

Chapter Six

Beiping (1936-1948): working life in the former capital and Japanese occupation

The Palace Museum

In late 1935, Huang Binhong was engaged by the Capital District Court (*Shoudu difang fayuan* 首都地方法院) in Nanjing, the capital of Republican China, to examine the authenticity of artworks in the collection of the Palace Museum (*Gugong bowuyuan* 故宫博物院) in Beiping. As we have noted previously, the contract related to a long-running and highly politicised legal case that had been brought against the museum director, Yi Peiji, who was alleged to have misappropriated artworks and replaced them with fakes. The court therefore insisted that the collection be examined to identify authentic and fake calligraphy and paintings to gather evidence to prosecute the director.¹ Huang Binhong's prominence as an art historian and connoisseur, through his involvement with publications such as *A Collectanea of the Arts* and *The Glories of Cathay*, as well as his connection to influential figures, such as Ye Gongzhuo, who occupied a position of power and influence within the Nationalist government, were instrumental in his being appointed to this position. The fact that much of the collection had been transported to Shanghai, where Huang was resident, and that he was not from Beiping,

¹ The contract document is dated 1935. According to Wang Zhongxiu the contract date was 11 December 1935. See Wang Zhongxiu, "Huang Binhong shi kao zhi shi, shang," *Rongbaozhai gujin yishu bolan 5* (2002), p.236. The conditions of the job are specified on the reverse of the contract: "1. To authenticate the entire group of calligraphy and paintings; 2. The duration is tentatively set at six months. Depending on the amount of work required, this period can be extended or shortened; 3. The fee for authentication is fixed at no more than five hundred *yuan* per month per person; 4. Authentication must be carried out in accordance with legal procedures involved in a lawsuit as stated in article 189 [of the civil code of the Republic of China]; 5. Produce a written report; 6. The hours for authentication each day will be governed by the opening hours of the Central Bank; 7. At the completion of the period of authentication a report must be submitted. If the report has not been completed and more work is required, there will be no further payment" (ZPM 03993).

were also likely to have been factors that worked in his favour.² The job provided a good salary of 500 *yuan* per month and he would have appreciated the opportunity to view works of art in the former imperial collection.³ But he would also have been aware of the politicised nature of the high-profile case against Yi Peiji.⁴

The Palace Museum had been established ten years earlier in the grounds of the Forbidden City, its creation a direct consequence of the fall of the Qing dynasty. After the “last Emperor,” Aisin Gioro Puyi (愛新覺羅溥儀, 1906-1967) was forced to leave the palace on 5 November 1924, the government moved quickly to open the historic home of the Qing dynastic rulers to the public. The State Council (*Guowuyuan* 國務院) set up the Committee to Rehabilitate the Palace (*Qing shi shanhou weiyuanhui* 清室善后委員會) to inventory the buildings and contents. Its five-volume report was published March 1925, detailing what would become the museum’s collection.⁵ On 10 October 1925, the Palace Museum was opened to the public for the first time. Palaces, once the privileged domain of the imperial family, and repository of treasures amassed by successive emperors, were transformed into a public institution. For the new regime, it was symbolic of a new order.

The museum established Committees of Reference to assess the objects. The Committee of Reference of the Hall of Antiquities (*Guwuguan zhuanmen weiyuanhui* 古物館專門委員會) comprised Chinese experts and museum staff, as well as invited specialists including the Canadian-American Dr John Calvin Ferguson, a long-term resident in China and a well-

² Zhu Jiajin, interview with the author, Palace Museum, Beijing, 9 November 2001.

³ The paintings that Huang and others examined and found to be authentic and unproblematic were shipped to Taiwan by the Nationalist government in 1949. Paintings that were questioned were sealed in crates and remained on the mainland. It was not until 1949 that the crates were opened. In subsequent authentication projects conducted by the museum, a number of the paintings that Huang had questioned are now believed to be genuine. Notable among these are Song Huizong’s “*Ting qin tu*” and Ma Lin’s “*Ceng die bing xiao tu*”. Zhu Jiajin, interview with the author, Palace Museum, Beijing, 9 November 2001. See also Nei Zhiliang, *Dianshou gugong guobao qishinian* (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2004), p.33; Yang Renkai, *Guo bao chen fu lu: Gugong sanshi shuhua jianwen kaolue* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1991), p.59. The question of Huang Binhong’s expertise in authentication and later scholar’s assessments of his judgements awaits detailed examination and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁴ Yi Peiji was never convicted and died in 1937.

⁵ Qing shi shanhou weiyuan hui, *Gugong wupin diancha baogao*, 5 volumes (Beiping: Gugong bowuyuan, 1925).

respected collector and connoisseur of Chinese art.⁶ Yi Peiji was appointed Director of the Palace Museum by the Nationalist government in February 1929, although he had been instructed to take responsibility in June of the preceding year.⁷ Yi, who was from Hunan, had previously served as a senior government official in his home province, and in 1922 he worked as an advisor to Sun Yat-sen, Grand Marshall of the People's Republic of China government in Guangdong (*Zhonghua guomin zhengfu*) and President of the Nationalist Party.⁸

On 13 November 1932, newspapers in Beijing reported that Yi Peiji had been accused of misappropriating antiquities and precious gems from the Palace Museum.⁹ The report was carried by the national and international press and became a major news story.¹⁰ At the time Huang Binhong was in Chengdu, but given his close interest in and involvement with cultural matters, he would no doubt have been aware of the incident.

In February 1934, the court began to investigate the case brought against Yi Peiji. In July of that year Yi resigned as museum director.¹¹ Huang Binhong was one of a number of individuals who were appointed by the court to authenticate works of art in the museum collection. The inspections began in Shanghai, where much of the collection had been transported during 1933 as a precaution against the threat of war with Japan.¹² Shanghai had plentiful storage and the objects could stay there until a new branch museum and purpose-built storage facility was constructed in the new capital, Nanjing.¹³ The inspections began in February

⁶ Thomas Lawton, *A Time of Transition: Two Collectors of Chinese Art*, pp.93-95. Lawton says Ferguson was appointed in 1927. See also Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshi nian zhi jingguo*, p.95.

⁷ Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshi nian zhi jingguo*, pp.298-299.

⁸ In 1928, Yi Peiji was appointed Minister of Agriculture and Mining and President of the National Labour University in Shanghai. The National Labour University was established by the Ministry of Education in 1927, the result of a conscious government restructure of the radical Shanghai University. Interestingly, Yi was removed from the Presidency in 1930, it seems for having effectively procured funds for the university from the Ministry of Agriculture, bypassing and creating ill-feeling with the Ministry of Education, which finally closed the university in 1932. See Xiang Si, Han Bu, *Xie yang xia de gongdian, minguo shiqi Gugong wangshi*, (Beijing: Changhong chuban gongsi, 2001), pp.217-218; also Wen-hsin Yeh, *Alienated Academy*, pp.173, 201, 356.

⁹ Xiang Si, Han Bu, *Xie yang xia de gongdian, minguo shiqi Gugong wangshi*, p.218.

¹⁰ Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshi nian zhi jingguo*, p.124.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.300.

¹² 128 crates containing some 9,000 works of calligraphy and painting, the core of the Palace Museum collection, were transported to Shanghai. See Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshi nian zhi jingguo*, pp.101, 108-109.

¹³ The idea to build a branch museum and storage facility in Nanjing was raised in July 1933, decided upon in April 1934 and in April 1935 the site of *Chaotian gong* was chosen. See Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshi nian zhi jingguo*, p.300.

1934 with the jewellery collection. The review of calligraphy, painting and bronzes commenced in late December 1935.¹⁴

In a letter to Xu Chengyao, his old friend from Shexian, Huang Binhong talked about his work in the vault of the Central Bank in Shanghai and the pressure he was under to authenticate a large number of paintings within a six-month period:

Recently, I have been asked by a friend to authenticate paintings [in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing]. Every day I work according to the hours of the bank, which is rather onerous, but I am able to view countless paintings and calligraphy from the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. There are also some pre-Tang works. Every day I record the details of scores of works. It will be hard to complete the task in the six months [allocated]. I make brief notes, check these for errors and put them in order. It is all very unsatisfactory.¹⁵

Huang Binhong's notes of the inspections are concise and to the point.¹⁶ The determination of authenticity is, in most cases, summarised by a single word or phrase, for example authentic (*zhen* 真), forgery (*wei* 偽), old forgery (*jiu wei* 舊偽), appears to be a forgery (*si wei* 似偽), exact copy (*moben* 摹本), recent copy (*jin linben* 近臨本) or a comment such as “not a Song dynasty painting, but painted by an artist during the Ming period.” In the case of questionable works, the assessment was briefly explained, for example:

Number 62 (*Cheng* 233-91). Wang Meng [ca. 1308-1385] hanging scroll depicting a studio on a mountain covered with pine trees. Silk support. Inscription in the upper right corner: “Studio on a mountain covered with pine trees, painted by ‘Xiangguang jushi’ Wang Meng in the eighth month of the ninth year of the Zhizheng reign [1349].” One

¹⁴ According to Wang Zhongxiu, Huang began the inspections on 20 December 1935 and finished this period of inspections on 28 April 1936. Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.371.

¹⁵ Huang Binhong, letter to Xu Chengyao, dated 13 January 1936, *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.146.

¹⁶ The notes are in the collection of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum. To assist with the assessment of the paintings, the Investigation Section of the Capital District Court drew up a standard inventory form that specified the following: artist literary name[s] (*hao*), other names (*fenhao*), title of the calligraphy or painting (*shuhua mingcheng*), artist (*zuozhe*), place of production (*zhi di*), length (*chang*), width (*kuan*), appraisal of collector's seals (*jianshang shoucang yin*), mount (*zhuangbiao*), cyphers (*fuhao*), inscriptions and colophons (*kuanshi tiba*). The majority of the records relating to Huang's inspection of paintings and calligraphy are included in the *Huang Binhong wenji, jiancang bian*, pp.27-577. The two numbers given to each item record the order in which Huang Binhong viewed the works and the original inventory number assigned to the object by the Palace Museum. In creating the record published in the *Huang Binhong wenji*, the editor Wang Zhongxiu has drawn on both Huang's handwritten notes, which are in the collection of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, and the entries in the final report published in 1940 as *Yi Peiji deng ren xinzhuan Gugong guwu an jiangding shu*. See *Huang Binhong wenji, jiancang bian*, p.27. See also R.H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1981), p.396.

seal below the inscription. Paintings made in the ninth year of the Zhizheng reign have seal script inscriptions, the painting is lacking in brush and ink technique and the inscription lacks a quality of naturalness. An old copy [*jiu linben*]. The inscription and the painting are uncharacteristic of the artist [*bulei*]. Forgery [*wei*].¹⁷

In the foreword to his report on the assessment of paintings, Huang defined and distinguished two types of copies, a freehand copy or *linben* 臨本 and a traced copy which was known as *moben*:

Paintings which display brush and ink technique, but which do not pay attention to the composition, are [herein] called *linben*. Paintings that copy the original composition but are lacking in technique are called *moben*, or exact copies.¹⁸

Connoisseurship and the appraisal of Chinese paintings is complex and fraught with difficulty. The judgements of different connoisseurs over time have and continue to be contested and re-assessed.¹⁹ Historically, paintings were copied, as part of a course of study, in order to absorb the spirit of ancient masters. As Huang suggested in the quotation above, artists made different types of copies, but for very different reasons. Copies were not necessarily made to deceive the viewer. The existence of copies in the imperial collection was therefore inevitable.

In letters to friends Huang conveys his excitement at viewing the imperial collection—the ultimate art collection for a Chinese connoisseur—and a desire to record information that would further art historical research and stimulate his own artistic practice. The time he had to view each artwork was very limited, but he did all he could to remember the treasures that he saw. In letters to Xu Chengyao, Huang expressed delight in works that had a Shexian provenance:

I have sighted the Orchid handscroll [*Lan juan* 蘭卷] by Zhou Tianqiu [周天球] of the Ming dynasty, which has colophons by seventy-seven people ... More than half of

¹⁷ Huang Binhong wenji, *Jianchang bian*, pp.35-36.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.27.

¹⁹ Judgements are based on a familiarity with art history including published references to the work, familiarity with the artist's work and life and a scrutiny of seals, calligraphy, painting style, age of silk or paper. During the twentieth century connoisseurs such as Wu Hufan and C.C. Wang began to use analytical tools including photography to determine the authenticity of works of art. Huang Binhong was a connoisseur of the old school and relied on his knowledge and the experience of what he had seen and read. For detailed discussions of authenticity see R.H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, pp.368-415; and Judith G. Smith, ed., *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Art: Papers Prepared for an International Symposium Organised by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Conjunction with the Exhibition "The Artist as Collector: Masterpieces of Chinese Painting from the C.C. Wang Family Collection"* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999).

them are from Shexian, and there are poems. There are also poems written by Zha Meihe [查梅壑 Zha Shibiao], but too many to copy. The security there [in the Central Bank] is very strict, and it is not possible to bring in someone else to copy them for me, which is rather dispiriting. I recently viewed a twelve-leaf album by Wu Tiansheng [吳田生], the whole of which was painted in the Xin'an style.²⁰

Looking back on the the experience, he observed:

There were many hundreds of storage cabinets, each with an assigned number. Each cabinet contained two to three hundred objects, but we could only look at a couple of objects in each cabinet, and were unsure whether there were fakes, copies, paintings with imperial inscriptions, or works by Qing-dynasty academy artists among the rest.²¹

In Shanghai, from late December 1935 to 28 April 1936, Huang Binhong had documented and appraised over 2,000 works of art, an average of over twenty works per day.

In Beiping from 1 June to 22 July 1936, he inspected a further 478 paintings in the Palace Museum itself.²² It was Huang Binhong's first visit to the ancient capital. He wrote to his wife:

Beiping has ancient trees and palaces, like no other place. Apart from that there are many scholars and lots of older people. Food and lodging is cheap and there is good public security despite the troubles outside. There is nothing to worry about. In a few days it will be two weeks that I have been working here. It is still not possible to determine how long I will stay.²³

Huang Binhong finally returned to Shanghai on 22 August 1936.²⁴



In September 1936 Huang Binhong was engaged for another three months to examine works stored in Shanghai. There were two groups of people undertaking these inspections,

²⁰ Huang Binhong, letter to Xu Chengyao, dated 13 January [1936], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.146.

²¹ Huang Binhong, letter to Fu Lei, dated 14 December [1943], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, pp.210-211.

²² On 18 May 1936, three weeks after he had finished the court-led inspection in Shanghai, Huang Binhong travelled to Nanjing and then onto Beiping. He travelled with Luo Changming, Huang Yi and Guo Xuchu. See Huang Binhong letter to Song Ruoying, dated 22 May [1936], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.79. From 30 July to 6 August Huang Binhong inspected engravings on metal and stone and other objects. See Huang Binhong nianpu, p.371. See also Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshi nian zhi jingguo*, p.302.

²³ Huang Binhong, letter to Song Ruoying, dated 1 June [1936], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.80.

²⁴ Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.381.

referred to in the final report as Group A and Group B. Huang Binhong, representing Group A, inspected some 945 works of art. It is unclear who was in group B.²⁵

In December of that year the collection that had been stored in Shanghai was transferred to Nanjing, prior to the official opening of the Nanjing branch of the Palace Museum on 1 January 1937.²⁶ The building of a new branch museum in Nanjing was evidence of the Republican government's use of culture to assert its political power and strengthen its base in the new capital. Huang Binhong followed the works of art from Shanghai to Nanjing and from early January appraised a final group of some 1,068 works of art over a three-month period.²⁷

By the end of the fourth and final period of inspection, Huang Binhong had sighted and written appraisals for some 4,636 pieces of calligraphy and paintings from the collection.²⁸ It had taken twelve months, spread over one and a half years, which was double the time initially suggested.

As Huang Binhong neared the conclusion of the court-led inspection work in early 1937, he expressed uncertainty about his future plans in a letter to Chen Zhu. He desired to seek a quiet place of refuge.²⁹ He needed to secure further employment and ensure the financial security of his family. In the early 1920s Huang had retreated to Guichi, Anhui, where the cost of living was lower than Shanghai. But on that occasion his plans were thwarted by a major flood.³⁰ Then, as now, it would appear that he was content to follow the course that was determined for him by fate.

²⁵ The third period of inspection was from 4 September to 3 December 1936. See *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.371.

²⁶ Wang Zhongxiu, "Huang Binhong shi shikao zhishi, shang: Gugong mai hua," *Rongbao zhai: gujin yishu bolan* 5 (2002), p.242.

²⁷ According to Wang Zhongxiu from 4 January to 15 March 1937 Huang inspected 1,029 works in Nanjing, and from 26 March to 1 April 1937 he inspected an additional 39 works. See *Huang Binhong wenji, jianshang bian*, p.574. Nei Zhiliang refers to eleven crates of artworks sealed by the court that had been transported to Nanjing. It would appear that Huang was examining these works at this time. See Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshinian zhi jingguo*, p.155.

²⁸ This does not include part numbers. Van Gulik gives an overview of the two-volume published report *Yi Peiji deng qinzhan Gugong guwu an jiating shu*. He notes that volume one covers 2,145 scrolls checked during the first investigation in Shanghai, 478 scrolls inspected in Beijing and 516 scrolls checked during the second investigation in Shanghai. Volume two includes 1,029 scrolls stored in Nanjing, 327 items also in Nanjing and 109 items in the secretariat of the museum in Nanjing. See R.H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, p.396.

²⁹ Huang Binhong, letter to Chen Zhu, dated 17 March [1937], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.122; Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.393.

³⁰ Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.162, 169.

Huang Binhong's return to Beiping

On 16 April 1937, just two weeks after he had completed the inspection of the final group of paintings and calligraphy in Nanjing, Huang travelled once more to Beiping. Huang's need to secure employment appears to have over-ridden any concerns that he might have had about the likelihood of armed conflict with Japan.³¹ Zhao Qi (趙畸) who became principal of the newly established Beiping National Art College (*Beiping guoli yishu zhuanke xuexiao* 北平國立藝術專科學校) in 1936, appointed Huang, Qi Baishi (齊白石, 1864-1957), Pu Xinyu (溥心畬, 1896-1963) and Wang Kongqi (汪孔祁) professors of Chinese painting.³²

After his arrival in Beiping, Huang Binhong wasted little time before he went out to meet with friends and associates. A diary fragment for the period 16 April to 25 November reveals a heavy schedule of meetings that reflect his determination to cultivate relationships with leaders of the local art world. Soon after his arrival, he met with Zhao Qi, with whom he was to take up employment,³³ and Zhou Zhaoxiang (周肇祥), a former Director of the Society for the Study of Chinese Painting (*Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui* 中國畫學研究會) and the Government Museum (*Guwu chenlieshuo* 古物陳列所).³⁴ He also met with the artists Pu Xinyu, Wang Xuetao (王雪濤, 1903-1982) and Wang Caibai (汪采白, 1887-1940) the son of Wang Fuxi from Shexian, and frequented a number of dealers and antique shops in the arts area

³¹ In an undated letter from Huang Binhong to Huang Jusu, thought to date from 1939, Huang Binhong alluded to his health as a reason for travelling back to the north. See *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.230.

³² Huang Binhong, letter to Xu Chengyao, undated, but post-28 April [1937], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.155. The Beiping National Art College was established by the Department of Education in 1934. In "Jiushi zashu zhi yi," part two, Huang mentions that a friend introduced him for the job as teacher at the "Beijing yishu xuexiao". See *Huang Binhong wenji, zazhu bian*, p.571. It is also worth noting that the classes at the Chinese Painting Research Studio at the Government Museum (*Guwu chenlie suo, Guohua yanjiu shi*) started in May 1937. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.392-393, and Wang Gong, Zhao Xi, Zhao Youci, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi," *Meishu yanjiu* 4 (1988), p.95.

³³ On 4 May Huang went to the academy to finalise formalities regarding his employment, for which he was to receive a fortnightly salary of 134 *yuan*. *Huang Binhong wenji, zazhu bian*, p.531.

³⁴ The Society for the Study of Chinese Painting was established in Beiping in 1920 by Xu Shichang, Jin Cheng and others and was one of the largest and most influential artist organisations in Beiping. Jin Cheng was the first president. After the death of Jin Cheng in 1926 the name of the organisation was changed to the Hu Society (*Hu she*) to commemorate Jin. It ceased in operation in March 1937. The Society for the Study of Chinese Painting and the Hu Society had strong cultural and political connections with Japan. In 1921 the organisation held a members exhibition in Japan. See Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu*, pp.41-42. The Hu Society was responsible for organising two exhibitions of historic Chinese paintings that travelled to Japan in 1928 and 1931, sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See Aida Yuen Yuen, "Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s," pp.86-96.

at Liulichang 琉璃廠, including Guguan ge 古光閣, Chonggu zhai 崇古齋 and Bowen yi 博聞移.³⁵

In his diary, Huang recorded the names of people for whom he painted art works, and the letters he wrote and received. In the months soon after his arrival, he painted a fan for Jin Qian'an 金潛庵, the son of Jin Cheng (金城 King Kungpah, 1878-1926) and Zhou Zhaoxiang, who were artworld rivals, and whose respective roles will be discussed in more detail below.³⁶

He appears to have planned a relatively short stay in Beiping.³⁷ While he was attracted by the cultural and scholarly life of the old northern capital, he was not accustomed to living in Beiping. He was a southerner after all. He had described the atmosphere on his first visit as “lonely and desolate, very different from olden times.”³⁸ (Figure 6.1) That sense was further exacerbated by the outbreak of war.

Japanese occupation and the Beiping National Art College

The Lugou Bridge Incident 蘆溝橋事變 on 7 July 1937 signalled the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War. For Huang Binhong it marked the start of what was to be a ten-year period of “exile” in Beiping. In a diary entry for 10 July, he wrote, “Learnt of the Lugou Bridge Incident”. Two weeks later, he noted “[Wang] Caibai returned to the south three days ago. I had planned to travel with him but was unsuccessful”. In his diary Huang noted repeated efforts to travel south, all frustrated by the fighting and the chaos that had ensued.³⁹

In a letter to Chen Zhu written on 17 August, Huang advised that the city of Beiping was calm, and that his wife and children had arrived safely ten days earlier. He went on to say, “I will have to wait a while before I can determine when I can travel southwards again”.⁴⁰

³⁵ *Huang Binhong wenji, zazhu bian*, pp.529-530.

³⁶ *Huang Binhong wenji, zazhu bian*, pp.534, 536. See also Aida Yuen Yuen, “Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s,” pp.86-96.

³⁷ Huang Binhong, letter to Xu Chengyao, undated, but thought to date from 1937, *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.155.

³⁸ Huang Binhong, letter to Xu Chengyao, undated [1936], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.152.

³⁹ *Huang binhong wenji, zazhu bian*, pp.536-38.

⁴⁰ Huang Binhong, letter to Chen Zhu, dated 17 August [1937], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.120. Huang Binhong's family travelled to Beiping from Shanghai to join Huang on the eve of the outbreak of war. Song Ruoying and her children travelled by boat to Tianjin. In Tianjin they were caught in the bombing raids but were unhurt. Song Ruoying had arranged for the transport of many of their possessions, including Huang's books and art works. Owing to the outbreak of war many crates did not make it to

After the outbreak of war, the principal of the the Beiping National Art College, Zhao Qi, led a group of thirteen teachers and forty-nine students to the interior of China for safety. Huang was among the staff who stayed on in Beiping. In 1937 he was seventy-four years old. Age was no doubt one reason why he did not undertake the taxing journey south to Jiangxi with the other teachers. In a letter to Chen Zhu, dated 8 December [1937], he gives us an indication of the situation:

The Beiping Art College is also moving to Lufu [in Jiangxi]. The situation is very complex and I do not understand the reality beneath the surface. There are over one hundred students who have travelled from various provinces to study in Beiping whose journeys have been blocked. They proposed that I stay as a literature and art tutor. Because I felt the offer was earnest, I will remain here for the time being. In my leisure time I am searching out and compiling materials relating to the Ming “left-over subject” [yimin 逸民] artists, beginning with those from Anhui. For example Hongren, Cheng Muqing [Cheng Sui], Zheng Yisu [Zheng Min], all of whom lived through very difficult times, maintaining an integrity of character unsullied by the events of the day.⁴¹

Why Huang did not return to southern China after the outbreak of the war, unlike so many of his friends and associates, and why he stayed in Beiping throughout the period of Japanese occupation and beyond remains unexplained. He appears to have adopted a detached attitude to what was happening and did not regard his decision to remain as unprincipled. Huang’s position, as stated in the letter to Chen Zhu, reflects the mind of a scholar attuned to tradition, looking back to historical precedent in order to deal with difficulties in the present. Referring to artists of the early Qing period who had lived under alien Manchu occupation, Huang draws a parallel with his own life and times. He had a long view of history and, like other cultural and literary figures who remained in Beiping during the Japanese occupation, he could regard the fact that he was there at that time as his fate, an inevitable reality but one that would pass. At the time he was also supporting a family—his wife, daughter, son and daughter-in-law.⁴²

Beiping and were sent back to Shanghai. It was only after great effort and trouble that the crates were later shipped back to Beiping. Many items were lost or stolen in the chaos of war. See the reminiscence by Huang Binhong’s son Huang Yingning, “Wangshi lili yi fuqin,” in *Mo hao yan yun: Huang Binhong yanjiu lunwen ji* (Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 1989), pp.159-160.

⁴¹ Huang Binhong, letter to Chen Zhu, 8 December [1937], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.126.

⁴² Huang Binhong, “Jiushi zashu zhi er,” part five, in *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.574.

The Japanese occupying forces established an education department and on 5 May 1938 the Beiping National Art College was advised that teaching could continue. Wang Shizhi 王之 was appointed principal and Huang Binhong, Yu Fei'an (于非闇, 1889-1959), Yan Bolong 顏伯龍, Jiang Zhaohe (蔣兆和, 1904-1986) and Shou Shigong (壽石工, 1888-1950) were among some forty staff who resumed teaching duties. Four Japanese teachers were also engaged, including Kazuma Tetsu (一東哲), a Western-style painter whose role it was to make Chinese brush and ink painting more relevant and encourage artists to respond directly to the natural world.⁴³ While the number of students enrolled was far lower than before the Japanese occupation, the academy continued to function.

Huang Binhong shared his personal art collection with the school community. In March 1942, the art academy organised an exhibition of ancient art, drawn largely from the collections of teaching staff. Exhibits included some thirty paintings dating from the Song and Yuan periods lent by Huang Binhong, and historic oil paintings collected by the Japanese professor Kazuma Tetsu and others. The purpose of the exhibition, according to one newspaper report, was to promote the “special characteristics of East Asian art” and to extend the research opportunities for staff and students.⁴⁴ In this exhibition historic Chinese paintings and contemporary Western oil paintings were placed in the context of East Asian art, a concept advanced in the earlier Sino-Japanese painting exhibitions held in China and Japan in the 1920s and early 1930s and part of the political framework of Japanese occupation with its ruling idea of the “Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere”.⁴⁵

After the surrender of Japan and the end of the Pacific War, the Guomindang Department of Education resumed control of the art school. In August 1945, the education department established the Beiping Temporary University Tutorial Courses (*Beiping*

⁴³ Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.416. Other Japanese teaching staff were Takami Kaju, Suda Riichi and Motouji Yoshiro. Thank you to John Clark for assisting with the romanisation of these Japanese names. See Wang Gong, et al., in, “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi,” p.97. It should be noted that the Japanese authorities had previously implemented similar reforms in Taiwan.

⁴⁴ The exhibition was held for 5 days from 25-29 March 1942. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.442.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the concept of Eastern art and the history of Sino-Japanese joint painting exhibitions during the period 1921-1931, see Aida Yuen Yuen, “Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s,” pp.71-96.

*linshidaxue buxiban*北平臨時大學補習班), which continued until July 1946.⁴⁶ During this period Huang Binhong was appointed lecturer in the Department of Applied Arts in the Institute of Education at the National Beiping Normal University (*Guoli Beiping shifan daxue* 國立北平師範大學) where he taught two classes of art appreciation.⁴⁷

After the appointment of Xu Beihong (徐悲虹, 1895-1953) as principal of the National Art College in August 1946, Huang Binhong once again became a member of the teaching staff and taught art theory.⁴⁸

The Government Museum

Soon after he arrived in Beiping, Huang Binhong also began to teach at the Chinese Painting Research Studio (*Guohua yanjiu shi* 國畫研究室) which was part of the Government Museum (*Guwu chenliesuo* 古物陳列所).⁴⁹ His association with the museum, like the National Beiping Art College, spanned the more than ten-year period of his residence in Beiping.

The Government Museum was the first Chinese public museum.⁵⁰ It was a separate entity from the National Palace Museum which did not open to the public until 1925.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Wang Gong, “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi,” p.97.

⁴⁷ See documents and envelope in the archive at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum (ZPM 05649). A document dated 9 March [1945] shows that Huang taught the “Art appreciation” class (*yishu xinshang*) on Mondays. The document is signed by the principal Zhang Erkang and the head of the institute Qi Senhuan. Huang’s appointment was from 1 August 1945 to 31 July 1946. An envelope dated 19 December 1945 from the Group Number Seven of the Special Beiping Temporary University Supplementary Courses (*Jiaoyu bu teshe Beiping linshidaxue buxiban di qi fenban*) includes a generalised administrative note to teaching staff. The National Beiping Art College was Group Number Eight of the Special Supplementary Courses. See Wang Gong, “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi,” p.97.

⁴⁸ Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.474-475; Wang Gong, “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi,” pp.97- 98.

⁴⁹ Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.394.

⁵⁰ The first Chinese private museum is the Nantong Museum, the idea for which was initiated in 1905 by Zhang Jian (1853-1926) following his trip to Japan to attend the Fifth Industrial and Agricultural Exposition in Osaka in 1903 and his experience of museums in Japan. The Nantong Museum was completed in 1912. The museum was owned and controlled by Zhang Jian and was conceived as a supplementary educational institution for the use of local schools. It was not open to the public during Zhang Jian’s lifetime. See Shao, Qin, *Culturing Modernity: the Nantong Model, 1890-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp.21-22, 142-150. Museums operated by expatriates and missionaries in China opened much earlier. For a history of the Government Museum, see Duan Yong, “Guwu chenliesuo de xingshuai ji qi lishi diwei shuping,” *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* (Palace Museum Journal) 5, no.115 (2004), pp.14-39.

⁵¹ See Zhu An, “Gu du wenwu xiaoxi,” *Shen bao, meizhou zhoukan*, 2, no.12 (25 February 1937), p. 233. In 1945 the Government Museum was amalgamated with the Palace Museum. See Yun Xuemei, *Jin Cheng* (Beijing: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), p.11.

Established in 1914 and administered by the Department of the Interior, the Government Museum was located in the southern section of the former Imperial Palace complex and occupied the three external palace halls, *Taihe dian* 太和殿, *Zhonghe dian* 中和殿 and *Baohe dian* 保和殿, together with the *Wenhua* 文華殿 and *Wuying* 武英殿 Halls.⁵² It displayed objects from the imperial collection that were previously in the Summer Villa at Rehe 熱河 (Chengde 承德) and the imperial palace in the ‘eastern capital’ of Fengtian 奉天 (Shenyang 沈陽). The collections of the Government Museum were also transported to Shanghai for safe keeping in 1933, but temporary exhibitions drawn from other sources continued to be held. For example, John C. Ferguson’s collection was displayed in the Wenhua Hall in 1935.⁵³ On 30 June 1936, an official event was held to commemorate the first anniversary of the Ferguson display. (Figure 6.2) That was just after Huang Binhong had completed his first period of inspection.⁵⁴ It is likely that he would have attended.

Jin Cheng, who was involved in the formation of the museum, had established the practice of inviting artists to copy paintings in the museum collection, both as a training exercise and to create high quality fascimilies that could be used for display, thereby extending the life of the original paintings.⁵⁵

This practice was formalised in February 1937 with the establishment of the Chinese Painting Research Studio, later was called the Institute for the Research of Chinese Painting (*Guohua yanjiu guan* 國畫研究館). As part of the Government Museum, the studio trained artists in Chinese brush and ink painting techniques, connoisseurship and authentication. Huang Binhong, Zhang Daqian (張大千, 1899-1983) and Yu Fei’an were employed as tutors. Huang

⁵² Yun Xuemei, *Jin Cheng*, p.10. Jin Cheng, who had studied law and economics in London (1900-1905) and travelled to America was one of the important figures associated with its early history.

⁵³ Shi Gufeng, conversation with the author, Hefei, Anhui, 26 April 2004. See also *Peiping Chronicle*, 1 July 1936, John Calvin Ferguson Family Papers, Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Na Zhiliang documents that 5,415 crates of objects from the *Guwu chenliesuo* were transported to Shanghai. See Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan shanshinian zhi jingguo*, pp.120-121.

⁵⁴ See invitation in the John Calvin Ferguson Family Papers, Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. (LTA 1988.01, Box 1 of 3).

⁵⁵ Yun Xuemei, *Jin Cheng*, p.11.

was a member of the research staff and head of the committee to assess the qualifications and artworks submitted by prospective students.⁵⁶

One student, Shi Gufeng (石谷風, b. 1919), who was part of the inaugural intake in 1937, recalled that Huang Binhong taught classes at the studio every Tuesday. His lectures were wide ranging and covered brush and ink technique, art history and anecdotes about historical artists. Huang discussed art history within the context of the present and generously shared his own discoveries in painting technique. The classes were lively, with a practical orientation, and elicited much laughter.⁵⁷ Classes at the studio were disrupted by the Japanese occupation of Beijing, but in August 1937 staff received notification from the Department of the Interior that teaching activities could continue.

As a student with the Chinese Brush and Ink Painting Research Studio, Shi Gufeng copied paintings from the museum's collection including Wang Hui's (王翬, 1632-1717) long handscroll "Streams and Mountains Without End" (*Xishan wujin tu* 溪山無盡圖, 1937), and the Liao Dynasty (遼代 907-1279) painting "Deers Amongst Autumn Trees" (*Qiulin qunlu tu* 秋林群鹿圖, 1940). Shi also copied Chen Zun's (陳遵) "Flowers of the Four Seasons" (*Siji huahui tu* 四季花卉圖, 1938), from the collection of Zhang Daqian, and "Historical Emperors of China" (*Lidai diwang tu* 歷代帝王圖, 1939) attributed to Yan Liben (閻立本, ca. 600-673) which, at that time, was owned by Dr John C. Ferguson and is now in the the collection of Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.⁵⁸

Ferguson and his wife and a number of other foreigners are recorded in a photograph taken in May 1938 on the occasion of the first anniversary of the establishment of the Institute for the Research of Chinese Brush and Ink Painting.⁵⁹ (Figure 6.3) Another photograph, taken on 8 September 1941, documents the first class of students to graduate from the Chinese Brush and Ink Painting Research Studio. (Figure 6.4) The tutors, Zhou Yang'an, Huang Binhong and

⁵⁶ A document in the Huang Binhong archive at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum is addressed to Huang Binhong as a researcher at the institute and head of the committee to assess the qualifications and artworks submitted by prospective students which suggests that this was also his role prior to the Japanese occupation. Government museum, letter to Huang Binhong, dated 6 August [1937], 2 pages (ZPM 03870).

⁵⁷ Shi Gufeng, "Zhiju shi za zhu bei yi," *Meishu shilun* 2 (1985), p.25.

⁵⁸ *Shi Gufeng hua ji* (Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 1999), plates 1-4.

⁵⁹ See *Shi Gufeng hua ji*, chronology, unpaginated. The photograph is not very clear, but it appears that Huang was not in attendance.

Yu Fei'an stand at the centre of the photograph, surrounded by students, the majority of whom are women but who also include Tian Shiguang (田世光, b. 1916), Guo Weiqu (郭維渠, 1908-1971) and Lu Hongnian (陸鴻年).

Huang Binhong's involvement with the Government Museum and key cultural and political figures in Japanese-occupied Beiping is documented in a photograph thought to have been taken in the spring of 1938 to celebrate the flowering of the Chinese crab-apple (*Haitang jie* 海棠節).⁶⁰ (Figure 6.5) The photograph features (from right to left) Jiang Chaozong (江朝宗, 1861-1943) the Mayor, Xu Shichang (徐世昌, 1855-1939), former President of the Republic⁶¹, Qian Tong (錢桐), Director of the Government Museum, Zhou Yang'an, tutor, Ferguson, and the artists Huang Binhong, Zhang Daqian and Yu Fei'an. The photograph is similar to one in the Ferguson archive that shows Ferguson standing in a courtyard with a group of elderly Chinese gentlemen. (Figure 6.6) The caption, written in Ferguson's hand, identifies the location as "3 Hsi-chiao [Xi jiao] Hutung" Ferguson's residence in Beiping, and is dated "April 28 1937".⁶² The people (from left to right) are Chen Handi (陳漢第, 1874-1940), Guo Baocheng (郭葆昌, b. 1889), Prince Pu Ru (溥儒, 1896-1963), Zhu Qiqian (朱啟鈞, 1872-1964), Feng Xu, Qian Tong, Zhou Zhaoxiang and Fu Zengxiang (傅增湘, 1872-1949) many of whom were associated with the Palace Museum and the Government Museum.⁶³ The nature of

⁶⁰ The *Haitang* or flowering crab-apple is *Malus spectabilis*, prized for its blossoms. There are a number of spectacular trees within the grounds of the Palace Museum and in the grand homes of the Manchu Princes. Pu Ru, who lived at Prince Gong's Mansion (*Gongwangfu*) gave a party there each year when the crab apples were in bloom. See Peter Valder, *The Garden Plants of China* (Sydney: Floreilegium, 1999), pp.157-158.

⁶¹ See Xiang Si, Han Bu, *Xie yang xian de gong dian*, pp.121-126. Xu Shichang became an Advanced Scholar in 1886 and a compiler at the Hanlin Academy in 1889. He was a close friend of Yuan Shikai and had a long association with the Beiyang military clique. He was a former viceroy of the northeastern provinces and President from 1918 to 1922. Xu was involved in cultural activities and was chair of the Eastern Painting Association (*Dongfang huihua xiehui*) a Sino-Japanese committee formed in 1926 to promote Eastern art. He was also an amateur painter. See Hummel, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, vol.2, pp.136-140 and Aida Yuen Yuen, "Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s," pp.83-86.

⁶² See daughter Mary Ferguson's restitution claim 1969-81 for properties 3, 4, 4a, 20 and 21a *Xijiao hutung* and 61 *Xi biao bei hutung*. John Calvin Ferguson Family Papers, Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archive, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

⁶³ Ferguson, Guo Baochang and Chen Handi were members of the Committee of Reference of the Hall of Antiquities, Palace Museum (*Guwuguan zhuanmen weiyuanhui*) and Zhu Zhiqian and Fu Zengxiang were correspondence members of the Committee of Reference. See Na Zhiliang, *Gugong bowuyuan sanshinian zhi jingguo*, p.159. In March 1938 a stele was erected in front of the Wenhua Hall recording the history of the palace and how in 1925 Ferguson's extensive collection of antiquities was deposited there. The text

the gathering is not identified, although the location is similar to that of the photograph mentioned above. Both show large flowering crab-apple trees, relatively rare in Beiping, curtained windows, similar paving and steps, and regular rows of pansies. Probably both images were taken from slightly different angles in the courtyard of Ferguson's home.⁶⁴ It would appear that Huang Binhong attended the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Ferguson and his wife in Beiping on 4 August 1937. An album of photographs in the Ferguson Family Papers contains photographs of gifts presented by guests, including "silver cups, shields, seals and porcelain ... from staff of the Government Museum, Huang Po-ch'uan [this is most likely to be Ferguson's romanisation of Huang Pucun, which was one of the names Huang Binhong used at that time] and Yang Po-hên, Miss Ren Wen-ying, Chang Ting-chi, Vice Director of the Old Palace Museum".⁶⁵ (Figure 6.7) Other gifts that are recorded in the album were from Xu Shichang, Wang Yunwu (Director of the Commercial Press), Ma Heng (Director, Old Palace Museum), Xu Hongbao (Bibliographer), T.A.Yuan (Resident Director of National Library). Also in the archive is a letter from Ferguson's daughter Florence to her brother Duncan, who writes "Guests started arriving at seven-thirty that morning, and the last ones left at eight that night. That said an interesting crowd, Taoist priests, Buddhist abbots, a Papal Delegate, an English Bishop, Hanlins, soldiers, artists, college presidents, a complete cross-section of Father's and Mother's life in China, and of course practically all the foreigners that were in Peking".⁶⁶

Ferguson and Huang Binhong knew each other well. During the Beiping years, according to Shi Gufeng, Ferguson would often seek Huang Binhong's advice on matters of authenticity.⁶⁷ The photograph, taken in spring, 1938, to mark the flowering of the crab apple,

was by Wu Tingxie and Fu Zengxiang. See Van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, p.98.

⁶⁴ Another photograph in the Ferguson archive, taken in the same garden but from a different angle and with different people, is dated 28 April 1934.

⁶⁵ Photograph album, Ferguson Family Papers, Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

⁶⁶ Florence Ferguson, letter to Duncan Ferguson, 1 September 1937, pp.8-9, unpaginated. Ferguson Family Papers, Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

⁶⁷ Shi Gufeng, conversation with the author, 26 April 2004, Hefei, Anhui. Ferguson had moved from Shanghai to Beiping in 1911. After the establishment of the Palace Museum in 1925 Ferguson was invited to be a member of the Committee of Reference. Along with a group of distinguished Chinese scholars and museum staff he attended weekly meetings at the Palace Museum to discuss and determine the attributions of works of art. Beginning in February 1933, however, a large number of museum objects were shipped to Shanghai for protection in anticipation of the looming war with Japan. The authentication work continued in Shanghai, though Ferguson did not participate in those meetings. At this time, in late

confirm's Ferguson's close relationship with the Government Museum and with important cultural figures in Beiping, including Huang Binhong.



In many ways Huang Binhong's time in Beiping during the Japanese occupation was lonely and difficult as he eked out a living by teaching, writing and selling paintings.⁶⁸

The local artworld in Beiping was factionalised as a result of a long-running feud between Jin Qian'an, the son of Jin Cheng, the first President of the Society for the Study of Chinese Painting, and Zhou Zhaoxiang, who took over leadership of the society. After Jin Cheng's death in 1926, Jin Qian'an created the breakaway society Hu Society (*Hushe* 湖社), which eventually eclipsed the Society for the Study of Chinese Painting in power and influence.⁶⁹ Huang wrote to Chen Zhu of his frustration and loneliness:

While there are many men of letters in Beiping, they are all separated by various boundaries and jostle amongst themselves creating trouble. They like to cite new acquaintances as proof [of their power], force them to join their group, appoint them as directors, or to a committee, but in actual fact it is all empty noise. Because of this I often think of leaving this place. Sometimes I retire from active life and travel to temples on the outskirts of the city. I read, practise calligraphy and, in between, do some painting. If I am seen I am dragged into town against my wishes. News of old friends rarely gets through and now it is close to year's end. There has been no news from friends and family in Shexian. I heard only that two of my nieces had died, which merely adds to my sadness.⁷⁰

In letters to friends, Huang gives the impression that he lives like a hermit, rarely going out of doors and only receiving dealers who bring books and works of art for him to appraise or

1935 in Shanghai, Huang Binhong began his association with the collection of the Palace Museum, through the inspections ordered by the court.

⁶⁸ Ye Gongzhuo, letter to Huang Binhong, undated, in which he discusses historical paintings that Huang was selling to a public institution, most likely the Shanghai Museum (ZPM 03256). See also many other letters from Huang Binhong to Huang Jusu and Bao Junbai discussing payment for Huang Binhong's own paintings, *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, pp.232, 236, 239-240, 340, 347-349, 350, 353, 358-359, 363-364.

⁶⁹ Aida Yuen Yuen, "Inventing Eastern Art in Japan and China, ca. 1890s to ca. 1930s," pp. 85-86. See also Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu*, pp.41-42. Two other art factions were aligned with the Xuelu Art Society (*Xuelu huashe*) and the Jinghua Art Academy (*Jinghua meishu xueyuan*).

⁷⁰ Huang Binhong, letter to Chen Zhu, dated 30 November [1937], *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.134.

purchase.⁷¹ Many later accounts of Huang Binhong's activities during this period also state that he "closed his door to the outside world" and concentrated on reading, writing and painting in the traditional style of the reclusive gentleman, a scholar dealing with a time of trauma or political chaos.⁷² Yet there is evidence to suggest that despite the image he projected, he was in fact actively engaged with the cultural life of Beiping. In addition to teaching at some of the city's key cultural institutions including the Jinghua Art Academy (*Jinghua meishu xueyuan* 京華美術學院),⁷³ the Beiping Academy of Classical Studies (*Beiping guxue yuan* 北平古學院) and the Jushilin Buddhist Painting Research Group (*Jushilin fohua yanjiuban* 居士林佛畫研究班), he also wrote for a variety of newspapers and magazines and was an active member of a number of art groups and associations.

Academy for the Study of Chinese Classical Learning

In November 1937, Jiang Chaozong, mayor of the puppet government of Beiping, announced the establishment of the Academy of Classical Studies (*Guxueyuan* 古學院), to promote the study of the Chinese classics (*Jingshu guxue* 經書古學). The academy was attached to the Government Museum and was located in the Chuanxin Hall 傳心殿, near the Wenhua Hall in the former Imperial Palace. Jiang Chaozong was named President. Huang Binhong, Zhou Zhaoxiang and Shou Shigong were among the eighteen members who attended an inaugural meeting on 6 November 1938.⁷⁴ The academy held regular meetings to discuss the special interests of its members. Huang Binhong was a member of the art, indexing, epigraphy and classics groups.⁷⁵ The academy also published a journal, *Collections of Writings on Classical Studies* (*Guxue congkan* 古學叢刊). Huang wrote articles for the first two issues,

⁷¹ Huang Binhong, letter to Chen Zhu, undated, *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, p.134.

⁷² For example, Wu Jing, *Hua zhi da zhe: Huang Binhong zhuan* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 2003), pp.186-187.

⁷³ See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.423.

⁷⁴ Others present at the meeting were Jiang Chaozong, Gan Pengyun, Hu Jun, Gao Yutong, Tian Buchan, Zhao Qunnian, Shou Xi (Shou Shigong), Zhou Zhaoxiang, Chen Qinghe, Zhang Yanqing, Ye Yaocheng, Zhang Fanqing, Guo Xiaolu, Wang Yangyi, Da Zhifu, Wu Xiangzhi, Huang Binhong (ZPM 05692).

⁷⁵ See notices of meetings in the archive of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum (ZPM 03868, 03871).

“A Chronology of Painting History” (*Hua shi bian nian biao*) and “Images on Ancient Seals of the Three Dynasties” (*Gu xiyin zhong zhi sandai tuhua*).⁷⁶

Huang Binhong’s publications during his time in Beiping were far fewer than in Shanghai, yet still impressive under the circumstances. From January 1939 to April 1941, he was a regular columnist for the *Weekly Art Supplement* of the *New Beijing Newspaper* (*Xin Beijing bao* 新北京報美術周刊) where most of his articles related to art and artists from Shexian, Huangshan and the Lower Yangtze Valley region.⁷⁷

In the second half of 1944, Huang Binhong wrote for the Japanese occupation government sponsored *North China New Newspaper* (*Huabei xinbao* 華北新報)—articles such as “The Future of Chinese Art” (*Zhongguo yishu zhi jianglai*) and “A Discussion of the Problem of the Reform of Chinese Painting” (*Gailiang guohua wenti zhi jiantao*), addressing the relevance of Chinese brush and ink painting.⁷⁸ He also wrote many articles for the magazine *Sino-Japan Monthly* (*Zhonghe yuekan* 中和月刊) from 1940-1944.

The Sino-Japan Monthly

Huang’s essay “On Painting” (*Huatan* 畫談) appeared in the inaugural and second issues of the *Sino-Japan Monthly* in 1940. The essay reworked his theory of painting, distilled as “five brush methods and seven ink techniques” (*wu bi qi mo* 五筆七墨), one of Huang Binhong’s most important artistic legacies. Subsequent issues featured his writings on Ming dynasty “left-over subject” (*yimin* 逸民) artists from Anhui, including long and comprehensive articles on Jianjiang (Hongren), Shixi (together with Lu Yuantong 陸元同, a graduate of the Government Museum) and Cheng Sui. He also published numerous works on seals.⁷⁹ For all of these articles Huang Binhong used the pen name Yuxiang 予向, which he had used in last days of the Qing dynasty to express his identification with late Ming *yimin* artists. His revived use of

⁷⁶ See *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, Appendix 1, pp.44-45. Both articles appeared in the first half of 1939.

⁷⁷ *Huang Binhong wenji, shuhua bian xia*, pp.222-275.

⁷⁸ “The Future of Chinese Art” is essentially a reworking of “On The Future of Chinese Art” (*Lun Zhongguo yishu zhi jianglai*), originally published in *Meishu zazhi* 1, no.1 (1934).

⁷⁹ See *Huang Binhong wenji, shuxin bian*, Appendix 1, pp.44-49.

it in Beiping suggests a renewed reflection on the nobility of Ming *yimin* artists in the face of foreign occupation as a result of his experience of living under Japanese occupation.

Sino-Japan Monthly was edited by Huang's friend Zhou Zhaoxiang and published by a press of the same name.⁸⁰ It was printed and distributed by a Sino-Japanese company, the *Shinmin Inshokan Kofun-yūgen-kōshi* 新民印書館股份有限公司 in Beiping. The magazine had the backing of *Shinmin-kai* (新民會) a Japanese organization operating in China whose president was Jiang Chaozong. The magazine claimed to have the latest printing technology and operating capital of five million *yuan*.⁸¹ The charter of the magazine was to "use scholarly research to inculcate knowledge in order to develop Eastern culture and establish such beliefs among the populace". The foreword to the inaugural issue in January 1940 stated that the magazine's focus would be on a diversity of historical subjects. It "did not dare to casually adopt any viewpoint, but would calmly conduct research on a variety of materials worthy of study in order to seek truth from facts". The editors mentioned the one hundredth anniversary of the Opium Wars and the two thousand six hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Japanese Imperial house as significant events to commemorate that year, asserting the reality of life in Japanese-occupied Beiping:

We are not at all familiar with our closest neighbour. If we cannot understand a near neighbour then how can we hope to understand the entire world. It is not appropriate for us to rely on what others say, rather than seek our own understanding. It is not possible for us not to understand our near neighbour and yet desire the peace and glory of prosperity. We hope that this commemoration marks the beginning of our greater understanding and awareness of Japan.⁸²

An afterword thanked particular contributors, including Huang Binhong:

Mr Yuxiang is a scholar of advanced years who has closed his door to the outside world and worked with diligence and without fatigue. He has agreed to be a regular contributor to the magazine. In this issue we publish the first section of his essay "On Painting," and bring to you his lofty and penetrating theory, which is written in a way

⁸⁰ For Zhou Zhaoxiang reference see Shi Gufeng, *Gufeng tang yi tan* (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1994), p.19.

⁸¹ See advertisement in *Zhonghe yuekan* 1, no.1 (1940), p.171.

⁸² Inaugural editorial (*Fa kan ci*), *Zhonghe yuekan* 1, no.1 (1940), p.4, unpaginated.

that is easily intelligible. He is able to teach others and is not only an artist, but a scholar. There is no-one who does not admire him.⁸³

His evident involvement notwithstanding, Huang used the pen name Yuxiang in the *Sino-Japanese Monthly*, suggesting perhaps a desire to distance himself from overt endorsement of the magazine and its sponsoring regime in Beiping. However he was an acknowledged senior contributor.

Huang was interested in a magazine focussed on cultural and intellectual history, and he probably needed the writer's fees. From a purely nationalistic perspective, however, there is a contradiction in Huang's position that many later Chinese writers and critics have had difficulty reconciling with the patriotic attitudes demanded of people today.

Exhibitions in Beiping

From 1940 until his departure from Beiping in 1948, Huang Binhong's works were included in many exhibitions held in the old capital, notably in Zhongshan Park (Zhongshan gongyuan 中山公園). Most of the exhibitions were organised by institutions with which he was affiliated, including the Association of the Soundless Poem (*Wu sheng shi she* 無聲詩社), Jinghua Art Academy, the Chinese Art Research Association (*Zhongguo huaxue yanjiu hui* 中國畫學研究會) and the Government Museum.⁸⁴

⁸³ Editor's postscript (*Bianji hou ji*), *Zhonghe yuekan* 1, no.1 (1940), p.172.

⁸⁴ There are few records that indicate Huang Binhong's active involvement in exhibitions in the years immediately after his arrival in Beiping. Exhibitions in which he did participate include the Calligraphy and Painting Exhibition of the Association of the Soundless Poem (*Wu sheng shi she*, 9 August 1940, *Zhongshan gongyuan*. See *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.424-425); Exhibition of the Achievements of the Jinghua Art Academy (*Jinghua meishu xueyuan*, 28 June 1940 held at Zhongshan Park. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p. 423); and the Eighteenth Exhibition of the Chinese Painting Association (*Zhongguo huaxue yanjiu hui*, 22 June 1941, held at Zhongshan Park and 31 October 1947. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.433, 485). The latter was a large selling exhibition of some 800 works including 10 works by the President Zhou Zhaoxiang, multiple works by Chen Banding, four works by Zhang Daqian as well as paintings by Pu Xinyu, Yu Fei'an and Wang Xuetao. The *Xinmin bao* newspaper reported "unfortunately only a small number" of works by Huang Binhong. Other exhibitions include the Summer Vacation Association (*Xiao xia she*) in which Huang Binhong exhibited some twenty paintings (20 July 1941, *Beihai Jingchengzhai*. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.433-435); and an Exhibition of artworks by staff and students of the Government Museum (11 November 1944, *Zhongshan gongyuan*. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.467).

Artists resident in Beiping during Japanese Occupation were drawn into politically motivated cultural activities.⁸⁵ In April 1942, Huang Binhong joined those who participated in the Greater East Asia Art Exhibition (*Da Dongya meishu zhanlanhu* 大東亞美術展覽會) held in Zhongshan Park and a venue in Japan. The exhibition included works by Japanese artists Nakamura Fusetsu (中村不折, 1866-1943), Takeuchi Seihō (竹内棲鳳, 1864-1942), Araki Jippo (荒木十畝, 1873-1944), Komuro Suiun (小室翠雲), Mizuno Shigeru (小野繁) and Usutani Sanmi (臼谷參見) as well as Huang Binhong, Qi Baishi, Zhang Qiyi 張其翼, Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡 and Tian Shiguang.⁸⁶ Later, in August 1944, Huang was among the prominent figures from the Beiping artworld invited to respond to a series of questions about the reform of Chinese painting published in the *North China New Newspaper* (*Huabei xinbao* 華北新報). The series of articles was in response to the likelihood of the war entering a decisive phase, and to Japanese artists organising themselves into groups dedicated to the service of their country. The questions posed by the editors largely related to the ability of Chinese brush and ink painting to reflect contemporary events and circumstances. In his response Huang spoke out against the overt depiction of contemporary political events and cautioned against artists losing sight of the original guiding principles of Chinese painting, which were linked to the written word. Huang urged his readers to strengthen their resolve and to believe in themselves. He encouraged them to use past experience to understand the present and to continue with brush and ink painting. In closing he pleaded, “Rouse yourselves” he pleaded, “Even though the ancients are no longer by our side, what is there to be confused about, to question or to shake your confidence?”⁸⁷ Huang passionately believed that through brush and ink painting artists could express themselves and their cultural identity. For him the adherence to the principles of

⁸⁵ On 30 October 1944, Huang Binhong participated in a “Sincere Discussion Between Chinese and Japanese artists” (*Zhong Ri huajia kentan hui*). The conference, held at the Peking Hotel, was attended by Huang Binhong, Hu Peiheng, Chen Banding, Jiang Zhaohe and others. The discussion was held in conjunction with an exhibition of oil paintings and Japanese paintings organised by the Japanese authorities titled “Art Exhibition to Mark the Final Battle for the Mainland” (*Dalu juezhan meizhan*). See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.467.

⁸⁶ The exhibition opened on 28 April 1942. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.443.

⁸⁷ For Huang’s full response see “A Self-criticism on the Question of the Reform of Chinese Painting” (*Gailiang guohua wenti zhi jiantao*), *Huang Binhong wenji, shuhua bian, xia*, pp.382-385. See also Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.465-466.

brush and ink painting were central to the issues of identity and nation building and should be strengthened and relied upon during times of national crisis.

The surrender of Japan, announced by the Emperor of Japan on 2 September 1945, marked the end of the Pacific War and the Japanese occupation of China. The first large-scale exhibition to be held after the end of the Sino-Japanese War featured works by Qi Baishi and Pu Xinyu and also some recent paintings by Huang Binhong. Organised by the Society for the Research of Cultural Relics in the Ancient Capital (*Gudu wenwu yanjiu hui*), the exhibition was held in Beiping in 1946 and toured Nanjing and Shanghai.⁸⁸ A rather acidic review of Huang Binhong's work was published in the inaugural and only issue of the magazine *Art Forum* (*Yishu luntan* 藝術論談) in 1946. Huang Binhong's extended period of residence in Beiping during the Japanese Occupation and the fact that he taught at the National Art College under Japanese administration in particular attracted the patriotic ire of the reviewer Shi Chongpeng 施翀鵬.⁸⁹ Shi stated that Huang Binhong travelled to Beiping after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war to take up a teaching position at the National Art College, which was not in fact the case. Some years earlier, in 1936, a scurrilous report had appeared in another magazine suggesting that Huang Binhong had become a Japanese citizen. In a letter to the editor, Huang strenuously refuted the allegation. Huang had emphasised his strong and sincere ancestral connection with Shexian and cited as evidence his recent work as an editor of the *Anhui Collectanea* (*Anhui congshu* 安徽叢書) and the *Shexian Gazetteer*. During the thirty years he had lived in Shanghai he had had discussions with "two or three Japanese friends" on the future of Chinese literature and art, he said, but there had been no recent contact. He concluded with a lament that not only was China behind other countries in science and material goods, but there was so little interest in her own culture, unlike in Japan.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ The Research Society for Cultural Relics in the Ancient Capital (*Gudu wenwu yanjiu hui*) was established in March 1946 together with the Central Committee for Cultural Promotion (*Zhongyang wenhua yundong weiyuan hui*) and the Chinese National Art Association (*Zhonghua quanguo meishu hui*). The critique published in *Art Forum* in 1946 refers to paintings in this exhibition.

⁸⁹ Shi Chongpeng, *ming* Nanchi, was a graduate of the Shanghai Art College. Wang Zhongxiu, email to the author, 19 February 2004. See also Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.476-477.

⁹⁰ *The Golden Awl* (*Jingang zuan*) was edited by Shi Jiqun whom Huang knew. See Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, pp.375-376.

There was a large community of Japanese people living in China. Huang Binhong did not deny his contact with Japanese artists and art historians. Historic and cultural ties between China and Japan dated back over a millennium. From the late 1800s, many Chinese intellectuals looked to Japan as a model of transition from a traditional society to a modern industrialised state. While few Chinese welcomed the Japanese occupation of China, Japan's respect for scholarship and the intense interest of Japanese scholars in the history and culture of China attracted the attention of many intellectuals.⁹¹ While Huang worked for Chinese institutions that were run by Japanese-appointed administrations, he appears to have limited his personal contact with Japanese friends and colleagues, particularly after the declaration of war.⁹² Huang Binhong was not wealthy and unlike Ye Gongzhuo who moved to Hong Kong to avoid the Japanese occupation, Huang Binhong had to deal with the practical issues of life, which meant continuing to earn a living.

Like that of the writer and intellectual Zhou Zuoren (周作人, 1885-1967), Lu Xun's (魯迅 Zhou Shuren 周樹人, 1881-1936) brother, Huang Binhong's example is complex. Susan Daruvala has argued that Zhou's conduct—his strong belief in respect for the writer as an individual, his detachment from the mounting political crisis, his failure to leave Beijing after the occupation and his collaboration with the Japanese after 1939—cannot be explained by easy categories such as collaboration, passivity or resistance, which are only relevant in an intellectual context dominated by nationalism.⁹³ Huang's moral position and code of conduct were based on the principles of a Confucian scholar and reflected his own personal values. Like Zhou, he maintained an independent attitude as an intellectual. In a context of heightened nationalism and patriotism, the position was easily misunderstood. A detailed cultural history of

⁹¹ A notable example is Zhou Zuoren (1885-1967), brother of Lu Xun. See Susan Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), pp.81-112.

⁹² Huang Binhong's close contact with Japanese artists and art historians is indicated by the reproduction of a letter from the Japanese artist Tanabe Masa to Huang Binhong, dated 22 May, which appears to have been written in 1924, and a landscape painting by Tanabe that is cited as being from Huang Binhong's collection, both of which were published in the magazine *Xueshu shijie* 1, no.8 (January 1936). In the letter Tanabe praises Huang's brush and ink and thanks him for his paintings. Examples of Huang Binhong's avoidance of personal contact with Japanese after the outbreak of war include him deflecting a meeting with the Japanese artist Araki Jippo when he came to the house in 1939, and Huang's decline of the offer by Japanese authorities at the Beijing National Art College to celebrate his eightieth birthday in 1944. Wang Zhongxiu, *Huang Binhong nianpu*, p.413, 458.

⁹³ Susan Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity*, pp.104-112.

the Japanese occupation is yet to be written and it is difficult to gain access to primary source materials. The period is still regarded by Chinese and Japanese scholars with great sensitivity.⁹⁴

In the case of Huang Binhong, a major artist and scholar of advanced years with defined interests and commitments that were intensely local yet with a very long-term perspective, a starting point might be that his understanding of China transcended the exigencies of the time and place in which he found himself.

⁹⁴ For an account of the work of Japanese artists in China during the first half of the twentieth century see John Clark, "Artists and the State: the Image of China," in Elise K. Tipton, ed., *Society and the State in Inter-war Japan* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.63-89.