its surrounds. Feng's description of the untrammeled rural life of his cousin, Zhou Bingchao, in "Conversations at Tonglu" (Tonglu fuxuan), Suibiji, pp. 248-49, is in a similar vein. Feng stopped at Zhou's village with his family
stable rural environment that he remembered from his youth had been destroyed by the economic impoverishment of the Chinese countryside and the collapse of the silk industry. Mao Dun, who came from the market town of Wuzhen close to Shimenwan, described the state of affairs in his stories "Spring Silkworms", "Autumn Harvest" and "Late Winter", which were written between late 1931 and late 1932, and published as Village Trilogy (Nongcun sanbuqu)."Spring Silkworms", which is set at the time of the Sino-Japanese conflict, the January Twenty-eighth Incident of 1932, describes the peasantry of Shimenwan enduring bankruptcy "under the dual pressure of imperialist aggression and traditional usury," as C. T. Hsia puts it in his study of modern Chinese fiction. The raising of silkworms had been a central feature of Feng's youth, indeed, it provided the economic backbone of the whole region. The activities involved in sericulture remained one of the central elements of the recollections of his past. With the passage of time the entire environment of his youth was being wiped out. After twenty years away from Shimenwan he found everything changed. Even the New Year's celebrations were quite different from the way he remembered them in his youth. Bankruptcy which had affected so many

after fleeing Shimenwan following the outbreak of the war. This episode is also described in Zhou Bingchao's 1985 essay, "Thinking of My Cousin Feng Zikai" (Huainian biaoqie Feng Zikai), Tongxiang wenyi, No. 25, pp. 14-19.

123 "An Outline Biography of Mao Dun" (Mao Dun zhuanlue), by Zhou Ping, Tongxiang wenshi ziliao, p. 5; see also Marián Gálik, Mao Tun and Modern Chinese Literary Criticism, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag Gmbh, 1969, pp. 1-18, for a details of Mao's early life. See Mao Dun's own comments on the background to the story in "How I Wrote 'Spring Silkworms'" (Wo zenyang xie <<Chuncan>>, published in October 1945, collected in Mao Dun xuanji, Vol. V, Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1985, pp. 316-20. Feng commented that in Shimenwan everyone wore silk, and in both food and clothing the residents of the town enjoyed a prosperity superior to their fellow countrymen. He made this point, he says, not to be boastful, but to express heartfelt thanks and also a sense of shame at being so well provided for. See "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 226.

124 C. T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, p. 163. Unfortunately, Mao's sequels to this story are self-conscious and lifeless political tracts. For these stories, see Spring Silkworms and Other Stories, Mao Dun, translated by Sidney Shapiro, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1979, pp. 1-75. "Spring Silkworms" was made into a highly successful film in 1933, reputed by Communist Party historians of Chinese cinema as the first work of the new literature to be adapted for the screen. See Cheng Jihua, Li Shaobai and Xing Zuwen, Zhongguo dianying fazhanshi, Vol. I, p. 208. The screenplay was written by the playwright Xia Yan, and the film was directed by Chen Bugao who used locations in Jiaxing County.

125 See Rankin, Elite Activism and Political Transformation, pp. 41, 62-65. Silk was a major source of revenue for Zhejiang from the late 19th Century and a major export item up until the 1930s. Tongxiang was a major silk producing.

126 "Recollections of Childhood" (Yiershi), Suibiji, pp. 21-23. Feng's grandmother was the family's silkworm enthusiast, and she took delight in the labours involving raising silkworms "as a corollary to the late spring", as Feng put it. (p. 21) Following her death around 1905 when Feng was seven, the family's interest in silkworms ceased. Commenting on Mao Dun's "Spring Silkworms" in his A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, C. T. Hsia says that it is his "best story and perhaps the outstanding achievement in Chinese proletarian fiction...almost in spite of himself, one feels that Mao Dun is celebrating in his tale the dignity of labour. Raising silkworms in the traditional Chinese manner is a primitive but exacting form of endeavour that calls for love, patience, and the favour of the Deity; it is almost a form of religious ritual." (pp. 162-63) Certainly the ambience of the raising of silkworms in the story parallels Feng's comments on his grandmother's passion for the annual ritual.
commercial interests in the town had made the Lantern Festival an economic impossibility, the introduction of the Western calendar had also undermined the significance of the Spring Festival; and as so many people were living on the borderline of poverty few had the heart to celebrate the coming of another year. 127

In the essay "Hometown" (Guxiang) written in 1935, Feng laments the end of the concept of a person having a native place. Flipping through a copy of The Three Hundred Poems of the Tang he finds numerous references to the native place (xiang). Indeed the word, or rather the concept, enjoyed a privileged place in traditional Chinese writing along with flowers, the moon and wine. 128 In the past, Feng says, "a person could be entirely satisfied with a life consisting of nothing more than staying put in their hometown and drinking amidst flowers on a moonlit night." 129 One of his earliest paintings on the theme of a poem is taken from the line, "Remembering our home in the light of the moon/Some people lost in thought in a river pavilion." 130 [7: 13] But such sentiments belong to the past. "Modern man...can find no great pleasure in gazing at flowers, inviting the moon and drinking the wine in his native home, for today the countryside is bankrupt. People must abandon their homes for the cities and pursue happiness there by arranging artificial flowers, a fake moon and drinking imported wine." 132

In a tone that would not be surprising if it came form rural activists like Liang Shuming, Feng wrote, "The lifestyle of [China's] agricultural age is gone forever. Today everyone is being forced to abandon their hometowns, and they are crowding into the city. But can they really expect to find a reasonable lifestyle there?" 133 He bemoaned the fact that the children of his day were growing up in cities with no concept of a native place, and when they become adults they may well go and find a living in yet another city, so that even the notion of a birthplace will lose all meaning. ""To find a home in any of the four directions' (sihai weijia) was [traditionally] the aspiration of a small number of mendicant monks and travelling warriors (xiake), but now it has become the norm for city dwellers." 134

127 "New Year Nostalgia" (Xinnian huaijiu), Yuanyuantang zaibi, p. 126.
128 "Hometown" (Guxiang), written on 10 March, 1935 in Shimenwan. See Chexiang shehui, Shanghai: Liangyou fuxing tushu yinshua gongsi, 1939, p. 11.
129 "Hometown", ibid.
130 xiang de guyuan jinye yue/ ji ren xiangyi zai jianglou, from a poem by Du Xunhe. Xia Mianzun, who had a copy of this painting hanging on his wall during the war, remarked in a letter to Feng that this was one of his best paintings, combining as it did both figures and scenery in an ideal balance. See Feng Zikai, "Reading Teacher Mian's Last Letters" (Du Mianshi yizha), written on 14 May, 1946 and reprinted in Xia zhuangji, pp. 100-104.
131 Zikai manhua, p. 51.
132 "Hometown", p. 12.
133 "Hometown", p. 13.
Feng commented that another thing that had increasingly lead to dissatisfaction among country people was a syndrome which he described by using the local saying "to pick up a Suzhou sock-string". It is an expression that meant if a country bumpkin found one of the ties used by the fashionable people of Suzhou to fasten their socks, they would not be satisfied until they had changed their whole wardrobe so as to match its elegance. One of Feng's earliest published paintings is "A Suzhou Man". Although not the vision of the most modern and Westernized person of the time, from his pose the man depicted appears smugly satisfied with himself. [7: 14]\(^{135}\)

Rural people were increasingly enthralled by even the most humble products from the cities, such as matches, cigarettes, buttons, dresses with embroidered pictures of nightclub scenes on them, leather shoes -- so easily soiled on muddy country paths -- Western clothes, which were suited to neither the climactic nor the social conditions of village life. Feng found the trend disquieting [7: 15].\(^{136}\) The baleful result of all of this was, he said, that "there are those who now think of themselves as being city folk who had been unlucky enough to have been temporarily exiled to the impoverished backwaters of the country; although there are others who harbour grand ambitions to transform their environment and make it harmonize with their new clothing, willing to change the rest of their dress, house and even wife so that they will all match their Suzhou sock string."\(^{137}\) [7: 16]\(^{138}\)

Feng also described the inroads made by "modern" beverages and foodstuffs such as carbonated drinks and toffee, as well as the powerful impression made by trains and planes on countryfolk. They stunned farmers who thought that the god-like people travelling in them were going to the cities, something they could never do. [7: 17]\(^{139}\)

The most enticing "sounds of the city", however, came from the wireless with its broadcasts of pompous speeches, tasteless dance hall music, and advertisements. "All of these things, from matches to the wireless, contribute to the welfare of man, and in theory their appearance in the countryside should be welcomed. But what, in fact, have they brought to rural people? Apart from an initial shock, temptation and a

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\(^{135}\) See Zikai manhua, p. 93. This figure is not quite as the pen-picture of the modern people described by Shen Congwen in the novel Alice's Travels in China (Alisi Zhongguo youyi), Kinkley, The Odyssey of Shen Congwen, pp. 107-108; Lee, The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers, pp. 32-33.

\(^{136}\) Dushixiang, 5: 40.

\(^{137}\) "Sounds of the City" (Duhui zhi yin), Chexiang shehui, p. 206. This essay was used as the preface to Dushixiang.

\(^{138}\) Dushixiang, 5: 41.

\(^{139}\) See Ermu xixin, edited by Feng Yiyin, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1987, p. 56. In Haru no maki, Yumeji has a number of similar paintings, although it is typical of the different temperament of the two artists that Yumeji's are of love-lorn boy or girl thinking of a distant traveller as a train goes by.
ridiculous sense of disharmony, nothing at all. The sounds of the city waft into the
countryside in many ways, equally the sounds of the countryside may be heard in the
city. But I fear that it is to no good purpose, for the city dwellers will invariably react
to the discovery of something from the country like those fashionable people of
Suzhou who on finding a peasant's straw shoe on the road cast it thoughtlessly into a
rubbish bin. 140

Feng's earliest works had been published by Zheng Zhenduo as part of an
effort to woo young urban readers away from traditional-style popular fiction, and yet
his description of the depredations of urban tastes and fads in the countryside seems to
reveal something akin to the spirit of the Butterfly school of fiction. To an extent he
also supported what Perry Link calls the "correct proportion of Westernization". 141
The complex reactions among the urban Chinese to Western culture has been well
reflected in the fiction of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School of writing. In his
study of the subject Link notes that "certain aspects of Westernization could become
widespread in urban culture but were superficial. Among both fictional characters and
the real-life attitudes of most readers, superficial Westernization consisted mainly of
stylishness, such as owning a fountain pen, wearing a tie, shaking hands in greeting,
or using an occasional Western phrase in speech....But on a deeper level...modern
Western ideas were firmly rejected...so were many aspects of life in the modern
city." 142

7: Travels in the Country

Feng himself despised trains, the symbol of modern material civilization in
Zhejiang from the early years of the 20th Century. 143 Feng, like his favourite
Japanese novelist Natsume Sōseki, felt that "Nothing shows a greater contempt for
individuality than the train." [7: 18]. 144 He declared himself to be, after Sōseki, one

140 "Sounds of the City", p. 211.
141 Perry Link, "Traditional-Style Popular Urban Fiction in the Teens and Twenties", in Modern
143 Mary Rankin devotes a considerable part of one chapter to the introduction of trains to Zhejiang
in the 1900s and its significance in her Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China, pp.
248-98. Feng says he took his first train trip at the age of seventeen when he went to Hangzhou to
take the high school entrance exams. His initial feelings for trains and his change in attitude over the
years is recorded in "Carriage Society" (Chexiang shehui), dated 26 March, 1935, the introductory
essay to the volume Chexiang shehui, pp. 1-9. Feng mentions trains in a more positive context in the
essay "Leisure" (Xian), see Chexiang shehui, pp. 159-75, where he talks of the delight that
children find in travelling by train: they have not yet been corrupted by too much experience and
world-weariness.
144 See "Tangxi", written in 1972, Suibiji, pp. 465 where Feng quotes his translation of
Kusamakura. For the original of this line see, Kusamakura, p. 143. Here I am quoting Alan Turney's
translation, The Three Cornered World, p. 181. For the quote in Feng's translation of the novel, see
of the only other people who "sees the importance of individuality and detests the material civilization of the 20th Century." So much did he dislike modern means of transportation that when writing about the years he spent living in Shimenwan and Hangzhou in 1972, he said he would go by boat whenever he could.

His boat trips along the canals and rivers of West Zhejiang brought the realities of the changing face of rural life home to him, especially during the summer months of 1934 when Zhejiang suffered its most severe drought for over half a century. [7: 19] In the long summer months of that year he wrote a number of essays that reveal a great deal about his attitude to the country. These writings are interesting also in that Feng did a number of paintings on related themes, revealing something of the relationship between his art and prose. In the introductory essay to Clouds (Yunni), a volume of paintings on country life mostly done in 1934, Feng wrote of the long torturous summer months during which not a drop of rain fell. The title of the book is taken from a painting "Clouds". [7: 20]

In a way the essay is something of a requiem for the countryside, its bankrupt and tortured present, the lost idyll of his youth, the vague and unrequited hope that it had provided him in his middle years. For despite his attempts to find succour and seclusion in the country, the desperate realities of rural poverty and dislocation constantly made inroads on his world.

In "Clouds", he says that he was not attempting a facile imitation of the Book of Songs (Shijing) by selecting this name for the book, but rather because, "I feel that among the people there is a constant sense of frustration and fear, very much like the overwhelming heat and dryness of last summer, and yet a few lone clouds waft in the sky before us, their beautiful shapes bringing comfort and encouragement, keeping a measure of hope alive in our hearts." Unlike those clouds, he says, his own paintings are too small and insignificant to satisfy the needs of this world of drought. "I fear all they can do is provide an empty distraction and relief, after which they will

145 "Tangxi", ibid. Tangxi was the town where Feng spent the night when travelling by boat between Shimenwan and the provincial capital.
146 During the month of July 1934, the Shanghai Weather Bureau recorded a temperature of 104.4 degrees Farenheit. See Zhejiang bainian dashiji, Zhejiang wenshi ziliao xuanji, No. 31, edited by the Zhejiang PPCC, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1986, p. 245. See also Zhang Gui, "Unforgettable Times -- Memories of the Days with Uncle Kai", Tongxiang wenyi, No. 25, p. 26; and Feng's essay "Leisure", Chexiang shehui, pp. 174-75. Lu Xun's "Talking About Writing Out of Doors" (Menwai wentan) was supposedly composed on the basis of conversations he had with friends while sitting outside at night during the heatwave of 1934.
148 Yunni, pp. 3-4.
drift off below the horizon and disappear of their own accord."\textsuperscript{149} But not all his reflections on the state of the countryside were similarly gloomy, and in one essay, "Writing in the Heat" (Rezhong xie gao), written in mid-July that year, he treated the subject far more playfully, going to considerable lengths to explain the difficulties he had keeping his brush and inkstone from drying out in the heat as he sat working.\textsuperscript{151}

In late spring that year, Feng had rented a boat and travelled along the Grand Canal from Shimenwan to Hangzhou on "a sketching expedition". It was during this leisurely outing and on a later trip which he undertook on business that he probably did most of the paintings in \textit{Yunni}.\textsuperscript{152} In the essay "Legs" (Routui), written at the height of the summer in August while he was staying at a temple in Hangzhou, we find a key to Feng's changing attitude to the countryside. The sight of farmers and their families lined up in rows along the sides of the Grand Canal furiously working waterwheels to irrigate their drought-stricken land brought home to the artist a sense of the suffering the farmers that no amount of propaganda by right-minded city intellectuals ever could. The need for man to struggle with nature to survive "is something all of the farmers understand without ever having to say it."\textsuperscript{153}

Previously I'd always felt put out by the discomfort of travel; but today I was disconcerted by the comfort I enjoyed. It was as though the temperature in my cabin suddenly dropped sharply; the food on the table in front of me seemed too luxurious; and the reason for my journey too frivolous.\textsuperscript{154}

Feng Zikai's sympathy for the farmers is complete when he compares the legs bound to the riverside treadmill with those of Shanghai dance hall hostesses and screen starlets who only started work in the evening, a time when due to the drought the farmers are still slogging away.\textsuperscript{155} The comparison between the city and country, however, does not lead Feng to any simplistic, or gratuitous, attack on urban life or luxury, a point any number of progressive writers of the time would have been happy

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{149} \textit{Yunni}, p. 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{150} \textit{Minjianxiang}, 4: 52.
  \item \textsuperscript{151} See \textit{Suibiji}, pp. 105-107.
  \item \textsuperscript{152} See the essay "Legs" (Routui), \textit{Chexiang shehui}, pp. 43-44. This essay can, in fact, also be taken as a verbal "illustration" of the painting "Clouds". A few of the pictures in \textit{Yunni}, such as the rickshaw puller in "Blood" (Xie), p. 12, and "The Street Sweeper" (Qingdaofu), p. 14, were done in the city, and when Feng repainted them for inclusion in \textit{Zikai manhua quanj} during the war, they were included in \textit{Dushixiang}, while most of the other paintings, which apart from a few exceptions all date from 1934, were included in the collection \textit{Minjianxiang}.
  \item \textsuperscript{153} "Legs", p. 47.
  \item \textsuperscript{154} "Legs", p. 48.
  \item \textsuperscript{155} Ibid; also Harbsmeier, \textit{The Cartoonist Feng Zikai}, p. 169.
\end{itemize}
to labour. Although he sympathizes with the farmers, the artist makes no attempt to identify himself with them "ideologically". Rather, Feng says that the discomfort he felt faded soon after his boat passes the scene, leaving him with the image of legs treading constantly in meaningless motion, legs familiar to any urban reader who has seen women pounding the boards on the screen or in the dance halls. Thus, even when the artist comes across scenes that others would exploit for some ideological purpose, Feng, like other writers of the non-militant casual essay in the 1930s, is ultimately impressed by the visual and emotional and not the social impact of the scene.

While on a sketching trip in May-June the same year, Feng had painted a number of scenes which he also wrote essays about. These include "The Open-air Barber" (Yewai lifachu), "San Niangniang", "Lantern Viewing" (Kan deng) and "Drum Music" (Guyue). All of these pictures reveal essential aspects of Feng's style, his approach to realism in art, sketching and his sense of irony.

Feng noticed the scene which he depicted in "The Open-air Barber" while looking out of the window as he lay resting in the moored boat. The window framed the scene perfectly. As the barber moved around his customer Feng felt as though he was only seeing one living being at work, the other was but an object completely at the mercy of the barber. Instead of discovering some political metaphor in this, or musing on the lack of freedom in the country, Feng sympathized with the willing victim, and was so fascinated that he took out his sketch book and records the scene. He comments on the method he uses to transfer this picture onto paper, providing us with a rare insight into the artist's approach to composition. The boatman and his wife saw the picture and were baffled as to why anyone would want to depict so unprepossessing a scene. The wife suggested Feng's time could be more profitable

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156 These four paintings and essays of the same titles were collected in Chexiang shehui, pp. 61-68, 69-75, 76-81, and 82-87 respectively.
157 "The Open-air Barber", Chexiang shehui, pp. 65-66. The picture appears on page 63.
Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 159, reproduces this picture dating it 1935, along with a précis of the essay.
158 "I got up, took out my sketch book and waited with pencil in hand until they were in the right position for me to do a drawing. I put the sketch on my table and made revisions as I criticized it to myself. The customer was covered in a white sheet, which completely covered his limbs and made him look like a snowman (xue pusa). Fortunately, on the bottom left-hand corner the legs of the stool were visible, something which allowed me to break up the lonely space (kongbaide jiliao) created by the sheet. Furthermore, [the whole scene] relied entirely on the complimentary position of the stool and the barber's paraphenalia, providing a solid basis for the picture. In reality, only one leg of the stool was visible, but I added another leg so it could serve the two purposes I've just mentioned. I also put in a blob of ink to the right of the second leg below the sheet to indicate the cuff of the customer's pants. This would, I felt, emphasize the whiteness of the sheet, as well as prevent the barber's black shoes looking too out of place at the bottom of the picture. This black spot on the bottom left-hand corner also helped enhance the unity of the picture by complementing the point of greatest visual power, the barber's singlet. I made my signature particularly large and dark so as to add to this overall effect." See "The Open-air Barber", p. 66.
spent painting the exquisite scenery of man-made gardens. Feng takes this opportunity to comment indulgently on the petit bourgeois tastes of the masses.

I'd noticed a photograph in the cabin of a woman made up to look like a rich lady. She was putting on a pose of casual elegance as she stood by a railing beneath a large tree the trunk of which was shaped quite bizarrely. Of course, I'd immediately recognized it as the boatsman's wife....Far be it from me to laugh at her, indeed I sympathized with her efforts. It was as though by hanging this picture she was trying to say that despite the fact that in material terms she was but a boatsman's wife, emotionally she was a woman of breeding.159

A few weeks earlier the boatsman had been unsuccessful in his attempt to force Feng's hand was when they came upon a special lantern festival in a village arranged as part of the New Life Movement.160 He convinced Feng to join him on the shore to watch the parade, and after finding an uncrowded spot -- a deep puddle in which the boatsman placed two bricks for Feng to stand on -- outside a locked temple they waited for the procession. There was a public toilet on the other side of the street, and during the hour-long wait, Feng found himself absorbed in the movements and poses of the people using the urinal.161 Although he discovered he had lost his sketchbook, he memorized one particular fellow and painted a picture of him back on the boat.

159 "The Open-air Barber", p. 67. He concludes that, "There's no lack of people in this world who naturally think that the only subject matter for painting is the wind, flowers, the moon, lacquered balustrades, covered corridors, beauties and scholars. My boatsman's wife was a typical representative of such thinking." (pp. 66-67.) They had commented that Feng's painting of the barber made it look as though he was cleaning his customer's ear, rather than cutting his hair. Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 160, reproduces a picture which he speculates may have been inspired by this observation. Even the choice of the title "The Open-air Barber" reveals a note of whimsy. Feng doubted that one would find an inexpensive barber shop out in the open overseas, and muses that the scene would impress foreigners. "The Chinese are truly refined and close to nature. Not only do their scholars and hermits love nature, even the common man prefers to have his hair done out in the sunlight, where butterflies flit around the grass....Seeing my depiction of this scene, foreigners will think that the Chinese are becoming more refined and closer to nature all the time...." (p. 68.)

160 "Looking at Lanterns" (Kan deng), Chexiang shehui, pp. 76-81. For details of the New Life Movement, see Lloyd E. Eastman, The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974, pp. 13-14, 66-70. In "Drum Music" (Guyue), Chexiang shehui, p. 87, Feng makes a guarded criticism of the movement. He saw a boy carrying a drum on his back which a man beats during the night procession arranged to stir up local interest in the movement and comments that the boy was too young and frail to endure such an athletic evening. "All that beating [on the drum] would probably knock all of his joints out of his what and his mother will have to put them all back in place when he get home." After sketching the boy he turned his attention to the music once more. "The beat was not as powerful or inspiring as before, it now seemed to convey an air of destitution."

161 "I was quite bored by gazing out over a field of heads that looked like the pates of Arahants. The only other thing in sight was the continuous line of people at the urinal diagonally opposite us. It was an endlessly varied scene, everyone took up a different stance [as they lined up in front of the wall], and for the moment this replaced the lanterns as the object of my appreciation. I had been given a rare experience, for never before in my life had I had an opportunity to make such a prolonged observation of a crowded toilet. It was so exceptional that I wanted to sketch a few of them...." "Looking at Lanterns", p. 78.
As for the lanterns, he said, "after standing there stuck on those two brick pylons for over an hour, I was so exhausted that I didn't have the energy to take them in. All I could make out was an endless array of lights the size of ping pong balls passing in front of my eyes." 

This again is an example of Feng's eye for the irrelevant, or his natural inclination to taking an interest in the seemingly trivial, especially in an instance where he has been directed to look at some larger, more important, relevant or conventionally interesting subject. This element of whimsy is an intrinsic part of the artistic philosophy of quwei. The other essays and paintings published after this expedition in Chexiang shenhui show a similar fascination with form and line in the people he observed, a sympathy for them, especially in the case of "San Niangniang". It is important to note, however, that it is a sincere understanding of or sympathy with the plight of these people, an understanding that came from a life-long familiarity with country life, and not the result of a superficial solidarity born of some political motive.

In observing San Niangniang as she makes her thread (da xianxian), Feng comments that this is probably something that the fashionable young men and women of the city would not understand. "When they look at my picture they might think that she is engaged in a form of 'snooker' (da tanzi), kite-flying, or even top spinning." Feng was enthralled by the mechanical precision and timing of the woman's movements, and only upon reflection comments that economic depression in the country meant that she would only be earning a pittance for her labours.

7.8 Conclusion

The five years Feng spent in Shimenwan and Hangzhou were among the most productive in his life. His writings, translations, collected essays and paintings from

162 "Looking at Lanterns", p. 79; also Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 161.
163 "Looking at Lanterns", p. 81.
164 "San Niangniang" (San Niangniang), Chexiang shenhui, pp. 69-75.
166 He uses the current 1920s Japanese slang to describe the city youths as moba and moga (from the English "modern boy" and "modern girl"). "San Niangniang", pp. 72-73.
167 "San Niangniang", p. 73.
168 In fact, he writes, "I thought to myself, if one were to use the currency of the land of hard work to calculate the worth of such pure technique and tireless labour, then ten gold pounds a day would not be too excessive a price. She [San Niangniang] held her forked spindle with a hand far more steady than that of any city gamesman; she wound the thread with greater dexterity than that of a kite-flyer. Her hand was more firm with the spindle than a hand that spun tops. You can make a lot of money playing snooker, though a day spent spinning isn't worth ten coppers. If San Niangniang wants to get rich, she'd better give up spinning for snooker." "San Niangniang", p. 74.
this period amount to a list of over twenty titles, including the essay collections *Chexiang shehui*, *Yuanyuantang suibi* (1935), *Feng Zikai chuangzuo xuan* (1936), *Yuanyuantang zaibi* (1937), volumes of paintings such as *Yunni*, *Duhui zhi yin* and *Renjianxiang* (1937), *Kaiming yinyue jiaoben*, a primer on music he edited with Qiu Menghen, as well as *Huihua gaishuo* (1935), *Yishu mantan* (1936), a series of essays on art, and *Shaonian meishu gushi* (1937). Many of the essays in these collections were published in the "Lin Yutang network of magazines" (*Lin xi kanwu*); while many his *manhua* observations of country life first appeared in the popular *Ziyoutan* supplement of *Shenbao*, the major Shanghai daily newspaper.

Productive though these years were, following the outbreak of the war and the destruction of Yuanyuan Hall Feng commented that, "Recalling those days, perhaps my enthusiasm for sneaking as much leisure time during my travails as possible to enjoy the scenery was no accident; it is as though I had a premonition that disaster was about to strike the Lower Yangtze and that I would be unable to stay in my home town for long. Thus, I devoted my energies to enjoyment." In the editorial of the inaugural issue of the short-lived weekly journal *Luotuocao* founded by Zhou Zuoren, Yu Pingbo and Feiming, the editors made a tongue-in-cheek statement to the effect that it was their aim to publish casual essays on all topics; this would be their way of "not engaging in useless activites" (*bu wei wuyi*...
Feng Zikai, using the same expression in the reverse, stated his aim in life during the years following the building of Yuanyuan Hall:

The ancients have asked 'how will one pass the years if you do not engage in useless activities?' (bu wei wuyi zhi shi, he yi qian youya zhi sheng). I believe in the truth of such a question, although I would add an explanation from Zhuangzi that 'use' (yi) is the same as profit (li)...thus to pass the time one must engage in that which is unprofitable.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{173} See \textit{Luotocao}, "Publication Announcement" (Fakanci), 12 May, 1930, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{174} "Farewell to Yuanyuan Hall", p. 232.
Chapter 8:
A Chinese Perspective

Paintings should be viewed as calligraphy. The essence of calligraphy is the placement of the characters, the power of the brushwork and the shade of the ink. The sound and meaning [of the words] are an ancillary to the beauty of the piece.

One should appreciate paintings as one listens to music. The essence of music is the flow of the melody, the varieties of tempo, and harmonies; the title of the piece or words to the songs are of secondary importance.

The beauty of paintings is in the shapes, the colours and the shading; the objects themselves and their meaning are of secondary importance...

The Romantics and Realists of the West lay great store on the selection of subjects, and the resemblance of the objects they depict to reality, producing works that are illustrations or photographic representations, turning the relation of host and guest on its head. The Futurists, Cubists, Constructivists have abandoned depicting objects altogether, they indulge in playing with the senses. Their "pure art" that looks like the palettes of the old masters, or the work aprons of builders. They have overreacted. The former emphasize the "literary" aspect of painting, the latter the "mathematical" aspect; neither can compare with the natural and expressive treatment of art as music or calligraphy. 1

8: 1 Introduction

This chapter is a study of Feng Zikai's view of Western artistic vision and technique, an evaluation of his place in debates surrounding the reform on Chinese art in the 20th Century and a comment of the fourth phase of his creative career, his landscape or scenic painting in the late 1930s and the 1940s.

Feng Zikai was born in an age when many Chinese artists clung tenaciously to the technical achievements of traditional painting, although, due to both circumstance and sensibility, they were becoming increasingly divorced from the literati world view. There were a number of artists who, through education in China or study in Japan or Europe, were deeply influenced by the new artistic vision provided by the West. The first decades of this century represented the second age of contact between Western and Chinese art, the first having been when Jesuit missionaries introduced oil painting and Western artistic techniques to China in the 17th and 18th Centuries. In order to gain some understanding of Feng Zikai's

1 "Thoughts on Tao Yuanqing's Painting" (Wo duiyu Tao Yuanqingde huihuade ganxiang), Feng Zikai, 15 December, 1927, reprinted in Yangliu, No. 20, 1988: 6, p. 1. Tao was one of Feng’s students and later a favourite of Lu Xun. He died in 1929.
reactions to Western art, both as a populariser of Western painting techniques and thought as well as an artist in his own right, it is essential to understand the reactions of Feng's artistic predecessors in the Ming-Qing period, and to survey the views of the literati artists and art historians who were contemporaneous with Feng.

From the outset, the contact of the Chinese artistic world with that of the West revealed basic differences in painting technique. These differences are most obvious in the areas of perspective, chiaroscuro and figure drawing. As even a cursory study of the scant documentary evidence reveals, these differences were regarded by both sides as having little more than technical relevance; and it is not until the early years of the Republic that the champions of Chinese art were forced by the increasing popularity of Western art in the schools and among younger artists to arrive at some systematic understanding of the underlying aesthetic and philosophical disparities between the two.

Feng occupies a special position in relation to the question of how Chinese artists were to come to terms with the Western artistic tradition. In his numerous writings on art, translations and paintings, he reveals an intellectual desire for a rapprochement with the West, while at the same time displaying a personal sensitivity and vision that is very much defined by the aesthetics of traditional Chinese art.

While many of his concerns may echo statements of Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng, the Japanese-educated leaders of the Lingnan School of painters, Feng's emphasis on feeling or artistic inspiration over mere technical virtuosity and intellectual syncreticism sets him apart even from these artists. In his contradictory approach to the questions of tradition and modernity we see a reflection of the dilemma of the Chinese intellectual in this century. Yet Feng's essays and paintings show him to be a man who availed himself of the artistic vocabulary of the past to develop a personal vision. He was both an inheritor of the traditions of Chinese art and a creative artist whose works which, unlike so many other innovators, still belong to the modern world, and which remain as fresh, even "relevant", as they were during his lifetime. Feng, in effect, was one of the first modern Chinese artists to attempt, and to some extent achieve, a personal reconciliation with both the West and China's weighty cultural tradition.

8: 2 The Size of the Moon

Late one autumn evening in the small Zhejiang township of Shimenwan, Feng Zikai overheard a conversation in the alley next to his house.

"Heavens, the moon looks large tonight."
"How big do you think it is?"
"Easily as big as my rice bowl."
"You're joking, it must be at least the size of a pan."
"Now you're being silly. I think it is as big as a wash basin."
"It's amazing just how differently people see things!"

This banal exchange caused Feng to reflect on the question of perspective and the nature of artistic perception. He recalled the countless number of times he had been asked that deceptively simple question, "How big is the moon?" He had always replied that it varies. Once he was held up to ridicule for saying that he thought it was no larger than the size of a copper cash. On another occasion, when he compared it with the windows of a house in the distance, he said it was like a large jar. His interlocutor dismissed him with the words, "It's because he's an artist. They see things differently."

It was a question that had continued to perplex him and it was only on that autumn evening that an explanation occurred to him. People, after all, see objects in one of two ways: according to their absolute or objectively measured size, or in relative terms. This is most obvious in the case of classical poetry, and he illustrates the point by quoting a line from the Tang poet Liu Yuxi (772-842): "In an autumn scene the mountains are but dots along the ridge of a wall," as well as a line from Du Fu (712-770): "A window frames the snows of the western ridges." Feng says that such perception is by no means peculiar to artists or writers since everyone appreciates the objective world in relative terms or, rather, in a poetic manner.

This basic discussion of perspective for young students was entitled simply "The Size of the Moon," in it Feng raised two questions, an appreciation of which are crucial to any understanding of his art. The first, and most important, is that Feng regarded perception, be it the relative size of things as in this case or the relationship of the artist to the objective world, as being extremely subjective and poetic in nature. The second is that he did not think of this poetic or lyrical view of the

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2 "The Size of the Moon" (Yuede daxiao) in Yishu quwei, p. 100.
3 Liu Yuxi: qiu jing qiangtou shu dianshan, quoted also in Zong Baihua, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting" (Zhongguo shihuazhong suo biaoxiande kongjian yishi) Meixuede sanbu I, p. 33. As for the translations of Chinese poetry in this work we can do no better than refer to François Cheng who, in Chinese Poetic Writing, cites Hervey Saint-Denys: Literal translation from the Chinese is most often impossible. Many characters may represent an entire tableau, a picture that can only be rendered by a paraphrase....Certain characters absolutely demand a whole sentence to be validly translated. One must read a Chinese line, penetrate into the image or the thought that it contains, force oneself to grasp the principal characteristic, and preserve for it its power or color. The task is perilous; and painful as well, when one perceives real beauties that no European language will be able to retain. (p. 215, note 19.)
4 Du Fu: chuang han xiling qian qiu xue, quoted also in Zong Baihua, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", p. 35.
6 It was written for the magazine Zhongxuesheng in 1933.
world as being limited to the artist but rather as something that is common to all men. In fact, his career as an art teacher, translator and writer on art revolves around his belief that it is possible to awaken the artistic mind of all people.

8: 3 Chinese Perspective

Zong Baihua (1897-1986), a contemporary of Feng and one of China's most influential art historians, was to write over a decade after Feng published his essay on the moon that the overriding element of Chinese artistic perspective is the concept of a reflexive or "warped" space; elsewhere he calls it "rhythmical space," a space that turns back on itself. He sees this as being essentially different from the notion of "infinite space" in Western art and thinking. Zong stated that such a view, characterized by a high degree of subjectivity, had led Chinese art to eschew the use of realistic representational techniques such as linear perspective. To Zong the expression of the Chinese artist is in the fact that he "drinks infinite time and space in himself and encompasses the mountains and rivers of the wide world in his own room." 8

[The Chinese] use the gaze of an unfettered soul to view the myriad objects in space. Our concept of space is not that of the Greeks with their well-defined three-dimensional sculptures, nor is it like the strict linear perception of the Egyptians as exhibited in the corridors of their tombs; nor, indeed, is it the boundless expanse of heaven witnessed in Rembrandt's oils. Rather it is an unfettered universe that is full of musicality. 9

Zong Bing (AD 373-443), author of "A Preface on Landscape Painting" (Hua shanshui xu), is credited with being the first Chinese painter to appreciate the fundamental questions of perspective. Zong Bing said that the essential aim of

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7 Zong, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", pp. 28-29. The arguments in this article, which was originally written in 1938, parallel closely what Feng Zikai had to say on the subject some years earlier. For biographical material on Zong Baihua and his role as a major Chinese art historian, see "An Outline Biography of Zong Baihua" (Zong Baihua zhuannian), by Zou Shifang in Jinyang xuekan (Taiyuan, Shanxi), No. 6 1984, pp. 64-70, written for the biographical project of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

8 "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", p. 34.

9 Zong, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", p. 29. Other art historians, however, have found evidence to suggest that early Chinese painters understood, even if they did not employ, the principles of linear perspective. In his analysis of Chinese landscape painting, Michael Sullivan quotes the essay "On Painting the Cloud Terrace Mountain" (Hua Yuntaishan ji) by the Jin Dynasty portrait and landscape painter Gu Kaizhi (AD 345-406) which suggests a primitive attempt to use linear perspective. Michael Sullivan, The Birth of Landscape Painting in China, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 95; see also Yu Jianhua, Zhongguo huaxian leibian, p. 581 for the Chinese text; and Fu Baoshi's study of Gu Kaizhi in Fu Baoshi meishu wenji, edited by Ye Zonggao, Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1986, pp. 413-28.
landscape painting was to depict those places, "Where one's body has wandered carefree and one's gaze taken in vistas from many angles...." Zong Baihua interprets this line as evidence that even the earliest Chinese landscape painters preferred to rely on a moving field of vision, one that was both rhythmical and harmonious, rather than on a fixed focal point and realistic perspective.

Zong Baihua uses this example to show that it is in a spirit of all-embracing self-content that the Chinese artist roams the Great Mystery. It is a sentiment common also in the works of Tao Yuanming, for example the line, "In a single look I exhaust the universe; If here I were not happy, what should I do?" Zong concludes that the Chinese concept of space is best summarized in the words of the Book of Changes (Yijing): "It is the law of heaven and earth that there is no going that is not followed by
a return.13 Interestingly enough, this expression of space as rhythm is something for which Michael Sullivan provides supporting archaeological evidence in his study of the genesis of Chinese landscape painting.14 Although he concentrates on a detailed analysis of physical artifacts, making only passing reference to the philosophical and psychological antiquity of Chinese artistic vision, Sullivan later comments that even in the early stage of Chinese art one notes a "highly abstract, rhythmic, and linear mode of visual expression... of all the elements that go to make up Chinese pictorial style as it evolved in later centuries, it is this abstract, linear quality above all which gives it a unique character."15

Indeed, the initial impression Chinese painting made on Western observers was far from felicitous. Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the Jesuit missionary and, to his


14 In commenting on the primitive "landscapes" found on painted lacquer objects, bronze mirrors and the borders of silk of the Han period, the origins of which go as far back as the Warring States and in particular the State of Chu, Sullivan notes that the various scenes "are all painted on a horizontal band which, because of the shape of the object on which it appears, is continuous, indeed endless." The Birth of Landscape Painting in China, p. 19.

15 The Birth of Landscape Painting in China, p. 43. Further on in his argument, Zong Baihua quotes a quatrain written by the poet Wang Wei of the Tang:

North Hill stands above the lake
Against thick evergreens gleams startlingly
a vermilion gate.
Below, South River zig-zags toward horizon,
Glistening, here and there, beyond the tree-tops of the blue forest.

See Zong, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", p. 34. This translation is from Poems by Wang Wei, translated by Chang Yin-nan and Lewis C. Walsmsley, Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1959, third ed., p.42. Of the four translations of Wang Wei's poems consulted, this version best captures the salient elements of perspective present in the original which is one of a series of twenty quatrains composed by the poet in the company of his friend Pei Di at Wang's retreat in the Wang River valley. In analysing this poem, Zong says that if a large tree were represented in a Western painting and done in accordance to the rules of perspective, then the dwellings, mountains and rivers spoken of here would be smaller, on the horizon and the distances foreshortened. Yet here in Wang's poem the waters of the South River appear and dissolve in the forests, not disappearing downwards out of view, but flowing upwards, coming closer to the subject, forming a flat two dimensional plane with the green trees and red mailings. This is exactly the type of approach, Zong argues, that is repeatedly taken by Chinese painters and which is so unsettling to eyes accustomed to the strict application of perspective. Zong, p. 32. As we have seen, Feng Zikai was the first modern writer to talk of the "artist's perspective of the poet" and "poet's perspective of the painter" that Zong mentions here.
Chinese contemporaries, a living repository of the wisdom of the West, is credited with having said in the early 16th Century: "They know nothing of the painting in oil or the use of perspective in their pictures, with the result that their productions are likely to resemble the dead rather than the living."\(^{16}\) Nor were such comments reserved for occidental readers, and in one notable case Ricci is quoted in a dynastic chronicle of Chinese artists as having said: "Chinese [artists] can only paint flat surfaces, thus there are no contours [in their works]. In my land we paint both light and shadows, giving the effect of the sides [of objects] being rounded. [In our painting] a face represented straight on is in full light, if on an angle then in shadow, to darken these shadowy areas results in the effect that those in the light appear outstanding."\(^{17}\)

It was not until the late 19th Century, when European art was experiencing a revolution in perception that led to a rejection of many of the realistic painting techniques developed since the Renaissance, that Western artists began to appreciate the very elements of Chinese and Japanese art that had been so repugnant to these early observers. Then, as accepted Western artistic concepts were overturned, Chinese ideas of space and representation came to be appreciated in their own right and their validity recognized. Finally, European writers could ask of their readers, "Does not...a European's picture of a landscape seem queer to a Chinese who has become

\(^{16}\) *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610*, by Nicola Trigault, S.J., translated by Louis J. Gallagher, S.J., New York, 1953, p. 34. This same passage is quoted in Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art From the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1973, p. 48, and by Feng Zikai in his article "The Unique Character of Chinese Painting" (Zhongguohua te), *Dongfang zazhi*, Vol. XXIV, No. I, p. 44. Again, nearly two centuries after Ricci George, Staunton, a member and chronicler of the Macartney Embassy, was to write: "the Chinese, indeed, seem to consider shade as an accidental circumstance, which ought not to be carried from nature to a picture from which it takes away a part of the eclair and uniformity of colouring; and as to the representation of objects at distant distance, they prefer having them drawn, not as they appear to the eye, gradually diminishing as they recede from it, but of their actual size, as determined by the judgement correcting the errors of sight; errors necessary, however, to the beauty and consistence of landscape." Sir George Staunton, *An Authentic Account of An embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*, London: W. Bulmer & Company, 1797, p. 309, quoted also in Raymond Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 113. As Dawson says, "Indeed, he [Staunton] even made the strange suggestion that the reason why the Chinese esteemed calligraphy so highly was that their painting was very bad!" Staunton even opines that this is why written moral maxims are hung on the walls in preference to paintings.

\(^{17}\) *Guochao huazhenlu*, by Zhang Geng, Vol. III, p. 33, in Vol. V of *Huashi congshu*, edited by Yu Anlan, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1962. This passage is referred to by Michael Sullivan in his *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, p. 61, where he states that Ricci's "little lecture on perspective" is appended to a biography of Jiao Bingzhen in Jiang Shaoshu's *History of Silent Poetry* (Washengshi shi), while, in fact, this work contains no such biography. A lengthier and more detailed version of this "lecture" is given by Gu Qiyuan in his notebook *Kezuo zhuiyii* (juan sixi, Li Mabao), quoted by Xiang Dain in "Western Influences on Chinese Art During the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties" (Mingsheng zhi ji zhongguo meishu suo shou xiyang zhi yingxiang), *Dongfang zazhi*, Vol. XXVII, No. I, 1930, p. 21 and Pan Tianshou in his *Zhongguo huaxu shi*, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1983, originally published in 1936, pp. 288-89.
accustomed to seeing landscape through his native art?" 18 Indeed they did, and it is in the Chinese reaction to Western art first in the 17th and 18th Centuries and later at the end of the Qing Dynasty that we find some of the basic elements that make up Feng Zikai's aesthetic world view.

8: 4 Rejection of the West

Jiao Bingzhen, an artist in the Kangxi period (1662-1722), had acquired a working knowledge of Western artistic perspective, presumably from his contact with the Jesuits when he was an assistant in the Imperial Observatory. 19 Jiao's best-known work are the engravings for the imperially-commissioned Gengzhitu (Illustrations of Rice and Silk Cultivation), a work on agronomy published in 1696. 20 The Qing art historian Zhang Geng was the first to point out the influence on Jiao's work by the newly introduced foreign style of art. 21


19 See Zhang Geng's Guochao huazhenglu, in Huashi congkan, Vol. II, p. 31; Friedrich Hirth, "Some Chinese Painters of the Present Dynasty," T'oung Pao, Vol. VI, 1905, p. 397; Sullivan, The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, p. 61; and, Sirén, Chinese Painting, p. 90. Hirth, Sullivan and Sirén speculate that Jiao must have learned the rudiments of perspective from the Europeans, most probably Ferdinand Verbiest ... after a lengthy and at times highly acrimonious contest with the court's established astronomers. See Jonathan Spence, To Change China Western Advisers in China 1620-1960, London: Penguin, 1980, p. 26. Sirén quotes Jiao's biography as given in Zhang Geng's Guochao huazhenglu, "'His compositions give the effect of distance, the objects decrease in size from near to far with perfect accuracy without the slightest mistake, because he represented them according to the Western manner.'" (p. 90.) Jiao was also a member of the Imperial Academy of Art. Sullivan also quotes Jiao's biography but incorrectly refers to it as being in Jiang Shaoshu's History of Silent Poetry (Wushengshishi) and not in Guochao huazhenglu.

20 The title of this work is variously translated as Illustrations of Agriculture and Weaving (Hirth); Illustrations of Rice and Silk Cultivation (Sullivan); and, Illustrations of Husbandry and Weaving (Berthold Laufer, "The Discovery of a Lost Book," T'oung Pao, 1912, pp. 97-106, compares engravings from the Song and Qing versions of this work to elucidate Jiao's use of perspective). Xiang Da, in "Western Influences on Chinese Art During the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties", refers to Zhang Pushan's (Geng) comments on Jiao's employment of perspective in the placement of people and the size of objects and says, "One can see it in every illustration. Trees and shrubs, huts and dwellings, figures and landscape (shanshui) are all depicted in accordance with old practice, it is only in the use of distance and size that he uses Western methods. And thus it is that a scientific method was melded with Chinese painting. This alloying of Chinese and Western saw the emergence of a new force in Chinese art and the development of a new school." (p. 27) Also "A Propos du Keng Tche T'ou", Paul Pelliot in Mémoires concernant l'Asie orientale, Inde, Asie Centrale, Extrême-Orient, Vol. I, Paris, 1913, pp. 66-122. Sullivan incorrectly refers to this article by Pelliot as appearing in T'oung Pao, 1913, see The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, pp. 271-72. For a clearly reproduced version of Jiao Bingzhen's engravings see Yáshi gengzhitu, introduced by Jiang Fucong, published by the Imperial Palace Museum, Taipei, 1979; and for a comment on the work of Jesuit scientists, see Spence, To Change China Western Advisers in China 1620-1960, p. 9.

21 See Berthold Laufer, however, in his short study of the Gengzhitu discusses the Chinese precursor of Jiao's work, a Song dynasty collection of forty-five engravings with a stanza of poetry attached to each by Lou Shou entitled Gengshitu which was published in 1210. Laufer, "The Discovery of a Lost Book," p. 98. For a detailed study of the history of these two sets of illustrations see Otto Franke, Kéng Tschi T'ou: Ackerbau und Seidengewinnung in China, Hamburg: L. Fiedrichsen & Co., 1913, pp. 65-88, and in particular pp. 83-84. It was not until Laufer had acquired a Japanese copy of
The impact of the other aspects of Jesuit scientific knowledge, whether it be in the realm of architecture, iron-founding, or astronomy, was considerable, and even the introduction of the religious beliefs of the missionaries resulted in learned exchanges with the Chinese literati. Yet for Zhang Geng the melding of Western and Chinese art had proved to be of only moderate aesthetic significance. He commented that Jiao's forty-six illustrations done to accompany poems on rice- and sericulture by the emperor were of such fine detail and craftsmanship that the throne ordered the set engraved and printed. Although Zhang's appraisal of Jiao's work was positive enough, his comments do not compare favourably with the subtle range of words and classifications used by the critic when commenting on the works of Chinese artists. In fact, Zhang Geng's evaluation of Western-style art was little more than dismissive. He concluded his entry on Jiao Bingzhen's charmingly realistic illustrations with the statement, "Jiao had apprised himself of the principles of Western painting and adapted them to his own needs, nonetheless the result is not worthy of enjoyment by the connoisseur and has failed to be adopted by lovers of antiquity."

It is the very question of why Jiao Bingzhen's innovations were "not worthy of enjoyment by the connoisseur" and "failed to be adopted by lovers of antiquity" that most interests us here. Despite the fact that the early 20th Century Chinese art historian Xiang Da was to call Jiao's illustrations "a new force in Chinese art" that could provide a panacea for the dilemma of the modern Chinese artist and one which Pan Tianshou, the artist and former member of Feng's high school art group, saw as being a seminal attempt at syncreticism, it was Zhang Geng's reaction that is

the Song work in 1908 that he was able to compare the two works and confirm the view that Jiao was influenced by Western art. To be in possession of these two sets of illustrations allows an analysis of the exact nature of the artistic impact that Western art had on a Chinese court artist in the 17th Century; however, as yet there has been no detailed comparative study of these two works or the psychological significance of the later. Nonetheless, in the conclusion to his study Laufer pinpoints the most salient "foreign" element in Jiao's work as being that of the use of perspective. "In the Song pictures," he writes, "there is not an atom of the entire perspective spectacle so ostentatiously displayed in the backgrounds of the Kangxi illustrations. All those shortened fields and roads, the quite un-Chinese attempt at representing a plain, are here lacking and replaced by that most characteristic phenomenon of the art of the Song -- scenery." "The Discovery of a Lost Book," p. 102.

23 See Guochao, p. 32. This quote is given by Sullivan in The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, p. 61, although I have chosen to translate it somewhat differently. The full text is given by Laufer, "The Discovery of a Lost Books", p. 99, who comments on the significance of this statement: "The case [for making the connection between Jiao and Ricci] is certainly much more validated if such a view is upheld by a Chinese art-historian than by one of us. It is almost immaterial what we are inclined to see in Chinese pictures, in order to understand them, we must know how the Chinese view them." (pp. 99-100). Zheng Chang, in his Zhongguo huihua quanshi, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1929, p. 439, concurs with this statement. See also Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 32, 36.
24 Pan Tianshou in Zhongguo huihuashi, pp. 290-92, tends to give prominence to the influence and significance of the early Chinese encounter with the Jesuits, although this is probably due to his
echoed by other artists and writers during the Qing dynasty and even well after its end. It is also an important key to understanding Feng Zikai's own aesthetic view and his approach to Western art.

The Chinese literati were, as Levenson writes, "amateurs in the fullest sense of the word, genteel initiates in a humane culture, without interest in progress, leanings to science, sympathy for commerce, nor prejudice in favour of utility." Specialized scientific knowledge was not only anathema to their codes of taste, but it contradicted the very essence of their style of life. Artistic activity played a central role in their world and it had an important role in the cultivation and expression of the individual. They were painters themselves, and they scorned professional artists, both as mere craftsmen and social climbers. When summing up the attitude of these literati artists, Feng Zikai, in a brief overview of the history of Chinese painting, quotes with a tone of approval two famous statements of the Yuan dynasty painter Ni Zan (?1306-1374): "What I call painting does not exceed the joy of careless sketching with the brush. I do not seek for formal likeness; I do it simply for my amusement"; also, "Yizhong always liked my bamboo painting. I did them simply to express my overflowing heart. My endeavour was not to give exact representations of their likeness...I simply brushed and rubbed for a long time."
It was an age in which the calculated attempts at decoration by the court painters were anathema to the eclectic amateurism of the scholar-official which appealed to the voice of tradition for legitimisation. Even if the Jesuit artists had not found a niche in the Academy of Art that cut them off from the mainstream of Chinese painting, their artistic style, philosophy and pursuits would surely have qualified them in the eyes of the literati as nothing more than dexterous hacks. Indeed, the Chinese connoisseurs' rejection of Western art was as inevitable as their repudiation of Christian dogma. Thus, in the mid-18th Century at the very zenith of Jesuit artistic influence in China the leading flower-painter and a contemporary of Castiglione, Zou Yigui (1686-1772), who was a favourite at court and therefore sure to have been familiar with the foreign art, wrote his famous assessment "The Western Manner of Painting" which is quoted in every study of the Jesuit artistic influence:

The Westerners are skilled in geometry, and consequently there is not the slightest mistake in their way of rendering light and shade (yinyang) and distance. In their paintings all the figures, buildings, and trees cast shadows, and their brush and colours are entirely different from those of Chinese painters. Their (views of) scenery stretch out from broad (in the foreground) to narrow (in the background) and are defined (as if mathematically measured). When they paint houses on the wall, people are tempted to walk into them. Students of painting may well take over one or two points from them to make their own paintings attractive to the eye. But these painters have no brush-manner whatsoever, although they possess skill, they are simply artisans (jiang) and can consequently not be classified as painters (i.e. artists). 28

28 From Zou Yigui's Xiaoshan huapu, Vol. II, see Meishu congshu, edited by Huang Binhong and Deng Shi, Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1936, third edition, Vol. V, Section 9, pp. 37-38; Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 35-36. This translation is taken from Siren, Chinese Painting, V, p. 228. See also Levenson, Confucian China and its Modern Fate, p. 38, and note 102 on p. 182, as well as Sullivan, The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, p. 85. Indeed, Feng Zikai starts his war-time article on the reform of art with this quotation. see "On the Reform of Chinese Painting" (Huihua gailiang lun), Sixiang yu shidai yuekan, No. 8, 1941, p. 37, discussed below. Zong Baihua also quotes Zou Yigui in his article, "Perceptions of Space in Chinese Poetry and Painting", p. 40, as does Zheng Chang in Zhongguo huaxue quanshi, p. 520; Zheng Chang in "An Appreciation of Chinese Painting" (Zhongguo hua zhi renshi), Dongfang zazhi, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, 1931, p. 9; Pan Tianshou in Zhongguo huilua shi, p. 293; and, Wang Bomin in his more recent Zhongguo huilua shi, Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1982, p. 552. See also Pierre Ryckmans, Shitao, p. 248, on Zou's Xiaoshan huapu, a work in which Zou enumerates six "airs" or qi to be avoided by the artist, the second of which is "the air of the artisan" (jiangqi). Even those among the literati who sought out the Jesuits to learn their artistic techniques were still dilettantes at heart interested in Western art only as another accomplishment to be practised for self-amusement. Nian Xiyao, (d. 1738) a Manchu bannerman official and superintendent of the imperial porcelain kilns learned perspective from Castiglione and wrote a treatise on the subject. In his Shi xue (The Study of Vision) published in 1729 for the use of painters, he says, "Having had talks with the Western scholar, Lang Shining [Castiglione], I can now make Chinese drawings in foreign style." Levenson, p. 159 and note 4, p. 202; also, Arthur W. Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period 1644-1912, Washington: U.S Government Printing Office, 1943, p. 590, and Sullivan, Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century, p. 36 note 2. As Levenson comments, "It was the enjoyment of an obvious trick amidst the accepted Chinese order, not conversion to the underlying, not so accessible, foreign aesthetic purpose." Confucian China and its Modern Fate, p. 159.
Even when Western art gained a new ascendency in China during the late-Qing and early-Republican period, writers and artists with literati sensibilities continued to reject it with arguments strikingly similar to those of Zhang Geng and Zou Yigui.

The famous Qing "translator" Lin Shu (1852-1924) was also an amateur artist and connoisseur. In the introduction to his comments on painting "The Master of the Chunjue Studio on Painting" (Chunjuezhai lunhua), Lin wrote that although he had never been given instruction in art theory or connoisseurship, he had enjoyed writing on the subject for many years. Formerly reluctant to publish any of his observations, the noticable popularity enjoyed by foreign art among those who had travelled overseas and acquired an acquaintance with it, discarding the Chinese traditions of ink painting as if they were "straw dogs" in the process, was such that he had decided to publish his treatise.

In this tract, Lin makes a number of comments on Western painting, generally reiterating the view that Western art belonged to the realm of the artisan. "Western pictures [that are] produced by mechanical means and paintings [that conform to the rules of] geometry are said to have a utilitarian value, but Chinese painting is a most wonderous thing for it is used to express the [artist's] feelings and cultivate the mind." The general tone of Lin's comments is not as dismissive as that of his predecessors, indicating an awareness perhaps that Western art and the world view that it represented were being introduced into China this time not as a mere plaything or an adjunct to the native painting, but as an alternative to Chinese art that was more in keeping with the scientific spirit of the age. Indeed, Lin's more revolutionary contemporaries, such as the reformer Kang Youwei (1858-1927) -- a noted calligrapher in his own right -- condemned the post-Song tradition of literati painting outright, stating that it was a hindrance to the modernization of China because

29 See Lee, The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers, pp. 41-58, for a study of Lin's "syncretic" approach to Western writing. For a comment on Lin's idiosyncratic style of translation, and a critique of translation into Chinese in general, see Qian Zhongshu's essay "Lin Shu's Translations" (Lin Shude fanyi), Juwen sipian, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979, pp. 62-94.  
30 Chunjuezhai lunhua, in Hualun congkan, Vol. II, p. 628. This book was, in fact, a collection of articles printed in the Peking press in the early years of the Republic and posthumously collected and published. In his codicile to this treatise, Gu Tinglong notes that in his painting Lin Shu emulated the style of Wu Li, a Christian convert who spent many years in Macao during which time he certainly saw a great deal of Western painting, p. 691; Guo Yin, Zhongguo huihua meixue shigao, Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981, pp. 427-28; and Sullivan, The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art, pp. 61-62.  
31 Lin, Chunjuezhai lunhua, ibid.  
32 Lin, Chunjuezhai lunhua, p. 628-29, in which he says that the Western view of the artist as primarily an artisan has some validity, for even Chinese writers and painters are, in their own way, the architects of their works.
it was so divorced from the mechanical age. "In today's world," he wrote, "the machines and devices of industry and commerce rely [for their construction] on painting [blueprints and plans]. If our painting is not reformed then there will be no industry or commerce to speak of [in China]." However, conservatives such as Lin were not moved by arguments in favour of artistic realism. When it came to the question of perspective, Lin, while acknowledging that Chinese artists "fail to differentiate between the near and distant" (yuandin ji bu/en), he felt that the careful verisimilitude of Western landscapes would only result in artistic eyesores if pursued by Chinese artists.

The early 1920s was a period which saw the reassertion among some Chinese scholars and writers of the value of traditional thought and art, a reaction to the extreme iconoclasm of the early May Fourth period. While Lin Shu was writing his notes on painting, the Japanese art-historian Oomura Seigai, whose work on oriental art was extremely influential in China in the 1920s through translations, declared that the inroads being made by Western art in Japan and China were a positive threat to the artistic life of the East. He was one of the first writers on the subject to actually formulate an argument for rejecting Western artistic vision as one that was both inferior to and incompatible with that of the literati style.

In his major defence of literati painting, Oomura declared that the Chinese had abandoned shading and perspective even though they had been familiar with these techniques from the time of the Jin Dynasty in the fourth century when they

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33 From Kang's "Wanmucaotang on Painting" (Wanmucaotang lunhua), see Meishu lunji (IV): Zhongguo huaxia tiaolun zhuanyi, edited by Shen Peng and Chen Liusheng, p. 2; and Zheng Chang "An Appreciation of Chinese Painting", pp. 115-16, an article written in 1930 in which Kang is attacked for his complete ignorance of the true principles behind art in general and Chinese painting in particular. Similarly, Pan Tianshou dismissed Kang's exaggerated praise for the importance of the "syncraticism" of Castiglione as being "a purely subjective interpretation by a man who is ignorant of both Chinese and Western art," and therefore his comments on painting are no more reliable than his political views. See Pan, Zhongguo huaxia zhi shi, p. 293. Indeed, Kang's first protracted contact with Western art in Europe deeply impressed him with its realism and as a result he became disdainful of the post-Song literati fascination with "expressionism." After visiting museums in Rome where he was most struck by the works of Raphael, he commented in his travel diary, "We [in China] came to pursue the unreal and our painting degenerated, yet how superior was our art under the Song and Yuan prior to the advent of Raphael!" See Kang Youwei, Ouzhou shiyiguo you jiji (I), Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1980, p. 79; also the Qing scholar-ambassador Xue Fucheng's notes on Western and Chinese art in his "On Seeing Oil Paintings in Paris" (Bali guan youhua ji), quoted in Shui Tianzhong, "The Introduction of Oil Painting to China and its Early History" (Youhua chuanru zhongguo ji qi zuoqide fazhan), Meishu yanjiu, 1987:1, pp. 57-58.

34 Chunjuexiai lunhua, p. 669, also pp. 686-67. Lin does, however, commend foreign painters for their realistic execution of waterfalls (p. 662).

35 There was another wave of cultural traditionalism that affected the New Art Movement in the 1930s, one which must certainly had some impact on Feng Zikai's thinking. See Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 142-46, 148-51.

36 See Chen Hengque (Shizeng), Zhongguo wenrenhua zhi yanjiu, including "The Value of Literati Painting" (Wenrenhua zhi jiaji), by Chen; and "A Renaissance of Literati Painting" (Wenrenhua zhi fuxing), lectures by Oomura Seigai, translated by Chen Hengque, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1922.
had been introduced from Persia and later from India (the so-called outufa). Both Chinese and Japanese artists had failed to transmit this tradition of shading and colouring to later generations for definite reasons of artistic taste. The basic reason he gives for this echoed the sentiments of Zou Yigui in the Qing dynasty: realism is far from the essence of artistic expression. The effects achieved by shading and perspective could thus never be highly valued, while the calligraphic brush-stroke remained the essential means for the expression of nature's wonders through painting. The poetry of a painting was evoked by the use of the line or brush-stroke, not in the precision of representation.

8: 5 Feng Zikai's Perspective

Feng Zikai touched on the question of perspective in many of his articles and occasional writings; and instructing students in the elementary rules of perspective was an important part of his work as an art teacher. But the question that intrigued him most about the relative place of perspective in Eastern and Western art was that of the role played by the poet and the poet's perception in Chinese art. In 1933, Feng wrote a lengthy article on the subject entitled "Chinese Art and Perspective" (Zhongguohua yu yuanjinfa), which, unlike the studies he wrote of perspective in literature, concentrated on the ways in which Chinese painting does not conform to the rules of perspective. It is a didactic essay written for students of art, while at the same time an apologia for the "peculiarities" of Chinese painting.

Feng mused that it is an abiding curiosity in Chinese art that it is the poet or painter as poet who readily availed himself of the rules of perspective that, strictly speaking, one would imagine belong to the realm of painting. Generally, the poet's aim in doing this was to achieve the effect of "foreshortening in poetry". Yet it is these same poets who, on taking up the brush to paint, invariably fail to represent objects and scenes as if seen from a fixed standpoint, creating instead pictures full of errors of perspective. Although such errors are strenuously eschewed by the instructors of modern art classes, Feng told his students that there is virtually no work...
in the history of Chinese painting that is free from the most elementary kind of flawed perspective.

Feng demonstrates his point by using the Ming artist Qiu Ying's (Shizhou) woodblock print illustrations for the first and fourth acts of the first book of *The Record of the Western Chamber (Xixiangji)* as examples. The first illustration he chooses represents the fourteenth passage of the first act when Zhang Gong and Cui Yingying see each other for the first time in the courtyard of Pujiu Temple, "the scene of that instant when 'she turned the autumn pools of her eyes on me as she was about to depart'." Feng outlines the principles of perspective, the concept of the flat plane, focal point, receding distance, and so forth, and then redraws Qiu Ying's illustration according to these rules, analyzing Qiu's "mistakes" by way of further explanation. He proceeds to do the same with the act "The Interruption of the Religious Service" (Naozhai). Again, Feng reworks the illustration according to the principles of perspective and concludes that the artist is guilty of using multiple focal points, in some cases no focal point at all, and even an inverted focal point. But, he says, this is no innocent mistake, nor is it proof that Chinese artists were incompetent in their work. He concludes that, "By comparing the two [sets of illustrations] it is obvious that the reason for this approach to linear perspective must, in fact, be found in the nature of the difference between Eastern and Western art. It is not a question of which is superior, but a matter of recognizing a fundamental variance [in artistic approach]."

The essential aim of Qiu Ying's work, Feng writes, was not to represent some readily known reality, but rather to "create a reality that is not of this world" (*bie you tiandi fei renjian*). Qiu Ying's illustration aims at providing the reader with a visual fantasy that will match the image of that scene at Pujiu Temple conjured up by a reading of the act "Beauty's Enchantment" (*Jingyan*). On the other hand, the

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42 Qiu Ying (?-1552?), was essentially uncommitted stylistically, renowned for works done both in the "northern" and "southern" styles. He is counted as one of the "Four Masters of the Ming" (*Ming stijia*) along with Wen Zhengming, Shen Zhou and Tang Yin. He was noted for his skilful imitation of the old masters and the moral sense of his works which were praised as "mirrors of antiquity."

43 Siren quotes Wang Zhideng's assessment of Qiu Ying thus, "He had no reason to feel ashamed before the old masters, but sometimes he got out of the old ruts and changed his manner. Yet, he could not abstain from adding feet when painting a snake (he was too meticulous and added too many details)", *Chinese Painting*, Vol. IV, p. 209.

44 *lin qu qiubo na yi zhuang de shunjia de guangjing*, as Feng writes in "Chinese Art and Perspective", p. 54. This line is translated by Hsiung Shih-i as: "How can I bear the bewitching glance she gave when she was about to depart!", S.I. Hsiung, *The Romance of the Western Chamber*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1968, p. 15. For the Chinese text I have used a recent reprint with Jin Shengtan's commentary, see *Jin Shengtan piben Xixiang ji*, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986, p. 44.

45 *The Romance of the Western Chamber*, pp. 41-46, and *Jin Shengtan piben Xixiang ji*, p. 74 ff.

46 Feng, "Chinese Art and Perspective", p. 65.
illustration that Feng has done in accordance with the rules of perspective gives the reader an idea of what it would actually be like to step into the physical reality of that monastery. Interestingly, he notes the line from Xixiangji written by Wen Zhengming alongside Qiu's illustration reads, "The sun in the sky proclaims that it is midday. The pagoda throws a round shadow." Although this line neatly reflects the writer's awareness of the principles of shade (that is, the circular shadow at the base of the pagoda indicating the position of the sun), it is not matched by a similar understanding in the pictorial representation of the scene. In Chinese art one is repeatedly confronted with an incongruous situation exists whereby the principles of painting are applied to writing while they are ignored by artists. In this and other essays Feng identifies the essence of the Chinese aesthetic as being in the "painter's eye" as employed by Chinese poets, and one of his favourite examples was the Tang poet-painter Wang Wei. To Feng it was this vision that the artist or poet used to transcend conventional temporal-spatial limitations and create a realm of his own, one that aims at evocation rather than communication.

How, then, did Feng Zikai explain this phenomenon to his readers? We should note that those who most often read Feng's articles on art were students being given an education in Western art by instructors who may well have agreed with Kang Youwei that the discarding of realism in painting after the Song had led to China's artistic degeneration. Feng's own conclusion was as follows:

From the earliest days Western art has emphasized realism. Greek sculpture was based [on a study of] the anatomy of the human body, while the painters of the Renaissance placed great emphasis on perspective. As for the naturalist painters of the 19th Century, such as the Realists and Impressionists, they lay great store on the realistic representation of objects at the same time as introducing the new

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47 The Romance of the Western Chamber, p. 15.
48 "Chinese Art and Perspective", p. 65. This is a point Qian Zhongshu makes with great erudition in his essay "Chinese Poetry and Chinese Painting" (Zhongguoshi yu Zhongguohua), Jiwen sipian, pp. 1-25. See also Ryckmans, Shitao, pp. 108-109.
49 See Pauline Yu, The Poetry of Wang Wei: New Translations and Commentary, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980, p. 24, where, in her discussion of the affinity of modern Western Symbolist and Chinese theories of poetry, Yu discusses Valéry's contrasting of prose and poetry on the basis of their different aims: communication versus evocation. Transposing her arguments onto art, we can see that the rejection of the descriptive and narrative by Symbolist poets is not totally unlike the Chinese literati artist's dismissal of realistic and descriptive elements in painting. Yu also quotes the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye on the question of the Symbolists' use of the word "as a symbol which turns away from its sign-meaning in the material world, not to point to something in the spiritual world, for this would still make it representational, but to awaken other words to suggest or evoke something in the spiritual world." (p. 22) This comment may act as a gloss to what Feng Zikai is hinting at when he talks of the artist wanting to "create a world apart that is not of humankind."
50 "Chinese Art and Perspective" was written for publication in the magazine Zhongxuesheng, as were Feng's articles, or as he called them "lectures" (jiang), "Perspective in Literature" and "Sketching in Literature" which were also included in the volume Huihua yu wenxue.
concept of the realistic and natural depiction of light and colour. Thus sketching from life has flourished in the West. The attitude of the artist in the East, however, has always been of a different order for it values the element of fantasy (kongxiang). Even [Chinese] images of Buddha and the various deities were unlike any human being, originating as they did in the realm of the imagination, be it the Western Paradise, Heaven or Hell. [Chinese] Painting has, needlessly to say, been equally unfettered by realism, seeking instead to depict the images of the imagination. In the world of the mind one's movements are unrestricted; when observing an object one may move to any height or angle at will, for it is to be in a dream. As the ancients put it: "Locked gates cannot contain dreams of longing, in pursuing one's thoughts, one can roam the heavens." The Chinese artist cramped in his small study painting a landscape is just like this lover, floating through the skies as if in a dream looking down over the world, eventually combining the manifold views and

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51 As the rest of this quotation reveals, Feng Zikai's use of the word kongxiang in many ways parallels the meaning of the traditional aesthetic term shensi to which Liu Xie devotes a chapter in his *The Literary Mind: Elaborations* (Wenzin diaolong). This term is often translated as "imagination", although James Liu in his discussion of what he terms the metaphysical theories of Chinese literature, prefers to render it as "thinking with the spirit" or "intuitive thinking", see Chinese Theories of Literature, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975, p. 33. In this context Liu quotes Lu Ji's *Exposition on Literature* (Wenfa):

He [the writer] observes past and present in a moment, And covers the four seas in the twinkling of an eye... He encages Heaven and Earth within Form, And defeats the myriad things at the tip of his writing brush. (Ibid.) For the original text see Guo Shaoyu, Zhongguo lidai wenlun xuan, p. 137.

52 See Chapter Five and Feng's essay "On Painting Ghosts" (Huagui) in *Yishu mantan*, pp. 152-53. chongmen bu suo xiangsi meng, sui yi rao tianya.
scenes he has observed at different times in one painting.\textsuperscript{54} Naturally, in Western art it is also normal to paint from memory or on the basis of the imagination in a studio, but in creating any work the task of the Western painter is above all to determine his own standpoint in physical terms, that is, the focal point of the picture, then to do his utmost to produce a realistic representation of the reality he observes.... If people today are determined to judge Chinese painting by the standards of Western painting, then they will invariably find errors in perspective, as well as discover that every painting is, in fact, a composite work consisting of many parts \textit{i.e.}, with more than one focal point. But if one allows oneself a moment of reflection, then it will become evident that things such as errors in perspective and the disunity of a given work lie at the very heart of Chinese art.\textsuperscript{55}

Feng continues that due to the symbiosis of poetry and painting in the Chinese artistic mind, errors in perspective such as we have in Qiu Ying's woodblock illustrations are actually germane to Chinese art: the addition of temporal elements to an art form that is by nature spatial means perforce that the spatial relationship of objects will be robbed of realism. It is this temporal element, that of a time evoked rather than simply time lived, that sets the Chinese painter apart. Although Zong Baihua, in his

\textsuperscript{54} The concept of the artist travelling in the realm of imagination although "cramped in a small study" \textit{(ju doushi zhong)}, as Feng puts it, is one of early origin in Chinese writing and art. In the Jin Dynasty Zong Bing, on returning to Jiangling from Heng Shan ill, "...said with a sigh, 'Now I am old and sick, I am no more able to stroll about in the wonderful mountains, but I can purify my bosom so that even when lying down I may ramble among the mountains (in my thoughts)' \textit{(wo yi you zhi)}; and so he transformed his former travels into pictures on the wall. Whether seated or lying down he always faced the pictures; such was his noble nature." See Osvald Sirén \textit{Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles}, p. 35, also quoted by Sullivan in \textit{The Birth of Chinese Landscape Painting}, p. 102. For the original text see Zhang Yanyuan, \textit{Lidai minghuaji}, Peking: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1983, second edition, p. 130, also Ge Lu's \textit{Zhongguo gudai huihua lilun fazhanshi}, Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, Shanghai: 1982, p. 39, for a short discussion of the word \textit{"woyou" or \textit{reclining travel}, had its origin in this story about Zong Bing and is an expression that came to mean landscape painting in general.

Similarly, in his \textit{Wenfu} Lu Ji talks of the travels in space and time of the writer or artist, see Guo Shaoyu, \textit{Zhongguo lidai wenlun xuan}, pp. 136-37. While Tao Yuanming describes his isolated rural existence and the joys of reading in his hut in a series of poems entitled \textit{Reading the Shanhaijing (Du \textless Shanhaijing\textgreater)}). He writes:

\begin{quote}
I browse in the record of the King of Zhou;
I glance over the pictures of Hills and Seas.
In a single look I exhaust the universe:
If here I were not happy, what should I do?
\end{quote}

See A.R. Davis, \textit{Tao Yuan-ming (AD 365-427) His Works and Their Meaning}, Vol.I, p. 154, and \textit{Tao Yuanming ji}, p. 82. Zong Baihua uses this same quotation when discussing the Chinese concept of time and space, \textit{Meixue sanhu} (I/p. 29, 34 & 38. Zong notes that the Song neo-Confucian philosopher Shao Yong called his study his "Anlewo", literally a "Nest for Repose and Pleasure," "with openings on either side called the sun and moon windows (riyueyong)."

\textsuperscript{55} Interestingly, Feng Zikai called the studies he used in Shanghai after 1949 his "Pavilion for the Sun and Moon," \textit{(Riyuelou)}. Perhaps this was an appropriate name for the relatively spacious quarters Feng and his family had in Shaannan Xincun from the mid1950s, the "literati compound" on South Shaanxi Road, but it became little more than a prison after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 when Feng was "hauled in" \textit{(jiuchulai)} and "struggled" \textit{(pidou)}. See Appendix I.

\textit{Chinese Art and Perspective}, pp. 66-67. Of course, Feng is ignoring the developments in Western art from the time of the Impressionists. As we will see later, he had his own theories about the origins and importance of 20th Century Western painting.
far more erudite analysis of this aspect of the Chinese aesthetic made some years later, drew quotations from literature and philosophy to establish the ancient origins of the sense of self-reflexive space and time in Chinese poetry and painting mentioned above, he was to come to much the same conclusion. One must speculate that Zong had read Feng’s articles on this question, and that he may well have garnered some of his ideas from them.

François Cheng, in his semiotic study of Chinese poetry, goes one step further to discuss the impact of the concept of the void, or *xu*, on poetry in terms that elucidate Feng Zikai’s comments on the poetic perspective of Chinese painting. Cheng writes that:

> The man who possesses the dimension of the void does away with the distance between things; the secret relationship that he finds among *things* is the same relationship he himself has with things. Rather than using a descriptive language, he proceeds by “internal representation,” letting words fully play their “games.” In discourse, by grace of the void, the signs, disengaged (to a certain degree) from the rigid and unidimensional syntactic restraint, rediscover their essential nature as both particular existences and essences of being. Implicated in the process of time, they are nonetheless beyond time. When the poet names a tree, it is as much the tree he has in sight as it is the Tree in its essence. Moreover, signs become multidirectional in their relations with other signs; and it is through these relationships that the subject appears, at the same time both absent and “profoundly present.”

Feng’s argument that Chinese artists were not interested in perspective was not an attempt to justify or explain away errors. Indeed, as we will see below, he thought modern Chinese artists should study perspective to make up for this traditional deficiency. He shows that in the case of Qiu’s illustration of the courtyard scene, there

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56 François Cheng, *Chinese Poetic Writing*, pp. 40-41. Zhang Shiyan, a contemporary Chinese writer, also discusses this question of space as a time continuum in an article entitled “The Establishment of Space in Painting Composition” (Huihua goutude kongjian jianshe), *Meishu yanjiu*, 1986: 3, pp. 21-33. Zong Baihua notes that the Chinese concept of the universe as expressed in the word *yu*zhou links the ideas of both space and movement in space, i.e. time, as the word *yu* signifies a dwelling, while *zhou* represents movement in and out of a dwelling. This concept of the universe therefore, has been associated with personal space or the dwelling from the earliest times (p. 38).

Joseph Needham, in his essay “Time and Eastern Man,” in *The Grand Turinon*, draws on the philosophical text the *Huainanzi* to interpret the word *yu*zhou somewhat differently:

> The expression which is now used for “the universe”, *yu*zhou, has essentially the meaning of “space-time”. In a text of 120 B.C. we read [Huainanzi, Chapter II], “All the time that has passed from antiquity until now is called *zhou*; all the space in every direction, above and below, is called *yu*. The Dao (the Order of Nature) is within them, yet no man can say where it dwells. (p. 219.)

In the same work Needham discusses Marcel Granet’s analysis of the Chinese view of time at some length (pp. 228-9) and also Granet’s *La Pensee Chinoise*, “Le temps et l’espace,” pp. 86-114. Needham quotes Granet, that in Chinese thought “The idea of succession [of events in time] as such was subordinated to that of alternation and interdependence.” Granet, *La Pensee Chinoise*, p. 330; and also *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol II, pp. 289 ff.) Again, such a view is implicit in Feng’s writings and explicitly expressed by Zong Baihua.
is so much open space that the artist's errors in perspective can be played down, yet with the interior of the temple in the scene "The Interruption of the Religious Service," there are so many geometrical hazards posited by the objects in the hall, the result was less than felicitous.

Why is this so, Feng asks. He agrees with the established view that it is because Chinese art places an emphasis on the adoration of nature. To transfer a distant landscape onto the flat surface of paper was in keeping with the aims of painting; however, to transpose the depths and dimensions of a close or closed scene required the use of various tricks of the eye, an irksome task, that to Feng's mind the Chinese artist took no pleasure in and, indeed, lacked the skill to perform. A form of painting such as the Chinese which admits neither of realism nor unity of composition cannot, of course, be judged by the strict rules of perspective. Yet, he says -- and this is crucial to Feng's lifelong commitment to Chinese painting -- what such art loses in this respect it makes up for by achieving a richer vocabulary of poetic implications (shiqu) than is possible in the painting of the West. ²⁷

Returning to that illustration of the meeting of Cui Yingying and Zhang Gong in the temple courtyard, Feng compares the first picture by Qiu with the illustration reworked according to the principles of perspective, and says that we can sense in the former something unique and fresh, a vastness of field. A leisurely aura suffuses the figures, giving the reader the feeling that he has left the real world and entered the realm of the Peach Blossom Spring of Tao Yuanming. It is for good reason, Feng says, that Mr Zhang sings at the end of this scene in adoration of Yingying, the beauty "... who has converted the Monastery of Buddha into a fairyland!" ²⁸

²⁷ This is an argument Feng repeats in a number of his articles, one of the earliest being "Chinese Painting and Western Painting" (Zhongguohua yu Xiyanghua), based on a lecture he gave to his third year class at the Li Da Academy in 1926. Published first in Yiban, it was reprinted in the volume Xiandai yishu pinglunji, edited by Fan Xiangshan, Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1930, no page numbers given.

²⁸ The Romance of the Western Chamber, p. 15, and "Chinese Art and Perspective", p. 68. The "fairyland" in the translation is, in actual fact, "Wulingyuan", the Wuling Spring, where the people in Tao's story about the Peach Blossom Spring lived. Perhaps Feng is thinking of the philosophical or religious utopia as depicted by the Tang poet Wang Wei in his famous poem "Song of Peach Blossom Spring" (Taoyuan xing), rather than just the political haven of Tao Yuanming's original Wuling Spring. See Pauline Yu, The Poetry of Wang Wei, pp. 59-61, 209-10. One of Qiu's better-known landscapes happens to be of the Peach Blossom Spring, it is also accompanied by a colophon by Wen Zhengming, see Sirén, Chinese Painting, Vol. IV, pp. 210-11. Sullivan notes that this preponderance for the world of the imagination was in clear evidence even in the earliest Chinese painting. "... The art of all areas reveals a fondness for portraying the hills and plants of a fairy world, such as the que and the fusang, many of which had auspicious connotations. Thus, although during the Han Dynasty little significant advance was made in the evolution of a true landscape style, the pictorial art of the period displays both variety and vitality, the product of the interplay of court styles and popular art, Confucian, Daoist, and legendary subject matter, and the realism of local folk traditions." See The Birth of Chinese Landscape Painting, p. 165.
The Western art historian George Rowley, in commenting on early Chinese painting expresses a view very similar to both Feng and Zong Baihua, writes that, "The composition [of paintings by Gu Kaizhi] was additive -- that is, it ran along in time, and it depended upon the spacing of areas and intervals and upon harmonic repeats of shape for unity." Similarly, he finds in the primitive principle of what he dubs "ideographic visualization" evinced in pre-Tang painting the origins of the later xieyi painting and the use of "memory images," or what Feng has called "images of the imagination." Rowley is somewhat more circumspect in his description of the fusing of the natural and the ideal in Chinese painting, however, and quotes Chen Hengque (whom he calls Ch'eng Heng-lo) to the effect that "Western painting is painting of the eye; Chinese painting is painting of the idea," appending a comment that, "His statement would have been complete if he had added, of the idea and not of the ideal." For Feng, on the other hand, "All the odd and mannerish techniques found in Chinese painting that are divorced from reality are the result of the artist having used a poetic perception to paint." Thus it is, Feng reminds his readers, that the oddities and grotesqueries in Chinese art are no casual error, but part of an autonomous and unique artistic vision.

8: 6 The Shadow of Mr. Science

Following the period of totalistic iconoclasm of the May Fourth years, Chinese students who had been studying overseas, impressed by the material achievements of the West and imbued with the spirit of science, the system behind Western advances, returned to China advocating the wholesale replacement of China's old cultural values with the spirit of science. They, like many of their fellows in the West, were making science into a religion, the religion of scientism. Science was, by the 1920s the object of what Hu Shi said was "almost nationwide worship".
In 1923, Professor Carsun Chang (Zhang Junmai) of Qinghua University gave a speech in which he called on the youth of China to turn away from a philosophy of life based on science. Following this a debate between advocates of Science and Metaphysics unfolded. The ensuing sometimes highly acrimonious and generally confused controversy was actually the result of a four-year preparatory period (1919-1923) during which metaphysicians had built up their forces. The origins of the debate are generally traced back to an article written by Liang Qichao on the basis of observations he made as a member of the Chinese Observers' Team on the state of the intellectual climate in Europe at the end of World War I. In it Liang warned his fellow countrymen of the dangers of adopting a materialistic and mechanistic view of life. He summed the situation and dilemma of the period in China succinctly: “Because of this [materialistic approach], the whole society succumbs to doubt, depression, and fear; it resembles a ship lost in a fog without her compass.” He affirmed the material advances of Europe but warned of the spiritual desolation that had grown in its wake. “[We] are like travellers lost in the desert; we see a huge black shadow in the distance and strive to catch up with it, thinking that it could be relied on as a guide. But after we catch up a little, the shadow disappears and we are in utter despair. Who is this shadow? He is none other than Mr Science.”

In commenting on the significance of the debate David Kwok writes:

The debaters had more at stake than philosophical disputation, for the role of China in the modern world was also under discussion. The question of deciding between the spiritual East and the

follows Owen by defining the word scientism as: an understanding of the power of science; a tool to be used in the critique of tradition; and, a form of substitute religion.

64 Chang gave his speech on 14 February, 1923. Among his most voluble critics were V. K. Ting, Hu Shi, and Chen Duxiu. See Scientism in Chinese Thought, p. 135; Chow Tse-Tsung, The May Fourth Movement, pp. 320-37; and Chow's article, "Anti-Confucianism in Early Republican China", in The Confucian Persuasion, edited by Arthur F. Wright, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960, pp. 308-309. For details of the debate and questions concerning Christianity, see Religious Thought Movements in China During the Last Decade: A Source Book (Guonei jinshinian lai zhi zongjiao sichao), compiled by Neander C. S. Chang (Zhang Qinshi), Peking: North China Union Language School, 1927, in two volumes. In his introduction (pp. 1-6), Chang divides the decade 1917-1927 into four periods: 1917-1921, the rational and calm period of the discussion of religion and its relevance; 1922, the anti-religion movement; and 1923-1927, the anti-Christian movement and the reform within the Church. Much of the controversy was occasioned by discussion surrounding the question of modernization: if foreign technology and politics were accepted, should their religion be accepted as well (pp. 1-3). Chang also mentions that Xu Baoqian of Qinghua University was collecting a volume of materials on Confucian and Buddhist reactions to the debate in this period, but it does not appear to have been published.


66 Kwok, Scientism in Chinese Thought, p. 137.

67 Ibid.
materialistic West was a constant preoccupation. In the past, China had tried to combine the spirituality of her old civilization with those very aspects of the technology of the West which were revealing the inadequacy of China’s material resources. 68

The debate and the intellectual climate of the time must certainly had some impact on Feng. His respected mentor Ma Yifu had quit Peking University only a few years before following a disagreement with his friend Cai Yuanpei, one of the protagonists in the debate, when it was decided to abandon the teaching of the classics at the institution. 69

In the late 1920s such Buddhist journals as *Haichaoyin* printed many articles arguing the scientific nature of Buddhism. Taixu, one of the other monks Feng admired most and an energetic Buddhist activist, authored many of these while championing a modern Buddhism. 70 Hu Shi said “We may not easily and lightly admit that God is omnipotent, but we certainly can believe that the scientific method is omnipotent and that man’s future is inestimably large.” 71 Hu’s own philosophy of life as set out in his “Preface” to a collection of pro-scientism articles from the debate published under the title *Science and the Philosophy of Life (Kexue yu renshengguan)*, 72 listed many points of which are in happy conjunction with Buddhist ideas, such as, the infinity of space and time, non-belief in a Creator or Prime Mover, the theory of evolution, the rules of causality, all matter is dynamic or alive not static, and belief in larger social self or good. 73 For his part, Taixu found much in common with Hu Shi’s declaration of faith and he sought confirmation of the principles of such sciences as astronomy in Buddhist texts by quoting examples to the effect that “space is endless and the number of worlds is infinite, for all are in mutual counterpoise like a network of innumerable beads”. 74 Biology, physics, chemistry, and so on were

69 See Jiniance, p. 13.
70 Taixu also lectured widely on the subject, see Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, p. 55, using such topics as “Buddhism and Science” and “Buddhism and Philosophy”. Taixu’s reforms were such that members of the sangha began to question the advisability of such a defence, fearful that there would be nothing of Buddhism left. In 1923, the first “world Buddhist organization” appeared in China, more of a whim on the part of one of Taixu’s followers and when a sign reading “World Buddhist Federation — Shijie fojiao lianhehui” caught the attention of a Japanese professor visiting Taixu at Lushan, discussions were held on “the possibility of collaboration between Chinese and Japanese Buddhists in spreading the dharma in Europe and America.” *The Buddhist Revival in China*, p. 55, also 55-64.
71 Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought*, p. 96, from Hu’s “Women duiyu Xiyang jindai wenmingde taidu”.
similarly embraced in the doctrine of modern Buddhist. Taixu called for a union of science and Buddhism, but pointed out that, "Scientific methods can only corroborate the Buddhist doctrine; they can never advance beyond it." He taught and wrote widely on the subject, producing works with such titles as *Renshengguande kexue*. He also opined that Sun Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles were "Buddhism put into practice".

Feng Zikai studied the sciences in youth. Although his early education was semi-traditional, at high school he learnt the basic principles of social Darwinism which, ironically led him to ponder the mysteries of time and space -- questions that had troubled him since his childhood -- with a more philosophical, perhaps even religious bent of mind.

Although not a participant in the Science versus Metaphysics debate, many of Feng’s ideas on the subject were informed by the discussions. He wrote that he had an antipathy towards science from youth, although in his twenties he was for a time fascinated by astronomy. He had avoided science at school and found books dealing with it technical and divorced from the emotional world to which he was attuned. It was in literature, especially poetry -- even in such commonplace collections as *Three Hundred Poem of the Tang* or the *Baixiang cipu* -- that he found "lines that touched on the very roots of human life, lines that had a personal resonance."

Yet he did not always indulge in the simplistic dichotomy of West = material civilization, East = spiritual civilization. His appreciation of modern art led him at times to hope that 20th Century developments in both art and architecture would somehow be reflected in a superior human society. In an essay entitled "Glass Buildings" (Boli jianzhu), written in 1932, he commented that although buildings that fit the description of the the Pure Land of the West were being created in Europe and America, he feared that "the speedy advancement of material civilization leads people to ignore spiritual civilization. Is this proof that culture is advancing?" He expressed the hope that a new culture, one that mirrored the Pure Land of the West would accompany the appearance of this new architectural environment.

In Feng’s mind the quarrel between spiritual values and material culture, East and West, art and science, expressed itself in very definite ways, ranging from

75 Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, p. 66.
76 *Renshengguande kexue*, Shanghai: Taidong tushuju, 1925.
77 Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, p. 66.
78 See the 1933 essay "Two ?" (Liangge "?"), *Suibiji*, pp. 61-67.
79 "On My Painting", *Chexiang shehui*, p. 223.
different approaches to book design, to his regret that China had too many Peng Gengs and too few men like Mencius. Whenever he contemplated the meaninglessness of war he would turn towards religion. Religion alone, he reflected, could provide a final spiritual resting place. His attitude to the war in general and the need to "protect the heart" has been discussed in the previous chapter.

A more extreme example of his stance in regard to the debate on spiritual and material civilization is, however, to be found in a speech he gave in mid-1939 to the students he taught in Guangxi. In it he echoed the arguments of the opponents of science in 1920s. He declared that the small-minded are impressed with the omnipotence of Western science, forgetting the superiority of Chinese spiritual civilization, and so they "have abandoned their own farming culture and are in favour of letting barbarians transform China." He repeats a sentiment expressed by Ma Yifu, Liang Shuming, Qian Mu and many others that only on the basis of spiritual civilization could China hope to rebuild itself after the war.

81 Jiaoshi riji, pp. 130-31.
82 This realization struck after the artist spent an evening with a group of scientists. See Jiaoshi riji, pp. 132-33. For Peng Geng, see Mengzi, Teng Wen Gong, III: B4; also Jiaoshi riji, pp. 76, 79 for further references to Mencius. After shopping in the local market run by the Yao in Guangxi Feng praised their simple and admirable, although materially deprived, lifestyle. See Jiaoshi riji, p. 118; also Lu Xun on the subject of a superior Han cinematic view of the Yao as primitives from the early 1930s in Lu Xun yu dianying (ziliao huiban), edited by Liu Siping and Xing Zuwen, Peking: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1981, pp. 16-17. For an exception to the general tenor of Feng's statements on material and spiritual civilization, see also Jiaoshi riji, pp. 25-26, & p. 28, where he states that spirit and matter are of equal importance. See also the essay "Material Civilization" (Wuzhi wenming) in Manwen manhua, a collection of essays, paintings and newspaper cuttings edited by Feng, Hankou: Changliu shudian, 1938, p. 94. In her bibliography of Feng's works in Feng Zikai, Feng Yiying records the publisher of this book as the Dalu shudian in Hankou. This is a fairly rare book and the copy I was able to consult in the Sichuan Provincial Library in Chengdu was published by the Changliu shudian of Hankou. The book consists of fifty pictures by various artists plus commentaries by Feng. Only one illustration, the last entitled "Life Force" (shengji), is by Feng Zikai.
83 See Jiaoshi riji, p. 77.
84 In this context see also Jiaoshi riji, pp. 15, 37, & 85.
85 The speech is reproduced in full in Jiaoshi riji, see in particular pp. 153-54. Feng's speech contrasts starkly with Wu Zhihui's sentiment. Wu singled out Buddhism for particularly barbed criticism. Not only had it failed to give China a real religion, it also helped strengthen Confucianism during the Song Dynasty with devastating results:

The harmless gossip of the ancient farmers and their rustic philosophers sitting on their faggot piles and sunning themselves in the wintry sun [characteristic of pre-Song Confucian and Taoist philosophical thought] now became the authoritative codes of morals and of government.

See Scientism in Chinese Thought, p. 48, from the essay "A New Belief Conception of the Universe and the Philosophy of Life" (Yige xinxinyangde yuzhouguan ji renshengguan), in Wu Zhihui wencun, I, 278-79, 286, quoted in Hu Shi's English translation in China's Own Critics, Peiping, 1931, pp. 64-65. Chen Duixi's attitude to Buddhism was, quite literally, iconoclastic. He wrote "All useless things, worshipped by people, are rubbish and idols and should be destroyed....If such idols are not destroyed, humanity will never be freed from self-deceiving superstitious and irrational beliefs....All kinds of Gods, Buddhas, Immortals, Spirits revered by various religions are useless, cheating idols and must be destroyed!" Quoted in Scientism in Chinese Thought, p. 71. From "On the Destruction of Idols" (Ouxiang pohuai lun), Xinqingnian, 1918, 5: 2.
A similar example can be found in Feng's war-time "Labourer's Song" (Laozhe zige) jottings. In one short essay entitled "The Path to the Annihilation of the Nation" (Wangguo zhi dao), he quotes Confucius and Mencius to point out that "rites, music and ethics are the foundations of the country". The rulers of the Warring States period were shortsighted in their use of arms to against each other, he said, for in the end it only led to their own destruction. Recalling the refrain of the pro-metaphysics lobby of the Science and Metaphysics debate of the 1920s he concluded:

"When the teachings are ignored, military men employ their stratagems", this is the path to the annihilation of the nation.

8:7 Art Reform

It was in the realm of art reform that Feng had initiated his own the melding of East and West. But his attitude changed from an open-minded acceptance of foreign art in his youth and twenties, to become an increasing in favour of the superiority of Chinese art, its techniques and the psychology that informed them as time went on. A gradual ossification of attitudes marked the intellectual development of many members of the May Fourth generation, but as we have observed, in the case of Feng Zikai, he had never travelled very far from the traditional cultural milieu. In the early 1940s he published his own programme for the reform of Chinese art. In it we find his most concise appraisal of Western art and a clear enunciation of his own style of "conservatism". This, however, did not mean that he negated the value or relevance of Western art, for as with so many Chinese intellectuals since the Qing Dynasty, he managed to rationalize his approval for Western art by finding in it strong resonance of Chinese artistic influence.

"The Reform of Chinese Painting" (Huihua gailiang lun) was written in 1941, at the height of the Anti-Japanese War. In it Feng outlined seven points which he saw as being of crucial importance for the development of modern Chinese painting. The

86 "li yue yu ren lun, shi ligo zu shi dagen.
87 Published in issue No. 397 of the Wenyi supplement of Ta Kung Pao, 17 August, 1938; collected in Manwen manhua and reprinted in Yuan'uyuazhi jiwai yiwen, pp. 126-27. Feng's argument in this essay appears to be a riposte to the writings of the Zhanguoce School, in particular Lei Haizong, of the late 1930s. I am grateful to Dr Michael Godley of Monash University, Melbourne, for bringing the details of the Zhangguo writers to my attention.
article is important not in that Feng attempted any radically new syncretic formulation that would enable his fellows to express themselves as contemporary Chinese artists, although he did present his ideas as being applicable to the Chinese artistic world as a whole. It is important because here Feng enunciated his own artistic vision in a clear and concise fashion. If anything, "The Reform of Chinese Painting" is a justification of Feng's own work and a statement of his belief that he at least has been successful in his combination of the Western and Chinese artistic traditions.

In terms of its immediate gestation "The Reform of Chinese Painting", elements of which had appeared in many of Feng's writings on art from the 1920s onward, was the direct result of the promptings of Bao Huihe, a "student" and imitator of his style of painting. Cast somewhat in the form of Hu Shi's famous "Some Tentative Suggestions for the Reform of Chinese Literature" in which Hu outlined his "eight-don't-ism" (babuzhuyi), Feng's article suggested seven principles for a new art. They were that artists should: 1. Not avoid reality; 2. Not copy other paintings; 3. Emphasize sketching from life; 4. Emphasize perspective; 5. Emphasize composition; 6. [Retain] the flavour of brush and ink; and 7. [Create works that ] Contain the flavour of life. These seven rules were, Feng said, based on the principle that an artist should, "take the best from both Chinese and Western art while avoiding their pitfalls".

Feng was by no means merely an apologist for traditional Chinese art, and although he used his writings and lectures on art to explain the theoretical principles behind the basic elements of Chinese painting, he was not what some Chinese art historians would call "an artist in the traditional mode" (yanxuxing yishujia). As we have seen from the discussion of his technique, subject matter and the presentation of his works, he was definitely in the camp of the artistic reformers.

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89 Bao was a member of the KMT army who was so enamoured of Feng's work that he paid a mutual friend to be introduced to the artist in the early 1930s. He became the secretary of a colonel in 1934, and published some of his work in the magazine *Yuzhoufeng* in 1937, as well as in the newspaper *Libao* in 1946. In mid-September, 1946, Feng and his family returned to Shanghai after spending the war years in Sichuan, and they lived with Bao for a few days before visiting Shimenwan and then moving to Hangzhou. Bao died of cancer of the liver in 1969. I am grateful to Feng Yiyin for the information concerning Bao's early relationship with Feng and his death; see also Zhuan, pp. 127, 202.

90 Hu Shi's "Wenxue gailiang chuyi" was published in *Xinqingnian*, Vol. II, No. 5, 1 January, 1917; see Chow Tse-tsung *The May Fourth Movement*, p. 30. As Chow writes, Hu in turn was influenced by the Imagist poets and even Ezra Pound's "A Few Don'ts". Feng was less dogmatic in his seven principles, only two of which are negative interdictions.

91 *Sixiang shidai Yuekan*, 1941, No. 8, p. 38; also Zhuan, p. 73.

92 Zhang Shaoxian and Li Xiaoshan, *Zhongguo xian dai huihuashi*, p. 3. Similarly, Feng does not readily fit into Zhang and Li's classification of "artists of the path-finder mode" (kaituxing yishujia).

93 "The Reform of Chinese Painting", ibid. One can compare Feng's seven principles with Gao Jianfu's proposals for new Chinese painting in "My View of Modern (xinguohua) Painting" (Wode xian daihua -- xinguohua -- guan), reprinted in *Meishu lunji*, No. 4, pp. 55-59, and it is clear Feng is just as interested in technical innovation as the leader of the Lingnan School.
His discussion starts out with the quotation from Zou Yigui recorded above. Feng said that Zou's was the initial reaction of a Chinese artist to the startlingly different works of the West. "This 'first impression' may have been enunciated quite casually, but such statements invariably touch on the truth." He then proceeds to list the six major differences between Chinese and Western art. They are: the soul of Chinese art is *xieyi*, for Western art it is sketching; Chinese art ignores chiaroscuro; and perspective; it lays little store in painting backgrounds and uses blank space; it emphasizes the use of lines, in other words it's calligraphic; and, (post-Yuan) Chinese painting places great importance on poetic inscriptions. They are not unlike the eight differences outlined by Fu Baoshi some years later.

Where Feng Zikai differed from his contemporaries in discussing Western art is not, of course, in his syncretic approach, for this was something that had been championed by the Lingnan School of artists from the 1920s, who, to an extent were carrying on from such Shanghai School painters as Ren Bonian (and even the earlier Qing artists Zeng Jing and Jiao Bingzhen). He agrees with his more extreme contemporaries that chiaroscuro, perspective, the use of a single focal point were worthy of emulation; and at the same time he agreed with the Lingnan School's attempt to inject elements of the modern world into the idealized meditations of the traditional artist. Like the Lingnan artists, Feng had been introduced to Western art through the

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96 Fu's eight differences were that: 1. Western art is primarily religious in origin, while Chinese art has always been concerned with the worldly or non-supernatural; 2. Western art is realistic, Chinese is *xieyi*; 3. Western art is positive and extrovert, Chinese is negative and introvertive; 4. Western art is dynamic, Chinese passive; 5. Western art is scientific in orientation, Chinese art is philosophical and literary; 6. Western art is explicit in representing objects, Chinese art is implicit; 7. Western art is youthful and energetic, Chinese are is in its old age; 8. Western art is objective, Chinese art subjective. These principles were enunciated in a speech entitled "The Spirit of Chinese Painting" (Zhongguo huihua zhi jingshen), made at the Nanking Cultural Hall on 13 August, 1947, subsequently published in Jinghu zhoukan, Vol. I, No. 38, 28 September, 1947. See Fu Baoshi meishu wenji, edited by Ye Zonggao, pp. 510-11.
97 See Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 14; 55-57; Gao Minglu, "The Modern Road of Chinese Art" (Jin-xiandai Zhongguo hua zhi lu), Meishu, 1986: 6, p. 48.
98 The brothers Gao Jianfu (1879-1951) and Gao Qifeng (1889-1933) were, along with the revolutionary Chen Shuren (1883-1948), the leading lights of the Lingnan School. See Cai Xingyi, "A Review of the Lingnan School of Painting" (Jianshuo "Lingnan huapai"), Beijing yishu, 1984: 4, pp. 35-36; Zhang Shaoxian and Li Xiaoshan, Zhongguo xidai huaquanshi, pp. 115-22; Qiu Dinglu, Zhongguo hua fandai gejia zongzai fengye yu jifa zhi tanlu, pp. 33-69; Jiang Jianfei, Zhongguo minchu huajia, pp. 70-75, 120-25; Ryckmans, Su Renshan, p. 7; Sullivan, Chinese Art in the 20th Century, pp. 44, 45, 48, 74; and Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 152-54. The arguments in favour of artistic syncreticism were echoed by no less an authority than Cai Yuanpei, the advocate of aesthetic education as a replacement for religion, in a prefatory note he wrote for the Lengyue huaping in May 1924. "Westerners think that Chinese art is unsuccessful realism; we in the East regard their works as reeking of artisanship. With greater contact and familiarity each has gained an appreciation of the other." "In Europe, since the Impressionists more of the Chinese style of painting has been introduced into their art...and there have been those here who have attempted to introduce some Western techniques to make up the deficiencies of Chinese painting." See the chronology in Cai Yuanpei meixue wenxuan, Peking: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1983, p. 229.
distorting prism of Japanese experience. His high school art teacher Li Shutong was educated in Japan, he spent a short time in Tokyo himself, and his reading and translation of Japanese writers was the source of most of his information on modern Western art. It was this blinkered vision which, as we will see, left him open to the harsh criticisms of artists more familiar with European art. Where Feng differed from the Lingnan School and a number of other syncretic artists and theorists was that he suffused his "theory" (which was a potted and sometimes quite derivative one at that) with feeling, or what he calls "the flavour of life" (renshengwei). Elsewhere he calls this "flavour" qu, quwei, or "the sympathetic heart" (tongqingxin).

Thus, while technical innovation occupied a prime position in his programme, it was sentiment -- something that placed him firmly within the wenren tradition -- that informed Feng Zikai's artistic world. Certainly, he wished to retain the basic medium of Chinese art -- ink and the writing brush -- rather than see the introduction of oil paints and canvas as the leading media for artistic expression. This set him apart from most of his immediate contemporaries (particularly those trained in Western academic art); it is also something that enabled him to remain true to the original programme of the Literature Research Society -- at least what he imagined that to be: the emphasis on

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99 In his evaluation of the Lingnan School Michael Sullivan sums up the skewed perspective of Japan as follows:

The significance of the failure of this school [the Lingnan School]...lies...partly in the nature of the foreign art which was assimilated. When certain Chinese traditional painters deserted the principles and the whole outlook that were theirs by inheritance for a foreign attitude and approach to nature which they but partly understood, the results were likely to be disastrous. How much more was this the case when that alien aesthetic had already passed through the hands of Japanese artists. Japan has notoriously fastened with enthusiasm on many of the more superficial (and even discreditable) aspects of Western culture, and she has equally failed, with a few outstanding exceptions, to take to herself the true spirit of Western art. The Western dynamic mastery of the subject is too often taken for verisimilitude, Western colour harmony for mere decoration, and Western romanticism confused with sentimentality. The artists of the Lingnanpai have acquired from Japan this distorted notion of the motives that inspire the Western painter, it is not surprising that their road to a new national art should have turned into a blind alley. The renaissance of Chinese art lay not in a new method, but in a new vision.

100 Feng's requirement for paintings to "contain the flavour of life" (han renshengwei) is the seventh of his seven principles for a new art. See "The Reform of Chinese Painting", p. 47.

101 See Chapter Five.

102 See Chapter Six.
the importance of life in art and the relationship of the artist to the world around him.\textsuperscript{103}

Of Feng's seven-point programme, his comments on the last point -- that the artist must create works that capture the flavour of life -- encapsulate the essential elements of his artistic view. In point two -- do not copy other paintings --, he is once more critical of the use of painting manuals, especially Wang Gai's \textit{Jieziyuan huapu}, and the deleterious effect they have had on Chinese art. Manuals have, he says, encouraged a style of plagiarism, a school of painting the products of which are composed from manuals. It has created an art that is "mired in the past" (\textit{nigu}).\textsuperscript{104}

These comments are interesting in light of the fact that from around the early 1930s Feng made increased use of the \textit{Jieziyuan huapu}, in particular in his landscape paintings.

In what is both a reflection of the May Fourth advocacy of individualism as well as a reflection of classical Chinese artistic ideas, in this article Feng called on artists to respect the individuality of the self (\textit{zunzhong "ziji" de gexing}), and to avoid copying others. From his earliest lectures and writing on art, Feng, an advocate of modern aesthetic education and art appreciation classes, put a great onus on the psychological, or rather moral, aspect of artistic creation. Although a view sanctioned by tradition, he saw no clash between emphasizing the moral dimension of art and his

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\textsuperscript{103} "The Reform of Chinese Painting", p. 47. It is in this context that one of Feng's most powerful statements on the subject of "art for life" can be found in his introduction to his 1936 collection of essays \textit{Yishu mantan} which, I feel, can be justifiably quoted in full here:

To be alive is to be possessed of feelings, and to be a sentient being is to be able to appreciate art. Art is no specialized form of knowledge, it is something that pertains to the very nature of man (\textit{benneng}). There can be no art experts, for all sentient beings are born with a knowledge of it. The world is ever changing, and human affairs are of endless complexity. This has led men to forget his original nature, for the stream to forget its source. Men exhaust themselves with the petty concerns of their own lives, and have lost that sense which is by nature part of life. Thus "art" has become a specialized study, and "artists" are so called because they are experts in "art". But with the appearance of "art" and "artists", art itself went into decline. We should walk forth from the depths of the palaces of art, bid farewell to the prized throne of the artist, go out and instruct children in the practice of the arts (\textit{yi}), stop people in the streets and discuss beauty with them. The subtle message we broadcast may spark a revival of that knowledge man is born with; it may restore to him that which is the common property (\textit{changqing}) of all men. So it is that all things can be art, all men artists.

The hand-written original of this preface was first printed in Yuzhoufeng, No. 29, 16 November, 1936. It is reproduced in Chapter Six, see [6:4].

\textsuperscript{104} "The Reform of Chinese Painting", p. 40. Feng was to rebuff critics of his wartime poems based on lines of poetry in his introduction to the collection \textit{Huazhou youshi}, published in Chongqing in 1943 (see Chapter Five for further details). He defended one painting based on a line of poetry about the famous beauty Xi Shi after she had been reduced to poverty by saying that the sentiments of the poem are as relevant today as they were in the past. "There are people like this [i.e., like Xi Shi fallen on hard times] even today, this is why I did this painting. My critics only know Xi Shi, this is what is called being mired in the past and unable to change (\textit{nigu buhua}). How can one possibly discuss art with such people?"
activities as a May Fourth intellectual. "I refuse to parrot Shitao, Bada, Wang [Wei] or Li [Sixun]; the ancients became successful artists because they expressed themselves. I want to create my own style and not be dependent on others." 105 Having said this he quotes a famous passage by the monk-artist Shitao (1642-?1718) on the subject of transformation (bianhua), in which the monk warned against those who thought the essence of art as being the dept imitation of others. He concludes with the words, "à ce train-là, au lieu de se servir de ces peintres, on devient leur esclave. Vouloir à tout prix ressembler à tel maître revient à manger ses restants de soupe: très peu pour moi!" 106 Feng in particular emphasizes the concluding lines of Shitao's comment: "Et s'il arrive que mon œuvre se rencontre avec celle de tel autre maître, c'est lui qui me suit et non moi qui l'ai cherché. La Nature m'a tout donné; alors, quand j'étudie les Anciens, pourquoi ne pourrais-je pas les transformer?" 107

While being able to "emulate the ancients" (shigu) the artist also had to be capable of "transforming" (hua) the past by relying on the power of the "self" (wo). 108 Feng justified this particular interpretation of traditional art theory by transmogrifying the last of the famous "Six Principles" (Liufa) of Xie He, "to transmit models by copying" (chuanyi moxie), and changed it to "put one’s self into emulating the ancients" (shigu you wo). 109 In doing this he based himself on the interpretational work of the Japanese art historian Kanahara Shōga. According to this view, the artist did not have to copy the works of the ancients but rather internalize them during the process of his self-cultivation. 110

Feng was not merely interested in recasting the words of the ancients in a modern format, carrying out a sly "transvaluation" and in the process. As an artist he saw no need to negate the past, finding in its achievements a universality and relevance

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105 "The Reform of Chinese Painting", ibid.
106 Ryckmans, Shitao, p. 34, a translation which I prefer to Lin Yutang’s rendering in, The Chinese Theory of Art, p. 143: “Thus the painter becomes a slave to a certain known artist and not his master. Even if he succeeds in imitating the model well, he is only eating the left-overs of his home. Of what value is that to the artist himself”; or Siren: “One becomes thus the slave of a certain painter instead of using him for one’s benefit. Even if one’s work is quite like that of a certain painter, one simply eats the dregs of his soup. What is there in that for oneself?” in The Chinese on the Art of Painting, pp. 187-88.
107 Ryckmans, Shitao, ibid.; Lin Yutang, The Chinese Theory of Art, ibid.; and Siren The Chinese on the Art of Painting, p. 188.
110 "The Reform of Chinese Painting", ibid. The concept of internalizing the spirit of creativity of ancient masters was one basic to traditional Chinese art theory. See Wei-ming Tu’s essay on the Neo-Confucian mode of thinking and Chinese art, “Inner Experience: The Basis of Creativity in Neo-Confucian Thinking”, in Mureck, ed., Artists and Traditions, pp. 9-15.
on which he could draw for his own work. His basic premise was that of the artist who neither finds himself divorced nor alienated from the tradition of Chinese art or its spirit. Paraphrasing Kanahara he wrote:

In science one does not need to study the past for the achievements of the past are inferior to the work of today. They have no independent value. In the case of art, however, [the past] is the "total" [expression] of personality. While in shape or form it may often undergo transformation, its basic demands and significance are unchanging. The past continues to exist in present reality. What was of value in the past still has value today. In studying art we do not want to take up from where the ancients left off, but must instead start anew where the ancients themselves started. "The past" for science is the path to the present; for art it is the starting point for today.111

In so saying Feng places himself in a venerable tradition; a large corpus of writing is devoted to discussions of the past and its relevance to the artist.112 Again, using Kanahara Feng commented that an artistic tradition can only remain alive if the individual artist expressed himself in his work; if he merely repeated the tradition mechanistically with no element of individual expression then he would fall victim to mere conformity (yinxi).113 Here he links his attitude to the past, the introduction of Western-style sketching from life, and even his own concept of empathy and sympathy in relation to the artist, writing that, "Tradition is the rebirth of the past in the 'self', sketching is the birth of the 'self' in the present reality of the object [being depicted]."114

It was in the realm of perspective and composition, however, that Feng became critical of Chinese art, as we have seen in the above. He repeated his criticisms of Qiu Ying (see above) and even reproduces his pictures of Qiu's inept understanding of

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111 "The Reform of Chinese Painting", ibid.
112 See in this context Fredrick Mote's essay "The Arts and the 'Theorizing Mode', Murck, Artists and Traditions, pp. 6-8, where he discusses the questions of the past (gu), sincerity (cheng), transformation, or deviation (bian) and recovering the past (fugu) in traditional Chinese art. Whereas Feng rejected the need to emulate the technical mastery of past artists, his attitude to the past and the need for a modern artist to recreate its spirit are well within the framework of traditional Chinese thinking.
113 "The Reform of Chinese Painting", ibid.
114 Ibid. Feng follows these comments with quotations from Yuan Mei's Suiyuan shihua and Qin Zuyong's Huishi jinliang to further elucidate his argument (Qin was a Qing Dynasty artist and author of Tongyin hualu, a work with which Feng had been familiar from his high school days, see Chapter Two). In this passage we also see the influence of Oomura Seigai who spoke of the virtues of sketching in his "The Renaissance of Literati Painting", pp. 19-20. After attacking Western art for being overly imitative of nature, Oomura stated that one of the faults of Chinese art was that it too often proved to be a pedantic imitation of old masters or teachers. The ancients often spoke of learning only from nature, yet it was now true to say that Westerners achieved this through their sketching of nature -- a practice that does not undermine their range of self-expression. Did not, he asks, Dong Qichang say that one must read 10,000 books and travel 10,000 li to perfect one's art? Feng also quotes Dong to support his argument.
perspective. Unlike his earlier writings, however, here Feng makes no attempt to defend the "innumerable follies" of Chinese perspective.\(^{115}\) He interprets Zou Yigui's criticisms of Western art as the work of "artisans" to be aimed solely at its lack of "brush-manner" (bifa), encouraging Chinese students of art to learn some Western techniques to improve the attractiveness of Chinese art.\(^{116}\) Similarly, Feng advocated Western composition and the use of a single focal point in place of the multiple or shifting focal point of Chinese painting. At the same time, however, he emphasized the critical importance of the use of space in painting, the use of "organic" (youjide) emptiness (kong) as a complement to the "unity in variety" (duoyang tongyi) made possible by a single-focus.\(^{117}\)

The reaction to Feng's article was almost immediate, and in June 1942 a reply, or rather an attack, was published by Lü Sibai (Luspa), an oil painter who had studied in Europe for five years and was a student of Xu Beihong.\(^{118}\) At the time he wrote his rejoinder Lü was the director of the National Central University Art Department at Shapingba outside Chongqing.\(^{119}\) Lü had read Feng's article as a program for the reform of Chinese art in general. Indeed, to readers not familiar with Feng's essays and artistic style, it would have appeared that this was the sole aim of "The Reform of Chinese Painting". However, if we interpret the contents of Feng's "reforms" as a personal justification of Feng's own artistic vision then Lü's impassioned riposte seems to be little more than a stuffy overreaction. In fact, Lü's lengthy rebuttle of

\(^{115}\) "The Reform of Chinese Painting", p. 43.

\(^{116}\) Feng makes one memorable condemnation of "the air of the artisan" (jiangqi) himself in his "Labourer's Song" vignettes. See Chexiang shehui, p. 183, where Feng refers to Mikuma Shiko's illustrations for the Edo writer Kan Denko's (1733-1806) Kinsei kijinden, a popular collection of essays. For the original illustrations, see Kinsei kijinden, in Nihon koten zenshū, Tokyo: Nihon koten zenshū kankōkai, Vol. III, 1930, pp. 1-4, 14-15; also Nihonshi no jimbutsuzō, Tokyo: Tsukuba shobō, 1967, pp. 255-57. Feng talks about one picture essay about a filial daughter by the name of Kuriko. Her husband and his family have long been dead and after a flood in her mountain home she is found under the mud holding her own eight-year-old son by the hand and carrying her husband's nephew, a twelve-year-old boy, on her back. They were obviously caught by the waters while trying to run to safety. Mikuma's illustration, Feng points out, doesn't depict the bodies of the dead woman and children, rather it shows Kuriko with the children fleeing the rising tides. "To my mind," Feng writes, "one can discover the difference between an artist and an artisan in this."

\(^{117}\) "The Reform of Chinese Painting", p. 45. Here Feng quotes Yuan Mei's Suiyuan shihua, Wang Yu's Dongzhuang hualun and Huaquan. "Unity in variety" is a concept that appears repeatedly in Feng's writings.

\(^{118}\) Writing in 1959 Michael Sullivan comments that Luspa and Xu's other "immediate associates and students have fallen under the spell of the technical virtuosity which is a main feature of the Nanking school" and, he says, "The mantle of the master, so far as European painting is concerned, fell for a time [in the 1930s and 1940s] on Lü Szu-pai (Luspa), his [Xu's] successor of the Nanking school, who spent five years in Europe and paints in a competent but schoolish manner." See Chinese Art in the 20th Century, p. 50. For a less caustic appraisal of Lü's work, see Zhongguo xiandai huihuashi, pp. 132-33; also Kao, China's Response to the West in Art, pp. 188, 192, 197. Lü Sibai (1905-1973), although a native of Jiangsu, received his primary school education in Feng's native district in Zhejiang. For further biographical details see Zhongguo yishujia cidian, edited by Li Runxin, et al, Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, Vol. V, pp. 405-406.

\(^{119}\) Sullivan, Chinese Art in the 20th Century, p. 53.
Feng's tract reveals Lü to be a self-important and bookish critic who is intolerant of Feng's less-than-iconoclastic approach to traditional Chinese art. At the heart of Lü's criticism is his distaste for Feng's syncretic approach to the problematic relationship between Chinese and Western art. He found Feng's solution simplistic and juvenile. Of course, one can also speculate that Lü had taken umbrage at a remark Feng had made in a speech on Chinese art in 1939 in which he had chided art students who had gone to France to learn about Impressionism when this genre of painting had its origins in China.

Lü berated Feng for his reference to Zou Yigui ("how could anyone in the 20th Century believe what he said, much less regard it as the truth?")

120 Lü's article is entitled "Reading Mr Feng Zikai's 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'" (Du Feng Zikai xiansheng suozuo <<Huihua gailianglun>>), reprinted in Wensi zashi, Vol. II, Nos. 5-6, 1966: 10, pp. 33-39.

121 "Reading Mr Feng Zikai's 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", p. 36, 38.

122 "Reading Mr Feng Zikai's 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", p. 36, 38.

123 "Reading Mr Feng Zikai's 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", p. 33. The arguments of Zou, Feng et al are even repeated today. For example, in Fine Arts in China (Zhongguo meishubao), a controversial weekly tabloid published in Peking, Issue No. 17, 1987, Wang Kejing, a doctoral candidate at the Zhejiang Arts Academy wrote in an article, "Chinese Painting Will Continue to Develop" (Zhongguohua jiang ji xia zhan xiqia), that the guohua will continue to flourish since Western art which until this century was obsessively concerned with shadowing, colour and perspective -- in short, the scientific and realistic representation of objects -- has now abandoned strict realism in favour of what he calls "xingde xieyi". Wang implies that even in the late-1980s Western art is merely imitating Chinese painting.

124 "Reading Mr Feng Zikai's 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", pp. 33-34.
in essence little more than photography.\textsuperscript{125} He catalogues his displeasure, finding Feng’s comparison of art and literature absurd,\textsuperscript{126} his comments on composition in traditional Chinese painting ignorant, and his rejection of Western art as lacking in "brushwork" and his praise for the calligraphic nature of Chinese art highly suspect.\textsuperscript{127} Lü revels a basic animosity to Feng’s art when he comes to discuss whether the essential and most valuable element of Chinese art is that it "contains the flavour of life" (hanyou renshengwei),\textsuperscript{128} as claimed by the artist. "For Mr Feng...the flavour of life is nothing more than an abstraction, painting grounded in the 'wind, flowers, snow and moon' (fenghua xueyue),\textsuperscript{129} with just a touch of humour thrown in for good measure."\textsuperscript{130} He comments in conclusion that, "If one were to paint a modern beggar, I'm quite sure that no amount of calligraphic talent could depict his spirit or create a work that would make people reflect deeply. For that we require down-to-earth sketching from life."\textsuperscript{131} The tenor of Lü’s dismissive comments is similar to Rou Shi’s haughty attack on Feng Zikai’s lectures on art and sympathy in the late-1920s, and equally reminiscent of the critique Cao Juren made in the early 1930s of poetic views of rural life,\textsuperscript{132} not to mention his virulent comments on Feng’s Husheng huaji.

Although Lü failed to see Feng's article as a personal artistic manifesto, a number of his criticisms were valid. The most important of these perhaps was that Feng based many of his conclusions on his limited exposure to Western art. There is little doubt that Feng had seen few original works of Western art; in all likelihood he gleaned most of his knowledge from the numerous Japanese texts on Western art which he translated.\textsuperscript{133} These included both books -- Kuroda Hōshin’s An Outline of

\textsuperscript{125} "Reading Mr Feng Zikai’s 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", p. 35. Feng makes statements to this effect in many of his writings, see Jiaoshi riji, p. 150, for a comment in a speech made close to the time of his writing "The Reform of Chinese Painting".

\textsuperscript{126} "Reading Mr Feng Zikai’s 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", p. 34.

\textsuperscript{127} "Reading Mr Feng Zikai’s 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", pp. 37-38.

\textsuperscript{128} "The Reform of Chinese Painting", pp. 47-48; and Lü, "Reading Mr Feng Zikai’s 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", p. 38.

\textsuperscript{129} This expression was first used by the Song Confucian writer Shao Yong in his Yichuan jirangji xu as a shorthand to indicate the scenery of the four seasons. It later acquired connotations related to sentimental love and self-indulgence. Lü uses the expression with the more modern and negative connotation of "decorative but empty" writing (or art).

\textsuperscript{130} "Reading Mr Feng Zikai’s 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", p. 38.

\textsuperscript{131} "Reading Mr Feng Zikai’s 'The Reform of Chinese Painting'", ibid.

\textsuperscript{132} See "The Poet’s View of the Farmer’s Life" (Shiren xinlide nongmin shenghuo), in Ziyoutan, Shenbao, 9 July, 1934, in which Cao berates Yu Dafu for his idyllic view of country life at a time when Zhejiang was suffering the effects of a devastating drought. Interestingly, most of Feng's Yunni series of paintings on country life were being published in the pages of Shenbao at this time. See Chapter Seven.

\textsuperscript{133} For a full list of these works see the list of publications in Feng Yiyin’s Feng Zikai, p. 287.
It is ironic that although Feng's "The Reform of Chinese Painting" was very much the quintessential statement of his own artistic credo, one he had put into practice in his paintings, illustrations and mastheads since the early 1920s, it was just when he was formulating his seven points in the late-1930s and early-1940s, that his own work revealed an increasing tendency to pursue some of the very things he had rejected in his earlier *manhua*. In his new work his style, once so natural as to appear quite spontaneous -- the graceful "awkwardness" (*zhuo*) of his early black and white sketches, and the expression of his "childlike mind" -- looked increasingly studied, at times even stilted. Now he tended to favour the use of colour, so much so that many of his 1940s' landscapes even look as though they were "coloured in". Indeed, it was in his landscapes, during what he called the "fourth" major period of his creative life -- one inspired by his enforced flight from Zhejiang and his exile in the interior of China -- that Feng restores to the rigid vocabulary of Wang Gai's *Jieziyuan huapu*, a lexicon of painting cliché which he had previously gone to considerable lengths to dismiss. [8: 3] Less than a decade later, when Feng made a self-criticism in 1952, one of the reasons he gives for "adding landscapes -- something I have never been adept in depicting -- to pictures of people" was to "please the tastes (*quwei*) of buyers". It is hardly an adequate explanation. As the spontaneity and simplicity of his earlier work was replaced by a more studied and careful use of subject matter, brushwork and colour, Feng increasingly
returned to the use of lines from poetry, either those taken from famous poets or his own, to express the "flavour of life" which, in his earlier period had so readily been captured by a few simple words. [8: 4] 141 Instead of using his paintings give new life to classical poems, it often seemed that he was relying on the recognized currency of the past to validate his art. Perhaps the fact that he was an established and older artist added to this stodginess. He increasingly adorned his work with the outer trappings of the wenren painter: the use of a red seal below his signature on paintings is particularly evident in his work of the 1940s, and his less sketchy and illustrative manhua were mounted and hung by his admirers like traditional scroll paintings. That he redrew (chongmiao), to use his own words, many of his earlier famous paintings, is also an indication that Feng seemed to be caught in the trap of many traditional Chinese painters for whom repetition, or "self-plagiarism", in old age would indicate creative exhaustion rather than maturation and a higher level of creativity. [8: 5] 142

Of course, this is not to say that Feng's paintings of the 1940s lacked entirely the poignant beauty of his early work. 143 But whereas in the past his "childlike mind" and "sympathetic heart" enabled him to see everything around him with a fresh perspective, now his innocence seemed forced, and the message of his work was even at times didactic and banal. 144 The empty and suggestive spaces of those casual and inspired works of the past were increasingly filled with colour, thick lines and wordy inscriptions; the meaning of his paintings became more obvious and repetitious as he narrowed his range of self-expression. As Feng Zikai said in his 1952 self-criticism, simple economic pressures had taken their toll on his quwei. Certainly, the war too had made him defensive about many of his ideas; he had been abruptly deprived of the serenity he had enjoyed at Yuanyuan Hall in the 1930s and forced to confront the horrors and violence of the world around him. 145 His artistic and personal outlook

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141 See Bi, Zikai fengjing huaji, pp. 31, 37, 46, 50, 55.
142 See Bi, Zikai fengjing huaji, pp. 18, 36, 43, 60.
143 See Jiaoshi riji, pp. 44-45 where Feng describes an idyllic scene of family life which he painted and presented to his neighbours. See also the essay by the former Renmin ribao literary editor Jiang Deming on this subject, "Feng Zikai's Jiaoshi riji" (Feng Zikaide <<liaoshi riji>>) Shuweiiji, Peking: Sanlian shudian, 1986, pp. 232-34.
144 In a comment on the Lingnan School Michael Sullivan says, "The painters of the lingnanpai set out to create a new art for China by an arbitrary synthesis of traditional technique and modern subject-matter. This purely intellectual approach to the problem also had its value as an experiment in how far the traditional medium could express modern concepts. The fallacy of their doctrine lay in mistaking contemporary subject-matter for a contemporary attitude of mind." Chinese Art in the 20th Century, p. 74. To an extent Feng made the same mistake in his later career.
145 During his flight from Shimenwan in "Conversations at Tonglu", Subibiji, p. 260, Feng wrote that:

By this stage I could contemplate the scenery of the river with 'disinterestedness'. Nature is always harmonious, full (yuanman) and beautiful. It is only man who is in discord, forever exhibiting his deficiencies and ugliness. But none of the vileness of man's life can affect nature...Previously I would
had equipped him to respond to these new experiences in a generally philosophical fashion that was, as we have seen, strongly influenced by Ma Yifu. But it was a philosophy that left little room for his wistful and romantic spirit that made much of his earlier work so engaging, and indeed so inventive. While he may have been able protect his own heart, he seemed powerless to preserve his art.

Transfer my own joys and sorrows to nature (gangqing yiru), believing it shared my emotions. Now I can see that was an offence to nature (xiedule daziran).

In this context see also James F. Cahill, "Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting", in The Confucian Persuasion, pp. 131-34, where he discusses how "the painter 'avails himself of things (luowu), or... 'borrows things' (jiawu), as vehicles for conveying feelings having no necessary connection with those things." (p. 131.) See also "Tonglu fuxuan", Suibiji, p. 257 where he speaks of Hangzhou as yet untouched by the war, still "like an innocent baby," he wrote, "it broke my heart."
After the war Feng returned east with his family, stopping in Wuhan and Nanjing on their way to Shanghai. After a short trip to Shimenwan, the family settled in Hangzhou.1

The excursion to Shimenwan in late 1946 was a deeply disturbing experiencing for the artist and it overshadowed the exhilaration he had felt at the end of the war.2 His account of it, "A Record of Returning Home After the Victory" (Shengli huanxiangji)3 is written in a powerfully nostalgic style reminiscent of Zhang Dai's Xihu mengxun.4 Feng said he felt like Rip van Winkle and he wandered the now drab and lifeless streets of the township with his family staring in the unfamiliar faces of the inhabitants who had grown up since he left ten years earlier.5 There was difficulty in determining the site of Yuan.yuan Hall, bombed by the Japanese, and after some

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1 Zhuan, pp. 201-202.
2 Feng's initial thrill following the Japanese surrender is well recorded in the paintings he did for Daobao yuekan, Vol. I, No. 1, 1 August, 1946, pp. 80-83, and others which were collected in Jiyou manhua (see note 8 below). Three of the manhua are about the defeated Japanese -- one shows the KMT sun beating down on a melting snowman holding a flag inscribed "Fascism" -- the fourth, "The first clear day in twenty years" (Nianlian lai weiyou zhi qingming), shows two children greeting the dawn on 30 May, 1946. Feng actually edited Daobao yuekan, a short-lived magazine which was published by the Gaizao chubanshe in Shanghai at the invitation of Mao Dun, although no other information about his role in it has yet come to light. See also Jiang Langxian, "Zikai's manhua at the Time of Victory" (Kangzhan shenglishide Zikai manhua), Renmin ribao, 2 September, 1985. Jiang was a colleague of Xia Zongyu, Feng's friend who worked at the Shangwu ribao (Xia later became a Renmin ribao editor, see Appendix II).
3 "A Record of Returning Home After the Victory" (Shengli huanxiangji), written in Hangzhou on 10 May, 1957, see Suibiji, pp. 302-305.
4 "When our little boat moored at the wharf next to the Nangao Bridge in Shimenwan, I looked around and wondered whether we had come to the wrong place. This was not Shimenwan; it was another place entirely. Apart from the fact that the Grand Canal had not been straightened out [Shimenwan was named after a bend in the canal], nothing else was the same. Yet this was where I was born and raised. Strangely, I felt no more familiar with this place treading on its soil after a ten-year separation than I did when I first returned to Shanghai. For the past decade the image of the old Shimenwan constantly filled my wanderer's dreams (kemeng); but the town to which I had returned had nothing to do with the native place I knew so well from my dreams." From "A Record of Returning Home After the Victory", pp. 302-303.
5 "A Record of Returning Home After the Victory", p. 303.
poking around in the ground, Feng's eldest son Huazhan found a piece of charred wood possibly from a door or window frame which he took to Peking as a memento.6

In Hangzhou, the family was first housed in Zhaoxian Temple, the former residence of Hongyi which was situated next to the house Feng had rented in the 1930s. Much of his income during the post-war years came from exhibitions of his work, although in 1947 he used the proceeds from one exhibition to help rebuild the Shimen Primary School.7 He also published a collection of paintings that had survived the war which he called Jieyu manhua (Paintings that Survived the Holocaust).8 Feng and his family suffered the economic deprivations of the civil war between the KMT and the Communists and awaited the outcome.

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On 5 April, 1949, Feng Zikai arrived in Hong Kong by boat. The fifty-two year-old artist had travelled there from Amoy after a two-month trip to Taiwan.9 One of the main reasons he decided to visit the British colony was to ask the calligrapher Ye Gongchao (hao Xia'an, 1880-1968) to do the calligraphy for for the third volume of Husheng huaqi, the paintings for which he had completed during his sojourn in Fujian.10 He also planned an exhibition of his works, expecting to live in Shanghai for some time on the proceeds.11

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6 "A Record of Returning Home After the Victory", p. 305.
8 Jieyu manhua, Shanghai: Wanyu shudian, 1947; Zhan, p. 203. Thirty of the sixty paintings in Jieyu manhua had been salvaged from Yuanzun Hall by friends the day before it was bombed, the rest were done by Feng during or just after the war. See his introduction to the book for the details.
9 He went at the invitation of Zhang Xizhen, the editor of Kaiming shudian. The paintings he did during the trip -- including rather mannered scenes of aborigines -- were collected in a volume with the work of other artists by Shu Guohua, Feng's neighbour in Hangzhou. The originals are in the hands of Shu's son, Shian. See Zhan, pp. 133-35; Feng Yiyin "Feng Zikai and Kaiming shudian" (Feng Zikai yu Kaiming shudian), Wo yu Kaiming, p. 117; Chen Xing, "A Short Record of Feng Zikai's Trip to Taiwan" (Feng Zikai Taiwan zhi xing lueji), Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 150-53. As Chen notes, during his stay in Taiwan Feng spoke on the local Taipei radio, the speech, entitled "Chinese Art" (Zhongguo yishu) was broadcast at 8:15 on the night of 13 October, 1948. Feng Yiyin and Chen Xing have copies of the transcript of the speech in which Feng first debunks Japanese painting as a mere imitation of Chinese art and then reviews what he regards as the basic differences between Eastern and Western art, emphasizing that Chinese painting relies on the imagination, not realism, and so on.
10 See Feng's introduction to Husheng huaqi, Vol. III, p. 2. He had shut himself up for a number of months to finish the seventy paintings for the volume. See "Introduction to My Hong Kong Exhibition" (Xianggang huaqian zixu), in Feng Zikai huaqian tekan, Sing-tao jih-pao, 15 April, 1949; and, "Feng Zikai, Once Among Us" (Ben zai renjian Feng Zikai), by Lo Wai-luen, in Xianggang wenxue -- nei diaoyi nanlai ji qi wenhua huodong, Hong Kong: Huahua wenhua shiyi gongsi, 1987, p. 171. Feng approached Ye Gongchao, a well-known calligrapher, on the suggestion of Zhang Xizhen. Unlike the first two volumes, some of the poems in the third book were actually composed by Feng himself. See Zhang Xizhen's introduction to the book, Husheng huaqi, Vol. III, Shanghai: Dafalun shujiu, 1950, p. 5 (not included in the 1979 Hong Kong reprint). Like Hongyi and
Feng's paintings had been appearing regularly in the local press for over a year.\textsuperscript{12} Even so, his popularity with the local people caught the organizers of the exhibition off guard, and the show in the hall of St John's Church on Garden Road which had only been scheduled for two days was moved to another venue for a further two days.\textsuperscript{13} In his "Introduction to My Hong Kong Exhibition" he summed up his career as a manhua artist for his admirers as follows:

Over the past twenty years many people have attempted to imitate my odd (qiguaide) style of painting, but sooner or later they all gave up. I am told that this is because they could not reproduce the sense of line or the style of inscriptions I use in my painting. As a result, in China today I remain the sole practitioner of this form of art. It is an isolated (gudude) and odd (qiguaide), neither Eastern nor Western (buzhong buxide) type of painting....\textsuperscript{14}

His "isolated and odd" work did not appeal to everyone, however, and the criticisms of his art and ideas that had first been voiced in the 1920s by Rou Shi, then in the 1930s by Hu Feng and again in the early 1940s by Cao Juren and Lü Sibai, were trotted out once more by local Hong Kong critics. As the civil war was nearing its devastating conclusion on the Chinese Mainland, Feng's paintings seemed more out of keeping with the martial spirit of the times than ever before. One leftist critic decried the spirit of his art in terms highly reminiscent of Rou Shi's attack:

We cannot comprehend Mr Zikai's compassionate soul....What does he mean by encouraging people to go into the mountains to

Feng himself, Zhang pointed out that the aim of the book was to encourage people nurture a "sympathetic heart" -- an ability to treat all sentient beings with equal compassion. Stopping people killing ants or encouraging them to turn to vegetarianism was not enough. "After all," he wrote, "it is reported that Hitler, the modern fascist devil, was a vegetarian." (p. 6.)

\textsuperscript{11} "Feng Zikai, Once Among Us", ibid.; and Zhuan, pp. 133-35. In his "Introduction to My Hong Kong Exhibition", Feng said a friend had previously asked him to send some of his works from Hangzhou so he could arrange an exhibition in Hong Kong on his behalf. The artist had declined as he wanted to be present during the exhibition so he could write dedications to the people who bought his paintings. He felt that anyone who bought his work was attracted to his art by some inner propensity and therefore had a "affinity of the brush" (hanmo yinyuan) with him. He explained that he saw the people who bought his paintings as friends; however, because he made a living from his art he had no choice but to ask for money.

\textsuperscript{12} "Feng Zikai, Once Among Us", p. 172. According to Lo Wai-luen, Sing-tao jih-pao started printed Feng's work regularly in a fortnightly supplement from January 1948. From the end of May that year he was editing the supplement -- "Children's Paradise" (Ertong leyuan) -- while also publishing cartoon strips of children of his own. The Dagongyuan supplement of Ta Kung Pao also carried his work from October that year. These, and some of the other painting he did during his stay in Hong Kong, were collected and reprinted in Feng Zikai lianhuan manhua, edited by Mo Yidian and Xu Zhengyi, Hong Kong: Mingchuang chubanshe, 1976. Feng started painting "cartoon strips", or connected manhua for Yuzhoufeng in 1934.

\textsuperscript{13} The exhibition ended up running from 15-16 and then 19-20 April. Feng also lectured at the Peizheng High School on Kowloon and the exhibition was put on at the school library on 21-22 April.

\textsuperscript{14} "Introduction to My Hong Kong Exhibition", ibid.
look at the falling petals of flowers, or depicting Chinese society as a
calm and peaceful place? How can people enjoy such a leisurely
existence? Perhaps Mr Zikai's artistic philosophy is to encourage us
all to wash away the "common dust" of worldly emotions and
emulate his credo of "kindness to all men" (yuren weishan).

But does he really think that people will start loving each other
just because he "conceals sorrow in landscapes, or heartbreak in
leisured outings"?15

The writer upbraided Feng for being "adrift in the lonely solitude of
'compassion'"; it was time for him to make "a speedy return to terra firma".16 This
was merely a foretaste of what was waiting for him back on the Mainland. On 23
April, 1949 he flew back to Shanghai. On 27 May, the city was occupied by the
People's Liberation Army, marking the beginning of Feng Zikai's life in New China.

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15 "Feng Zikai's Paintings" (Feng Zikai de hua), by Luo Wenhong, Ta Kung Pao, 24 April, 1949,
quoted in Lo Wai-luen "Feng Zikai, Once Among Us", p. 173.
16 Ibid.
Conclusion

The alienation of 20th Century Chinese intellectuals from traditional culture and the significance of cultural conservatism is a vast and complex problem, and one dealt with masterfully by Joseph Levenson, Benjamin Schwartz and Charlotte Furth, among others.¹

"Creativity," as Levenson points out, "presupposes a state of tension between a fresh imagination and the weight of tradition, a tension which leads to development within tradition."² While vocal traditionalist artists such as the guohua painter Wu Hufan³ set themselves against experimentation in the Chinese artistic media -- he was particularly opposed to the depiction of figures in contemporary garb -- others such as the Lingnan School of painters attempted a formalistic modernization of their art. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, champions of traditionalistic thinking such as Wu were increasingly confronted with the dilemma of "wishing to preserve what had been valued...in time [finding] themselves valuing what had been preserved."⁴

¹ The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China, edited by Charlotte Furth, is a collection of essays on different aspects of these questions; while Levenson's Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, is a work of near magisterial significance in this area of debate.
² Levenson, Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, p 132.
³ Levenson cites the case of Wu when discussing the quandry of Chinese artists this century. Wu (1884-1968), the son of a prominent Qing official, went to school with the future May Fourth cultural figures Ye Shengtao, Gu Jiegang (the historian) and Yan Wenliang (the oil-painter) in Suzhou. He studied art in Japan and Taiwan with Ye Gongchao (the calligrapher Feng visited in Hong Kong); and his cousin was Huang Yanpei, a schoolmate of Li Shutong, and an activist in the Rural Reform Movement. Sullivan in Chinese Art in the 20th Century, p. 38, makes a passing reference to Wu's painting as being "typical...of the state of the academic tradition" with its "tight and careful brush-work."
⁴ Richard Gilman, Decadence: the Strange Life of an Epithet, p. 52. Although referring to the classical Western world, Gilman's comments have their relevance in the case of China. Gilman goes on to say, "The result was that, increasingly, value itself became the exclusive province of the past and the present was transformed into something resembling a vast association of museums: a Smithsonian Institution of artifacts, physical procedures, mechanisms, a Louvre of consciousness and received imagination. The 'crisis' of the ancient world, so much talked about and fretted over in later historiography, can be seen to have lain most fundamentally in this steady accumulation of the past within all the spaces of the present, so that to live must have in time become to have been lived, to be the abode of ghosts. This fate is perennial, in some degree; we have Ibsen's play to remind us of its 'modern' operation. But it must in ancient times have been universal, profound, wholly inescapable."
The present work has presented evidence that both in his writings and paintings Feng Zikai felt that enlivening tension between the collective experience of the past -- tradition -- and his own modern artistic vision. He had, to quote Levenson once more, "the will to develop tradition". It has been a major thesis of this work that this "will" was central to Feng's temperament, which had been conditioned by his early years in West Zhejiang, and was also the result of the influence of three men during his life, Li Shutong (the Dharma Master Hongyi), Xia Mianzun and Ma Yifu.

These three men played a leading role at one time or another in his life. Li Shutong, an unusual and multi-talented individual, influenced his interest in music and art as well as his personal development when he was in high school, and it was Li who led him to continue his studies in Japan. In 1927, at a time of increasing political divisions and conflict in the Chinese intellectual world, again it was Li, now the Buddhist monk Hongyi, who provided Feng with spiritual guidance.

Xia Mianzun, a lay Buddhist, was the man Feng followed in his career as a teacher and then translator, first to Chunhui High School and then to the Li Da Academy. Feng emulated Xia to become a tireless educator, not only in the classroom but also as a writer for educational publications. Feng's career as a popular translator of texts on music and art was also much influenced by Xia's own work as a translator and editor.

The third leading figure in Feng's adult life was the Confucian philosopher Ma Yifu. Feng's writing and art, especially during the Anti-Japanese War, were deeply affected by Ma's personal philosophy and its particular combination of Confucian and Buddhist thought. Ma's reclusive lifestyle may even have inspired Feng's own retirement from active life in the 1930s. As Hongyi was increasingly occupied with lecturing in monasteries and temples throughout the 1930s in his attempt to revive the fortunes of the Buddhist School of Discipline, Feng drew closer to Ma. After 1949, with both Li Shutong and Xia Mianzun dead, Ma Yifu, although ailing and living in seclusion in Hangzhou, remained a vital link to the moral and cultural values which Feng had pursued in the past.

Commenting on the intellectual crisis of the May Fourth period, Lin Yu-sheng has observed that:

5 "When traditionalists lost the will to develop tradition, and sought instead to repeat it, they changed its content. They no longer saw it, with a spontaneous aesthetic vision, as a world of beauty which could pique them to new discoveries. They saw it rather as an antithesis to the West, and development could only weaken it in that capacity." Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, p. 133.

6 Feng's attachment to these three men at different periods in his career was first suggested to me by Chen Xing in our discussions of the artist's life and work by the West Lake in Hangzhou in 1986.
...totalistic iconoclasm excluded for many the possibility of recognizing explicitly the intellectual and moral meaning of elements of the old Chinese culture that had survived the disintegration of the Chinese tradition. Since those elements could not be explicitly recognized and dealt with, they were ignored. But ignoring them could not resolve the very real problem of finding a new framework for integrating the intellectually meaningful parts from the old culture with the new ideas and values of the West.⁷

Feng found his own solution to the dilemmas of his times, the relationship to tradition and the role of the individual in an age of change and disruption not by simply clinging to the wreckage of the past, nor by being swept up by the powerful wave of "totalistic iconoclasm" during the May Fourth period. Although Feng Zikai may not have found the "new framework" Lin is talking about, his personal form of Buddhism and an appreciation of the role that yuán or affinities had in creating a stable and lasting structure during an individual's life, provided the artist with an alternative to the intellectual chaos of his day. At the centre of Feng's network of affinities was his relationship with Li Shutong.

It may well be that having lost his father at an early age, Feng found a surrogate father or authority figure in Li Shutong. Li had an almost charismatic appeal to Feng throughout his life. The deep spiritual and personal friendship Feng shared with Li was not shaken by the iconoclastic currents of the May Fourth period which broke the student-teacher bonds of so many of Feng's contemporaries.⁸ Feng consciously bound himself to his teacher when he pledged to paint the six volumes of the Husheng huaji series. He made this decision in 1927-1928, a crucial turning point in the history of modern Chinese intellectual and political life. The vow provided him with a code of action and duty that withstood the violent pressures of the 1940s and, as is shown in Appendix I, overrode even the most crushing demands of the new society.

This is not to say that Feng was untouched by the age. The political and social violence within China, the alienation created by the cities, the disruption arising from rural bankruptcy in the late 1920s and 1930s and the devastation of the Anti-Japanese War all find their place in Feng's art and essays. At times his inner world was overwhelmed by the exigencies of the day. Yet Feng had found an alternative cultural milieu in which to function, one that was firmly rooted in his religious perceptions and a belief in the importance of personal cultivation and self-expression.

⁸ This refers to the 1920s' disaffection between "the teacher's generation" as Schwarcz calls it and the "pattern making, model builder, paradigm-articulators" of the "third generation" of modern Chinese intellectuals. See Li and Schwarcz, "Six Generations of Modern Chinese Intellectuals", Chinese Studies in History, Winter 1983-84, p. 49.
When he first observed and recorded the lives of his young children in the 1920s, still much influenced by May Fourth discussions of the child, Feng wrote about the importance of retaining a "childlike mind" (tongxin). As a teacher of art appreciation in the late 1920s and in essays on the subject of art in the 1930s, he repeatedly referred to the need for people to develop and maintain an "artistic heart" (yishude xin); and during the politically divisive and violent days of the late 1920s up to the late 1940s he emphasized through the Husheng huaji series that people should develop a "sympathetic heart" (tongqingxin), a "heart of equality" (pingdengxin). Above all, he believed it was crucial to "protect the heart" (huxin) against the ravages of the world.

Feng's comments on the "childlike mind", self-expression and quwei paralleled to some extent statements by the late-Ming philosopher Li Zhi and members of the Gongan School of writers. Zhou Zuoren identified the Gongan School as the main precursor of the individualist literature of modern China. The writings of the chief Gongan writers, the Yuan brothers, along with that of a number of other late-Ming writers, was the object of a literary revival led by Zhou Zuoren, Lin Yutang, Fei Ming and Yu Pingbo. Feng Zikai published many of his own casual essays in the pages of magazines set up by the greatest advocate of the "expressivist school" of individualist literature, Lin Yutang.

Feng Zikai's art was by no means purely self-indulgent, and because of his sympathy for the poor and the suffering of his fellow man leftist writers found him a contradictory figure. Along with a number of his colleagues at the Chunhui High School at Baima Lake and the Li Da Academy in Shanghai, he chose the less politicized road of personal and cultural development after the May Fourth years. Feng did not really become a member of what Vera Schwarcz identifies as the Chinese intelligentsia -- that self-aware group of revolutionary "technicians" -- and up to 1949 he preferred to be known as an artist (yishujia).

Feng Zikai found his personalized form of expression in the painted essay, the shōhinga (xiaopinhua) to use Takehisa Yumeji's term, or the manhua, the word chosen by Zheng Zhenduo to describe his work. Feng's continued use of the term manhua, despite the fact it was soon popularized as a translation of "cartoon", in effect removed him from the debates surrounding the New Art Movement. Because he did not fall in with any of the major schools of modern art, he was ignored. While sketching from life and drawing realistic scenes, he belonged to and identified with the artistic tradition

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9 Schwarcz, From Renaissance to Revolution, p. 143ff.
of the *manhua* or sketch-like figure that had developed in China and Japan over many
centuries.  

Feng was a May Fourth artist who from his earliest days felt drawn to the vital
force of traditional culture. In his early paintings he chose traditional poetry, one of
the most value-laden forms of Chinese literary culture, as his source of inspiration. By
"translating" lines from classical poems he felt himself to be both fully at home in a
traditional form of expression and free to recreate the meaning of the poems. As he
said, "I often feel that some of the best lines [of classical poetry] are...a description of
the lives of modern man; or that they have spoken on my behalf....Therefore, good
poems are forever new, no matter how old they are."  

The style of his early works was one of unstudied and natural grace. The
contrast of ink (*shi*) and space or blank areas (*xu*) fills the work with the same force
and pregnant significance pursued by traditional artists, and his inscriptions, be they
poetic or not, add a dimension to the work. As Feng matured his painting betrayed a
more deliberate edge, and after the early 1930s he never recaptured that early fluidity.
This is especially true of his landscapes. His style became more studied and heavy and
the blanks, space originally created to allow room for thought, were increasingly filled
in, his brush strokes became thicker, the message more obvious.

He found common cause with the early humanistic elements of the May Fourth
most clearly enunciated in Zhou Zuoren's "Humane Literature". If, as some writers
have it, the main thrust of the May Fourth Period was the transformation of the
national character of the Chinese through a change in the heart and mind, then Feng
Zikai, whether as a teacher, translator, writer, artist or even a parent, continued this
enterprise throughout his life.

Similarly, if the task of making one's life a work of art is to be regarded as an
achievement, then surely Feng Zikai was one of the most successful artists of his time.
Zhu Guangqian said of him: "Zikai was an artist from head to toe. His general attitude

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10 Kao, in *China's Response to the West in Art*, p. 228, lists Xu Beihong and Lin Fengmian
   together with Feng Zikai as achieving "the gradual assimilation of the Western experience into
   traditional paintings....They approached nature in a more vigorous and direct way than their
   predecessors had."

11 From Feng's "Introduction to *Huazhong youshi*", see Chapter Four.

12 Zhou's "Postscript to *Zaban er*" (*Zaban er tiji*), in Yu Pingbo, *Zaban er*, p. 147; Pollard,

13 I am grateful to Dr Mary Farquhar of Griffith University, Queensland, for her comments on this
   subject.


15 See Pollard in *The Limits of Change*, edited by Charlotte Furth, p. 349.
to life, his way of expressing himself and his ready smile, the way he treated others, were all quintessentially artistic..." His greatest success was to remain a man who was not polluted by life; he was not degraded by experience. Like Li Shutong he was an artist whose greatest creation was his own life.

In terms of the influence of Feng's work on others, perhaps it is in the realm of the manhua that his impact is most readily seen. Imitators of his style first appeared in the pages of Funü zazhi in the 1920s and also in Zhongxuesheng in 1931, while his student Bao Huihe emulated him in Yuzhoufeng in the mid-1930s. During the war, one young Shanghai-based artist was so impressed by the Husheng huaji that he published his work under the name "Cikai" or "following Feng Zikai" in Shenbao [10: 1]

At least two prominent contemporary Mainland Chinese cartoonists or manhuajia demonstrate a debt to Feng Zikai's artistic style. One of them is Hua Junwu (b. 1915), a leading veteran cultural bureaucrat and a widely-published artist. Although he more readily acknowledges the influence of the White Russian Sapajou on his work, the line of his Chinese ink and brush sketches, the use of borders and even the style of calligraphy and inscription are heavily reminiscent of Feng's work. [10: 2] Bi Keguan (b. 1931), an artist and the manhua historian who is often quoted in this thesis, proudly claims to be a student of Feng. He is also a man who has championed the re-evaluation of Feng Zikai manhua in China since the Cultural Revolution. Some of Bi's non-political work (like Hua) is primarily a political artist) shows the power of Feng's art, and even the occasional title is borrowed from Feng. [10: 3]

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18 See Feng's Jiaoshi riji, pp. 94, 128. One of Cikai's paintings is reproduced on page 94.
19 Chinese Satire and Humour: Selected Cartoons of Hua Junwu (1955-1982), translated by W.J.F. Jenner, Peking: New World Press, 1984, pp. 7, 10. Hua wrote a short article on his relationship with Feng as an introduction to Feng Yiyin's Feng Zikai. This essay, "Mr Zikai" (Zikai xiansheng), was originally published in Meishu, 1984: 12, pp. 50-51. Hua was introduced to Feng in the early 1930s by Lin Yutang and taken to see him again in 1934 in Hangzhou by Tao Kengde. He comments on the importance of Feng's manhua and his Yuanyuantang suibi essays. Some of Hua's earliest work appeared with Feng's in the pages of Yuzhoufeng.
20 See Bi's introduction to Bi Keguan manhua xuan, Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981, p. 5. Bi's manhua of children are directly influenced by Feng's work. After graduating from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Peking in 1956 he worked in the magazines Manhua and Meishu. In 1959, Bi started painting a children's manhua column which was syndicated in many newspapers. Even the name of the column was an acknowledgement of Feng's influence: it was called Tongxin, "childlike mind".
Even among other cartoonists, including those who acknowledge no debt to Feng and whose work has in terms of temperament little in common with his art, there is evidence of some influence. This lies in the use of the Chinese brush and ink, the emphasis on the brush, to depict the everyday, mundane and even trivial.

I have tried to show by referring to the artist's writings that the key to understanding much of his work, in particular his paintings of the 1920s and the early 1930s, lies within the ineffable regions of the artist's personality.

In summing up Feng Zikai's achievement as both an artist and an individual, it is surely the measure of sympathy, something he called "the sympathetic heart" (tongqingxin) -- a basic element which informed his life and work -- that marks him as a significant figure on the stage of 20th Century Chinese culture. It is for this reason that his work remains vital today while that of so many of his contemporaries is of little more than academic interest or curiosity value.

In his study of modern Chinese fiction, C.T. Hsia identifies the limitations of 20th Century Chinese culture as being due to what he calls the "failure of sympathy". Writing of Luo Huasheng (Xu Dishan, 1894-1941), a lay Buddhist and an early member of the Literature Research Society, Hsia says:

Most contemporary Chinese writers reserve their sympathy for the poor and downtrodden; the idea that any person, irrespective of class and position, is a fit object for compassionate understanding is alien to them. This failure of sympathy accounts for the moral shallowness of the bulk of modern Chinese literature: in its preoccupation with national and ideological issues it is little disposed to examine individual destinies in the spirit of charity.\(^{21}\)

Perhaps it is the "success of sympathy" in Feng Zikai's life and work that makes him such an attractive figure.

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\(^{21}\) C.T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, p. 91, also, pp. 55-56 & 84-92. The only time I have found Feng and Xu's work linked is in a selection of Buddhist-oriented essays edited by Chen Huijian, the Taiwan Buddhist lay disciple and author of a prize-winning biography of Hongyi. See *Si jushi ji*, essays by Xia Mianzun, Feng Zikai, Xu Dishan and Chen Huijian, Hong Kong: Huangyuan chubanshe, no date.
Appendix I:
Feng Zikai Liberated (1949-1975)

1: Introductory Note

The following material is an outline study of Feng Zikai’s later life under Communist rule in Mainland China. While an attempt is made to indicate the elements of continuity between Feng’s pre- and post-1949 career, I have not been able to gain access to all the material which would make a thorough evaluation of the years 1949-1975 possible. Furthermore, it is certain that in the next few years more material will become available on this period of Feng’s life, and many additions to this essay will be possible. For this reason I have decided to relegate this part of my study to an appendix rather than include it in the main body of the text.

Feng Zikai’s life after 1949, in its salient aspects at least, differs little from that of many of the aging intellectuals and cultural figures of the "Old Society" who chose to remain on the Mainland. To this extent at least, I feel that Feng’s last years should be seen in the context of the fate of a large group of individuals who, in terms of their public personae, were increasingly deprived of their individuality. The details of their shared fate cannot possibly be contained in this short essay. I will concentrate instead on the aspects of Feng’s post-1949 life that reflect both his past and his efforts to retain what I choose to call a "private plot of the soul".

It is a private plot that he first started to cultivate under the influence and instruction of his teacher, Li Shutong, or the Dharma Master Hongyi. Though Hongyi had died seven years before the Communist victory, he continued to play a crucial role in Feng Zikai’s late years. In fact, Feng’s pledge to finish the six volumes of the Husheng huaji, first made to Hongyi in 1939, was like a lifeline both to his past and to the Buddhist world -- in China and especially overseas -- that helped the artist maintain a spiritual independence, no matter how limited, from the

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1 In general, I use capital letters in translating Mainland Communist jargon. Sometimes both capital letters and quotation marks are employed.
political violence that increasingly undermined the integrity of his contemporaries. Through Hongyi he was bound to a regimen of commemoration and worship -- this involved the building of a pagoda to Hongyi's memory at the Hupao Temple in Hangzhou in 1953, an attempt to establish a memorial hall to the master from 1955 to 1959, the compilation of a chronology of his life in the 1950s, as well as the collecting and publishing of Hongyi's calligraphic works in the 1960s -- all of which gave his life an alternative structure outside the agenda set by the exigencies of communism. Hongyi was the central motif in the link Feng maintained with his friend Guangqia (b. 1901), a Singapore monk, and his correspondence with Guangqia is the most important source for clues to Feng's inner life at this time. Thus it was due to Hongyi that Feng was able to maintain the network of yuan or affinities that offered a structure to his life, his belief and his spirit. Considering the role Buddhists, both clergy and lay, were expected to play in Chinese foreign relations from 1949 onwards, one can only speculate as to the precise reasons why the authorities allowed Feng to continue his frequent correspondence with Guangqia and whether this was linked to foreign policy considerations involving Singapore and Buddhists in South-East Asia.

This essay is arranged in roughly chronological order. Like many others, the corruption of the KMT, continued civil unrest, and economic instability had brought Feng Zikai out in criticism of the government. This, coupled with his continued sympathy for the leftist cause -- one inspired as much by its proponents, many of whom where friends, as by its politics -- may well be the reason why, unlike so many other Buddhists, he decided to stay in the Mainland after 1949. But this is the starting point of our speculations about his new life. Certainly, the essays and paintings he did during the period up to 1949 were often quoted by Communist writers to prove his correct political orientation and laudable "patriotic"

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2 Feng Zikai zhi Guangqia fashi shuxinxuan (referred to hereafter as Shuxinxuan), has been previously cited and was published in Hong Kong by Guangqia in 1977 for distribution to Feng's Buddhist friends and admirers. I was given a copy of this rare and fascinating book by Feng Yiyin. Unfortunately, the published correspondence is a selection of letters, and the first post-1949 letter is dated 6 June, 1955, some years after the initial period of adjustment demanded of Chinese intellectuals and literati in the early 1950s. Guangqia's selection contains over 140 letters, which apart from a few letters addressed to him in the 1930s and 1940s, all date from after the Communist victory. The only gaps being 1949-1955, 1966-1970 and 1973 to the time of Feng's death in 1975. Apart from the lacunae from 1966-1970, years during which Feng was presumably forced to cease all overseas correspondence, the other gaps may one day be filled in. There are few similar volumes, collections of Zhou Zuoren's letters to Cao Juren and Bao Yaoming in the 1950s and 1960s, and Fu Lei's letters to Fou Ts'ong, Fu Lei jiashu, being the only other obvious examples of a continuous and relatively open correspondence between a Mainland cultural figure and a friend or relative outside China that come to mind (see below for comments on Zhou's letters).

3 Welch, Buddhism under Mao, pp. 169-70.

4 Holmes Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, pp. 157-59, in particular page 158.
attitude. The most generally referred to essay in this context is "A Record of Exterminating Bandits in my Mouth" (Kouzhong jiaofeiji), written in the winter of 1947. Feng writes about a trip to the dentist Yi Zhaoxue when he had his remaining teeth extracted, likening them to "official bandits" (guanfei), venal and corrupt officials. It is an obvious attack on the KMT of the time and he concludes it with a wish that the dentist will be able to replace his rotting teeth with a set of "upstanding, well trained talents who will serve the State and the People. Only then can the territory in my mouth finally enjoy peace."  

2: The Communist Great Harmony

One of the possible reasons why Feng Zikai was capable of accommodating himself to Communist rule with such ease was his own belief in the world of the Great Harmony (datong shijie), which he expressed in his writing as early as 1925. In his postscript to the third series of Husheng huaji, the calligrapher Ye Gongchao had even expressed the hope that this book would further encourage the cause of peace and brotherhood, bringing the "World of Great Harmony" (tatong zhi shi) closer to realization. This was a Confucian concept with a considerable pedigree in Chinese intellectual history; it also dovetailed with some basic Buddhist beliefs such as that of the Western Paradise or Pure Land, references to which occasionally appear in Feng's writings. The hope for equality, harmony and an end to divisiveness and killing were powerful attractions of the new government. Certainly one thing that contributed to the optimistic hopes of intellectuals like Feng and Ye was the fact that they had always lived under the KMT and had little understanding of the realities of Communist rule in the "Liberated Areas".

Another reason why Feng held out high hopes for the new government, one shared by other impoverished intellectuals and artists at the time, was that after

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5 "Record of Bandit Extermination in my Mouth" (Kouzhong jiaofeiji), Suibiji, pp. 306-308. For a typical Mainland appreciation of this work, see Zhuan, p. 132. In response to the ministrations of the Yi Zhaoxue, the dentist who extracted Feng's remaining seventeen teeth and made a set of replacements, Feng wrote a lengthy essay in classical Chinese which was engraved on a four-leaved folding screen. This highly humorous piece is in the style of a personal essay and it was published as "An Offering to the Dentist Yi Zhaoxue" (Zeng Yi Zhaoxue yayishi) in Zhegan luxun, No. 316, 10, July 1948, p. 4. It is quite unlike "A Record of Exterminating Bandits in my Mouth". The screens bearing Feng's calligraphy were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

6 "Record of Bandit Extermination in my Mouth", p. 308.

7 See, for example, "One Evening in Tokyo" (Dongjing mouwande shi), Suibiji, pp. 5-6.

8 Written in April 1949, Husheng huaji, Vol. III, p. 141.

9 For a study of the history of the Great Harmony and Buddhism in China see also Zhongguo gudai datong sixiang yanjiu, by Chen Zhengyan, Lin Qian, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1986, pp. 222-35. For some details regarding the use of Pure Land doctrine by Buddhist-Communists up to 1966, see Welch, Buddhism under Mao, pp. 262, 288-91.
years of political uncertainty and financial hardship he now looked forward to a stable environment and the possibility of being given a living allowance by the government. In conversation with Feng Zikai in Hong Kong, Ye Gongchao had expressed the hope that one day artists could be supported (shanyang) by the government. Feng had replied with grim humour, "With our past government [i.e., the KMT] literati and artists would be grateful in the extreme if they were not interfered with, not oppressed, or done violence to. No one would dare think of being supported by the government." During the late 1940s, Feng had been known for his policy of the "Three Nos" (no teaching, no public speaking, no banquetting), and family members recall that earlier during the war, when money was tight, Feng refused the offers he received to work in the government, preferring to teach and paint for a living. They report that he had said in private that, "It would be easy to become a bureaucrat. You only need two talents: self-promotion and flattery."

Feng had also expressed the wish that, "If artists have a steady income then they can avoid having to engage in commerce over their art and they can progress in a more rational manner, and achieve more ideal results. But that is my hope for the future." In keeping with this positive mood, he wrote a long letter to Huazhan, his eldest son, who was studying in America. According to his family, in it he "warmly praised the New Society and the Liberation Army" encouraging Huazhan to return to be with his family. Despite his family's very positive interpretation of this letter it is arguable that Feng just wanted to keep the family together. After all, he also wanted Chenbao, his eldest daughter who was working in Amoy, to return to Shanghai to be with them.

In an essay written for a Peking newspaper in early 1950, Feng returned to his metaphor of the three-storied house he had used when discussing his relationship with religion some ten years earlier. This time, however, the inhabitants of the building were divided not by differing goals in life, but by class. Those on the top floor lived a life of ease and wealth in a bright and airy atmosphere.

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10 His friends Xia Mianzun and Zhu Ziqing had died in the 1940s in poverty.
11 This certainly came to pass for Ye, who was appointed director of the Academy of Chinese Painting (Zhongguohuayuan) in Peking when it was established in May 1957.
12 "Introduction to My Hong Kong Exhibition".
14 Zhuan, p. 117.
15 "Introduction to My Hong Kong Exhibition", ibid.
17 Zhuan, p. 138.
18 Zhuan, ibid.
Those on the second floor were not so well off, while the people on the first (or ground) floor lived in poverty in cramped and airless rooms. One night the building collapsed, killing or crippling many of the inhabitants of the third floor. The others had escaped in time; in fact, they had joined forces to push the pillars supporting the building over. Now the carpenters and plasterers among the denizens of the first floor were leading everyone else to reclaim what they could from the wreckage to build a series of one storey houses which everyone could enjoy equally. 19

3: Zhou Zuoren and Yibao

One of his first post-1949 projects was doing the illustrations for Zhou Zuoren's poems published in the Shanghai Yibao. 20 Another was his introduction to his illustrations for Lu Xun's short stories. 21 In the period just prior to the establishment of the People's Republic and in the early years of the new state, Feng Zikai came to publish a series of pictures that represent perhaps the last unfettered expression of his own "childlike mind". There were seventy-two paintings in all, and they were done as illustrations for Zhou's Ertong zashi shi. The poems were written while Zhou was still in gaol in Nanking, sentenced by the Nationalist government for his collaboration with the Japanese occupation of Peking.

Zhou says in an introduction to the poems that they were inspired by a casual reading of Edward Lear's nonsense rhymes in June 1946. 22 Lear's poems had been a favourite of Zhou's during the May Fourth period and he had written

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19 "The Three-storey Building" (Sancenglou), 29 January, 1950, Xinminbao, reprinted in Yangliu, No. 15, 1987: 3, pp. 1-3. Zhu Nantian, an aged poet and admirer of Feng, had an article in the same issue of Yangliu, p. 9, reaffirming the importance of Feng's original interpretation of the three stories for anyone who hopes to understand the artist's thinking.

20 This is not mentioned in Zhuan or Nianbiao as Zhou was still under a cloud when these works were written. Chen Xing mentions this co-operative venture in "Feng Zikai and Zhou Zuoren" (Feng Zikai yu Zhou Zuoren), Jiaxingbao, 10 January, 1988, and Zhong Shuhe of Yuelu shushe publishers in Changsha, Hunan, has arranged for the poems and paintings to be published in book form for the first time in 1989. Zhong has almost single-handedly overseen the considerable publishing effort to reprint Zhou's works in the Mainland.

21 Zhuan, p. 204; Nianbiao, p. 39. The chronology in Zhuan is basically rewritten on the basis of Nianbiao.

22 See the full introduction to the poems in Zhitang zashi chao, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1987, pp. 57-58. This introduction is dated March 1948 in this first collection of Zhou's poems where Zhou states that the poems were written "the year before last" (qunian). However, in Zhou Zuoren nianpu edited by Zhang Juxiang, Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1985, pp. 528-29, the introduction is dated August 1947 and it states that Zhou wrote the poems in that year. To add to the confusion, the Hong Kong art critic Zhu Xingzhai quotes Zhou's introduction in full in an article entitled "A Note on the Poems of the Old Man of the Hall of Knowledge" (H Zhitang laoren de shishu), in the Hong Kong magazine Wenyi shiji, 1960: 2, pp. 10-11, in which Zhou writes that the piece was "copied out during the Spring Festival of 1950." (p. 11.)
about them a number of times; bewailing the fact that Chinese writers never produced nonsense poetry themselves. It is not clear how Feng came to do the illustrations, although two things should be taken into account. One is that Zhou, as we have seen, had admired Feng’s illustrations for Yu Pingbo’s book Yi in the early 1920s; the second fact is that Feng Zikai had done a series of paintings as illustrations for Lu Xun’s "The True Story of Ah Q" just prior to the Japanese War. Although the pictures were destroyed when the Japanese occupied Shanghai, Feng repainted them at the request of his student Qian Juntao. Again they were lost during the bombing of Canton, and it was only on his third painting that the works were finally printed. He commented that as Chongde County, his native place, was some distance from Shaoxing (some three hundred li) the scenery, clothing and customs were not entirely the same. However, they were presumably accurate enough for Zhou Zuoren to ask Feng to illustrate his own Shaoxing poems.

The poems and illustrations were published in the Yibao, a short-lived Shanghai newspaper, from 23 February to 6 May, 1950. Although the poems were published in Hong Kong in the early 1970s and again in China in 1987, apart from the Shanghai publication, they were not widely known until the 1980s. 

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23 See Feng’s original introduction to these paintings in Feng Zikai huihua Lu Xun xiaoshuo, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1982, where these works have been reprinted along with illustrations Feng did of Lu Xun’s other stories. William A. Lyell reproduces eleven of these paintings in his Lu Hsun’s Vision of Reality, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, pp. 147, 151, 169, 213, 221, 225, 254, 257, 278, 302. See also Song Mufa’s article “Concerning Manhua for The True Story of Ah Q -- defending Mr Feng Zikai” (Guanyu << Manhua Ah Q Zhengzhuan>> -- dai Feng Zikai xiansheng bianzheng), Yuzhoufeng, 1941: 9, pp. 143-45, in which the writer defends Feng's drawings after reading a criticism of them by Yan Shaoduan in the Zhongyang ribao of 21 July, 1941. Also Wei Shan’s article “On Manhua for The True Story of Ah Q (Ping <<Manhua Ah Q Zhengzhuan>>, Huqiao ribao, 28 October, 1948. Wei Shan’s attack on Feng’s portrayal of Ah Q, and that is what his article amounts to rather than a criticism, reveals something of the attitude to Feng that was first voiced in the 1920s. While admitting that Feng’s drawings had represented Ah Q in a new fashion, avoiding the tendency of earlier paintings “either to depict him as a revolutionary or some sort of clown who was there to amuse us”, Wei Shan says that Feng’s Ah Q is also a lifeless failure. His shortfall is one which proves that “in dealing with such a theme [Feng Zikai] is unwilling, incapable or maybe just too scared to recreate Ah Q on paper”. The crux of the matter was not Feng’s manhua technique, it had more to do with the artist’s spirit of social struggle” or rather lack of it. Having declared himself to start nitpicking, Wei Shan proceeds to deride Feng’s style of painting in the following terms: “I have always been of the opinion that both Feng’s intentions (mingyi) and brushwork (bifa) are of the most antiquated, shallow and mediocre type. To my mind he has always seemed far too eager to assimilate the detritus of Japanese bourgeois art educators and make it his own.” Although Wei Shan does concede that in painting Ah Q Feng has made a tentative step in the right direction — realism. However, it is a case of too little too late.

24 Zhou Zuoren nianpu, pp. 528, 556. In this work the editor, in commenting on the poem, states, "None of the things Zhou writes about have a very lofty content, but he has described some famous historical figures and local stories in a simple and lively fashion. We may definitely say that this is a relatively interesting (jiao you quwei) collection of children’s poetry.” (p. 556) In Zhou Zuoren nianpu, p. 537, it is stated that Zhou published 908 essays in Yibao from 22 November, 1949 up to 15 March, 1952. Also “Talking About Zhitang’s Yibao Essays (Tantan Zhitangde <<Yibao>> suibi), Renmin ribao, 22 December, 1987, p. 8, Zhong Shuhe, the enthusiastic and courageous publisher of Zhou’s work in Hunan, presaged that a new book, <<Yibao>> suibi was to appear in 1988 with 756 of these articles. And at the end of 1988 the book, edited by Chen Zishan, was published in Hunan under the title Zhitang jiwaiwen: <<Yibao>> suibi, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1988.
from examples used by Zhu Xingzhai in 1960 in an article, the illustrations have not been reproduced until recently. The pictures, like much of Feng's illustrative work as seen in his illustrations for Xia Mianzun's book and the Lu Xun stories, are very detailed and utterly lacking in the whimsy and spontaneity of the paintings of his own children. They, like the poems by Zhou, are the representation of an adult's view of a children's world and the things in that world which catch the attention of a child. In short, they are narrative and obviously illustrative. Nonetheless, one can still detect the particular tone (quwei) of Feng's style. One of the interesting elements of this collection is that in the second group of twenty-four poems there are a number of works which deal with traditional Chinese poets, some of whom -- for example, Tao Yuanming, Du Fu, Li Bai and Jiang Kui -- were among Feng's favourites.

4: The Childlike Mind in the Service of the State

Shortly after the Communist takeover in 1949, it became evident that Feng Zikai's style of painting was to be regarded differently. Despite having only ever been a marginal children's writer, Feng's work, in particular his 1920-1930s paintings of children, were now reclassified as children's art and he was warned that his maudlin and solipsistic view of the childlike mind was out-of-date. The art critic Wang Chaowen, a self-professed fan of Feng's work, gave a positive prognosis for the future of children's art in light of "the new historical circumstances" under socialism in 1951, availing himself of the opportunity to take a swipe at Feng's 1920s paintings of children. "The life, emotions, aspirations and dreams of children in New China have a rich and healthy poetic meaning," he wrote in an article for the Renmin ribao in 1951. "Not only does this deserve to be depicted in our painting, it would be a loss if it were not....The possibilities for the expression of such typical themes of children's life such as patriotism are richer and healthier by far in New China than they were under the old society. Thus we have an ideal situation in which paintings that are far more poetic, captivating and socially significant than such works as "Zhanzhan's Bicycle" are now possible. As the very nature of the society has changed, the ideology and emotional range of children has become more progressive and the function of adults as role models has increased. Therefore, the situation that Mr Zikai recognizes in the introduction of

25 The poems were published separately under the title Ertong zashishi in Hong Kong by the Chongwen shuju in 1973. Zhou Zuoren put together a volume of the poems with Feng's illustrations together out of newspaper cuttings taken from Yibao which he had taken to Hong Kong by Cao Juren in the early 1960s. Lo Wai-luen (Ming Tsuen) was made the custodian of this book by Cao before his death in 1972.
his Zikai huaji with such heartfelt sorrow and sighing -- one in which adults and children are in a permanent state of opposition -- is undergoing a basic change, and the distance between the worlds of the adult and the child is being rapidly reduced.

The style of children's painting which Feng displayed throughout the 1950s and 1960s under the pressure of the Communist Party's policies to remodel the ideology of the intellectuals is, in keeping with the hope expressed here by Wang Chaowen, upbeat and positive. Typical of these works are paintings like "Stories of Heroes"; "Domestic Economies"; "Mum, I want a red scarf too!"; "The Snowman"; "Two Peach Trees"; "Enthusiastic Workers"; and, "Think of the Source Whenever You Take a Drink", with its injunction never to forget Chairman Mao. In keeping with the compulsory optimism of the new society, virtually all of Feng's post-1949 works were done in colour. Gone are the simple ink

27 Feng Zikai huaji, p. 1.
28 Feng Zikai huaji, p. 2. Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 188 comments on this painting that Feng gives us here "a very sensitive portrait of the domesticated variety of children of the new China. The coat of the boy in the middle is like a straitjacket. His impeccable hair-style leaves no doubt that the boy is not being given undue freedom. Soon the little one on the right will be similarly streamlined,...The girl on the left stands to attention. She will move if and when she is told to. She is frozen stiff by her excellent and disciplined education. There is something deeply unsettling about this cartoon [sic] and about its trite message, especially when one sees it against the background of Feng's earlier work." In fact, this painting is a recasting of an earlier work in the series "Manhua of Life" (Manhua renjian). See Feng Zikai caise manhua xuanji, Hong Kong: Zhongliu chubanshe, 1977, p. 16. In this earlier painting, presumably done shortly before 1949, there are four children, and it is an altogether more natural scene than the 1958 version.
29 Feng Zikai huaji, p. 3.
30 Feng Zikai huaji, p. 9.
31 Feng Zikai huaji, p. 11. This painting was denounced in the Cultural Revolution, see below.
32 Feng Zikai huaji, p. 12. I take this title from Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 187, who has rightly observed the difference between this 1960 picture and Feng's 1926 painting "Enthusiastic Workers" (Kuailede kudaozhe) in Zikai manhua quanji, 2: 55; and The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 73. Harbsmeier comments on the later picture that "...now the children have become real little workers. Their work is dead serious. One can't even be sure whether the little girl on the far left isn't explaining the benefits of collectivization to the little boy opposite her. An unchildlike working spirit prevails in the picture." Harbsmeier has aptly fingered the deadened jollity and "happiness through labour" spirit of this work.
33 Feng Zikai huaji, p. 16. This last painting is of a well in the old Ruijin Soviet which Feng, along with a group of other artists and writers who were left over from the old society, were taken to visit in 1961. See his essay "Think of the Source Whenever You Take a Drink" (Yinshui siyuan), Suibiji, pp. 424-27. Harbsmeier indulges Feng somewhat when he comments on this work that "If one is going to have propaganda by Feng Zikai, this is quite an acceptable piece of it." See The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 195.
34 One Mainland critic explains the reason for this in the case of Feng's paintings of children by saying that (and I quote verbatim), "The old artist was so overcome by all the new childlike minds of all the new children of new China that touched him that he felt Chinese ink was insufficient to express the delight he felt for these new children..." See Huang Ke's "Depicting the Childlike Mind in Thick Ink and with Sincere Feelings -- on Feng Zikai's manhua of Children".
sketches of the past, and with them much of the simple charm of his style. But even under the dire circumstances when all people had to proclaim as if with one voice that "the old society of ten thousand evils has been transformed into a Country of Gentlemen (junziguo),\textsuperscript{35} and the hell of the past has been refurbished as heaven,"\textsuperscript{36} Feng’s works never became a simplistic instrument of class struggle or Party policy.

What remained of Feng’s childlike mind after 1949 is something that is only rarely hinted at in his forcedly cheerful and generally lifeless new works. Even the redone versions of the paintings of his artistic maturity -- the 1920s and 1930s -- are wooden and uninspired. In 1934 he wrote an article "On Children’s Paintings" (Ertonghua) in which he asked parents and teachers to let children draw and scribble whatever they wished without attempting to restrict or channel their creative energies along conventional lines. "Drawings children do on walls invariably have a greater artistic value than the things they produce in art class at school. This is because these drawings are not forced or posed but rather the result of a natural enthusiasm and self-motivation....I’m convinced if one were only to take the time to make a careful study of these drawings we'd be able to find out the truth about how children think and feel; we would be able to understand their hearts."\textsuperscript{37} In 1958, one of the periods of intense Party repression in China, he wrote once more on this subject. The essay was entitled "Talking About Children's Painting" (Tan ertonghua), and in it he suggested a number of ways in which art teachers in primary school could induce young children to abandon the naïve habit of painting "what they don't see". "The young are fascinated by drawing, but they are clumsy in their execution [of pictures]. As a result they often depict things inaccurately or completely incorrectly," he says in his opening sentence, in a complete about-face in thinking. He proceeds to denounce the deleterious influence of John Dewey and his Chinese followers (presumably Hu Shi, a writer whose work had been the object of a nationwide campaign of denunciation in 1955). "The reactionary educational theories of the bourgeoisie claim that this conforms to the theory of evolution. They say one should let children paint as they please without interference. This is a mistaken approach to the instruction of children in art."\textsuperscript{38}

He continues by prescribing various positive methods teachers can employ in

\textsuperscript{35} This is a reference to the Country of Gentlemen described in Li Ruzhen’s novel Jinghuayuan. A number of Feng’s children’s stories seem to have been inspired by this book; in fact, “Darenguo” is little more than a rewritten episode from it.

\textsuperscript{36} From Feng Zikai’s “A New Year’s Essay” (Xinnian suibi), written on 29 November, 1960 for the China News Agency (Zhongguo xinwenshe), an organ of the Chinese propaganda machine aimed at the overseas Chinese. See Suibiji, p. 400.

\textsuperscript{37} “On Children’s Paintings” (Ertonghua), in Yishu quwei, p. 63.

\textsuperscript{38} “Talking About Children’s Paintings” (Tan ertonghua), Suibiji, p. 384.
helping children of the age of three or four to represent objects in an accurate and realistic manner. It seems by this time Feng Zikai had taken Wang Chaowen's not-so-subtle advice to heart. 39

5: "Self-Renewal"

The price of adjusting to the new order in the early 1950s was high for Feng as well as for a number of his old friends such as Yu Pingbo and Zhu Guangqian. 40 Mao Zedong's attack on Sun Yu's film Wu Xun zhuoan in 1951 marked the beginning of a year-long purge of the cultural world. In 1947 Feng himself had illustrated Wu Xun zhuoan, a biography of the late Qing educationalist of Shandong written by Zhang Mosheng. 41 Wu Xun's story had been made into a major two-part film and released in 1950 42 and it became the centrepiece in the first

39 The essay "Lucky Children" (Xinfu ertong), Subiji, pp. 412-14, written for the 1 June Children's Festival of 1961, is a similarly depressing work. Possibly written on request to be used as propaganda aimed at Taiwan and Overseas Chinese, it is little more than a paean about the good fortune of the children of New China. Feng praises the communal mess halls that everyone can enjoy and the happy sense of neighbourliness in Shanghai which was unknown in the Old Society. In letters to the Singapore monk Guangqia written at around this time, however, Feng asked for medicines for himself as well as his ailing son and daughter, Xinnel and Yiyan, and he appeared genuinely grateful for the small sums of foreign currency Guangqia sent regularly which entitled Feng and his family to extra rations of oil and other foodstuffs. This was, after all, at the height of the deprivations of the "three bad years", 1959-1961. See Shuxinxuan, edited by Guangqia, pp. 67-77, in particular page 68 where, in a letter dated 6 February, 1961, Feng actually mentions the "natural disasters" of the previous years. This seems reason enough to speculate that Feng wrote "Lucky Children" with his tongue very firmly in cheek.

40 For examples of the type of denunciation these men were subjected to, or the confessions they were forced to make, see Li Yang's "The Bourgeois World View of Mr Yu Pingbo and his Idealist Artistic and Scholastic Thinking" (Yu Pingbo xianshengde zhanhuijijide renshengguan he douchangguan he weixianlunde wenyi xinlixue), Beijing Daxue xuebao, 1955: 1, pp. 69-91; and, Zhu Guangqian's denunciation of his books Wenyi xinlixue and Gei qingniande shierfeng xin in Renmin Ribao, 26 November, 1952. In this article he castigated himself for a "superior" (zhigao), "detached" (chaozuo) and "flippant" (huaji wanshi) attitude. Also Zhu's more thoroughgoing self-criticism "The Reactionary Nature of my Literary and Artistic Thinking" (Wode wenyi xinlixue de fandongxing), Wenyibaow, 1956: 12, pp. 34-43. Yu Pingbo was, of course, the object of Mao Zedong's purge of Bourgeois Scholastic Authorities which had been inspired by a new critique of the novel Hongloumeng in 1954.

41 See Zhang Mosheng, Wu Xun zhuoan, Shanghai: Dongfang shudian, 1947, with twenty one paintings by Feng. This work is not listed in Feng Yiyin's otherwise exhaustive bibliography in Feng Zikai, pp. 282-89.

42 The film was directed by Sun Yu and starred the veteran actor Zhao Dan as Wu Xun. It is the only film in which Zhao actually speaks in his native Shandong dialect. For details of the production and an outline of the scenario, see Zhongguo yishu yingpian bianmu, Peking: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1981, Vol. I, pp. 49-52. Sun Yu based his script on another illustrated biography of Wu Xun, Duan Shengwu's Wu Xun xiansheng huazhuan, illustrated by Sun Zhijun. See Sun Yus's "My Film of Wu Xun zhuoan and my Denunciation" (Wo biandao <<Wu Xun zhuoan>> he shou pipande jingguo), Shanghai wenxshi ziliao xuanji, No. 53, edited by the Shanghai CCPC, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1986, p. 201-22, especially page 201. The first call for a review of the case surrounding the film, and its denunciation by the Central Committee Investigatory Group led by Li Jin (Jiang Qing), came in a series of article published in the Shandong scholarly journal Qiuxuekan from 1980 to 1981. In 1985 a number of moves were made to "rehabilitate" Wu Xun. See Wang Yanzhi, et al, "Three Documents Concerning the
cultural purge after the Communist state was established. The attack on the film was but a prelude to a denunciation of the educationalist Tao Xingzhi and a move to purge so-called "bourgeois democrats" from the Party ranks. Although I have not yet found evidence of Feng's response to the attacks on the film and Wu Xun, it is hard to imagine that they left him unscathed. Interestingly, in the hundreds of articles I have sifted through on Feng's essays and paintings, I have found no mention of his paintings of Wu Xun. It was at the height of the "Three Anti, Five Anti" Campaign of 1951-1952, a movement utilized by the Communist Party to subject China's non-Party intellectuals to the first of a series of political baptisms aimed at their "thought reform" (sixiang gaizao).

The Kaiming shudian, one of the six major publishing houses in China in 1949 and one with which Feng had been associated since Zhang Xizhen (1889-1969, a native of Shaoxing, Zhejiang) founded it in 1926, was an early, albeit willing, victim of socialist nationalization. Its fate is outlined in the final section of a history of the publisher entitled "Glorious Homecoming" (Guongrong guisu). After applying to become a private-state co-operative in early 1950, it was ordered to remove its offices from Shanghai to Peking. In June that year the new central Publishing Administration directed it to organize and hold its first cadres' meeting, the aim of which was to "unify thought and strengthen understanding" of the position of the publishing house. "After this meeting," the Mainland historian of this period notes, "everyone was united in their thinking, they had raised their understanding of the situation and were now happy to accept the leadership of the Party, and to work hard for the Party publishing industry." By early 1951 Kaiming was living off state funding and in the second half of the year it was subject to the purge of the "Three Anti, Five Anti" Campaign under the direct

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44 A more popular expression was "to let down your pants and have your [bourgeois] tail cut off" (tuo kuzi, ge weiba). Yang Jiang (b. 1911), translator, essayist and novelist, has described this initial period of "self-adjustment" in her humorously chilling novel, Washing in Public (Xizao), Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1988.
45 From a surviving Kaiming man Tang Xiguang's essay "The Path of Kaiming" (Kaimingde licheng) in Wo yu Kaiming, pp. 312-14.
46 Tao Xiguang, "The Path of Kaiming", p. 313.
leadership of the CPC Youth League publishing branch, Qingnian chubanshe. In April 1953 it was subsumed into Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, losing its identity entirely.

The first indication of Feng's own fate at this time was a denunciation of him that appeared in the pages of the early-March 1952 issue of Wenyibao -- I presume for the first time in public -- for his "bourgeois idealist" view of music, and this literary journal was filled with similar criticisms, exhortations for "cultural workers" to remould their thinking, and ritualistic self-criticisms. The general atmosphere is easily gauged by a Wenyibao critique of the Shanghai cultural scene made in early 1952:

The Shanghai cultural sphere lacks a firm and efficacious directing ideology. This has resulted in some non-proletarian thinking that had gone into hiding in the early days after Liberation to rear its ugly head once more and to take advantage of various opportunities for self-advancement. Certain cultural workers are resting on their laurels, or feel unduly self-satisfied, and long for the past. They fail to engage energetically in political study, make no demands on themselves to progress, are divorced from the Masses, divorced from Reality, and divorced from Politics. The result of this is that various works produced are suffused with the ideology of the bourgeoisie or the petit-bourgeoisie, and are bereft entirely of a correct class stand.

In the same article, the word quwei was used in a context vastly different from that previously understood by Feng Zikai. Now the word was linked with the most negative and retrograde elements of the society. Writers and artists were criticized for "satisfying the quwei of certain backward masses" (luohou quwei).
and when something was to be condemned by Party critics as unsuited to the positive and progressive values of revolutionary culture it was referred to as "low-class quwei" (diji quwei). And although manhua were encouraged, they were cartoons to be created on order for the press, such as "Illustrations for the Regulations on the Repression of Counter-revolutionaries".  

In July 1952, not long after the Wenyibao attack, Feng Zikai was obliged to make a self-criticism in which he virtually negated his life's work. It is a typical example of the baleful self-negations of countless writers, artistics and intellectuals at the time, and it closely follows the ritualistic formula of Party-induced confessions, with a scathing autobiographical critique, formalistic analysis of the ideological roots of his "errors" and an expression of determination to change his Class Standpoint and Serve the People. Feng castigated himself for "being divorced from the masses", not having held down a job since the age of thirty, ignoring politics, pursuing an interest in "pure art in the service of the capitalist class", thereby poisoning the thinking of many people.  

While the whole document is worthy of translation and analysis, I will limit myself to a quotation from the first section, Feng's critique of quwei:

In my past writing quwei was my chief inspiration. I would allow myself to be moved by something and then follow my emotions without any thought about whom I was serving. At the time I thought this was an expression of genius, an expression of the self (xinglingde biaoxian). In retrospect, [I realize] this was out-and-out individualism! Let me give some examples: I entered the Zhejiang Provincial Number One Teachers' College at the age of seventeen, and in my first three years I was driven by vanity and a desire to be top of the class, so I was particularly studious and came first in the exams. But in my final two years Mr Li Shutong taught me art and I suddenly concentrated my quwei on painting and music, leading me to abandon all my other courses. In those years I did not even make the first twenty in the exams. During that time I often took my painting things to West Lake to sketch, or hid away in the music room to practise. In the end, I only just managed to graduate. Thinking back on it [I realize] my hard work in those first three years was due to the

51 "The Cultural Sphere of Shanghai Should Rectify Ideological Confusion", ibid.
52 "The Cultural Sphere of Shanghai Should Rectify Ideological Confusion", p. 18. Shanghai artists were, in fact, castigated for not being more energetic in their work as propagandists during the "Three Anti" Campaign. According to the statistics used in this article, of the fifty manhua printed in the Shanghai press during 1951, thirty-seven were of foreign (presumably Soviet) origin, three were reprinted from Renmin ribao, and only ten originated in Shanghai itself. Most disturbing of all was the fact that only six of these were painting "in co-ordination with the present central duty [zhongxin renwu, of political propaganda]."
53 Feng Zikai, "My Ideological Self-Examination" (Jiancha wode sixiang), Dagongbao (Shanghai), 16 July, 1952. Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, pp. 36-37, gives a translation of some of the key passages of this article.
54 The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 37.
vanity inspired by Individualistic Heroism; my unfettered interest in art and music in my last two years was a result of quwei thinking. My family was badly-off: my father became a juren just before the Imperial Examination System was abolished so he lived at home, and died of pneumonia when I was only nine. My mother eked out a living from our ancestral business, supporting me and my five elder sisters. We were always in financial straits. In the normal course of events, after graduation I would have become a teacher to help support my mother. But I did not give that a thought. Again a slave to quwei I was determined to study art. I got a loan of one thousand yuan from a wealthy relative to study in Japan, where I took classes in Western art and music, studying foreign languages at night. Because of my quwei in all of these I did not stint myself and studied them all. After a year I was forced to return to China due to a lack of funds and having achieved nothing. I had to become a teacher to make enough money to live on and so I could pay back my debt (by then I was married and had two daughters). The realities of life pressed heavily on my views of quwei, yet whenever things became a little easier my quwei thinking would take over. Right up to the present time, this type of Petit-Bourgeois Individualism still rules my thinking, and it is necessary to use Proletarian Thinking to replace it.55

Despite his resolve to improve his health with the aid of Mao Zedong Thought (he suffered from severe bouts of pneumonia throughout the 1950s and 1960s) and to Serve the People, Feng all but gave up painting until requested to take up the brush again by Guangqia in Singapore.56 His own admission that he virtually did not paint at all for the first seven years of the existence of New China is certainly an indication of an inability or even reluctance to come to terms with his environment.57 For an artist who had throughout his career chronicled the world around him in manhua to say this much in correspondence with someone overseas

55 "My Ideological Self-Examination". 56 In the early post-1949 letters included by Guangqia in Shuxinxuan, Feng states that, "I work a few hours every day introducing Soviet culture (translating). I abandoned painting long ago. One thing that will reassure you at least is that everything here is peaceful and our lives are happy (shenghuo xingfu)." See the letter dated 11 September, 1955, Shuxinxuan, p. 13. Again, "Of late I have been concentrating on translating foreign works, and I have not painted for some time, I only do so now occasionally in response to government calls (xiyang shenhua huashao) by painting small manhua for publication in the press." From a letter dated 21 February [1956], Shuxinxuan, p. 14. And in a letter written on the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1956, Feng says, "For years now I have continued my calligraphy but rarely done any paintings, I am quite out of practice (huabi shengshu)...." Shuxinxuan, p. 18. He started doing illustrations for fans which he sent to Singapore. 57 In a letter dated 5 July, 1956, obviously in response to Guangqia's enquiry about how much he was selling his work for, Feng wrote, "The Government of China takes care of artists, and they do all paid for works exhibited according to fixed regulations. However, I have been busy with translation work for the last seven or eight years and have not sold any paintings. For this reason I no longer have any fixed charge (runli) for my work. I will do paintings for any friends you introduce for free...." Shuxinxuan, p. 22.
is surely an indication of the lingering death of his artistic spirit. Most of the
paintings he did for publication after 1949 definitely show signs of *rigor mortis*.

As his biographers comment in 1951-1952, "for the sake of co-ordinating
with the situation at the time, [Feng] energetically took up the study of Russian
once more, something he had begun thirty years before in Japan."58 And although
he had concluded his 1952 self-criticism by promising to introduce contemporary
Soviet literature to Chinese readers, most of his translations from Russian were of
works from before the 1917 Revolution.59 In the same year he was made a
committee member of the Shanghai Municipal Culture and History Research
Institute (*Shanghaishi wenshiguan*).60 The novelist Wang Xiyan (b. 1914), a man
who had taught with Feng at Zhejiang University during the Japanese War, was
transferred from Hangzhou to Shanghai in 1952 and saw the artist often.61 "I
really thought I could smell the definite 'stench of a [Buddhist] layman''' whenever
he met Feng at first.62 Later, he claims, the artist seemed to acquire a more positive
attitude.63

Indeed, Feng was sufficiently conscious of the role he was expected to play
in the New Society that he joined in the vicious denunciations of the Hu Feng
Counterrevolutionary Clique in mid-1955. His attack was printed in the official art
monthly *Meishu* and was accompanied by a particularly lacklustre cartoon by Hua
Junwu.64 Feng's article is a mirror-image of similar vituperative attacks, and it is
impossible to tell, unless Feng's family or friends were to provide us with the
information, what led him to write this peculiar screed, the only one of its type
within the *œuvre* I have found during my research.65

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58 *Zhuan*, p. 204. Also Wang Xiyan, "An Energetic Sower -- Remembering Feng Zikai" (*Xinqinde bozhongzhe -- ji Feng Zikai*), *Wangshi yu aisi*, edited by Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1979, p. 359-60, 366. Wang writes that Feng not only wanted to translate the work of Turgenev, but also Leo Tolstoy and Goncharov (in particular the novel *Oblomov*).
59 *The Cartoonist Feng Zikai*, ibid.
60 *Zhuan*, p. 205.
63 Wang says Feng brushed aside references to his 1920s and 1930s essays "Gradual" and "Autumn" as being the work of a pessimist. When asked by Wang what he thought of things in the New Society, Feng reportedly said, "Times have changed. Now one is supposed to discard pessimism." "An Energetic Sower -- Remembering Feng Zikai", pp. 362, 364. I fail to find in this comment the unbounded enthusiasm for the People's Republic that Wang remarks is self-evident. It should be kept in mind that Wang was writing his essay in February 1979, only a short time after the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution.
65 The article is so uncharacteristic of Feng's style of writing that in the absence of other material we are justified in speculating as to the reasons. It may be recalled that Hu Feng had made a rather
In September 1953, Feng along with Qian Juntao, Zhang Xizhen, Ye Shengtiao and others had a pagoda built at Hupao Temple in Hangzhou for the preservation of Hongyi's remains (sheli or sharira). It was completed in January 1954. This was one of the religious activities which Feng undertook with great energy and devotion in his later years, and expression of his continuing devotion to the memory of his old teacher. There were hopes to establish a Hongyi Memorial Hall at Hupao, but the plans for this were frustrated over the years by erratic government policy shifts and restrictions. Feng tried to put a good face on all of this, especially after he had asked Guangqia, whom he had not seen since his 1948 stay in Amoy, to canvas for donations for the hall in South-East Asia, but his disappointment and frustration are clearly evident in his correspondence.

In a sarcastic attack on the manhua Feng did for Shenhuo ziyoutan in 1935, berating him for ignoring the social context of his work. See Xiaopinwen yu manhua, edited by Chen Wangdao, pp. 173-76. Although in his denunciation of Hu, Feng says, "I've heard of him, but I've never met him, nor have I read his works", it is feasible that one of the reasons he lent his name to this unsavoury campaign was because of Hu's attack of twenty years ago. Again, it is interesting to note that the first post-1949 letter Guangqia has included in his Shuxinxuan, pp. 9-11, was written on 6 June, 1955, twelve days before Feng wrote his denunciation of Hu. Given the stringent political controls on citizens of the People's Republic at the time, is it possible that the authorities, or Feng's Work Unit, stipulated that he had to join in political campaigns or "take a stand" (biaotai) during the Anti-Hu Feng purge of the cultural world if he wanted to enjoy Overseas Contacts (haiwai guanx)? Party apparatchik are certainly known not to be above such brazen bargaining.

Zhuan, p. 205; Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 38; also the 11 September, 1955 letter to Guangqia, Shuxinxuan, p. 12. Lin Ziqing, Hongyi's biographer, has recently revealed a number of interesting facts concerning the construction of the pagoda in "Mr Feng Zikai, a Man Who Respected His Teacher and Valued the Way" (Zunshi zhongdaode Feng Zikai xiansheng), Renmin ribao, 12 November, 1988. According to Lin, Feng was the motivating force behind the whole project. When, on a trip to Hangzhou in 1953, Feng found out that a reliquary had yet to be built for the portion of Hongyi's ashes stored at Hupao (the remainder had been divided between the Puqiong Pagodas at Kaiyuan Temple and Chengtian Temple in Quanzhou, Fujian), he asked Hongyi's disciple, the monk Kuanyuan, to help him plan a pagoda. Lin says that, as the value of the local currency had not yet stabilized, calculations for the cost of the building were made in amounts of rice. As Hongyi had always been averse to receiving donations, Feng decided to do ten paintings and sell them for one hundred catties (one picul or dan) of rice each. This was soon done and plans for the pagoda were drawn up. See also Zhuan, p. 171 and note 1, where it is recorded that the pagoda was demolished during the Cultural Revolution and restored by the Hangzhou Parks and Gardens Bureau in October 1980.

Although the two had been introduced by Hongyi in 1931 and had been in correspondence ever since, they did not meet until 1948 when Feng went to pay his respects at Nanputuo Temple, the place where Hongyi spent his last years. See Chen Xing, "Feng Zikai and Dharma Master Guangqia" (Feng Zikai yu Guangqia fashi), Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 156-57. According to a letter from Chen Xing dated 19 January, 1989, Guangqia was born into a scholarly family in Nan'an County, Fujian in 1901. His father, who was a gongsheng under the Qing died in 1905, and in October 1921, Guangqia took the three refuges from the monk Ruideng and became a monk at Nanputuo Temple.

Feng's old schoolmate and friend Wu Mengfei was energetic in his efforts to realize their plans. This project and the setbacks it suffered from 1955-1958 are mentioned often in Feng's correspondence. See Shuxinxuan, pp. 12, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26, & 29 in particular.
1957, Feng wrote an introduction to a collection of Li Shutong's writings edited by Guangqia in which he said the best memorial to Li was to run a school based on high moral principles as Guangqia was doing.  

By this time Guangqia had become a veritable life-line for Feng. Not only did he help the artist pursue his Buddhist activities and pursue his "filial" devotions to Hongyi, he also constantly remitted money to Feng, along with gifts of much-needed medicines and a range of presents from the most practical (towels and foodstuffs) to personal luxuries (watches for himself and his children, as well as a lighter and highly-prized "555" brand cigarettes). One reason for the official tolerance of this constant exchange of letters is obvious: the people's government was eager to protect what was certainly a welcome and not inconsiderable source of foreign currency. For his part, Feng had the dolorous duty of trying to indicate to the monk that the status and condition of Buddhism had radically changed since 1949, and the comments he made in his correspondence offer an interesting sidelight on other studies of communist religious policy. Holmes Welch who has otherwise admirably documented the reform and manipulation of Buddhism in the 1950s and 1960s, unfortunately makes no mention of Feng Zikai, and seemed unaware of his continued Buddhist activities up to 1966. Welch does note that Hongyi's School of Discipline came in handy for the Communists, who saw its numerous restrictions on an individual's words and deeds as an ideal starting point for the reform of the Buddhist church as a whole.

The references in Feng's letters to the state of Buddhism in New China are scarce, but poignant. Remarkng on Hangzhou's Hupao Temple in 1955, Feng said it had been redesignated as part of a scenic zone and few monks were now left in the temple. "Those who are there now survive by selling tea." He continued, "monks in China today, regardless of age, all have to work and to take part in political study and various meetings. There are practically no remaining hermits. Things are very different from how they used to be..." However, Guangqia was

69 Shuxinxuan, p. 20.
70 Letter dated 4 May, 1960, Shuxinxuan, p. 48. Feng was delighted with the cigarettes, a brand he had not been able to smoke for over ten years: "they are even better than I remember."
Guangqia had also sent flints for his old lighter and he had so many left over ("a supply for fifty years") that he was able to give them away, an act he jokingly referred to as "creating incense affinities" (xianghuoyuan).
71 Holmes Welch, Buddhism under Mao, pp. 225-26, notes that Guangqia was not the only Overseas Chinese Buddhist encouraged to send hard currency and make an indirect contribution to the Construction of Socialism in China.
72 Welch, Buddhism under Mao, pp. 129-30, 268-72, & 394.
73 Letter dated 11 September, 1955, Shuxinxuan, p. 13. He makes a similar comment in his 1956 Mid-Autumn Festival letter to Guangqia: "The majority of monks take part in political activities and very few are able to practice religion behind closed doors anymore. Thus, the Buddhist sphere in China today has changed its appearance (mianmu) in keeping with the times. If
anxious to return and see what the situation was like for himself. It is unclear why he delayed his trip from the mid-1950s to 1965 when he did eventually make a pilgrimage. One of the reasons for Guangqia’s procrastination may well have been Feng’s repeated comments that he would find things much changed.74 How the other changes in the life of Chinese Buddhists affected Feng is unclear. Perhaps as an intensely private man he had never taken much interest in the public aspect of Buddhism and its suppression left little mark on him. Could he have condoned the mass killings of landlords and counterrevolutionaries in the early 1950s?75 Or what, for example, did the author of the Husheng huaji think of Buddhists being obliged to contribute to a fighter-plane — the "Chinese Buddhist" — in the Korean War?76 And did he view the attack on the Shanghai Buddhist Youth Society in 1954 with equanimity, allowing himself to think that it was, as the Party apparat declared, a nest of counterrevolutionaries?77 What little we do know comes from his correspondence with Guangqia, but the full story can only be told by his immediate family, and there is no indication that they are willing to tarnish the idealized image of Feng as a patriotic and pro-socialist old intellectual throughout the seventeen years up to 1966.

7: Continuing to Protect Life

One of the most extraordinary ventures of Feng’s post-1949 years was his fulfillment of his pledge (huan yuan) to Hongyi to paint six series of "paintings to protect life", the last to consist of one hundred paintings with poems to be published on Hongyi’s one hundredth birthday in 1979. The realization of this plan would not have been possible without the spiritual and material support of Guangqia.

The third collection having been published by the Falun shudian in 1949, the fourth series was due for publication in 1959. Feng had the material ready in time -- unlike both the earlier and later series the fourth consisted chiefly of stories

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74 There are stray comments on the situation throughout the correspondence. For example, when Guangqia asked Feng and Wu Mengfei to invite educationalists in China to write articles for an anniversary edition of the journal of his Buddhist school, he received the reply that it would be inappropriate for them to do so. "The theory and practice of education in China now are at a great distance from those of Buddhism. Even if we did get articles for you, I am sure none of them would be appropriate for your journal." Letter dated 22 January, 1961, Shuxinxuan, p. 70.

75 Other Buddhists certainly managed to rationalize the terror. See Welch, Buddhism under Mao, pp. 272ff, & 232-37. In his letter to Guangqia Feng talks disparagingly of a "bad" disciple of Hongyi’s who was undergoing labour reform in Peking.

76 Welch, Buddhism under Mao, p. 278.

77 Welch, Buddhism under Mao, pp. 237-39.
from notebook (biji) literature collected over many years\textsuperscript{78} -- but as he revealed to Guangqia "publication [in China] is impossible".\textsuperscript{79} The monk immediately set to work to have the book published in Singapore.\textsuperscript{80} Feng sent the completed manuscript by registered seamail on 18 October, 1960.\textsuperscript{81} It appeared on time in Singapore with eighty paintings by Feng and calligraphy by the lay Buddhist Zhu Youlan.\textsuperscript{82} His *Husheng huaji* was in both form and content certainly at odds with Party policy. That he was allowed to send them overseas for publication is an interesting example of government lenience in regard to Buddhists overseas. But this is not to say that Feng did not have reservations about having the book published.

The monk Guangqia prefaced the volume with an introduction drafted by Feng and revised by Guangqia and dated 20th of the Ninth Month, 1960, Hongyi's eightieth birthday.\textsuperscript{83} In it he said he had been receiving paintings from Feng for some years, keeping them for this occasion. The artist corroborated this in his postscript.\textsuperscript{84} As we can see from Feng's correspondence, however, this was a "white lie" (or *fangbian sahuang* in Buddhist parlance\textsuperscript{85}). In his letter of 23 September, 1960, he wrote, "Please make a point of telling people that it was your idea [this is, in fact the case...] and that you were merely printing paintings I had been sending you over the years. This would be best. After all, I am involved in educational and cultural work in China so it is my primary duty to produce works related to the Socialist Revolution and Socialist Construction. It is quite inappropriate to devote my energies to collections on protecting life; even more so to be involved in publishing these overseas." He added a *post scriptum* praising Guangqia for his efforts and assuring him that this good deed would accrue

\textsuperscript{78} *Shuxinxuan*, p. 137. Zhang Chao's *Yuchu xinzhi*, Yu Quyuan *biji* (by Yu Pingbo's grandfather, one of Zhou Zuoren's favourite books), and *Yuweicaoaang biji* (written by Ji Xiaolan of Peking), all of which were works of the Qing, being among his sources.

\textsuperscript{79} Letter 19 August, 1960, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{80} See the letter dated 20 September, 1960, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{81} He had wanted to send it by registered airmail, but the post office employee decided it was too expensive and "without asking me sent it ordinary mail". "I wanted to see the book produced as soon as possible and was not concerned about the cost of postage [of over ten yuan]...this is Heaven's will." Letter dated 18 October, 1960, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{82} Feng says he asked Zhu to do the calligraphy because, apart from having a good hand, he had been a vegetarian since youth. See the letter dated 20 September, 1960, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 56. Guangqia, generous to a fault, sent Zhu a watch and later a fountain pen. *Shuxinxuan*, pp. 57, 72. Also, Zhu Youlan, "Feng Zikai and his *Husheng huaji*" (Feng Zikai he tade <<Husheng huaji>>), *Zhejiang yuekan*, 1986: 12, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{83} *Husheng huaji*, Vol. IV, p. 3. Feng explained he had written the introduction to explain that the paintings had been sent to Guangqia over a long period of time, thus protecting him from criticism. See his letter dated 17 October, 1960, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{84} *Husheng huaji*, Vol. IV, p. 161.

\textsuperscript{85} Feng calls it just that. See *Shuxinxuan*, p. 58.
boundless merit. Both Feng and Zhu Youlan distributed copies of the book in China privately, mostly to devout Buddhists and vegetarians.

The effort had been worth it. As Feng says in both his letters and his postscript he dreamed that animals of all descriptions had approached him to pay their respects. "To me this is proof," he wrote, "that it is matters of life and death that most readily touch the heart. To be able to use this popular method to admonish people not to indulge in wanton acts of murder merely to satisfy their gustatory cravings...has been throughout the aim of Dharma Masters Hongyi and Guangqia, as well as of the artist." He said the government's method of helping disaster-stricken zones by depriving urban citizens of food supplies was an efficacious method of "protecting life" (husheng), but he was grateful for the food and money he received from Guangqia and did paintings, often on fans ("suitable for the hot weather in the South"), to repay him.

The fifth series of ninety paintings was completed in 1965, only six years after the fourth. Feng explained in his introduction to the book that he had brought things forward by four years in response to a "general demand for early publication", and a letter of encouragement from Guangqia. In a letter to Guangqia he said, "All life is impermanent, and if I was to leave this world without having fulfilled my pledge (yuan) it would be the greatest disappointment to me." In fact, friends had suggested he engage in both the fifth and sixth series at the same time, and under Guangqia's auspices he set to work on the fifth series immediately (in September 1964), reducing his public commitments so he could finish it quickly. Over the following months he scoured collections of poetry and histories in search of suitable themes and stories. He had collected sufficient

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86 Shuxinxuan, p. 57.
87 See, for example, Shuxinxuan, p. 135.
88 Shuxinxuan, p. 57; Husheng huaji, Vol. IV, p. 161. In a letter dated 31 March, 1965, Shuxinxuan, p. 148, where he talks of having similar dreams while preparing the fifth series of paintings, Feng wrote, "sometimes the scenes in my dreams help me create new pictures to protect life. This is subtle beyond description."
89 Ibid. For further details of the publication of the fourth series of Husheng huaji and its popularity after publication, see Shuxinxuan, pp. 60, 61, 65, 67, 68, 78, 81 & 133-35.
91 Husheng huaji, Vol. V, p. 3; Feng's 1965 letter to Guangqia, Shuxinxuan, p. 137.
92 Shuxinxuan, p. 137.
93 Ibid; and the letters dated 5 September, and 21 October, 1964, and 28 April, 1965, Shuxinxuan, p. 139, 142, & 150 respectively.
94 See letters of 31 March and 12 April, 1965, Shuxinxuan, pp. 148-49. He had given up the laborious and time-consuming process of finding suitable stories from classical prose literature as he had done for the fourth series.
written material to accompany the ninety pictures by June 1965, and began painting. The calligraphy was done by Yu Yu, a calligrapher from Amoy working in the Buddhist Academy (Foxueyuan) in Peking. The book was completed in September 1965 and sent to Singapore immediately, although not without some minor difficulties. It would seem more likely that with the unstable political situation in China he thought it expedient to finish the book as soon as possible.

In fact, in early 1966, shortly after the fifth series had been completed and just after Guangqia had visited China, Feng was warned by friends to stop distributing copies of the first three series "because they clash with [the Government's policy] to 'eradicate the Four Pests' (mosquitoes, flies, rats and bedbugs)...." He took the advice and asked Guangqia to do his utmost to distribute the books overseas; "I am sure that Master Juexing [a mutual friend] has explained the situation to you....There should be no problem if I keep a few copies at home." During the preparations for the fifth series, Feng had, with the help of friends in Shanghai, managed to locate the originals of the first and second series and Guangqia arranged to print all five volumes in a new, standard edition. This was an extremely exciting development for Feng and for months he devoted numerous letters to the subject, including detailed instructions on the design and

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95 Letter dated 8 June, 1965, Shuxinxuan, p. 151. He finished the introduction about this time and sent it to Guangqia. See the letter of 16 June, 1965, Shuxinxuan, p. 152.
96 Shuxinxuan, p. 149.
97 See letter dated 28 August, 1965, Shuxinxuan, p. 154. The manuscript was sent on 25 August, "The only thing that it was not sent airmail, but registered seamail. This is not because I was unwilling to pay for the postage: the truth is recently the customs people have become much stricter and they are particularly wary of anything sent by airmail. I have run into difficulties in the past, so I thought it best to use registered seamail." Also the letters of 7 and 14 September, Shuxinxuan, pp. 150-51, in which he first frets over the manuscript and then describes his joy over the news that Guangqia has received it safely. "Personally, I think that it has been under the protection of the power of the Buddhas, it is worthy of a celebration." (p. 151.) In fact, as he records in his letter, he celebrated that night with an extra cup of Shaoxing wine.
98 chu shihai, at first the "National Program for the Development of Agriculture, 1956-1967 (Draft)" had listed these as "rats, sparrows, flies and mosquitoes". When the program was eventually adopted in 1960 sparrows had been replaced by bedbugs. See Glossary of Chinese Political Phrases, by Lau Yee-fui, Ho Wan-yee, Yeung Sai-cheung, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1977, p. 47; Holmes Welch, Buddhism under Mao, pp. 286-87. As Welch notes, by the late 1950s the Buddhist doctrine of non-killing had been reinterpreted with an eye on government policy. "Convenient" or "beneficial killing" was approved of by Shirab Jaltso, president of the Chinese Buddhist Association, who said, "...We will not only locusts but also any other harmful elements, such as imperialists and counterrevolutionaries. The killing of those that must be killed is not incompatible with the spirit of our religion." However, Welch says, "...one gets the impression that it was harder to persuade monks and devotees to help kill rats and wolves than counterrevolutionaries. At any rate, there are almost no reports of monks taking part in the campaigns to rid the country of animal pests." (p. 287.)
99 From a letter dated 14 February, 1966, Shuxinxuan, p. 163. Although he asked Guangqia in this letter to send a few copies of the series to friends in China, he emphasized that "you must not send more than I have asked for".
layout of the new books. He also wrote a special essay relating the events that made the new edition possible, and asked Guangqia to edit it and include it in each of the five volumes under his (Feng's) own name.\textsuperscript{100}

The sixth and final series of the \textit{Husheng huaji} was completed secretly during the Cultural Revolution era (1973),\textsuperscript{101} consisting of one hundred paintings by Feng matched with the calligraphy of Zhu Youlan.\textsuperscript{102} The manuscript was sent or taken to Singapore for safekeeping and published in Hong Kong in 1979, fifty years after the first in the series appeared in 1929.\textsuperscript{103} Guangqia summed up his view of Feng's achievement in his introduction to the book:

\begin{quote}
While himself caught in dire straits and subject to constant attack the layman [Feng Zikai] was able to remain unbending in his ambition, sincere in his emotions, [determined] to repay his teacher's kindness (bao shien) and fulfill his lifelong pledge (jian suyue). Working diligently late into the night and rising with the call of the cock, he silently applied himself to the selection of subject matter and furtively painted these one hundred outstanding works. After which he put them aside for the appropriate time....\textsuperscript{104}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{100} Letters dated 16 June and 2 July, 1965, \textit{Shuxinxuan}, p. 152, & 153 respectively. Feng had wanted this to be a postscript under his name, but it later appeared as a preface written by Guangqia.

\textsuperscript{101} Feng had decided on continuing the project as early as 1970. In a letter dated 11 January, 1971, \textit{Shuxinxuan}, p. 171, written while convalescing from a long bout of illness, Feng said, "While I was sick I would think of the past, and I would often be overcome by emotion. I made a pledge to Dharma Master Hongyi that I would do six series of paintings to protect life, of those five have been completed, one remains. Recently in my dreams I have been troubled by this thought, and I fear I will not be able to complete the task. I am now seventy-two years old..." He concludes the letter with the fervent wish that Guangqia will remain in good health and continue to propagate the Dharma for years to come. For information concerning the year the sixth series was completed (that is, 1973), see Zhu Youlan, "Feng Zikai and his \textit{Husheng huaji}", p. 28. Zhu says Feng was determined to complete the sixth volume but lacked adequate reference books. Fortunately, Zhu found a volume entitled \textit{Dongwujian} -- a traditional compendium consisting of tales of animals culled from diverse sources, mostly classical notebook literature -- among his old books which provided most of the material the artist required.

\textsuperscript{102} According to Zhu, "Feng Zikai and his \textit{Husheng huaji}", p. 29, Feng did not want to expose his friend to any danger over the book, but Zhu brushed this aside declaring, "we are disciples of the Buddha, and for the sake of spreading the Dharma and benefitting sentient beings I am prepared to take any risks necessary. It will be my pleasure to do the calligraphy for the book." (ibid.) The essayist Xi Murong notes in her article in \textit{Jueshi} (no reference available, reprinted from \textit{Yishujia}), "Eternal Pledge -- Reading Feng Zikai's \textit{Husheng huaji} (Yonghengde mengyue -- du Feng Zikaide <<Husheng huaji>>) dated Shimen, 1982, that unlike the earlier series, Feng actually numbered all two hundred pages in the manuscript so as to keep them in order after his death. To her this was an indication that he did not think he would live to see the book published.

\textsuperscript{103} The details of the production of this last volume are scarce, Zhu Youlan's article mentioned above being the only reliable source. Feng's (published) correspondence with Guangqia ceased in November 1973 without mentioning what progress he had made with the book. See Guangqia's 1979 introduction to series six, \textit{Husheng huaji}, Vol. VI, pp. 1-7; \textit{Zhuan}, p. 171-72. He intimates that he obtained the paintings for this last volume during a trip to China in the winter of 1978 (p. 1).

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Husheng huaji}, Vol. VI, p. 1.
The significance of such a commitment that covered nearly half a century has not been lost on mainland writers, and Lin Ziqing, Hongyi's aged biographer, has recently praised Feng's act of devotion in the leading Party paper.105

8: The Artist as Translator and State Employee

In a letter dated 11 January, 1959, Feng recorded that he could no longer keep up the long working hours he was used to before he turned sixty (in 1958) -- ten hours a day in the past, and now he would work for five or six hours in the morning and read in the afternoon. His vision at night was poor so he would retire early.106 In this year, he was made editor of the arts volume of the new Cihai dictionary project,107 and in the same year he made his first trip to Peking to take part in the National People's Political Consultative Congress. The novelist Ba Jin (b. 1904) remembers the occasion: "We took part in the study sessions together, but he never said much."108

Although unstated it is obvious that by this time Feng was sending pictures to Guangqia for sale, and he received in return regular amounts of money (sums of ten, twenty or thirty Renminbi) for which he appears sincerely grateful, and therefore presumably it is money for which he and his family are in need. The same is the case with medicines (especially Rimifon -- Leimifeng, a common Western medicine for TB).109

Feng's work as an artist, although approved of officially, was relegated to what was seen as a minor art form: that of children's illustration. After a hiatus of some years he continued to do pictures based on lines of poetry, initially for friends of Guangqia's in Singapore and then for publication in China. Many of these were new versions of earlier works, although he also did a number of new paintings in keeping with the revolutionary demands of the time. Even in these, however, he tended to retain something of the naïve tone of his past work, despite the fact that this was often unsuited to the sodden and serious nature of art in the new society. Many of the poetic inscriptions he did on paintings after 1949 were, in fact, his own composition. The thirty-two paintings in the first section of Feng Zikai huaji, published in Shanghai in 1963, all works produced after the founding of the

105 Lin Ziqing, "Mr Feng Zikai, a Man Who Respected His Teacher and Valued the Way", ibid.
106 From a letter dated 11 January, 1959, Shuxinxuan, p. 33.
107 Zhuan, p. 207.
108 "Remembering Mr Feng", p. 39.
109 See, for example, Shuxinxuan, pp. 75, 98, 100, 103. Zhou Zuoren also asked Cao Juren to send him Rimifon from time to time.
People's Republic, are in colour. It was his paintings and their inscriptions, especially the lines of poetry, which were the central feature of criticisms of him during the Cultural Revolution.

Selected volumes of his past work were reproduced along with some new works, but in the seventeen years for 1949 to 1966 only four volumes of both new and old work appeared, and a new selection of his essays was produced in 1957 under the old title Yuanyuantang suibi. His numerous translations during this period, some twenty-five titles, attest to the fact that most of his time and energy were now devoted to this non-controversial field of endeavour. Like many others, Feng took up Russian in the early 1950s, and a number of his translations were from Russian, mostly school texts, although he did a translation of Turgenev's Hunter's Diary which was published in 1953. Japanese translations were of equally and perhaps greater sentimental value for him at this time. In 1956, he edited a volume of paintings by Sesshū (1420-1506) to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the Japanese artist’s death, for which he wrote a lengthy essay.

110 Feng Zikai huaji, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963, pp. 1-32. The second section of the book, which features works from before 1949, are, fittingly enough, all in black and white. In the introductory note to his chapter on Feng's post-1949 work, "Cartoons under communism: A difficult adjustment", Christoph Harbsmeier states that, Feng Zikai was a progressive intellectual, but he was not a militant communist until 1949." (p. 183.) I would venture to say from the material available, in particular his post-1949 correspondence with the Venerable Guanqiu, Feng Zikai was at best a reluctant fellow-traveller, never what one could could a "militant communist". In fact, I do not know of any of Feng's writing or painting which directly supported the Communist doctrine of class struggle or which in any way reflected the hate campaigns that swept the country from the early 1950s. See Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, pp. 184-98.


113 Published by Renmin wenxue chubanshe in Peking. For corrections to errors in the dating of essays in this volume, see Yin Qi, "Concerning the 1957 Edition of Yuanyuantang suibi" (Guanyu yijiu wuqi nian bande <<Yuanyuantang suibi>>, Yangliu, No. 8, 1985: 7-9.

114 Feng Yiyin, Feng Zikai, pp. 287-88; Chen Xing, "How did Feng Zikai Translate Hunter's Diary?" (Feng Zikai zenyang fanyi <<Lieren biji>>?), Xiaosa fengshen, pp. 165-66. Chen says the translation took him only five months. First published by the Wenhua shenghuo shudian in 1953, in 1955 it was included in the authoritative "Foreign Literary Classics Series" (Waigu guidian wenxue mingzhu congshu) by Renmin wenxue chubanshe which rejected all other translations by Geng Jizhi and the essayist Huang Shang.

115 Xuehoude shengya ju yishu: jinian Riben huajia Xuezhou shishi 450 zhoulian, edited by Feng Zikai, Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1956. Feng’s essay on Sesshū is on pp. 1-12. In March 1963, after a painting excursion taken in Zhejiang during which he visited Tiantong Temple, Feng wrote another essay on Sesshū, "Remembering Sesshū at Tiantong Temple" (Tiantongsi yi Xuezhou), Subiji, pp. 442-45. This essay, apart from rather feeble attempt to point out the realistic nature of Sesshū’s work, is a xiaopinwen of the classical cast.
In 1956, he began working on Natsume Sōseki's *Three Cornered World*, a work he greatly admired and had quoted in his essays of the 1930s, and upon its completion in 1957 he started work on the poet Ishikawa Takuboku (1885-1912), as well as undertaking the full translation of a book by Korolenko with his daughter Feng Yiyin.

One interesting interlude in Feng's life in the 1950s was, until recently, known only to his family. Feng Yiyin records that in the late 1950s her father would work hard on his translations or paintings (presumably these were generally done to be sent to Singapore) and at night he would relax by drinking Shaoxing wine and reminiscing about the past. His family encouraged him to write down some of the stories and at first he said, "Nowdays you're only expected to write things with ideological content (sixiang yiyi), surely these ancient reminiscences of mine aren't of any value?" Yiyin encouraged him to write them down anyway for their amusement. Before long he had written a story called "Six Thousand yuan" (Liuqian yuan), the first and only short story he ever wrote. It is about a dissolute character from Shimenwan who comes to a bad end in Shanghai.

In 1956 he was at Longhua Airport to meet Uchiyama Kanzō, the Japanese bookseller and friend of the leftist Shanghai literary world, when he visited the city after a nine-year absence. Uchiyama records a touching incident involving the sale of an incomplete set of Natsume Sōseki's works to Feng in the 1930s, but says little about their conversation following what seems to have been an emotional reunion. Sitting in the same car going into the city, Feng said, "Shanghai's changed quite obviously, hasn't it?" Changed colour, I replied without a pause," writes Uchiyama, "Mr Feng nodded, 'Exactly.'" Unfortunately there are no more details of their exchange, for Uchiyama proceeds to describe the trees lining the streets and comments on how much they have grown in the last decade. That night they dined together at the Gongdelin vegetarian restaurant.

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119 He wrote on the envelope containing the story, "This is a playful composition, not for publication", and it was only in 1984 that Feng Yiyin decided to disobey her father's instruction and publish it. See "A Precious Inheritance of <<Six Thousand yuan>>", p. 11. Feng used their real names in the manuscript which Feng Yiyin has judiciously replaced with letters from the roman alphabet. To justify her decision to publish the story Yiyin interprets it as a denunciation of the evils of opium smoking brought about by British imperialism. (p. 13.) See also Chen Xing "An Artist's Short Story" (Yipian manhuajia xiede xiaoshuo), *Xiaosafengshen*, pp. 177-81.
120 See "Mr Feng Zikai" (Hō Shikai sensei), an essay written in December 1956 and included in Uchiyama's memoirs, *Kakoroku*, Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 1960, p. 397.
121 Uchiyama, "Mr Feng Zikai", p. 398.
year he travelled to Peking for a meeting of the Third Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) to which he had been made a delegate, and recorded his enthusiasm for the whole experience in an essay for *Ta Kung Pao*.122

In 1960 Feng was appointed the head of the Shanghai Academy of Chinese Art (*Shanghai Zhongguo huayuan*)123 and a member of the Shanghai Friendship Association. He said both positions were without a salary and the former job only required him to take part in occasional meetings; his lifestyle continued largely unchanged. As a figure in the Friendship Association he said his "only duty is to meet foreign guests".124 Neither position was allotted a government stipend, although he enjoyed the use of a car when on official business, and despite Feng's role as a relatively "high profile" non-Party figure, from his correspondence with Guangqia at this time it is obvious his family was experiencing the same difficulties as the other citizens of Shanghai because of the strict rationing instituted during the "three bad years", and the extra rations of staple grains, oil, and even meat and fish allowed because he was a recipient of foreign exchange remittances from Singapore came in very handy.125 It was not until well into 1962 that Feng could write, "recently [food] supplies in China are abundant; therefore I have no need to ask you to buy anything for us."126

In 1961, having received a commission from the Renmin wenxue chubanshe in Peking to make his contribution to Sino-Japanese Friendship, Feng

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124 From a letter to Guangqia dated 25 July, 1960, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 52. He says, presumably to reassure Guangqia, "while I have a number of [such] positions, out of consideration of my age the Government does not require me to go to the office regularly, I am obliged to take part in important meetings." By 1961 he was avoiding as many official activities as possible. In the letter of 3 July, 1961, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 80, he says he took full advantage of the fact that during the sweltering summer months the government allowed younger officials to act as his proxy. Holmes Welch notes that in 1961 a delegation of Buddhist women from Singapore toured the Mainland and, awed by Chairman Mao's benevolence in regards Buddhism, reported that "the life of monks and nuns was secure and peaceful." See *Buddhism under Mao*, p. 203. Guangqia was presumably influenced by such reports when he finally decided to visit the Mainland in 1965.
125 See the two letters dated 8 November, 1960, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 60-61, in which Feng explains the benefits of "Overseas Chinese dollars" (*qiaohui*). On page 116, Feng refers to the value of *qiaohui* to Ma Yifu who had received Hong Kong $100 from the monk. Also the letter from 22 March, 1961, *Shuxinxuan*, p. 69. Feng had just received a food parcel from Guangqia and he says optimistically, "There have been severe droughts and crop failures over the past two years and the supplies of food have been somewhat restricted. If this was before Liberation countless people would have died in the stricken areas...After Liberation the Government has devised appropriate means (to deal with the problem): people in unaffected areas have to limit their wants (jieyi suoshi) to help those in disaster zones, thus the shortages, and no one has died in the afflicted areas." We can only speculate as to whether he was ignorant of the real situation, or simply playing the Party diplomat in private, fearful of the consequences if he told the truth.
126 *Shuxinxuan*, p. 116, from the letter dated 12 November, 1962. Along with this, Feng requested that Guangqia hold any money lay devotees had paid for his paintings (or *gongyang*, to use the Buddhist term) until he needed to buy anything.
began work on a translation of the classical Japanese novel *Genji monogatari* by Murasaki Shikibu. Although completed in 1965, it was not published until many years after his death.\(^{127}\)

A discussion of landscape poetry and painting was initiated by the editors of the Peking-based journal *Wenxue pinglun* and the monthly *Meishu* in February, continuing for most of the year. The central questions discussed were: do landscape paintings have a class nature and do people of different classes react to landscape paintings and poetry in the same way, and how should landscapes be proletarianized? Thus far it has not been possible to ascertain Feng Zikai's reactions to this discussion, although, as the head of the Shanghai Academy of Chinese Art, presumably he would have been expected to "state his position" (biaotai) during the debate. In September of the same year Feng took part in a three-week organized tour of the sacred sites of the CPC in Jiangxi along with many other older writers and artists in the Shanghai PPCC.\(^{128}\) He wrote a number of uncharacteristically upbeat essays and poems as a result, and also did a number of paintings.\(^{129}\)

\(^{127}\) *Zhuan*, pp. 152-53; and Feng's 1962 essay "My Translation of *Genji monogatari*" (Wo yi <<Yuanshi wuyu>>), *Suibiji*, pp. 438-41, written after he had completed the sixth chapter of the novel. The book was published in three parts in 1980, 1982 and 1983. According to Ye Weiqu's introduction, Feng's translation was written into the Renmin wenxue chubanshe publication schedule again in 1973 but rejected during the "Campaign Against the Revival of the Black Line" shortly after. The translation was revised by Liu Zhenying and the tireless Feng Yiyin. See Ye's "Introduction to the Translation" (Yibenxu), *Yuanshi wuyu*, by Zi Shibu, Vol. I, Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1980, pp. 9-10. Another Chinese translation by the Taiwan Japanologist Lin Wenye has been produced in Taiwan. Zhou Zuoren was requested by the Renmin wenxue chubanshe to edit the manuscript of Feng's translation in January 1964 and he started work on it in late February. See *Zhou Zuoren nianpu*, p. 665; and his letter to Bao Yaoming dated 13 July, 1964, *Zhou Zuoren wannian shouzha yibaifeng*, Hong Kong: Taipingyang tushu gongsi, 1972, p. 8. In another letter to Bao, dated 5 January (1964?) and inexplicably included in the first volume of his published correspondence with Cao Juren, resident in Hong Kong since the late 1940s, Zhou notes that Feng had made an error in his translation of a line of Ishikawa Takuboku's poetry leading Zhou to doubt his ability to make a good job of *Genji*. See *Zhou Zuoren and Cao Juren, Zhou Cao tongxinji*, Vol. I, Hong Kong: Nantian shuye gongsi, 1973, p. 40. Zhou himself undertook to translate Heike monogatari the following year. He finished seven out of eleven books in mid-1966 at the age of eighty-two. The remaining books were translated by Shen Fei and published in 1984 under the names Zhou Qiming (i.e., Zhou Zuoren) and Shen Fei.

\(^{128}\) The places they visited were Nanchang, Zhangzhou, Ruijin, Jinggangshan, Fuzhou and Jingdezhen.

\(^{129}\) *Suibiji*, pp. 418-21, 424-27, 428-31; *Zhuan*, p. 208. This trip is also mentioned in his correspondence with Guangqia. See the letter of 3 October, 1961, *Shuxi ne*, p. 83. In this Feng merely comments that the trip was exhausting. Two other essays written in memoriam for the opera singer Mei Lanfang -- a man he admired greatly as a singer and a "serious" (renzhen) artist -- seem far more genuine in tone. See *Suibiji*, pp. 415-17, 436-37. One of Feng's "non-commissioned" paintings of this period is reproduced with Sun Xingchu's "Five Newly Discovered Rare Works by Feng Zikai" (Xin faxian wu Fen Zikai xizhen hua), *Jingji shenghuobao*, 28 November, 1984. It had been sent in the mail on 1 March, 1961 to Zhou Jiajin, a relative (neibiaodi) from Shimenwan in his late 20s, who was an officer at an airforce academy in the North-East. The painting shows a man in military uniform on a galloping horse. The inscription reads: "A Great Future" (Qiancheng yuanda).
October 2, 1962 was the twentieth anniversary of Hongyi's death and Feng clearly felt guilty about being unable to arrange any major commemorative activity in Hangzhou. In his 1962 letter to Guangqia explaining the reasons for this, Feng wrote that the main difficulty was that all of Hongyi's disciples "are extremely busy with work" -- a common euphemism in communist parlance indicating that discretion was advised, and any gathering would be impossible. Anyway, he laments, "there are very few monks at Hupao Temple now, and none of them have any idea who Master Hong (Hong gong) was." Feng decided to commemorate his teacher in his own way by painting one hundred votary pictures of Guanyin -- two every morning -- and giving them to the faithful, "as an expression of my devotion".130 When Hongyi had died in 1942, Feng had painted one thousand pictures of the Buddha for distribution.

In an attempt to allow Ma Yifu, now an elderly man suffering a serious eye complaint, to share in the largesse of the Singapore faithful, Feng Zikai asked Guangqia to enquire as to whether anyone wanted Ma Yifu's calligraphy. Payment (runbi) could be sent as Overseas Chinese dollars, the receipt of which would entitle Ma to precious rations for various goods.131 Although clearly in need, Ma was initially opposed to exploiting his art in this fashion, and only relented later.132

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130 Shuxinxuan, p. 102, also pp. 105-107. Most of the paintings were to be sent to devotees in Singapore. In Shuxinxuan, p. 106, Feng says the paintings are to be given away as an act of devotion and that he could not possibly think of accepting money from the faithful for them. Obviously, Guangqia had suggested this as a way to help Feng get money. He also says that Wu Mengfei, a fellow student from his days in Hangzhou and the man who gave Feng his first teaching job, wanted to arrange a gathering in Hangzhou in early October but was forced to abandon this as "all our old friends are scattered throughout the country, and, after all, they are busy serving the State". Instead of a gathering, Feng decided with those friends in Shanghai who were free to go to make a trip to Hupao Temple to sweep Hongyi's grave. For the eventual realization of this plan see also pp. 108, 113. Due to partial blindness the eighty-year-old Ma Yifu, who Feng always calls "the layman Venerable Ma" (Ma lao jushu) in his letters to Guangqia, was unable to make the trip to the temple. As he had promised, Feng sent Guangqia photographs of the occasion. A large commemorative meeting for Hongyi was organized by the Shanghai Buddhist Association on the twentieth anniversary of his death, 2 October, 1962. Over seventy people attended the ceremony, and Feng Zikai officiated at the service held in the morning, following which the celebrants lunched at the Shanghai Gongdelin vegetarian restaurant, a favourite spot for both Feng and Hongyi in the 1920s and 1930s. See p. 112.


132 The first mention of Ma in the correspondence is in Feng's letter of 10 June, 1956 in which Feng described the philosopher as being well taken care of by the government, blind in one eye, and the fact that he rarely used his brush any more. After having heard about Ma's illness and relationship with Hongyi (that he introduced Li Shutong to Buddhism) from Feng in late 1960, see Shuxinxuan, p. 62, Guangqia started sending money to support the old man (p. 71) as well as medicine for his cataracts (p. 115). Guangqia, on a suggestion from one of Ma's disciples, wanted to publish Ma's calligraphy but this suggestion was rejected by Ma on the grounds that his work was of no artistic value and he had no desire to publicize his work. Feng quotes a letter from Ma in Shuxinxuan, p. 76. For other references to Ma and his calligraphy in this correspondence, see
In May 1962, Feng, having been elected the Chairman of the Shanghai Artists' Association, gave a speech at the Second Congress of the Shanghai Artists' and Writers' Association. It was twelve years since the first was held in 1950. At the meeting he read four poems and explained them. The fourth, in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Mao Zedong's 1942 "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art", contained the couplet, "The rain and dew of twenty years, One hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools contend." His explanation of this one line actually takes up one third of his speech, and in it he calls for an uninhibited implementation of the "Double Hundred" Policy. He said:

[The Party] has called for one hundred flowers to blossom for years now, and of course, many have. However, in the past nearly all the flowers have been large and famous flowers, all with their specific meaning. For example, we've had plums symbolizing purity, and orchids with the fragrance of the kings, as well as bamboo the mark of the gentleman (junzi zhi jie), not to mention the crysanthemum, the flower that can weather the frosts and cold. But there are also many smaller buds, unknown flowers which have never been able to blossom forth...some of them are very fragrant and beautiful in their own right and should be allowed to blossom. Only then can we talk of letting one hundred flowers blossom. Moreover, since one accepts that they are fragrant flowers [and not poisonous weeds], flowers that should be free to blossom, then let them grow of their own accord. Don't "help" them grow; don't interfere with them. I've seen some bonsai (penjing) in which the branches of trees have been bent out of shape and tied up, causing them to grown into twisted forms, they have been crippled. They are artificial and prettified creations; they are ugly. People plant holly (dongqing) as hedges, quite beautiful in themselves, if allowed to grow as they will. But gardeners use shears to cut them all down to the same height, as though giving them a haircut...what's beautiful about a row of holly bushes that all look exactly the same? If such plants could talk, and were allowed to speak their minds, I believe they would certainly protest.

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pp. 72, 79, 84, 115, 126, 133. Ma's hand-written Buddhist scriptures were published in Singapore and highly valued by both devotees and connoisseurs.

133 "shuangbai" fangzhen. This is the CPC policy to "let one hundred schools of thought contend and one hundred flowers blossom".


135 "I've Written Four Poems" (Wo zuole sishou shi), 9 May, 1962, reprinted in Yangliu, No. 16, 1987: 6, pp. 1-2. Also Zhuan, pp. 153, 208. Feng also said in this speech, "My beard might be white, but I am Red." See also Wang Xiyian's "An Energetic Sower -- Remembering Feng Zikai", p. 364; Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 39. Harbsmeier comments, "Feng gained roars of applause [sic] for this talk about the big cutlass [that is, shears], but he was soon to suffer bitterly for what he had said."
Ba Jin, a well-meaning but politically timid pro-Party writer, still remembered the speech many years later and could quote from this passage in his memoirs.\textsuperscript{136} Wang Xiyuan, a Party writer and friend of Feng, made a somewhat exaggerated claim about Feng at this time, commenting on this speech in 1979 that, "I was one of the people who enthusiastically applauded this speech at the time. My eyes were filled with tears for the Buddhist layman I had known was now a fearless fighter who would storm the forces of evil wherever he found them."\textsuperscript{137}

Shortly after this, in August 1962, Feng published a short essay about his cat entitled "Ah Mi" in the monthly \textit{Shanghai wenxue},\textsuperscript{138} accompanied by a painting: "The Bad Cat Sits on the Guest's Neck" (Maobobo zuo zai guikede houjingshang). It was in the "casual essay" style of the 1930s and in the unstable political atmosphere of the time it is not surprising that it was misinterpreted (see the following section). Feng was criticized for both his speech and the essay,\textsuperscript{139} and plans to publish a selected volume of his post-1949 writing was dropped.\textsuperscript{140}

Before his public image was clouded over by criticisms, however, a short documentary film of Feng's painting was made by the Central News and Documentary Studio in the autumn of 1962,\textsuperscript{141} a copy of which is now kept on video cassette in the rebuilt Yuanyuan Hall in Shimenwan. In October of that year he went to Hangzhou with family and friends to pay his respects to the Dharma Master Hongyi on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the monk's death.

In 1963, he went on a sketching trip through Zhejiang with his wife, one son (Yuancaon) and his daughter Yiyin, visiting Buddhist temples along the way.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{136} Ba Jin, "Remembering Mr Feng", p. 39.
\textsuperscript{138} "Ah Mi" (Ah Mi), see \textit{Suibiji}, pp. 432-35. See also Chen Xing, "Feng Zikai and Cats" (Feng Zikai yu mao), \textit{Zhejiang ribao}, 24 February, 1987. Li Shutong had been a great cat-lover, and his letters home from Tokyo were filled mostly with enquires about his cats' health.
\textsuperscript{139} "Remembering Mr Feng", ibid. Ba Jin comments on the attack that, "This old artist who was known as 'an energetic sower' [the novelist Wang Xiyuan's epithet] had done no more than speak his mind in a very mild fashion. He was only talking about the pleasures of life, a certain type of work method. Even in his wildest dreams he'd never have thought of being 'anti' anything, or 'attacking' anything. Shortly after this, however, a typhoon started blowing and his speach and painting...were in an instant denounced as 'Anti-Socialist' Poisonous Weeds." Also see \textit{Zhuan}, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{140} See Feng Yiyin's "Editor's Afterword" (Bianhouji) in \textit{Suibiji}, p. 500. She states that the Shanghai branch of Renmin wenxue chubanshe suggested Feng make a selection of his essays for publication in book form in the winter of 1962. By the time he had put together thirty essays dating from 1956 in a collection which was to be called \textit{Xin Yuanyuantang suibi}, the political current had changed making publication impossible. All of these essays have been included in Feng Yiyin's \textit{Yuanyuantang suibiji}, pp. 324-441.
\textsuperscript{141} "The Artist Feng Zikai" (Huajia Feng Zikai), \textit{Zhuan}, p. 208; Harbsmeier, \textit{The Cartoonist Feng Zikai}, p. 39. Harbsmeier's comment on this film is that "Feng tried to be a constructive member of communist Chinese society."
\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Zhuan}, p. 208; also the letter dated the Birthday of Guanyin, 1963, \textit{Shuxinixuan}, p. 119. Feng describes the crowds of believers at the Nanputuo Temple celebrations of Guanyin's birthday
Since 1961 there had been a superficial relaxation in the purge of Buddhism, and it would seem as though Feng took advantage of the more liberal atmosphere -- one daresay added to by the emergency measures introduced to counter the disastrous years of the Great Leap Forward and after. Feng had noted in a letter to Guangqia that since 1962, the availability of foodstuffs had increased considerably: "we can obtain what we need, so it is no longer necessary to get help from outside", certainly an indication that the food and money Guangqia sent in the past were deeply appreciated.

10: The Cultural Revolution

In 1966, Feng Zikai was denounced. A number of his paintings were attacked for supposed Counterrevolutionary inferences, especially "Enjoying the Spring Scenery in a Boat", a picture of a group in a boat looking at a building with the word "The People's Communes are Good" written on it next to which there is a peach tree in blossom which is reflected in the water of the lake. The poetic inscription says "...by planting peach blossoms by the lake, one tree can be enjoyed as two". The criticism of this was that Feng was satirizing the People's Communes as being a mere mirage. The following ritualistic vilification will give the reader some idea of the content and tone of the numerous essays, articles and posters that appeared in the early years of the Cultural Revolution attacking the artist.

Feng Zikai

Feng Zikai was born into a landlord family in Shimenwan, Chongde County, Zhejiang, in 1898. He is a thorough-going

for Guangqia's benefit. He wrote an essay on his trip to Putuo Island shortly after returning to Shanghai, "The Temple of the Guanyin who was Unwilling to Depart" (Buken qu Guanyinyuan), Suibiji, pp. 446-48. He says he first visited the island as a youth fifty years earlier. As in the case of his essay on the Japanese Buddhist painter Sesshū (Suibiji, pp. 442-45) Feng tactfully disguises a votary's Buddhist tale in the cloak of Sino-Japanese Friendship. Perhaps this should be understood within the context of what Holmes Welch describes as the utilization by Buddhist of government policy towards their religion. See Buddhism under Mao, pp. 257-66.

There was a period of relative relaxation in the early 1960s, but as Holmes Welch points out, starting in 1963 there were numerous indicators of the devastating developments of 1966 and after. See Buddhism under Mao, pp. 340-41, 351-60.

Some of the other paintings denounced are listed in Zhuang, pp. 163-65; Shao Luoyang's "I Will Remember his Elegant Spirit Forever", p. 14; and Ba Jin, "Remembering Mr Feng", p. 42. Also Feng Yiyin's article, "The Fate of Feng Zikai in his Last Years and his Unpublished Works" (Feng Zikai wanniande zaoyu ji yizuo), Lianhebao, 18 August, 1983. A friend in Shanghai says he remembers one of Feng's paintings, of a large red brick, in the Black Painting Exhibition organized at the time to denounce the city's artists. Entitled simply "Red Brick" (Hong zhuan) it was thought to have been done to ridicule Mao and Zhou Enlai's call for intellectuals who were Red (hong) and Expert (zhuan).
Anti-Communist, a practiced enemy of the People, part of the dregs of the nation. In every historical period, he has used poetry, paintings and essays to closely co-ordinate with the KMT Reactionaries to carry out nefarious activities against the Communist Party and the People.

During the Second Revolutionary War [1927-1937], the bandits of Chiang Kai-shek carried out a large-scale "encirclement campaign" against the Revolutionary Bases. The Worker Peasant Red Army of China along with the People of the Revolutionary Bases engaged in an heroic Anti-Encirclement Struggle. It was at this crucial time, however, that Feng Zikai published the first volume of *Husheng hua ji*, propagating reactionary Buddhist thought, waving the banner of "protecting life" while advocating non-killing (i.e., that there should be no armed struggle), anaesthetizing the People's revolutionary will to fight.

In the early phase of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, Feng Zikai energetically promoted the idea that the nation would be annihilated (*wangguo*), and following the "July Seventh Incident", as the Japanese plotted to swallow up China by force of arms, Feng Zikai went around chorusing "Under the Blue Sky and White Sun, everywhere is our home", singing the praises of the repressive rule of the KMT as "sunlight wherever you go", "you can live at peace and work happily". 1941 was the year the fascists of the world were most unbridled in their activities, and Feng chose this time to manufacture a stream of Black Paintings such as "There is no war in the quiet borders of the horizon, the orders of fighting have become the light of sun and moon" and "The harvest has been good, even more reason to feel the spring is fine", depicting the countryside under the rule of the KMT as being a "quiet and peaceful" [like Tao Yuanming's] "Peach Blossom Spring beyond the world". He propagated class and race surrender, spreading the pacifist thinking of the bourgeoisie. He wanted the People of China to be the slaves of a foreign power.

After Liberation, Feng maintained his reactionary stance, viciously attacked the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and was insanely Anti-Party, Anti-Socialism and Anti-Mao Zedong Thought.

In 1950, at the time that the People of the Whole Country were celebrating Liberation, Feng Zikai painted a picture entitled "Yet the snail has a home of its own", evidence that he felt he had no home to which to return.

In 1956, he closely allied himself with Liu Shaoqi's Theory that Class Struggle has been Eliminated, continually painting such works as "Cartridges Have Become Flower Vases, The World is Forever at Peace", propagating pacifism, desirous of the Revolutionary People laying down their arms.

In the same year he wrote a Poisonous Essay, "Thoughts on New Year", publishing along with it the Poisonous Painting "Hairstyles are Tall in the City", viciously attacking the Party Central and all the policies the Centre had formulated.

In 1957, he wrote the Black Essay "Substitute Painting", attacking the Proletarian Dictatorship as being like an "iron lock" with "its bloody mouth gaping hungrily", saying that it is "the
symbol of the shame of man”, expressing the wish that it would soon collapse.\textsuperscript{147}

In 1960, while in name praising the People’s Communes he churned out a Poisonous Painting, “Two Peach Trees”, depicting People’s Communes as a superficial sham, “fake” and “exaggerated”.\textsuperscript{148}

In 1962, he used a poem by [the 12th Century Song Dynasty writer] Xin Qiji to depict the joys of being an independent farmer in one of his paintings, wildly propagating the “three freedoms and one contract”.\textsuperscript{149} At the same time, coordinating his efforts with the anti-Chinese chorus of Imperialism, Modern Revisionism and the Reactionaries, Feng wrote the essay "Ah Mi" in which he made a vicious attack on the Redden Red Sun in Our Hearts Chairman Mao, vilified the Socialist System saying that “people aren’t [treated as well as] cats”, and that the relationship between people is hypocritical.\textsuperscript{150}

During the three successive years of natural disasters, Feng Zikai did many Black Paintings attacking the Socialist Revolution and Socialist Construction, and attacking the Socialist System, which he sent to Hong Kong for publication and which were lauded by the Chiang Kai-shek Bandits in Taiwan.

However, under the protection of the Black Line in Art and Culture of Zhou Yang and Xia Yan, Feng Zikai, this enemy without a gun, was able to insinuate himself into the National Political Consultative Congress, become the Chairman of the Shanghai Branch of the Chinese Artists' Association, Vice-Chairman of the Shanghai Branch of the Writers' and Artists' Association, the Head of the Shanghai Academy of Chinese Art, and People’s Representative for Shanghai, and he was lavishly praised as an "authority" of "high social standing" who is "multi-talented".\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{147} “Substitute Painting” (Daihua). \textit{Suibiji}, pp. 339-41. This essay was, in fact, written on 5 December, 1956. See also Zhu'an, p. 151.

\textsuperscript{148} See Feng Zikai \textit{huaji}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{149} Or sanzi yibao. This policy, attributed to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping in 1962, extended the uses of agricultural plots for private use, the extension of private markets, increased numbers of small enterprises responsible for profits and losses, and individual production quotas based on households. It was aimed at ameliorating some of the devastating economic consequences of China’s break with the Soviet Union and the “three successive years of natural disaster” from the Great Leap Forward of 1958 to 1961.

\textsuperscript{150} According to Chen Xing in "Feng Zikai and Cats" (Feng Zikai yu mao), \textit{Zhejiang ribao}, 24 January, 1987, the passage in the essay that so offended the Cultural Revolutionaries read as follows:

I remember my dead tabby, we called it "Uncle Tabby" (Huang bobo); but where I come from "uncle" isn't necessarily a respectful title, we call ghosts "Uncle Ghost" (Gui bobo), and thieves "Uncle Thief". So there was no reason I couldn't call a cat "Uncle Tabby".

See \textit{Suibiji}, p. 434 for this passage.

\textsuperscript{151} This biographical denunciation is taken from \textit{Wenyi heixian renwu shizhong}, edited by the Proletarian Lu Xun Corps of the Chinese Department of Wuhan University, Wuhan, Hebei, published May 1968, pp. 157-58. From the evidence of Feng Yiyin’s "The Fate of Feng Zikai in his Last Years and his Unpublished Works", it would appear that this was a standard denunciation of Feng which probably originated in Shanghai.
Feng's family remember the shock and disappointment the old artist felt at being attacked like this and quote him as follows:

They want to force me to admit that I am Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist. If I don't they say they'll organize a mass rally to denounce and struggle me... I really love (reai) the Party, New China and Socialism! But they won't let me love them...\textsuperscript{152}

According to his biographers, "from then on he reconciled himself to the situation and treated his confinement in the Cow Shed as a chance to meditate (canchan); and he regarded participation in the criticisms and struggle sessions as play acting."\textsuperscript{153} The family kept him supplied with wine -- they passed it off as medicine -- and even when his persecutors cut off the beard he had grown following his mother's death in 1930, he refused to take offense and quoted Bai Juyi's famous line to his friends, "The prairie fire can't burn everything,/ The spring winds will revive it."

Throughout this period -- late 1966 to 1969 -- he was subjected to the rounds of self-criticisms, denunciations, struggle sessions and street parades endured by most Chinese writers and artists at the time.\textsuperscript{155} Nonetheless, he did manage to keep a sense of humour and even referred to being dragged over to Pudong, the eastern suburb of Shanghai across the Huangpu River, to be "struggled" one night as "an evening excursion on the river" (Pujiang

\textsuperscript{152} Zhuan, p. 165. This line has become something of a cliché in recent years, especially since the poet-playwright Bai Hua's screenplay "Unrequited Love" (Kulian) was rocketed to fame by Deng Xiaoping's denunciation of in July 1981.

\textsuperscript{153} Zhuan, p. 166; Wang Xiyan, "An Energetic Sower -- Remembering Feng Zikai", p. 365-66; Feng Yiyin, "The Fate of Feng Zikai in his Last Years and his Unpublished Works". It is also rumoured that some family members participated in the denunciations of Feng.

\textsuperscript{154} Zhuan, p. 166. Pan Wenyan, a friend of Feng's in his latter years, a co-author of Zhuan and the author of Nianbiao, says this comment was made to him. See "Mr Feng's Beard" (Feng xianshengde huxu), Xianggang wenxue, 1985: 9, p. 16. Ba Jin passed by Feng's home some time in 1967 when he was on his way home after being publically struggled. "I walked over to South Shaanxi Road to take the trolley bus home when I saw the Spanish-style building Mr Feng lived in. It made me think of him, and I felt terrible; I couldn't stand it: what was going to happen to a pure and good man like him?! One day I saw him. He didn't have a walking stick [as was his habit] and he had an umbrella under his arm. He rushed by me and I noticed his beard was gone, and he looked quite different from when we'd been in the same NPPCC study group together. I don't think he saw me, but I thought he looked younger. I was very happy that another good person had managed to survive. I thought he'd made it..." From "Remembering Mr Feng", pp. 41-42.

\textsuperscript{155} Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, pp. 40-41, presumably basing his account on interviews with family members, says Feng was initially denounced as a Reactionary Academic Authority in June 1966 when the academy was occupied by Revolutionary Rebels. His assets were frozen in August and despite lingering illness, he was forced to make daily reports to the academy. From September 1968, he was handed over to the Shanghai Municipal Museum where he was paraded with a placard hung around his neck. One of the most evocative accounts of life in the Cow Shed can be found in the Cultural Revolution memoirs of Yang Jiang, the translator and wife of Qian Zhongshu. See "Record of the Years Bingwu and Dingwei" (Bingwu dingwei jishi), in Jiangyincha, Peking: Sanlian shudian, 1987, pp. 139-182.
Indeed, the Cow Shed confinement, even if limited to office hours every day, must have been particularly hard to bear for a man who had never worked in an office in his life and had had no regular employment since the mid-1940s. In the hours before breakfast each day he would engage in what he called "underground activities" (dixia huodong). It started out with him planting flowers in his garden and some occasional writing and soon developed into energetic schemes for translation and writing. The following is one page from Feng Zikai's Cultural Revolution daily report written with a fountain pen for the Revolutionary Rebels who supervised him. This single page, formatted in imitation of the original, was presented to the rebuilt Yuanyuan Hall in Shimenwan by Feng's daughter Feng Yiyin, and is on display in a glass case in the study on the first floor of the building. It is not clear how long he kept this "diary" and if or when it will be published in full.

Diary entry for Sunday 31 March, 1968
Feng Zikai

6:00 Got up
7:00 Breakfast
8:00 Studied Chairman Mao’s works: "Combat Liberalism" and the "Three Old Articles"158
10:00 Rest, arranged personal effects and washed feet
12:00 Lunch
2:00 Studied Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong
4:00 Rested, copied out a self-criticism
6:00 Dinner
8:00 Retired for the night
No visitors all day
I did not leave the house.159

It is a laconic and poignant statement on Feng's life at the time.

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156 Feng Yiyin, "The Fate of Feng Zikai in his Last Years and his Unpublished Works". At the height of the Cultural Revolution, Shen Benqian, an old high-school classmate and member of Feng's Tongyin Art Society, was given a copy of a pamphlet: Denounce and Struggle Feng Zikai Special (Pidou Feng Zikai zhuankan) with a long article entitled "One Hundred Thousand Struggle Feng Zikai". Shen wrote a poem to comfort his old friend. However, he did not dare mail it to him. See Chen Xing, "Feng Zikai and Shen Benqian" (Feng Zikai yu Shen Benqian), Xiaosa fengshen, p. 164. They did resume contact in 1973 shortly after Shen’s seventieth birthday.


158 The laosanpian from Mao’s Selected Works, "Serve the People", "In Memory of Norman Bethune", and "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains".

159 I copied this entry by hand during a trip to Shimenwan in mid-November, 1986. See also Gu Wei’s "Feng Zikai During the 'Long Night'" (Feng Zikai zai "changye" zhong), Aomen ribao, Jinghai supplement, No. 26, 1986. At some point during his house-arrest Feng in 1969, Feng wrote out the Gushi shijiushou from the Zhaoming Wenxuan, using the poems to express his own frustrations. See Zhuan, p. 211.
In the autumn of 1969, at the age of seventy-two, Feng Zikai was taken to live and work in a village in the outskirts of Shanghai. Although he is said to have been unperturbed by his fate, his health failed and he was hospitalized in Shanghai in January 1970. After being released from hospital he secretly undertook the translation of the Japanese classics Ochikubo monogatari and Taketori monogatari in 1970, and in 1972 he translated Ise monogatari. In the evenings, Feng started a new series of Yuanyuan Hall essays, secretly writing thirty-three pieces which he collected under the title Yuanyuautang xubi. Thinking they would be safer if deposited outside of Shanghai, Feng sent the manuscript to his son Xinmei for safe keeping. At the time of writing, Feng Yiyin, who now has these last essays in her possession, has only allowed seventeen of them to be published. Some of the others will be included in the projected complete works of Feng Zikai, but others, Feng Yiyin has told me, are of too sensitive a nature or critical of some of Feng's contemporaries to be published for the moment.

In these last essays Feng reconfirmed many of the basic views he had held throughout his life. Many are childhood reminiscences, unabashed in their powerful nostalgia for a more innocent and untroubled past. Within these there are such works as "Ah Qing", which describes an unmarried farmer who would sell kindling to Feng's family. Ah Qing's only hobby was playing the erhu, which he did with extraordinary talent and sensitivity, "the effect was in no way inferior to the [music of a] violin, something entirely due to [Ah Qing's] inspiration and dexterity." At the end of the essay, the artist passes his judgement:

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160 Zhuan, pp. 166, 168-69, 211; Harbsmeier, The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, p. 41. He is said to have composed poems in secret during his Cow Shed days he did this under the cover of studying Mao Zedong's Selected Works and he covertly sent them to his son Xinmei in Shijiazhuang. During his period of rustication he was particularly friendly with the Shanghai art world official Shao Luoyang.

161 Zhuan, pp. 211-12. These works were published in one volume under the title Luoqiwuyu, the Chinese reading for Ochikubo monogatari, Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1984. See also Feng Yiyin's "Father's Last Book" (Fuqinde zuihou yibushu), Wenhuibao (Shanghai), 16 September, 1985, written on the occasion of the publication of the book. Yiyin records that her father's translation project started with Genji monogatari had been interrupted by the Cultural Revolution, but as soon as he had a chance he returned to the task. After finishing these monogatari he wrapped them in paper and put them away with the words, "Give this to Xinmei [his youngest son who was working in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province] when he comes. I won't see them published in my lifetime, but perhaps they will be in yours." Xinmei arrived at Feng's bedside shortly before his death and the artist had Yiyin hand over the package.

162 Zhuan, p. 212; and Feng Yiyin's "Editor's Afterword", Suibiji, pp. 500-502. News of the thirty-three essays in Yuanyuautang xubi was not made public until 1983 when Feng Yiyin announced the "discovery" to a reporter of the Shanghai Wenhuibao. See "Posthumous Discovery of a Collection of Essays by Feng Zikai" (Feng Zikai yipi sanwen yizuo faxian), Wenhuibao, 25 January, 1983. This report mentions that Feng's old friends including the literary historian Guo Shaoyu, the playwright Ke Jing and the novelist Wang Xian, were all delighted to hear that the essays had survived the Cultural Revolution, and considered that their existence was a literary event. Also Feng Yiyin, "Concerning Yuanyuautang suibiji" (Guanyu <Yuanyuautang suibiji>), Wenhuibao, 26 January, 1983. One of the essays, "Tangxi", is printed in the same issue of the Wenhuibao with a reproduction of two pages of the original manuscript.
Ah Qing was alone in the world, bereft of the joys of family. Playing the erhu was for him the be all and end all of his life. How powerful music can be; equally, it is clear that at times a life of the spirit can replace material comfort. This is even more so for those who awaken to the Dharma of the Buddha and become monks. 163

In addition to the literary activities described above, Feng Zikai busied himself in his last years with a number of religious projects, which he regarded as being extremely important. Although some years before the one hundredth anniversary of Hongyi's birth, in 1976, Feng completed the fifth and sixth volumes of the Husheng huaji, and sent them, not without some difficulty, to Guangqia in Singapore for publication. Another work was his translation of a Japanese commentary on *The Awakening of Faith* (*Dacheng qixinlun*), a treatise (*shastra*) attributed to Asvaghosha which is highly esteemed by Mahayana Buddhists. 164 Feng completed the translation in 1971 and once more sent it to Guangqia, although not without some trepidation. 165 Nonetheless, he did say in a letter to the monk, 163 "Ah Qing" (Ah Qing), *Suibiji*, p. 495. Ah Qing's full name was Yao Aqing and Yao Qiang has written a short account of him entitled "My Great-grandfather Yao Ah Qing" (Wode taigong Yao Aqing), *Yangliu*, No. 6, 1985: 4. She points out that Ah Qing died in 1954 and hastily reassures Feng Zikai's "soul in heaven" that Ah Qing's descendants now enjoy a "full and happy life": Yao Qiang's father is a cadre, her mother a shop assistant in a state store and she is a middle school student.

164 Feng had been familiar with the book for many decades. He records in his *Jiaoshi riji*, p. 125, that he recommended it to a student as the most suitable introduction to Buddhism available. Yang Wenhu, the prominent lay figure in the revival of Buddhism in the late Qing, was first drawn to Buddhism by this book, and "Suddenly he realized that love, family, and country held no interest for him. From then on he began searching for sutras in all the bookshops, monasteries, and temples, and got his friends to search on his behalf." See Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, p. 3, who in turn quotes from Yang's granddaughter Buwei Yang Chao's *Autobiography of a Chinese Woman* and other sources, including Timothy Richard's introduction to his translation of *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana Doctrine* (Shanghai, 1907), p. x. In about 1922, Ouyang Jingwu, another prominent Buddhist layman, accepted the thesis of some Japanese scholars that the work was a forgery, thus setting him at odds with most Chinese Buddhists at the time. See Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, pp. 118-119 and note 35. The question of the authenticity of the book has been reviewed by Paul Demiéville, "Sur l'authenticité du ta ich'eng k'i sin louen", *Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise*, Tokyo, 1929, 2: 1, pp. 74-76. Again in Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, p. 237, Lewis Hodous is quoted on the subject of Buddhism in China in the 1920s. Hodous points out that, "Not only monks, but laymen trained in Japan are delivering lectures on the Buddhist sutras. The favourites are the *Awakening of Faith* and the *Saddharma-pundarika Sutra*." Both works were a favourite of Feng's. See Chan, Sin-wai, *Buddhism in Late-Qing Political Thought*, p. 19, for details of Yang Wenhu and the book, also p. 23, note 34, where Chan gives details of the discussions surrounding both the authorship and translation of the book. On page 44, Chan notes Zhang Taiyan's discovery of the book and his interest in it.

165 In a letter written to Guangqia on 17 August [1971?], Feng said, "In our country it is stipulated that you enjoy religious freedom, but not the right to propagate religion [Feng's emphasis]. Since your brother [i.e., Feng] is propagating [religion] overseas without permission, I dare not use my real name. For this reason I have signed [the manuscript] 'anonymous' (wumingshii). For the same reason, it is inappropriate for me to write an introduction, although if someone else does I do not think it would be such a great crime if they revealed just who
"Your brother [i.e., Feng] was instructed by Master Hongyi from youth, and I remain a sincere Buddhist. Even in my old age my heart has not changed." He also kept in contact with a number of Buddhist lay devotees, and maintained his vegetarian diet. The book was photographically reproduced in Singapore from Feng's hand-written manuscript in 1973.

In the autumn of 1971, Feng also completed work on a volume of over seventy paintings which he had begun in 1969. It was his last collection. They were done to replace over three hundred paintings he had given his friend Hu Zhijun over the years up to 1966 which had subsequently been destroyed. Every time Hu visited him Feng would hand him a sealed envelope with a newly completed painting inside it. Aptly enough, Feng chose for the title of this collection Bizhou zizhen. In it there were a number of paintings in imitation of his earliest work. It was over forty years since he had first associated himself with such writers as Yu Pingbo, Lin Yutang and Zhou Zuoren, the advocates of "self-
expression" (xingling) in the 1930s, and in the introduction that he wrote to this last volume he said:

In my youth and middle age, I delighted in satirical manhua, depicting the scenes I saw around me, showing up the vileness of humanity. But I also used classical poems to depict modern scenes. I am now an old man, and reflecting on the works of my youth I deeply regret my work has added to the [bad] karma of "satirists". In private, however, I am pleased that by depicting the scenes of classical poetry I have used their mysterious beauty (gushi zhi meimiao) to refine my nature and dispel the concerns of the world (keyi taoqing shixing paiqian shilü ye). 168

He gave the collection to Hu, "to be hidden away by a man who loves me." The last words of the introduction read simply, "My life-long affinity with painting (huayuan) is exhausted with these works", 169 marking the end of the one yuan that had run like a thread through the weave of his whole life. Earlier in the year he had gone with Hu Zhijun to Hangzhou where they stayed with relatives. Feng saw his elder sister Feng Man (Mengren), another faithful Buddhist, and spent an emotional time reminiscing. He passed by Jiangzhuang, Ma Yifu's former residence (Ma had died peacefully in 1967), but he could not bring himself to go inside. 170

He completed the last of his essays in 1974 and also retranslated his favourite Japanese novel, Natsume Sōseki's Three Cornered World (Kusamakura). 171 In the same year, Feng Yiyin records that two paintings Feng produced as part of his "underground activities" fell into the hands of the authorities, and were denounced as "new criminal evidence" and included in the Black Art Exhibition organized by the Gang of Four. 172 Yiyin tried to convince him not to give away any more paintings for fear of further trouble but Feng brushed her protests aside. "All of my paintings are Poisonous Weeds, but there have always been people around who think of them as Fragrant Flowers, and who

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168 Quoted from the reproduction of Feng's handwritten introduction which is reproduced in Xianggang wenxue, 1985: 9, p. 18. According to Xiao Ding's "A Record of the Trials of Feng Zikai's Paintings", p. 31, once a member of a Workers' Propaganda Team asked him for a painting. He did a picture with the inscription "You Reap what You Sow" (Zhonggua degua).

169 Xianggang wenxue, ibid.

170 Zhuan, p. 212.

171 Zhuan, p. 213; Caoying's "Feng Zikai's Career as a Translator" (Feng Zikaide fanyi shengya), Shanghai meishu tongxun, No. 25, December 1985, p. 6. Feng is quoted as having said that "both [translations] have their strong points". He gave the new translation to his friend Hu Zhijun in Shanghai who still has it and is said to be on the look out for a publisher.

172 "The Fate of Feng Zikai in his Last Years and his Unpublished Works", ibid.
want to treasure them as their own. I'm still more than willing to give them my work..."  

One week after the Qingming Festival in 1975, some seven months before his death, Feng Zikai returned to Shimenwan, his first trip in nearly thirty years. He had prepared for friends three copies of He Zhizhang's poem in his own calligraphy, and lived in the town for ten days, visiting his old school, the site of the family dye shop and Yuanyuan Hall. In the summer of 1975 he suddenly said to his old drinking partner Hu Zhijun that he was giving up his beloved Shaoxing wine. He said he just wanted to see what it was like not to drink, but Hu guessed that he must have been ill. His resolve lasted about two weeks, but he only had a week's drinking left. At the end of August he was hospitalized.

Feng Zikai died of lung cancer on 15 September, 1975.

On 5 July, 1978, the Party Committee of the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau based on a re-examination of Feng Zikai's "case", overturned the Municipal Revolutionary Committee's judgement on the artist, approving his official rehabilitation. On 28 June, 1979, the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau, in coordination with the Municipal Writers' and Artists' Association and the Shanghai Chinese Art Academy, held a memorial ceremony for Feng and deposited his ashes in the Longhua Revolutionary Columbarium.

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173 Ibid. Xiao Ding says that in 1974 Feng's family -- presumably Feng Yiyin -- confiscated the old man's brushes so he would not be able to give any more paintings away. "They were very nervous and did it to protect him." He promised to stop painting but did nothing of the sort. See "A Record of the Trials of Feng Zikai's Paintings", p. 31.

174 Ronggeng and Mengquan, "Uncle Kai's Trip to his Home Town" (Kaishu guxiang zhi xing), Tongxiang wenshi ziliao, No. 2, pp. 91-95; Zhuan, pp. 175, 214. In January 1975, the Revolutionary Committee of Shimen Township asked Feng to do a calligraphic inscription for "The People's Hall of Shimen Township". See Zhuan, pp. 174, 213. Feng's pre-Cultural Revolution inscriptions for the town had all been destroyed. The site of Yuanyuan Hall was occupied by a glass fibre factory when he visited in 1975, as it was until 1984 when the reconstruction of the hall was undertaken. See Ding Fan's 1983 somewhat idyllic report on the town, "Shimenwan, an Inspiration for Poetry and Painting", p. 72.

175 "When Mr Feng Once Swore Off Wine", Xianggang wenxue, 1985: 9, p. 13.

176 Zhuan, pp. 177, 214; Nianbiao, p. 55.

177 Zhuan, pp. 177, 215; Nianbiao, p. 55. In Xianggang wenxue, 1985: 9, p. 19, there is a picture of Feng's niche in the columbarium which shows the photograph of a PLA officer in uniform on the shelf above Feng's urn and picture.
Appendix II:
The "Feng Zikai Industry" (1975–1989)

1: The Makings of an Industry

Following the end of the Cultural Revolution and the various Communist Party resolutions overturning the Anti-Rightist campaign which was primarily aimed at intellectuals in the late 1950s (adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the 10th Central Committee of the CPC in December 1978) and then the Cultural Revolution itself (adopted by the Sixth Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC in June 1981), mass rehabilitations of those persecuted in these movements took place. As we have mentioned in the previous section, Feng Zikai was officially "rehabilitated" (pingfan) in mid-1979.

This rehabilitation process in general led to a fascinating nation-wide phenomenon, an officially condoned period of nostalgia and reminiscing involving both the past (that is the early years of the People's Republic and, in some cases, the "seventeen years" from 1949 to 1966 previously condemned as the period of the "dictatorship of the black line of Liu Shaoqi") and the victims of political purges. This wave of reminiscing reached a height in the early 1980s and has built up noticeably once more since 1986, despite frequent bans on certain topics and individuals.²

The early phase of what I regard as the memory industry in China was fairly simple. This was determined by both the content of the memoirs being written and the nature of Chinese propaganda and publishing. It is easy to understand the motives of family members and friends of deceased cultural, academic and even

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² "Memory as the enemy of tyranny", Geremie Barmé, Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 May, 1988, pp. 47-48. A rash of new books and articles on the Cultural Revolution and major political figures began to appear in mid-1988 and by early 1989 there were reports that the CPC Politburo was attempting to put limitations on what could be written about.
political figures wishing to write about the dead both in an attempt to pay back the debt of silence that had accrued over the years and partly as a means to revive the memory of their loved ones. Such memoirs, articles and essays provide us with much fascinating although not always reliable information on the life, times and work of the individuals concerned. But this relatively innocent and laudable enterprise can and in many cases has changed with the new economic and political priorities of the state. With the increasing commercialization of the Chinese publishing industry which has followed on from the urban economic reforms initiated in 1984, writing about quirky and eccentric characters can be a profitable business. For those who can create a cult around an established figure there is also the possibility of receiving state funding or other support, a high-profile in the media and, what appears to be important to many writers, personal prominence as the guardian of the memory of the dead. A combination of commercial exploitation and political manipulation creates the ideal environment for a burgeoning memory industry. I believe that in recent years Feng Zikai has to some extent become the object for just such an industry. Although it is not possible here to make a thorough study of this phenomenon in general or the Feng Zikai industry in particular, in the following pages I provide a series of notes and observations on the subject arranged in chronological order to give the reader some sense both of the positive and less than laudable aspects of Feng’s posthumous fate.

2: Singapore and Hong Kong in the 1970s

Long before Feng’s death in 1975, the monk the Venerable Guangqia was active in Singapore as a propagator of and even agent for Feng’s Buddhist works and calligraphy. Also in the 1970s Pan Wenyan, a long-standing friend of Feng’s wrote a short, although not entirely accurate, chronology of the artist’s life. The most noteworthy work on Feng Zikai in the 1970s was undertaken by Lo Wai-luen (b. 1939), a scholar of Hong Kong literary history and a highly-regarded prose writer in her own right (she writes under the name Xiaosi). She published her work on Feng Zikai under the name Ming Tsuen (or Ming Chuan, in Hanyu pinyin).³ She began a correspondence with Feng shortly before his death, and sent him a copy of Takehisa Yumeji’s Chuppan, a gesture the artist much appreciated.

Lo had been led to work on Feng Zikai by a strong attraction to his paintings and essays. In fact she admired him so much that in the mid-1970s she stopped

³ See Chen Xing’s article “Miss Ming Chuan and Feng Zikai” (Ming Chuan nüshi yu Feng Zikai), Jiaxingbao, 22 November, 1987 & 29 November, 1987.
work on him. In a short article commemorating the tenth year of his death she gave her reason, "to turn a person you deeply respect into an object for research is one of the most tasteless things you can do (shi wanfen shafengjingde shiqing)." Nonetheless, among Lo Wai-luen's own writings on Feng is volume of his paintings with short essays explaining each one, her Feng Zikai manhua xianyi (1976), one of the most coy and to my mind unfortunate books produced on Feng, and one not without imitators. Apart from many articles on Feng's work, some of which have been referred to in the text of this work, Lo edited an extremely useful collection of stray essays and articles by Feng in 1979, presaging by some years the efforts of Mainland Feng scholars. Before abandoning her work on Feng Zikai in the 1980s in favour of a study of the activities of Mainland writers in Hong Kong in the 1940s, she was planning to edit and publish the complete works of Feng Zikai, a study of his work and a detailed chronology of his life. She believes that in the fullness of time the members of the Feng Zikai Research Society will be able to complete all of these projects. Nonetheless, Lo has maintained her interest in Feng Zikai, and during the late-1980s she has acted as an intermediary for members of the society who have wanted to have articles or books published in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Also in 1979 Pan Wenyan, a friend of Feng's in Shanghai, published his chronology of Feng Zikai's life under the auspices of the Venerable Guangqia in Singapore. In Hong Kong, a volume of thirty-four cartoon strips (four frames per page) was produced by Mo Yidian and Xu Zhengnong with introductory and other essays by local writers and two of Feng's daughters Feng Yiyin and Feng Chenbao. One of the most interesting of the essays in the book was written by Hah Gong (d. 1987), Hong Kong's greatest satirical essayist. In it he said, "Today everything is suffused with aggression, either political or economic. It is as though things may explode at any moment. By reading these manhua you can regain your youth (fanlao huantong), your mind and emotions will be at peace and you can reduce your evil tendencies."

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4 "No Mere Commemoration" (Bushi jinian yigeren name jiandan), Ming Tsuen, Xianggang wensue, 1985: 9, p. 19.
5 Ming Tsuen, Feng Zikai manhua xuanyi, Hong Kong: Chunyi chubanshe, 1976, 186 pages.
6 Yuanyuantang jiwei yiwen, edited by Ming Tsuen, Hong Kong: Wenzueshe, 1979, 293 pages. With a preface by Feng Yiyin dated September, 1979, and an introductory note and editor's postscript by Ming Cheun, it is a beautifully produced volume which contains 42 essays by Feng unavailable for many years or not included in previous collections.
7 See Yangliu, No. 2, 1984: 10, where Feng Yiyin quotes a letter from Lo.
8 Feng Zikai xiansheng nianbiao, Pan Wenyan, Hong Kong: Shidai tushu youxian gongsi, 59 pages.
9 Feng Zikai lianhuan manhuaji, edited by Mo Yidian and Xu Zhengnong, Hong Kong: Mingchuan chubanshe, 1979, 14 pages of essays and 34 pages of cartoons.
3: Early Developments in the Mainland

In 1979, in the Mainland one of the first collections of reminiscences of literary figures appeared in Shanghai, and Feng Zikai was included among the seventeen entries. In an essay on Feng, the novelist Wang Xiyan summed up Feng's life by claiming that "despite the fact that he was an admirer of Li Shutong, he was, if one studies his whole life, someone who really belongs to the great tide of the Revolution, he was a fighter in the ranks of the Revolution, although he moved slowly along the path of progress, and even seemed to hesitate at times." Of Feng's old friends, Zhu Guangqia wrote one of the earliest articles in memoriam it is also one of the essays on Feng least affected by political exegecies. Meanwhile, members of Feng's family, especially his energetic daughter Feng Yiyin, and family friends had banded together to write their own "official biography" of Feng which was first printed in *Xinwenxue shiliao*, a quarterly journal that has over the years been one of the major outlet for memoirs and reminiscences. The biography was later revised and published in book form both in the Mainland and later also Taiwan (see under 1987 below). Again in 1979, Hong Kong and Mainland writers on Feng contributed a number of articles on Feng's life and art to the September issue of *Ming Pao Monthly*. Illustrations in this issue of *Ming Pao* included photographs of Feng's wife Xu Limin with Feng Yuancao and Feng Yiyin, and a list of corrections and additions by Ming Tsuend to Pan Wenyan's biography. Numerous shorter biographical notes and essays have appeared since then.

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10 Wangshi yu aisi, edited by Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1979, pp. 349-79, with essays by the novelist Wang Xiyan and Feng Yiyin. Those honoured by being included in this very early and prestigious volume were listed in order of political importance. They were: Guo Moruo, Lao She, He Qifang, Ah Ying, Zou Quanlin, Zhao Shuli, Liu Qing, Yang Shuo, Guo Xiaochuan, Hou Jinjing, Ye Yiqun, Wei Jinzhi, Feng Zikai, Fu Lei, Wen Jie, Hai Mo and Luo Guangbin.


13 *Xinwenxue shiliao*, published by Renmin wenxue chubanshe in Peking. Feng Zikai zhuan was published in four consecutive issues of this journal from June 1980 to March 1981. Feng Huazhan, Feng Zikai's eldest son, did not participate in the writing of this biography, nor has he joined the Feng Research Society. I believe this is due to a falling out he had with his sister(s) involving the treatment of Feng during the Cultural Revolution.


16 For example Chen Xing's "Feng Zikai (1898-1975)" written for *Zhongguo xiandai zuojia pingzhuans*, Vol. IV, Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1986, pp. 73-99, and "Is Natsume Sōseki the only one who understands me?" (Zhi wo zhe, qi wei Xiamu shushi hu?), in *Zouxiang*
Current evaluations of Feng Zikai's prose are numerous. Some of the earliest, dating from the early 1970s when Feng was still under a cloud on the Mainland, were written in Hong Kong. In the Mainland many articles have appeared on the subject of Feng's essay in recent years. To date, one of the most honest pieces of writing to appear on Feng was written by the Shanghai scholar Yin Qi in 1984. In her "A Preliminary Study of Feng Zikai's Essays" (Feng Zikai sanwen chutan), she commented on the disturbing tendency among "well-intentioned people" to make a case that Feng had abandoned the pessimistic Buddhist religious thinking that had marked his maturity in favour of a more "engagé" spirit. "For Feng Zikai the writer," she says, "religion was an organic part of his creative spirit. Any artificial attempt to ignore this [aspect of his life] for the sake of some taboo will only result in making Feng Zikai something other than he was." Lo Wai-luen was so impressed by this passage that in a letter dated 10 September, 1984, written to congratulate Feng Yiyin on the establishment of the "Feng Zikai Research Society", she said Yin Qi had displayed "thoughtfulness and courage, this is the kind of specialist spirit of seeking truth from facts which a researcher should have; to be objective and fair, not to follow political fashion: there is hope for the young scholars of China!" In a rather pointed remark she also said "...one should not allow the objectivity of one's research work to be undermined by a personal relationship with the person being studied, there is no need to 'impose taboos for the sake of a relative' (at present some of the offspring of writers in China are victims of this pitfall in researching their parents' work, it's a spirit that is not in keeping with scholarship, you can all overcome this and provide a model for others)...."

Other book length publications dealing with Feng include Chen Xing's two volumes of collected essays on Feng, Xiaosa fengshen, parts one and two, a second single-volume selection of which is being produced in Taiwan by Chen Xinyuan, the editor of Wenxun. Chen Xing has also written a novel based on Feng's life which will appear in 1989 (see below). He hopes this partly fictional work will be a best seller.

Hereafter follows a short chronological account of the major publishing and other events involving Feng Zikai after 1980.

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17 See Zhongguo xiansheng wenxue yanjiu congkan, 1983: 4, previously quoted in the introduction to this thesis.
18 Quoted in Yangliu, No. 2, 1984: 10.
19 Chen Xing was introduced to Chen Xinyuan by Ming Tsuen.
4: A Chronicle of the Industry

1981

In this year the first major post-1949 selection of Feng's essays appeared. Feng Zikai sanwen xuanji, edited by Feng Huazhan and Qi Zhirong, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 258 pages, with an introductory essay by Wang Xiyan dated 27 June, 1980 and an editorial introduction by Feng Huazhan. Wang Xiyan, the novelist, wrote his first essay about Feng for the volume of reminiscences Wangshi yu aisi in 1979. For this new selection of essays he wrote an essay entitled "Exposing Oneself" (Chiluoluode ziji) in which he claimed Feng Zikai's essays belong to the school of serious and committed writers as opposed to the frivolous "humorists" and "casual essayists". He thereby rejected any suggestion that Feng was affiliated with such writers as Zhou Zuoren, Lin Yutang or Yu Pingbo. As the political climate now allows a more rational evaluation of these writers and Feng's relationship with them, it would be interesting to know if Wang has revised his view.

1982

Bi Keguan, the Mainland cartoonist and a self-proclaimed student of Feng's, made two separate visits to Ye Shengtao (d. 1988) in March 1978 and April 1979 to discuss his relationship with the late artist and Feng's first book, Zikai manhua. In September 1979 and June 1981 he paid similar visits to Zhu Guangqian (d. 1987). Transcripts of both conversations were published in 1982. This was part of Bi's effort over a number of years up to the mid-1980s to increase public awareness of the importance of Feng Zikai and Li Shutong in the history of 20th Century Chinese art. This thesis contains numerous references to Bi's work.

1983

Yuanyuantang suibiji, by Feng Zikai, edited by Feng Yiyin with an editorial postscript dated 1981, Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1983, 504 pages. This book contains 104 essays by Feng arranged chronologically and was the

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20 Feng Zikai sanwen xuanji, pp. 4-5. Wang is particularly scathing when discussing Zhou Zuoren's essays and quotes Lu Xun on the subject of the casual essay at length. (p. 3).

21 "Ye Shengtao Talks about Painting -- two conversations concerning Zikai manhua" (Ye Shengtao tan hua -- guanyu Zikai manhua) de liangci tanhua), and "Zhu Guangqian Talks about Painting -- two conversations concerning Zikai manhua" (Zhu Guangqian tan hua -- guanyu Zikai manhua) de liangci tanhua), in Meishu shilun congkan, No. 4, 1982; 2, pp. 1- 5, & 6-11 respectively. This issue of Meishu shilun congkan printed Feng's early painting, "Ren san hou, yigou xinyu tian ru shui" on the cover. The Mainland philosopher Li Zehou used the same painting in his recent Zhongguo xiandai sixiang shilun, Peking: Dongfang chubanshe, 1987, opposite page 254.
largest selection of its type when it appeared. Some of his most notably religious works or comments on Hongyi are conspicuous in their absence.

1984

January, Shao Luoyang, a friend of Feng's from the Cultural Revolution, wrote an article about the relationship between morals and art for the Jiefang ribao in Shanghai in which he quoted from a number of classical Chinese sources on the subject and used Feng Zikai's own words to justify the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign which Deng Xiaoping had launched in October 1983.22


The Feng Zikai Research Society (Feng Zikai yanjiuhui) was set up on 19 August at the suggestion of Venerable Guangqia and in September the group published the first issue of Yangliu, a semi-official and internally distributed journal. The early members of the society were the authors of Feng Zikai zhuans and it had its headquarters in Feng Yiyin's apartment on Caoxi North Road, Xujiahui District, Shanghai. Since its founding the society has held a number of meetings, among other activities it has helped host the octogenarian monk Guangqia on his occasional perambulations around China. Feng Zikai's friend Ye Shengtao acted along with Guangqia as an informal advisor to the group before his death in 1988. Upon its initiation the society consisted of eleven members (in order of seniority):

Feng Chenbao (b. 1920, female), Feng Zikai's eldest daughter and retired translator and editor from Shanghai yiwen chubanshe; 
Hu Zhijun (b. 1921, male), friend of Feng in his last years. Employed at the Shanghai Electricity Authority; 
Feng Yuanvin (b. 1921, female), Feng's daughter, retired language teacher formerly of Red Flag High School, Shanghai; 
Feng Yuancao (b. 1927, male), Feng's adoptive son; editor with the Peking Renmin yinyue chubanshe; 
Zeng Lufu (b. 1928, male), supervisor of the sculptors' workshop of the Shanghai Parks and Garden Bureau; 
Feng Yiyin (b. 1929, female), Feng's daughter and research worker in the Foreign Literature Research Institute of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences; 
Pan Wenyan (b. 1931, male), teacher at the Shanghai Nanshi District Night School; 
Bi Keguan (b. 1931, male), cartoonist, historian of the Chinese manhua, research worker in the Art Research Institute of the Chinese Fine Arts Research Academy;

Yin Qi (b. 1935, female), Feng scholar, lecturer at the Shanghai Pumuo District Night School; Chen Xing (b. 1957, male), Feng scholar, secretary to the president of the Hangzhou Teachers' College (more recently an editor of the school's social science journal); Bi Yuanying (b. 1959, female), essayist, teacher at Jingsong Number Three Middle School, Peking.

The society was founded with seed funding from the Venerable Guangqia. Its charter, printed in the first issue of Yangliu, outlined the aims of the society as being to collect, collate, edit and where possible publish material concerning Feng Zikai's life and work, also to hold meetings to facilitate the exchange of information among the society's members, and to aid in the publication of information concerning articles and material on Feng Zikai in Chinese and non-Chinese books, journals and newspapers.

The magazine Yangliu, literally "willows", a reference to Feng's love of this tree in the 1920s and various manhua, is produced every two to three months. It consists of articles on Feng Zikai or relevant information and more recently rare speeches and articles by Feng Zikai himself. It also provides two regular features: "Dandelions" (pugongying) in which articles concerning Feng are listed by name and author with publication details; and, "Swallows" (feiyan), a news and information column. These indexes have been of help in locating relevant material for the present study.

1985

Feng Zikai lun yishu, edited by Feng Huazhan and Qi Zhirong, Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1985, editorial introduction dated September, 1983. The book is divided into five sections with selections from Feng's writings on art, music, literature, calligraphy, architecture and industrial design.

Yangliu, issues Nos. 5-9, printed a number of articles to commemorate the tenth year since Feng Zikai's death in 1975, a selection of which were reprinted in the September 1985 issue of the Hong Kong monthly Xianggang wenxue.

The most important event of this year in terms of the Feng Zikai industry was the opening of the reconstructed Yuanyuan Hall in Shimen Township, Tongxiang County, Zhejiang. The project had been made possible with funding from Feng's old friend the Venerable Guangqia, who returned to China for the

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23 Yangliu, No. 1, 1984: 9.
opening, and a special room in the new building is devoted to their friendship. To paraphrase Holmes Welch's perceptive comment on the use of religion in Mainland China before the Cultural Revolution, they [investors in the Feng industry] realize that Buddhism as a living religion has little or no future in China, but that its past has a future.

The first news of the event was published in the overseas edition of *Renminribao* on 15 September, 1985 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Feng Zikai's death. Other reports were printed in the Shanghai press around this date, and the September issue of *Xianggang wenxue* devoted over ten pages to articles on Feng and the new building. There are a large number of imitations of Feng Zikai's work painted by his daughter Feng Yiyin in the one room of the hall set aside as a museum to his art. The museum produces and sells envelopes with Feng Zikai manhua printed on the left-hand side and the legend "Produced by Yuanyuan Hall" (Yuanyuantang zhi) running along the bottom. At the time of writing the envelopes were only available in red and blue. The entrance ticket visitors purchase at the hall for ten fen also have a range of manhua with coloured borders printed on them. The small shop in the hall sells fans with Feng's manhua "In the Cool" (Naliang) printed on it and cotton handkerchiefs in red, blue and brown with manhua inspired by Feng's children, as well as garish lace scarves bordered with velveteen in red or black. Crudely-made plastic bookmarks in blue, green, yellow and red with paintings in black on them are also sold. The prices of all of these items are minimal.

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25 This is a reminder that up to 1966 "the friendship of Buddhism" had been an important rubric in the manipulation of Buddhism in China's relations with other Asian countries. Holmes Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, p. 179ff.

26 See Welch, *Buddhism under Mao*, p. 145.


28 *Jiefang ribao* carried a news report sent from Shimen on 16 September, 1985 entitled "The Opening of Mr Feng Zikai's Rebuilt Former Residence" (Feng Zikai xiansheng guju chongjian luocheng), and a longer article by Yang Qiao, "Strolling Around Yuanyuan Hall" (Yuanyuantang manhu), on 21 September. *Wenhuibao* entitled their short report of 16 September "Feng Zikai's Rebuilt Former Residence Yuanyuan Hall is Opened -- Opening Ceremony Held in Tongxiang Yesterday" (Feng Zikai guju Yuanyuantang chongjian luocheng -- jiemu dianli zuo zai Tongxiang juxing).

29 *Xianggang wenxue*, 1985: 9, pp. 5-19.

30 Chen Xing has also printed envelopes with Feng manhua for his own use, and a friend of his from Hangzhou has produced "rubbings" of Feng's paintings after having carved pictures in reverse on bamboo which are not, I believe, for sale.
17 September, the Venerable Guangqia presented the original manuscripts of the six volumes of *Husheng huaji* which he had preserved in Singapore since the early 1970s to the Zhejiang Provincial Museum.\(^{31}\)

Starting with issue No. 9, November 1985, *Yangliu* went from being duplicated from hand-cut stencils to being printed. From this issue Chen Xing took over as editor of the magazine from Feng Yiyin who found her other work on Feng Zikai so time-consuming as to make editorial work on *Yangliu* impossible.

1986

The "print run" of *Yangliu* increased from thirty copies, the normal number until May 1986, to fifty copies from September 1987 onwards, an indication that circulation has increased.\(^{32}\)

Four new members were accepted into the Feng Zikai Research Society during this year:

Lu Guwei (b. 1932, male), China News Agency, Shanghai Branch;
Feng Gui (b. 1921, female), curator of Yuanyuan Hall, Shimen Township, Tongxiang County, Zhejiang;
Ding Xiujuan (b. 1954, female), a teacher at Shanghai Number Six Teachers' College Primary School;\(^{33}\)
Zhang Wei (b. 1956, male), librarian in the Xujiahui District Library, Shanghai.\(^{34}\)

1987

Starting in March, *Yangliu* began to print rare articles, speeches and essays by Feng Zikai, mostly dating from after 1949. In this same month the Feng Zikai Research Society accepted two new members:

Zhu Nantian.\(^{35}\)

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\(^{31}\) *Yangliu*, No. 8, 1985: 7-9; Chen Xing, *Xiaosa fengshen*, p. 159. Zhu Youlan, Feng's friend and the calligrapher for two of the *Husheng huaji* series in, "Feng Zikai and his *Husheng huaji*", p. 29, records that upon arriving in Shanghai from Singapore Guangqia dined with him at the Overseas Chinese Hotel. During the meal the monk said he had been offered large amounts of money by Buddhists in Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, but he had declined all these offers in favour of presenting the original manuscripts of the six books for preservation by the State. One can only hope that his well-meaning intentions are not betrayed at some future date.\(^{32}\)


\(^{34}\) *Yangliu*, No. 14, 1986: 12, p. 10.

\(^{35}\) Apart from his being a friend of Feng's and a poet in the traditional style, I have no other information on Zhu.
Pan Songde (b. 1941, male), assistant research worker, Modern Chinese Literature Research Institute, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. 36

Also in March, the editors of Yangliu reported that Feng Zikai zhuan had been published in Taipei by the Lanting shudian. 37

In April, after further construction at Yuanyuan Hall in Shimen, the original entrance to the building has been rebuilt completing the final stage of work on the project. 38

Also in April, Ermu yixin, a selection of Feng's essays on the theme of travel with illustrations edited by Feng Yiyin, Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 98 pages. Xiaosa fengshen, Chen Xing's first collection of essays on Feng Zikai written between 1983 and 1985 was also published in April, Guilin: Lijiang chubanshe, 238 pages. The calligraphy for the cover was done by Qian Juntao, Feng's student.

During May-June, the Venerable Guangqia visited China again, this time travelling to Shimen, Shanghai, Guilin, Peking and Tianjin as well as the Buddhist sacred sites on Mount Emei and Leshan in Sichuan. While in Tianjin he saw, Li Duan, Dharma Master Hongyi's son, and presented him with the gold watch his father had given away when he became a monk. 39

September, it was reported in Yangliu that Christoph Harbsmeier's The Cartoonist Feng Zikai had been translated into Chinese by Ms. Zhang Yi of Shenyang Teachers' College (see below), and starting in October the essays that make up the second volume of Chen Xing's Xiaosa fengshen began to appear in the county paper Jiaxingbao. 40

The book Feng Zikai, included in the series "Xiandai meishujia hualun, zuopin, shengping", edited by Feng Yiyin, was published in Shanghai by the Xuelin chubanshe, 289 pages, with eight colour plates and 135 black and white illustrations. "Mr Zikai" an essay by Hua Junwu was used in stead of a preface.

36 Yangliu, No. 15, 1987: 3, p. 19. Pan is the author of one particularly noteworthy article on Feng, "Feng Zikai's War of Resistance Song Lyrics" (Feng Zikaide Kangri geci), Kangzhan wenyi yanjiu, 1982: 3, pp. 12-13. Pan was writing during a new stage in the CPC's attempt to purge "pornographic music" (huangse yinyue) in 1981-1982, and he uses Feng's wartime song lyrics to prove the artist took a remarkably early stand against "porn music" and the "sounds of defeat" (wangguo zhi yin). Shortly after Pan's article a book of denunciations of contemporary "porn music" was published in Peking, see Zenyang jianbie huangse yinyue, edited by Renmin yinyue, Peking: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1982, 60 pages. It is interesting that in 1988 Pan dropped his ideologically correct stance and proposed that a school of "Feng studies" be established in China.
37 Yangliu, No. 16, 1987: 6, p. 3.
38 Yangliu, No. 17, 1987: 9, p. 3.
39 Yangliu, No. 17, 1987: 9, p. 3.
although Feng Yiyin includes a biography of Feng and an extensive list of his publications.

An Appreciation of the Essays of Xia Mianzun and Feng Zikai (Xia Mianzun Feng Zikai zuopin xinshang), by Huang Jihua, Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987, 194 pages. This selection of essays by the two writers with a rather fanciful analysis after each work was penned by an assistant professor from Huazhong Teachers' University (see below).

At the suggestion of Venerable Guangqia, the Lianhe zaobao newspaper of Singapore sponsored a major retrospective exhibition of Feng Zikai's paintings and calligraphy from 3-8 December. The most active custodian of Feng Zikai's literary and artistic heritage Feng Yiyin flew to Singapore to take part in the exhibition. Among the visitors to the exhibition who wrote about the event was the historian Chow Tse-tsung who had met Feng in Chongqing in 1943 and received from the artist a painting along with a calligraphic inscription of one of Chow's own poems.

Sometime during the year the Dali Match Factory in Guizhou Province produced a series of twenty-four matchbox covers using Feng Zikai's colour landscape paintings. The first cover used a picture of Feng Zikai, the other twenty-three are reproduced from Zikai fengjing huaji, edited by Bi Keguan, Peking: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1983. I have only been able to obtain a photocopy of these covers. Chen Xing, editor of Yangliu and an enthusiastic popularizer of Feng's work, suggested in a short article on the subject that Feng's manhua were also ideal for use on stamps, book marks and greeting cards, and he appealed to "the relevant authorities" to consider exploiting the artist's work in this way. 1988

Feng Zikai's Collected manhua of Children (Feng Zikai ertong manhua), selected and introduced by Feng Yiyin, was published by the Sichuan shaonian ertong chubanshe in Chengdu, 98 pages. It contained a number of pictures previously seen only in journals.

July, an entry was devoted to Feng Zikai's translation work in the Dictionary of Chinese Translators, edited by Lin Hui et al published this month. In

41 Yangliu, No. 17, 1987: 9, p. 3. Two glossy brochures of Feng's paintings with various commemorative essays, one in Chinese and English, were published for the occasion, and many of the newspaper reports on the exhibition were collected and photocopied for members of the society.
42 Zhou Cezong, "A Meeting of Minds -- Memories of Feng Zikai" (Yiqi xiangfeng -- nian Feng Zikai), Lianhe zaobao, 10 December, 1987.
43 Chen Xing has written about the matchboxes in "Feng Zikai manhua on Matchboxes" (Huohuashangde Feng Zikai manhua), Jiaxingbao, 6 March, 1988.
44 "Feng Zikai manhua on Matchboxes", ibid.
it a short biography of Feng was provide with a partial list of Feng's translations and a summary of Feng's "translation theory".45

In August, Feng Huazhan published an essay in the Hong Kong monthly Mingbao on the subject of his father's essay writing and translations during the Cultural Revolution in which he made a veiled criticism of his siblings for avoiding contact with their father after he was denounced.46

Late in the year The Calligraphy of Feng Zikai (Feng Zikai shufa), a large volume edited by Feng Yiyan, was published by Sichuan meishu chubanshe in Chendu. The book was produced with traditional thread binding, with a listed price of 35 RMB.

In December, the Feng Zikai Research Society celebrated Feng Zikai's 90th birthday at Tongxiang County, Zhejiang.47 Pan Songde, one of the researchers in the group, proposed in a speech at the commemorative meeting that a school of "Feng Studies" (Fengxue) be established in imitation of "Dream of the Red Chamber Studies" (Hongxue) which enjoys high-level official patronage in China.48 It was also reported at the meeting that members of the society had over the last four years that have published or produced 360 "products" (chengguo).

Three new members were welcomed to the Feng Zikai Research Society in December 1988:

Huang Jihua (b. 1930, male), assistant professor, Department of Chinese, Huazhong Teachers' University, Wuchang, Hubei;
Shen Jisheng (b. 1922, male), member of the editorial committee of Hongyi dashi quanj (forthcoming), Fuzhou, Fujian;
Zhang Yi (b. 1964, female), tutor, Foreign Languages Department, Shenyang Teachers' College, Shenyang, Liaoning.49

Yangliu was distributing eighty copies per issue by the end of 1988.50

In the 20 December issue of Hangzhou ribao, an article by Jue Weihang appeared entitled "The Chen Xing I Know" (Wo suo renshide Chen Xing), something of an indication that members of the Feng Zikai Research Society, even serious scholars and writers like Chen Xing, are making a name for themselves on

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46 Feng Huazhan, "Feng Zikai's Writings in his Last Years" (Feng Zikai zuihou jiniande zhushu huodong), Mingbao, 1988: 8, pp. 75-76.
48 "I Propose Establishing Feng Zikai Studies" (Jianyi chuangli yimen Feng Zikaixue), Pan Songde, Yangliu, No. 22, 1988: 12, pp. 3-4.
the basis of Feng Zikai's own fame.\textsuperscript{51} It is a common enough phenomenon, but "fame by association" has taken on new and important dimensions in China over the past decade.

\textbf{1989}

4 January, Chen Xing's "novel", \textit{The Legend of Li Shutong and Feng Zikai -- A World of Buddhism and Art (\textit{Fotian yihai -- Li Shutong yu Feng Zikai chuanqi})} -- a semi-fictional account of Feng and Li Shutong's relationship -- started being serialized in \textit{Renmin ribao} (overseas edition). In February, Chen began revising this work for publication in book form.\textsuperscript{52}

February, Feng Huazhan published an article on Feng Zikai's poetry in the monthly \textit{Mingbao}.\textsuperscript{53} This is the latest in a series of similar essays by Huazhan on this subject.

Feng's old friend from his Sichuan days, Xia Zongyu, one-time journalist for the \textit{Shangwu ribao} and a former editor in the \textit{Renmin ribao}, prepared a deluxe coffee-table volume of Feng's work, \textit{Feng Zikai yizuo}, mostly his paintings but with a small selection of essays and reminiscences by friends (Ye Shengtao, Zheng Zhenduo, Zhu Ziqing, Zhu Guangqian and Ba Jin) for publication in February 1989. This would be the second of three deluxe editions Xia has edited for the Peking Huaxia publishers, the first being \textit{Hongyi dashi yimo}, (Peking, 1988). The projected third volume was to be of Ma Yifu's calligraphy (title unknown; approximate publication date 1990). It was envisaged that the three volumes would eventually be sold as a set.

Xia was also planning a facsimile reprint of Yu Pingbo's \textit{Yi} with illustrations by Feng Zikai to appear in 1989. The book will be a deluxe edition done in thread binding with a protective outer casing.

\textit{Feng Zikai wenji}, in a projected seven sections (\textit{juan}) was announced for publication over the next few years. The publication of the section "Artistic Writings" (\textit{Yishujuan}) in four volumes was fixed for 1989 as one of the books being produced to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The editors-in-chief of what will be the most important, and

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Yangliu}, No. 22, 1988: 12, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{52} Based on information provided by Chen Xing in a letter to the writer dated 19 January, 1989; see Chapter One, note 114. Chen included in this letter a name card he designed for himself which features a painting by Feng Zikai reproduced in navy blue with Chen's name and titles, including "Member of the Feng Zikai Research Society, China", printed on the right-hand side of the card in non-simplified Chinese characters.
\textsuperscript{53} Feng Huazhan, "Feng Zikai and Poetry" (Feng Zikai yu shici), \textit{Mingbao}, 1989: 2, pp. 108-109.
hopefully the most authoritative, collection of Feng's works available are Feng's daughters Feng Chenbao (Ah Bao) and Feng Yiyin.

_Feng Zikai yanjiu ziliao_, edited by Feng Huazhan and Yin Qi for the Peking Academy of Social Sciences as a volume in the series "Zhongguo xiandai zuojia zuopin yanjiu ziliao congshu", which will contain essays by Feng not available in other collections, critiques of his work, a list of publications and a new and enlarged chronology of his life. This should be an authoritative work and it is expected to appear in 1989 from the Ningxia renmin chubanshe.

5: Feng Zikai Overseas

Apart from Yoshikawa Kôjirô's wartime translation of Feng's essays into Japanese, the only other similar work has been Brenda Foster's translation of the artist's twelve children's stories undertaken as part of a thesis for a Master's degree in the Department of Asian Languages at Washington University in 1974 under the direction of Wang Ching-hsien (Yang Mu, editor of the four-volume _Feng Zikai wenxuan_).54

The only major published work dealing with Feng Zikai and his art that I know of in a foreign language is Christoph Harbsmeier's handsomely produced _The Cartoonist Feng Zikai: Social Realism with a Buddhist Face_. It would appear that Harbsmeier took a leaf from Lo Wai-luen's book, _Feng Zikai manhua xuanyi_ to be precise, for his work features short and often unconvincing commentaries on the paintings selected. One of the most appealing and unique elements of Feng's wenren-style of modern art is that, apart from a translation of his title or a paraphrasing of the poetic inscription, his work does not require any commentary. Feng's art is self-explanatory, even for non-Chinese readers.

In March 1985, Teresa Chi-Ching Sun, a scholar resident in California, USA, presented a paper entitled "A Comparative Study of Two Artists, Feng Zikai and Norman Rockwell" at the Thirty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Inc. Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain a copy of Ms. Sun's paper despite efforts to contact her.

In 1986, the American-based scholar Hung Shuen-shuen submitted an M.A. thesis at Michigan State University entitled _Feng Tzu-k'ai: His Art and Works_, fifty-seven pages in length.55

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54 Yang mentions this in _Feng Zikai wenxuan_, Vol. III, p. 231. Apart from her translations, Foster did an analysis of the stories and made a study of the range of children's literature in 20th Century China. I have not been able to consult her work.

55 This thesis provides a short although not particularly penetrating review of some of the salient aspects of Feng's art.
Feng is fleetingly mentioned in histories of Chinese literature and modern art, and Jonathan Spence’s *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980*, uses “Listening” (Ting), one of Feng’s earliest pictures, as an illustration opposite the title page.\(^5^6\)

The largest private collection of Feng’s works outside of China which I have been able to see belongs to Y. S. Chan, the librarian in charge of the Asian Studies Collection, Menzies Library, the Australian National University. It consists of fifteen paintings, mostly mounted on scrolls in traditional style and generally dated from before 1949. He acquired them through art dealers in Hong Kong. Naturally, Guangqia has a far larger collection of works sent to him by Feng before his death, many of which he has published in *Zikai manhua ji qi shiyou momiao*. By the early 1980s there were rumours in Hong Kong that fake Feng Zikai paintings were being sold through dealers in Fujian, and in 1987 Feng Yiyin made a public statement on forgeries. She is herself a practised imitator of both the painting and calligraphic styles of her father.\(^5^7\)


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**ARTICLES:**


Glossary

[This glossary contains key Chinese and Japanese terms, names and titles referred to in the text]

1: Chinese Names: People and Places

Ah Bao (Feng Chenbao)
Ah Nan
Ba Jin
Bada Shanren
Bai Juyi
Baima Lake, Shangyu
Bao Huihe
Baoding
Bi Keguan
Bing Xin
Bo Yi, Shu Qi
Cai Yuanpei
Cao Juren
Cen Shen
Chen Chunlan
Chen Lianzhen
Chen Sanli (Sanyuan)
Chen Shizeng (Hengque, Xiudaoren)
Chen Wangdao
Chen Xing
Chen Yinque
Chengnan wenshe
Hu Feng
Hu Rongrong
Hu Shi
Hu Yuzhi
Huang Binhong
Huang Hanqiu
Huang Mao
Huang Wennong
Huang Yanpei
Huang Yuanlin
Huang Zongyang
Huizong
Hupao Temple
Jiang Baishi
Jiang Danshu
Jiang Jianfei
Jiangwan
Jiao Bingzhen
Jiaxing
Jin Nong (Dongxin)
Jing Hengyi (Ziyuan)
Jinguyuan
Jinhua County
Jiujiang
Judge Bao
Judge Shi
Kaiming shudian
Kang Youwei
Kangxi
Kuang Husheng
Kucha’an
Lao She
Li da xuehui
Li da xueyuan
Li da zhongxue
Li Houzhu (Li Yu)
Li Kangxian
Li Qingzhao
Li Shutong
Li Yu (Liweng)
Li Yuanjing
Li Zehou
Li Zhi
Liang Qichao
Liang Shuming
Libailupai
Lin Pu
Lin Shu
Lin xi kanwu
Lin Yutang
Ling Shuhua
Lingnanpai
Liu Liuzhou (Liu Zongyuan)
Liu Shuqin
Liu Tongguang
Liu Xunyu
Liu Yong
Liu Yuhua
Liu Yuxi
Liu Zhiping
Liu Zongzhou
Lü Sibai
Lu Xun
Lüzong
Ma Yifu (Yifo)
Mad Monk Ji
Manhuahui
Mao Dun
Mengzi
Ming Tsuen (Lo Wai-luen, Xiaosi)
Nanjing gaodeng shifan
Nanyang gongxuexiao
Ni Yide
Ni Zan
Ouyang Jingwu
Ouyang Xiu
Pan Tianshou
Peng Geng
Pujiu Temple
Qi Baishi
Qian Mu
Qin Zuyong
Qiu Ying (Shizhou)
Ren Bonian
Rou Shi
Shanghai shuhua gonghui
Shanghaipai
Shangyu
Shapingba
Shen Benqian
Shen Bochen
Shenbao
Shi Chong
Shimenwan sishu
Shimenwan
Shitao
Shu Guohua
Songjiang núzi zhongxue
Su Causeway
Su Shi (Dongpo)
Sun Fuxi
Taixu
Tan Sitong
Tangqi (in Jinhua, Zhejiang)
Tao Kangde
Tao Yuanming
Taohuayuan
Tongxiang
Tongyin huahui
Wang Dunging
Wang Gai
Wang Guowei
Wang Renshu (Ba Ren)
Wang Wei
Wang Xingxian
Wang Zhimei
Wei Fengjiang
Wei Yingwu
Wen Zhengming
Wenchang
Wenxue yanjiuhui
Wenzhou
WuHufan
WuMengfei
Wuyouyuan
XiaMianzun
Xiaoyangliuwu
Xie
Xie He
Xie Wuyi
Xilingyinshe
Xintianyuan
Xixi
xiaoxuetang
Xu Beihong
Xu Dishan
Xu Limin
Xu Qinwen
Xu Liumin
Xu Dushan
Xu Beihong
Xidu Xiaoxuecang
Xinliuyuan
Xinlingyinshe
Xie Wuyi
Xie He
Xiaoyangliuwu
Xia Mianzun
Wuyouyuan
Wu Mengde
Wu Huyuan
Wenzhon
Wenxue yanjiuhui
Wenchang
Wen Zhengming
Wen Yingwu
Wei Fengjiang
叶千雨
叶盛涛
婴行
涿州，漠州
孟剑
伯平
东道
希寿
寿平（南田）
祝寿
姚（浙江）
曾鲸
曾谷
曾衍（七道士）
曾子
曾瞻（豊華瞻）
张敬
张珏
张君
张立
炎翼
张戴（横渠）
张袒
赵景
招贤
浙江
2: Chinese Book, Magazine and Article Titles

Baimahu zhi dong
Beijing jianpu
Boli jianzhu
Chule zhongxuexiao yihou
Chunjuezhai lunhua
Ci Yuanyuantang
Cong haizi dedaode qishi
Daocaoren
Dongfang zashi
Dongxi wenhua jiqi zhexue
Dongxin xiansheng zahua tiji
Duhui zhi yin

白馬湖之冬
北京建築
玻璃建築
出了中學以後
春覺齋論畫
辭緣緣堂
從孩子得到的啓示
稻草人
東方雜誌
東方文化及其哲學
冬心先生雜畫題記
都會之音
Jiaoyu
Jieyu manhua
Jieziyuan huapu
Jingyan
Kaiming yinyue jiaoben
Kan deng
Kexue yu renshengguan
Laozhe zige
Linquan gaozhi
Lunyu
Luotuocao
Manhuade miaofa
Mei yu tongqing
Meishu yu shenghuo
Meiyu
Mingxinguo
Nali zou?
Naozhai
Nongcun sanbuqu
Pingwu
Qianjiashi
Qingchen
Renjian cihua
Renjianxiang
Renpu
Renshengguande kexue
Rezhong xie gao
Rongzhai suibi
Sanzijing
Xian
Xiandai yishu shier jiang
Xiangqing ouji
Xiaodoupeng
Xiaoshuo yuebao
Xihu chuan
Xihu mengxun.
Xinshaonian
Xinwenxuede yaoqiu
Xinwenxuede yuanliu
Xixiangji
Xueshengxiang
Yanghua yanjiuhui
Yasuiqian
Yi
Yiban
Yijing
Yinyu
Yishu bineng jianguo
Yishu gailun
Yishu mantan
Yishu quwei
Youyou huaji
Yuanyuantang suibi
Yuanyuantang zaibi
Yunni
Zaijia lujiao zhi kaishi
3: Chinese Terms and Expressions

aide jiaoyu
aimei zhi xin
babuzhuyi
benxin
bianhua
biaoxian
bie you tiandi fei renjian
bifa qiyun
bifa
bimo qingqu
bin
bu qiu xingsi
bu wei wayi zhi shi,
   he yi qian youya zhi sheng
bu wei wayi zhi shi

愛的教育
愛美之心
八不主義
本心
變化
表現
別有天地非人間
筆法
氣韻
筆墨
情趣
不求形似
不為無益之事，何以遣有涯之生
不為無益之事
buxiu zhi zuo
buzhong buxide
caisan
cao cao ru bu jingyi
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daominjian qu
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dazhong wenyi
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4: Titles of Paintings and Poems, and Lines from Poems

Anxiang
Beixiesheng de shihou

Bingche
Chuanle babade yishang

Chunjiang shuineuan ya xian zhi

Cui fu xingren shou

Duhui zhi chun

Dushi zhi qiu

Guyue

Jianglou ganjiu

Jiao'er zhen ming bo,

chubu ji qiqu

Jinye guren lai bu lai,

jiao ren li jin wutong ying

Lian juan xifeng ren bi huanghua shou

Luori fangchuan hao

Mouzhong jiaoyu

Nü laibin -- Ningbo nüzi shifan

Ouzuoli shi Shangshan weng

Qianniu zhinü xing

Qianqiu sui

Qingtai menwai

Qishi san

Qixi

Ren san hou, yi gou xinyue tian ru shui

San Nianniang

Shengxueji

暗香
被寫生的時候
病車
穿了爸爸的衣裳
春江水暖鴨先知
翠緞行行人首
都會之春
都市之秋
鼓樂
江樓威，薦
嬌兒真命薄
初學
今夜故人來不來
教人立盡梧桐影
簾捲西風人比黃花瘦
落日放船好
某種教育
女來賓，寧波女子師範
偶坐席，商山翁
牽牛織女星
千秋歲
清秦門外
乞食三
七夕
大散後，一鈎新月天如水
三娘娘
升學機
Shuying
Tong lai wan yue ren hezai?
Wokan qian nü zhinü xing
Wu-sa zhi ge
Wuyan du shang xilou yue ru gou
Xiangkou
Xiaofeng canyue
Xingjun jiuri si Chang'an guyuan
Yan gui ren bu gui
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Yijiang chunshui xiang dong liu
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月上柳梢頭
月光如水，水如天
責子
最初的朋友
醉花陰
5: Japanese Names and Terms

Atarashikimura

Bunhōdō

bunmei kaika

Chūjū jimbutsu giga

e de egaita zuihitsu

Edo

Ei Ichō

Fukuzawa Yukichi

giga

Hokusai manga

Hōnen manga

Imaizumi Ippyō

ji ji manga

ji ji mangen

Jijishimpō

Kanahara Shōga

karikachyua

Katsushika Hokusai

Kitao Sei'en

Kitazawa Rakuten

Kunō no shōchō

kurasumēto

Kuriyagawa Hakuson

Kuroda Hōshin

kyōga

Manga hyakujo

manga
Takehisa Yumeji
Tanizaki Junichirō
Toba Kakuyū
toba-e
Tōkaidō
toko no ma
Uchiyama Kanzō
Ueda Bin
Ueno bijutsu senmon gakkō
Ukiyoe manga
Waseda jitsugyō gakkō
yōga
Yōga kenkyūkai
Yoshikawa Kōjiro
Zōge no tō o idete
List of Illustrations

(This list provides a cross reference to the text of this thesis, the appended illustrations with their titles and their sources. 1:1 means Chapter One, Illustration One. The page numbers refer to the text of the thesis. Illustrations are indicated in the body of the thesis in square brackets.)

Sources:

AJ Aide jiaoyu, Xia Mianzun
BJFST Beijing fengsatu, Chen Shizeng
BJP Beijing jianpu, Zheng Zhenduo, Lu Xun
BMHX Bi Keguan manhua xuan, Bi Keguan
CFTZK The Cartoonist Feng Zikai, Christoph Harbsmeier
CGSZ Chûgoku sôgo zuroku, Suzuki Kei
CSH Chinese Satire and Humour, Hua Junwu
CXSH Chexiang shehui, Feng Zikai
DSYM Hongyi dashi yimo, Xia Zongyu
EMYX Ermu yixin, Feng Zikai
Feaver When we were young, William Feaver
FJH Zikai fengjinghua ji, Feng Zikai
HHYWX Huihua yu wenxue, Feng Zikai
HSHJ Husheng huaji, Feng Zikai
HSHJ Husheng huaji, Feng Zikai
HYFS Hongyi fashi, Chinese Buddhist Association
JR Jiaoshi riji, Feng Zikai
JYMH Jieyu manhua, Feng Zikai
LXJ Xiao chaopian lixianji, Feng Zikai
MHQJ Feng Zikai manhua quanji, Feng Zikai
MHX Feng Zikai manhua xuan, Bi Keguan
MS Meishu, 1980: 2
MSSL Meishu shilun, 1985: 3
MSYJ Meishu yanjiu, 1984: 4
SB Shenbao Ziyoutan, 10.7.1934
SFX Ma Yifu shufa xuan, Anhui Calligraphy Association
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擁護長崔蔡不足多也葬時為銘其墓文稱其儔韓文公評文云雄深雅健似司馬子長崔蔡長子羅池建廟祀文公復作碑辭頌其死而為神云

柳
春江水暖鸭先知

图片显示了一幅画，画中有柳树和水面上的鸭子，背景是春江水暖的景象。
我

3:5
今後的本刊

今後的本刊與諸君相見已有四年了。我們常自覺我們能
力的鈍鈍，且常自覺工作太忙，不能把我們的全力
放到本刊上。這是我們所時時懷念的。自五月出版
後，我們逐漸把這一切故後如初的小燈吹熄了，使我
們得以暫時休息。然而陰霾蔽日的中學，即使我們
不能實踐這個願望，甚至有時使我們不能不更為努力

文字週報

第二十七期

版

百四十三

記在清宮所見未完稿的詩書

胡鶴生

短話

西語

C.K.
趣味豐富的秋的天象

匡互生

在四季的天象中，最有意思的就是秋季的天象，秋季的天象是古人的神話所傳說中所含的天文現象，如嫦娥奔月、牛女渡河等，這些神話在秋季的天象中最後以實例的形式出現。

不但神話或傳說為是從來詩歌中所含的天文現象，七月底的天象現象，如維南有箕星不可以揚錦北有斗不可以挹酒漿等。
不
死

孫福熙

我自幼很愛養小動物。南瓜棚下養來的絡繹娘；在小竹籠中給他南瓜花；碧綠的靜在橙黃的花上用他口旁的四隻小腳——我以前這樣稱他們的。——搬動咬下來的花的碎片放入口中，在河埠頭魚蝦船中買物的時候我總疑神留意有什麼方法可以得到一隻小蝦。一條小魚最愛是有花紋的小魚，叫得花裏的一類我取了來養在碗中，盆中，看小魚的尾巴。在花的錦繡裡，不知麻雀的麻和養的魚，網。金鈴子等，我都愛護和樂養的。然而他們都要死的。織娘與小麻雀常被貓吃去。小魚們常常不知是什麼緣故的浮在水面上的肚子向上了。蟋蟀金鈴子也是一樣每次養着他們總是。
長 阪

他緩緩來見才拿在手中的一本陶集後折了倒進枕畔午飯時換來的

山的皺褶照得非常清澈遠去好像移近了一些新綠飛在新綠中帶着些異味

間見桌上並列地丟着兩個書包知道兩女兒已從小學散學回來了屋內寂靜

無聲的針線籠裡鬆鬆地開放著快做好的小孩單衣針子帶了線斜定在紙

抹抹預備醞釀的瓶醋似才從河埠洗滌了來的

「丙」

「尊」

5:2
障礙地露出孩子原是的
髮絲，豎起耳垂的

T.H.
穿了爸爸的衣服
寒假回老家
要，弟去看見不認識了。

5:20
不為自己求安
不為眾生求樂
但願眾生得離苦
朗聲告誡一言
亭言
軒雨聽
亭與市
拿来即用，一开即用，非常适合初学者的使用。
亲朋聚会处
有生知者情，有情即有情。故赴非者非情，乃是
人亦在能；去者常人，人之生存，知也。晚近世衰废
生话三隅，而丧失其生人之常情。故是无能之能，
为者为而能者，长绝之者为，为能者家，里。其艺
何等而能，而能至，老命末起。出师之深，辞之士
家之位，好雅而高，不等，故人与之，福善，改
言而乖，与足相待。其生人之常情，是事，皆可自
在艺，而同人皆得为。而艺家
也。人间书画之文，皆是此序，以题生素。好古
双十节自三日便至，得在杭州田家圃别寓。
中國青年

十

月

改

命

大

立

國

國

民

年

月

日

日

7:3
训育主任的頭
兩種吸煙
此地不准小便
今夜故人来未至
故人画槐树图

8:5
人散後一钩新月天如水