

金子吟

單柏欽詠和集



游子吟

单柏钦旅加画集

荣宝斋出版社

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单柏钦

自序

“游子吟”，是锡平兄与我不谋而合为即将合作出版的画集题的书名，它表达了我们共同的心声。

作为浪迹天涯、年愈花甲的游子，我一生最爱的、最刻骨铭心的有二：

一是我的母亲朱雅。我三岁丧父，在穷乡僻壤中，是她含辛茹苦地把我养大成人，才使我有机会于今日薄有虚名，但直到她逝世时，我都没能供她以温饱的生活，这是我一生最大的遗憾！因此我居住的地方总以“雅”字为名，如：“雅风楼”、“怀雅居停”，以此纪念我敬爱的母亲。

二是伟大的祖国。尽管她历经劫难，久经风雨，至今仍然贫穷，但她源远流长、博大精深的文化历史遗产，却仍不断孕育着她的子女。漂泊异乡的游子们，无时无刻不对她深深依恋、魂牵梦系！这本册子是我数十年心血的结晶，定曰《游子吟》，以奉献给伟大的母亲——祖国！

1995年与锡平兄出版了一本画集，很欣喜获得诸多鼓励和鞭策。在其序言中，我曾对彼时的艺术思潮做了些针砭，对自己的追求提出了一些方向与预期。很欣喜历经数载，自己的见解和探索经受住了考验。我将继续始终不渝地在继承传统艺术精华的同时，不断努力开拓创新。至于我对作画的体会，尽体现于画中。以下附录一篇我画钟馗的心得，呈教方家。

胸中块垒、笔底波澜——我之写钟馗

一、无心插柳——偶然兴至画钟馗

70年代后期仍是春寒料峭的年代，有一次我到一间陶瓷厂作瓷碟画。画这些小玩意儿的目的是，一是还画债，二是供自己摆设。当晚吃过厂里款待的晚饭，我已进入微醺境界，便来到简陋的工场内。当时作画的地方只有一盏昏黄的电灯、摆在旧木桌上的几碟瓷画颜料和一大摞白瓷碟。吃了人的嘴软，因此一夜就要赶完二十几件碟画给厂里的领导和身边的朋友，那真是非作大写意不可了。

当时正值寒冰初解，我再斗胆也只敢画一些舞蹈人物和少数民族形象，不敢触及“四旧”古人。画到兴起时，一位在旁观看的夜班老工人问我：“你会不会画钟馗？”在酒意未消，画兴方浓的当儿，我不假思索地回答：“会！”便拿起一个白碟。然而我不但没有画过钟馗，甚至于脑中也只有从坊间画谱和任伯年画集里得来的一点模糊印象：浓眉怒目、满脸乱胡、拿一把剑、戴一顶两个心形帽翅的官帽。我深知仅凭这点记忆做细致描画绝不可能，便壮着胆子拿起大羊毫笔，蘸满红颜料，涂抹几笔，作为似是而非的衣服，添上记忆中的那点印象，一挥而就画成一个钟馗。未想到竟引起旁观者的赞赏，自己亦颇感痛快淋漓。从此每逢雅集挥毫之时，我便画钟馗来代替美女，竟可比较轻松地赚酒赚饭吃了。后又经香港的中国国货公司拿去印挂历，在海外受到广泛欢迎，因此我便和钟馗结下了不解之缘，二十年来以此为题不停地挥洒着。

二、寄情——画钟馗的创作目的

为什么我会特别钟情于画钟馗呢？当然海内外广大知音的欣赏是一个主要原因，但更重要的是我在创作钟馗这个不虚不实的人物过程中能够借题发挥、任意涂抹，借此把自己的感情、思想及对人生、世事的

态度，不受拘束、逃过挑剔地表达出来，所谓“借钟馗之杯酒，浇我胸中之块垒”。因此，我画钟馗的创作源泉永不会枯竭和停顿，亦不会陷入千人一面和困于前人的窠臼。

三、大写意人物画——真放出精微

我画的钟馗基本上是大写意，虽然表面看来是一挥而就，但是文章千古事，得失寸心知。殊不知中国画的技法中难度最大的是大写意，因此，纵观中国人物画，一些作品每每表现出有胆无识、笔多妄下，或粗野烦躁、剑拔弩张、矫伪做作，表现出来的则是空洞无物、神形俱灭。这些画家亦往往如昙花一现，无法坚持下去，只因和“写意”背道而驰。

我在大写意人物画创作的长期探索耕耘中尝尽了甘苦，亦有一点个人的体会，愿在此略陈管见，冀引高明：

积学。作为一个真正的中国画家必须具有渊博的学识，这基本因素是要求在哲理、诗文、书法、金石等方面下功夫，即所谓“书卷气”，只有具备广博的画外功夫，才不至江郎才尽。数十年前教素描的王肇民老师说过：“画几幅好画靠灵感，画几年好画靠基本功，一辈子画好画靠修养。”这的确是金石之言。

“真放出精微”，记得这是石涛的话。徐悲鸿先生又说过：“宁拙毋巧”，这是写意真髓。我看过李可染先生和潘天寿先生作画，皆是笔无妄下、成竹在胸、形随意发、沉着而稳重，看似轻松随意，其实乃经千锤百炼而臻化境。因此作大写意画必须是在缜密的理性导引下，将聚集心中的激情用笔高度发挥，倾注而发，如公孙舞剑、如张颠狂草。

粗中有细。粗是豪放、雄浑、凝练、有气势，使人一看就被强烈地吸引住；细是在关键处所做的精妙刻画，令观者深入细品，此是中国画“远看取其势，近看取其质”之意，是绘画对比法则之一。齐白石先生笔下之虫草、花卉配合堪称典范；我则力求在人物的脸、手上下功夫，如摄影之聚焦，尽粗而无细，则往往不能耐人寻味。

不懈地锻炼基本功。“问渠哪得清如许，为有源头活水来。”作画如做其他学问，练就一套把式就只有卖出，而没有取进，一定会江郎才尽，不少画家之所以辍笔，我想主要原因在此。所谓基本功一方面是广泛涉猎、博取所用，而更重要、更贴身的是持之以恒地练习造型基础和书法。人物画学习之所以比较难是要准确生动、得心应手地刻画形象。书画同源，鸿篇巨制都是一笔一笔画出来的，不解用笔之奥秘，绝不能成为一个好画家。每天临池籀隶，慢慢领悟了就会参透以慢制快，以静制动的玄机。

砚边点滴，散碎无章，拉扯不完。这虽不像一篇文章，因我不是论家，但我只求直率表达自己的想法，抒发真性灵。

在此必须再谢锡平兄弟。我旅加独处，因有其这样肝胆相照的知己时刻关心帮助，才能使我潜心艺事、埋首丹青。数年来，锡平兄不仅帮我在台湾、马来西亚等地举办画展，还为我策划出版了大型的《单柏钦画集》，今次又特为我出版此册，不论策划、摄影、编排、联系均亲力亲为，力求达到尽善尽美，在此仅志数言，以表微忱！

单柏钦

1999年春 于多伦多怀雅居停

A Wanderer's Soul

A Wanderer's Soul—this is a title both Mr. Chen Xiping and I have chosen coincidentally for the present new collection of my paintings. It certainly expresses our common thoughts.

All these years I have been wandering, and now I find myself well over sixty already. In my life as a wanderer, out of the many things that I cherish, there are two that I love most and always miss.

One is my mother Zhu Ya (Ya, her first name, literally means Elegance in Chinese). My father died when I was only three years old. Living in a remote village, it was my dear mother who brought me up through all sorts of hardships. Without her, I would not have had the chance to achieve what I have today. However, even by the time of her death, I was still unable to provide her with a decent living. This has been my eternal regret! Therefore, to permanently honour the loving memory of my mother, wherever I wander and stay, my residence always bears the name Ya of my mother, as in Ya Feng Lou (Tower of Elegance), and in Huai Ya Ju Ting (Residence in Memory of Ya the Elegant).

The other one that I love and miss is my great motherland China. Although she is still quite poor after going through one disaster after another in history, her wealth of cultural and historical heritage never stop nurturing her children, from generation to generation. Even those who have been wandering overseas, like me, will always cherish the dreams of their dear motherland. This collection is the fruit of my decades of labour. Now by naming it *A Wanderer's Soul*, I am presenting it to my great motherland China.

Back in 1995, in collaboration with Mr. Chen, I published a collection of my works. To my pleasure I have received a lot of positive feedback and encouragement. In the preface to that collection, while I criticized certain trends of thought in visual art at that time, I set myself some goals in my pursuit of art. Several years have passed since, and I am pleased to see that my views and my exploration have stood the test. I pledge that I will untiringly continue my creative study while adhering to the fine tradition inherited from our predecessors. As to what I have learned from my painting experience, most of it is self-evident in my paintings. To complement it, I am attaching below a note about my experience in painting Zhong Kui, which I hope will draw some more advice and comment.

How I Took to Drawing Zhong Kui

Purely Unintentional

It all started in the late 1970s, a time when one could still feel the chill before the advent of spring. I found myself in a porcelain factory painting plates. The purpose of doing such trivial paintings was twofold: to give them out as easy gifts to those I felt obliged to while keeping some for myself as at home. That evening I had been wined and dined by the factory personnel and was just a little high. The porcelain workshop was crude and shabby. The light was dim. On the huge wooden table stood piles of plain white plates and a few containers full of paints. Feeling compelled to repay my entertainers and friends, I knew they wouldn't let me go that night without at least finishing some two dozen pieces. How to tackle the daunting task in one breath? The only way was to resort to bold freehand brushwork, and do it nonstop!

At that time, the thaw after the deep political freeze had barely begun. In my drawing I did not have the guts to touch on any historical figures that would be condemned as "*Four Olds*". So what I drew seldom went beyond some dancers or figures of Chinese minority nationalities. I was at the height of my enthusi-

asm when an onlooker, an elderly worker on night shift, suddenly asked: "Can you draw Zhong Kui?" Without thinking, still under the impact of the booze, I took the challenge and said yes, and I reached for a blank plate. To tell the truth I had never done Zhong Kui before. The only thing I knew about the legendary ghost catcher was from what I had seen in Ren Bonian's collections as well as in some old drawing manuals. But the impression was vague: A man with thick eyebrows and angry eyes, a full beard, with a sword in hand, wearing a mandarin hat with two heart-shaped pompons, and no more. I knew very well that, with such scanty impression alone, it was impossible for me to do a Zhong Kui in fine detail. So I mustered up my courage, dipped my brush into the red paint and applied a few bold strokes on paper, forming the ambiguous clothing of the character. Then by adding some details of what I could remember, I finished in a jiffy my first Zhong Kui. Unexpectedly it drew loud applause from the crowd, and I felt extremely happy, too. Ever since then, whenever I was to draw in public at gatherings of artists, I would do Zhong Kui instead of pretty girls. It was amazing how you could earn your wine and food in such an easier way! Later on a Hongkong company specializing in Chinese products released calendars carrying my Zhong Kui paintings, and they were well received overseas. In this way I formed an inseparable connection with Zhong Kui and it has been a main theme in my painting for some twenty years.

A Vehicle for Expressing Feelings and Thoughts

Why do I have a special liking to drawing Zhong Kui? One major reason of course is the large number of Zhong Kui enthusiasts in China and overseas. However, the most important reason is that I could make full use of this semi-real character to convey my thoughts with my unrestrained paintbrush. I could state my view of life and of this mundane world, yet avoid being picked on—perfectly what is described as: Venting one's pent-up grievances through the wine that Zhong Kui drinks. Therefore, the source of my artistic creation is never exhausted. My impressions of Zhong Kui are constantly refreshed, never identical, never falling into the conventional old rut.

Using Bold Brush to Accent Finer Details in Figure Painting

My Zhong Kui paintings are basically freehand bold brushwork. Though simple as it looks with just a few brush strokes, it represents the hardest technique in Chinese brush painting. A review of the history of Chinese figure painting shows that many artists have failed to maintain or even run against the essence of this "*freehand vivid expressionism*". Many of their works demonstrate the painter's empty boldness and lack understanding. There is too much unrefined hastiness, exaggeration and affectedness. As a result, the effect of such art work is hollow and poor in both appearance and spirit. Naturally, most of these artists were little more than transient figures in history.

For decades I have been engaged in the study of bold freehand brushwork in Chinese figure painting. Through sweetness and bitterness, I have learned quite a few lessons, which I would be more than willing to share here in hopes of receiving comments from experts.

Constant Accumulation of Knowledge A Chinese artist must be equipped with a wealth of knowledge. This knowledge should encompass philosophy, literature, poetry, calligraphy, and seal cutting. Without a wide range of knowledge beyond painting itself, there is absolutely no way for artists to show any depth of cultivated refinement. They would soon find their natural talent drained. I remember Mr. Wang Zhaomin who taught sketch decades ago. He said: "To do a few good pictures you can rely on inspiration; to continuously produce good works for a few years you should rely on your good foundation; and to continuously create good works for a life time you have to resort to your depth of knowledge and cultivation." This is real valuable advice to all of us.

“Real Bold Brushwork Accents Finer Details.” I remember that piece of advice from Master Shi Tao. Another master Xu Beihong also said: “Better to be clumsy and awkward than to be flashy and deceitful.” Their advice manifests the essence of freehand brushwork. I once had the honor of seeing Master Li Keran and Master Pan Tianshou painting. It was really awesome: Every stroke is applied just in the right place with calm confidence, following the rhythmic flow of the artists’ feelings. They both seem to do it with such ease to the viewers. Do people see, though, the long years of painstaking practice and study behind their perfect performance? Therefore, the application of bold freehand brushwork should be guided by real careful thought, so that one’s intense emotion is poured out through a flow of free movement of the paintbrush.

Refined Subtleties amidst Crudeness By crudeness we refer to the quality of being bold and uninhibited, being vigorous and powerful, and being compact and condensed. Such a quality would immediately hold the attention of the viewers. Subtlety, on the other hand, refers to the detailed and elaborate descriptions in crucial spots. Refined subtleties in a painting would invite the viewers’ scrutiny. This is exactly what is implied in one of the principles of contrast in Chinese painting theory: “From a distance, it is the painting’s vigour that holds your attention; while in close range, it is its refinement that is attractive.” Master Qi Baishi was exemplary in arranging his flowers and insects to form a good picture. As for me, my focus is on the refined depiction of my figure’s face and hands—very similar to what focusing does in photography. A painting with all crudeness but no refined subtlety is quite unlikely to stand any pondering and scrutiny.

Ceaseless Improvement in Fundamental Skills “You asked me why there is such a constant flow of water in the stream? All because there is a good supply from the fountainhead.” In painting, just as in any other professions, if we only expend our skills without acquiring new ones, even the most gifted would soon find themselves depleted. This, I believe, is one major reason why many of our painting artists hang up their paintbrush. What I mean by fundamental skills certainly include an extensive acquisition from all sources so as to be selective in application. More importantly, however, we must persevere in learning and improving our basic modeling skills and our calligraphic skills. The reason why figure painting is rather difficult is that it requires accuracy and vividness to portray a character. Calligraphy and painting share the same origin. Without exception, any great work in writing or painting is built up stroke after stroke. Therefore, a painter without a thorough understanding and command of the elusive brush is never a good one. Every single day I practice calligraphy after classical models. The more I do it, the deeper my understanding, allowing me even greater freedom and flexibility in my work.

So much of what I have to say is in bits and pieces that do not seem to make up an article. I excuse myself for this, though, as I am not a writer. My intention is just to be straightforward in expressing what I have in mind and what I feel deep in my heart.

Here once again I must thank Mr Chen Xiping. Residing in solitude in Canada, I am lucky to have the support and care from a close friend like him. His constant assistance has enabled me to concentrate on painting. Over the past years, he has not only helped me to hold solo art shows in Taiwan and Malaysia, but also to organize the publication of *Selections of Shan Baiqin’s Painting*. Now here again he is busy preparing to publish the present new collection! From its design, photography, editing, up to all coordination work, Mr. Chen has been doing it by himself to ensure perfection. It is really hard to find words to show my heartfelt gratitude.

Shan Baiqin

Huai Ya Ju Ting, Toronto

Spring 1999

翰墨缘

——我与单柏钦在多伦多

我与柏钦兄的翰墨之情，始于偶然的邂逅。回首当年初抵加拿大，无意中看到柏钦兄的画作，立即被深深地吸引住了。尤其那大写意钟馗活灵活现、栩栩如生，令我爱不释手，当即买下，成了我收藏的第一幅柏钦作品。从此我便与钟馗及柏钦兄的作品结下了不解之缘，与柏钦兄也由敬仰到相识相知，直至今日情同手足。这些年来，为了共同的理想，出于为中华文化艺术事业尽献绵力的追求，我们经常促膝论艺，从处世哲理到艺术修养，柏钦兄给了我许多有益的指导与教诲，使我能在这艰难的艺术道路上走下去，把自己对中华绘画、书法的爱好同弘扬中华文化艺术事业结合起来。

过去几年，我们曾一同前往台北市国父纪念馆及马来西亚吉隆坡香格里拉酒店举办“单柏钦画展”；在多伦多，又曾在我主办的“华翰轩文化艺术中心”开幕典礼上举办柏钦兄的近年新作观摩展；1994年底，我们与岭南美术出版社合作出版了《单柏钦画集》，得到许多艺术爱好者的好评。这次我们再度合作《游子吟》画集，借以再次体现画家对艺术的执著与忠诚、实践与探索，也作为我们身居海外的游子敬献给我们至爱的母亲——祖国及伟大不朽的中华民族文化艺术的一点心意。

柏钦兄一生坎坷，但是，冷酷的岁月不但没有摧毁他的意志，反而激发起他自强不息的信心。他甘耐寂寞、孜孜不倦，致力于中国画的研究和探索。最令我钦佩不已的是，他从不固步自封，力图承先启后，敢闯敢创。他遵照高剑父大师“师法大自然”的教诲，从生活中不断寻找艺术语言，锲而不舍地发掘新的知识、求得新的突破，使其作品面貌常新、日见老辣精湛。他从不满足于既有的业绩，一如既往、勤奋有加，不论酷暑严寒，坚持每日临摹古帖，从前贤的笔迹中吸取营养，钻研具有优秀传统文化的中国书法，并以书法入画。他凭着丰富的生活经历和艺术感受、凭着广泛吸取的营养和经过千锤百炼的绘画技巧，创造出一幅幅既“文”又“新”的作品，充分体现了“读万卷书，行万里路”的治学精神。柏钦兄所走的道路和取得的成就，对立志献身于艺术创作的青年一代来说，无疑具有一定的借鉴意义。

柏钦兄擅写人物画，其用笔豪逸粗犷、酣畅淋漓。所写人物，不论神仙佛道还是古代人物，在其笔下无不栩栩如生。这些人物，或满怀豪情壮志，或玩世不恭，或为不满现实而悲愤抑郁，或萧散放逸而内心悲伤沉重，其中大多数人物都具有崇高的人格，许多作品都极富深刻含义。柏钦兄笔下的钟馗，更是千姿百态，把人世间的七情六欲、喜怒哀乐表达得淋漓尽致，真正体现了中国人物画“传神”的精髓。柏钦兄作画，行笔泼辣沉稳，用墨浓淡相宜、气韵生动，奔放处不离法度、细微处照顾气势，有笔有墨、有形有神，静中有动、粗中有细，气势非凡。近年，他更致力于钻研创作意境深远宽阔的作品，追求人物与境界的完美结合，讲究更为细腻、更有深度的人物刻画。他画作上的赋诗题词内涵丰富、韵味情趣十足、耐人寻味，诗、书、画都结合得很完美，使观赏者得到极大的艺术享受。所作现代写实人物，则以中国画的传统笔墨与西方的造型技巧融会而成，力求创新。在中国人物画的领域里耕耘了多年的柏钦兄，尽管成绩斐然，至今依旧虚心而不停地上下求索。相信他的努力探索必会开拓出一条新的路子。天道酬勤，他将来势必会结出更加丰硕的艺术果实。

当前，在世界科技发展和经济大潮的冲击下，人们的注意力普遍转向了发达的科技产品、转向了投资与股票，原来作为人类精神食粮的艺术，也与经济混在一起，许多真正的艺术被冷落了。诚然，当今电视、电脑文化对人类文明的贡献功不可没，艺术品成为现代社会雅俗共赏的装饰品及收藏品，确实是件好事，但是，如果因此而导致人类精神文化的倒退、性灵的萎缩，如果艺术家只图迎合市场而把作品变成商品，从而失去艺术的真正的含义，那则是太遗憾也太可悲了。其实，只有经济与精神双重发达，才是真正健康的现代社会的标志。世俗之后，人们会追求崇高；纷乱之后，人们会追求宁静；物质之后，人们会感到精神世界的渴求。真正的炎黄艺术家，必须有勇气与人类固有的世俗缺陷奋斗，更加倍努力地为达到艺术理想而耕耘，尽心尽力在中华文化的土壤中寻找出中华艺术的现代形态，创作出具有中华民族特色和时代精神、具有中华民族灵魂的艺术作品。真正的艺术，终究会获得重视。我们愿意同广大的中华文化艺术爱好者一道，共同为弘扬中华国粹尽力，使充满生命力的中华文化艺术的明天更加灿烂、更加美好、更加欣欣向荣。

编者艺术修养不高，上文所陈管见，只图抛砖引玉，与同好者共磋。

陈锡平

1999年元旦于墨缘斋

Mr. Shan Baiqin and I in Toronto

The start of my friendship with Mr. Shan Baiqin was purely accidental. It happened years ago when I was new in Canada. One day I chanced upon Mr. Shan's paintings and was greatly fascinated by them. His bold-brushed *Zhong Kui*, in particular, looked so spirited and vivid that I just couldn't tear myself away from it. So I bought it right away, which was to become the very first piece in my collection of Mr. Shan's works. From then on, I became inseparable from his paintings and from the legendary character of Zhong Kui. Meanwhile, my bond with Mr. Shan gradually evolved from sheer admiration to good acquaintance and into today's close friendship. Driven by a common interest to help spread Chinese art and culture, we have spent plenty of time together exchanging views on art. Mr. Shan has taught me a great deal about artistic cultivation as well as philosophy. It is his enlightening guidance that has made me stay firm on the arduous path of art, determined to merge the cause of promoting Chinese art and culture with my personal passion for Chinese calligraphy and painting.

Over the past few years, Mr. Shan and I have put on an *Exhibition of Shan Baiqin's Paintings* respectively at the National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Taipei and at the Shangri-La Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. We also organized a demo-exhibition of Mr. Shan's most recent works at the grand opening of my Eminence Learning Centre in Mississauga, Canada. In 1994, we had *Selections of Shan Baiqin's Paintings* published by the Ling Nan Art Publishing House, Guangzhou. The publication was well received by art lovers. Now, again with our joint effort, we are putting together the present collection, *A Wanderer's Soul*, which once again represents the artist's perseverance and loyalty in his artistic exploration. As Chinese wanderers overseas, we would like to present the collection, as a small token of love, to our beloved motherland China and to the immortal Chinese art and culture.

Mr. Shan had a life full of frustrations. Nevertheless, he was never daunted by adversities. On the contrary, those grim years toughened his will to constantly better himself. Despite loneliness, he has been untiringly engaged in the study and exploration of Chinese painting. What I admire most in him is his bravery and creativity. He is never found complacent or conservative, always attempting to usher in something new in addition to the classical inheritance. Following Master Gao Jianfu's instruction to "go by nature", Mr. Shan never stops seeking artistic inspiration in life, always coming up with new discoveries, new knowledge and new breakthroughs. There is therefore never a stale look in Mr. Shan's new works, which are always polished with techniques that he keeps perfecting every day. Never feeling content with his achievements, he works harder and harder. Every day, no matter in summer or in winter, he will practise calligraphy after the classic masterpieces, trying to absorb as much nourishment as possible. Through his intensive and unceasing study of traditional Chinese calligraphy, Mr. Shan has shaped his own unique style in excellence, which he introduces into his paintings. With his well-honored calligraphic and painting techniques, buttressed by his colourful life experience and artistic exposure, he has brought forth numerous art works that are both "classical" and "new". What he has accomplished and the route he has taken toward his achievements would definitely serve as a good example for the younger generation who are willing to devote themselves to the cause of artistic creation.

Mr. Shan is especially good at figure painting. His brushwork is crudely dynamic and highly expressionistic, applied with overwhelming power and ease. Under his brush, all the characters he creates seem to come alive, be they supernatural beings, Buddhist or Taoist monks, or historical figures and beautiful women. Some of these characters are charged with lofty sentiments and aspirations, others with dire cynicism. Some look depressed with grievances against society, others seem romantic and unrestrained but unable to conceal their innermost sadness. Many of these figures being lofty personalities, Mr. Shan's por-

trayal of them often carries significant implications. Through the character of Zhong Kui, for example, which comes in hundreds of poses, Mr. Shan depicts with compelling power all the human emotions and desires one could experience in this world. This is a perfect illustration of what is called the "essence of vividness" typical in Chinese painting.

Mr. Shan's brushwork is daring yet steady, lively with perfectly balanced shades of ink. While the style looks bold and unrestrained, it never crosses the line of rational discipline, and his fine detailed brushwork never goes out of perspective. His paintings are rich in colourful ink and calligraphy, exquisite both in form and vividness. One can easily sense vitality in his stillness, and refinement in his seeming crudeness. In recent years, Mr. Shan has been concentrating on the creation of works of even more significant artistic conceptions. By blending figure and landscape painting techniques, he takes aim at producing more characters of profound sophistication. His calligraphy on his paintings, often expressing the artist's comments in the form of poetry, affords palatable food for thought, adding, a graceful finishing touch to the art works.

At the present time, under the impact of the global economy and the development of technology, people's attentions is generally drawn to sophisticated technological products as well as to investment and stock. Even art, which used to be regarded as nourishment for the human mind, has become heavily diluted with commercial economy. This becomes obvious when many genuine arts are being cold-shouldered. To be sure, the modern TV and computer culture has contributed enormously to human civilization. It is also a nice thing to see art works become ornaments or collection items that would satisfy people of both refined and popular tastes. Nevertheless, if artists should turn their works into mere commodities simply for the sake of catering to the market, the original purpose of art would be defeated. It would be really shameful if the current trend should ever lead to such a fall back in human ideology and culture or lead to reduction of human intelligence. In fact, only with an equally developed economy and culture can a modern society claim to be genuinely healthy. After having enough of the mundane, people would seek something lofty; after experiencing enough disorder, one would yearn for serenity; and after having too much materialism, people would naturally look forward to a life of cultural and spiritual abundance. Real Chinese artists, in my opinion, should have the courage to confront and overcome the intrinsic weaknesses of human beings. They are obliged to redouble their effort toward the realization of their artistic dream. They should firmly base themselves on the soil of Chinese culture and explore the best mode of presentation for Chinese traditional art, in order to create more art works that could embody the Chinese national characteristics as well as the spirit of the times. Eventually, I believe, genuine art will no doubt receive serious attention. It is my hope that all our Chinese art lovers will work hard together to further promote the best of the Chinese art tradition and carry its vitality forward to a better tomorrow.

Chen Xiping

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