

THE BEST IN MODERN
CHINESE FOLK
PAINTING

中国现代民间绘画选集

The Best in Modern Chinese Folk Painting

中國現代民間繪畫選萃



飾美人香 120×85cm 華生蘭(女)(藏) 青海湟中
Hand-embroidered hankerchief 120X85cm
Hua Shenglan (female, Tibetan) from Huangzhong

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中國現代民間繪畫選萃

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前言

焦勇夫

這裏所收錄的二百多幅當代中國民間繪畫，是編者從近年來各地新創作的約一萬幅民間繪畫中選出來的。因此，說它們是精品，並冠以“萃”的稱號，可以說是不過分的。之所以要把它們輯印成冊，無非是想，當我們的藝術收藏家、藝術鑒賞家，以及廣大讀者在欣賞了國畫、油畫、版畫等“正宗”的美術作品之後，再來瀏覽一下這些出自農民、牧民、漁民、乃至家庭婦女之手的民間繪畫，猶如從深宅大院的藝術之宮出來，踏上山野莽原一樣，呈現在面前的是另一個天地，另一種意趣，別有一番滋味。而對於編者，也有藉此對近年來民間繪畫的創作加以回顧和檢閱，以利登上新程的想頭，這就自不待言了。

近幾年，在中國的羣衆文化活動中，民間繪畫的廣泛興起，是一個很突出的現象，其成績十分引人注目。1988年春天，全國有五十個在民間繪畫創作上成績顯著的縣，被文化部社會文化局命名為“畫鄉”。嗣後，以自己的顯著實績而要求命名的，也已不下數十起。據了解，每一個已命名的和雖未命名但已够得上畫鄉資格的縣，大抵都有幾十名或上百名作者，他們都是各行各業的勞動者，有的還是邊遠地區的少數民族，所作的畫種，也不限於民間畫，也有國畫、油畫、版畫，還有專畫漫畫的。本畫冊之所輯，便是以文化部社會文化局命名的畫鄉的作品為基礎，共收集了六十六個縣、市的現代民間繪畫作品。可以說，這些作品已反映了近幾年中國民間繪畫的概貌。

或者有人要問，民間繪畫的創作怎麼在中國如此興盛呢？是否因為畫能賣錢，從而作者們把繪畫當成致富的一條路呢？回答是否定的。自然，中國民間繪畫近幾年確曾多次在國內外舉辦過展覽，有些作品確曾被有識之士以重金買去收藏，但這並不說明作者在以畫換錢，而只說明了

這些民間繪畫確有其公認的藝術價值。實在說，中國民間繪畫的勃然興起，正是這個國家政通人和，廣大農民富而求樂、富而求美的結果。

中國自七十年代末實行改革開放至今，已逾十年了。這期間，社會主義商品經濟得到了發展，人民的生活有較大改善。與此同時，廣大農民、牧民和其他勞動者的精神世界得到了急劇的擴展，精神品位也有了明顯的提高，在文化活動中，他們已經不再安於你唱我聽、你畫我看，當被動的接受者，而是自己也要參與到文化創造的活動中來。他們或則登台演唱，或則揮筆作畫，以此來追求人生價值和顯示自己的聰明才智。我敢說，當讀者翻閱這本畫冊，面對這些琳瑯滿目、風格各異的作品時，都會被這些農民、牧民、漁民，乃至家庭婦女的豐富想象力和不拘一格的藝術表現力所打動，而發出嘖嘖的讚嘆之聲。

也許有人會問，這些粗手大腳的畫家，既沒有“學問”，又沒有進過美術院校，何以能畫得這麼好呢？這就要同他們的生產活動聯繫起來分析。平時，他們耕耘大地，馳騁草原，漫遊江河湖海，大自然給他們以厚愛，生產勞動為他們積累了豐富的素材，所以他們作畫時信手拈來，百無禁忌，沒那麼多的條條框框。他們的創作是自由的，怎樣感受的就怎樣畫，想畫什麼就畫什麼，在創作上真正達到了“率意而行，適情而止”的境界。但這並不是說，他們的畫只是專供自我欣賞的“盆景畫”，他人不可得；倒是相反，爭取更多人的喜愛，為作品尋找到最好的知音，也是他們所追求的。聽說近一個時期，專業美術人員借鑒和研究民間繪畫的興趣越來越濃，而市場商販對民間繪畫的經濟價值也十分注意。這固然可以表明中國民間繪畫已經在專家的眼裏，在大眾的心中有了應有的位置，但也確實不能不叫人耽心這種藝術作品被商品化的傾向所衝擊和浸染，從而出現粗製濫造、魚目混珠的可能。我正是懷着這種喜憂參半的心情促成編輯出版《中國現代民間繪畫選萃》，並為之撰寫前言的。我深深期望這本集精品於一冊的畫集的出版，不但將有助於讀者認識中國民間繪畫，而且對於維護它的美好的形象，也將會有所貢獻。

Foreword

*Jiao Yongfu**

The two hundred and more paintings in this album were chosen from about ten thousand folk paintings done in recent years in various parts of China, so it is no exaggeration on my part to claim that they are the best. The aim in compiling them into an album is to give the art collector, connoisseur and general reader an opportunity to peruse the work of peasants, herdsmen, fishermen and housewives, familiar as they may be with the orthodox Chinese tradition, oils and graphic art; to take them into the mountains and the wilderness, to a world with a totally different charm and attraction from that of the secluded Palace of Art. It has also given us as compilers an opportunity to look back over the folk painting of recent years and to broaden our horizons.

In recent years folk painting has come very much

into the foreground of cultural activities in China. In the spring of 1988 fifty-one counties notable for their output in the field were designated "Homes of Painting" by China Social Culture Bureau of the Ministry of Culture. Since then dozens of others have applied for the title on the ground of distinguished achievements, and investigation has shown each, whether or not the title has actually been conferred, to boast anything from a dozen to a hundred painters working in forms varying from ethnic folk painting to traditional Chinese painting, oils, graphic art and cartoon. This album includes paintings from sixty-six counties and towns, mostly those designated "Homes of Painting". The work offers a general picture of recent folk painting in China.

One may be forgiven for wondering whether the sudden boom in folk painting in China is financially motivated, but it is not. Although several exhibitions of Chinese folk painting have been held at home and abroad in recent years and some pieces have fetched large sums from connoisseurs, this amounts only to acknowledgement of the artistic value of the paintings rather than any avarice in the painters. In a

*Jiao Yongfu is chairman of the Chinese Folk Art Association

nutshell, the prosperity of folk painting in China simply reflects government concern for the happiness of the people, resulting in a more affluent peasantry seeking beauty and artistic satisfaction.

In the ten years since the seventies, when reform and an open policy have been followed in China, a socialist commodity economy has developed and the people's livelihood greatly improved. At the same time the spiritual vista of the broad masses of peasants, herdsmen and others has undergone tremendous expansion and uplift. They are no longer passive listeners to songs and viewers of paintings by others. They want to participate in creative life themselves. They sing before audiences and take up painting brushes in search of the value of life and to demonstrate their talents. I daresay that when readers skim through this album of paintings in a variety of styles they will be forcibly struck by the rich imagination and varied expression of these peasants, herdsmen, fishermen and housewives.

Some may ask how such clumsy, uneducated people, who have never so much as set foot in an art academy, come to paint so well. It is because they are

close to production. They till the land, ride the vast plains, sail the rivers, lakes and seas and are intimately involved with nature, so that they have at their fingertips the rich material of productive activity, and this frees them from conformity. They paint their feelings or whatever they care to paint, freely, constrained solely by the need for fulfilment and tempted no further. This does not mean that they paint merely for their own enjoyment. On the contrary, they seek to reach out for sympathy. It seems that recently professional artists are increasingly interested in imitating and studying folk painting and that market traders are paying attention to its monetary value. Although this shows that this folk art form has acquired status in the eyes of professionals and laymen, it also causes unease that it may become mercenary and crude. Thus it was with mixed feelings of pleasure and anxiety that I urged the compilation and publication of this album and write this foreword, in the sincere hope that a book of the best in the field will not only draw attention to Chinese folk painting but also contribute to the preservation of its good name.

論現代民間繪畫

曹振峯

一九八五年底，我在一篇文章中將人們習稱的“農民畫”重新定名為“現代民間繪畫”。所以重新定名，是從農民畫的發展趨勢，農民畫出現的新因素，和作者隊伍的變化等情況考慮的。

現代民間繪畫可以說又古老，又年輕。所謂古老，就是它的母體歷史久遠，任何畫種都不能與之相比；所謂年輕，就是它作為畫種出現，也不過十餘年或三十來年。它雖然飽含着古老的民間藝術形式，但毫無陳腐之氣，而是以它強烈、真摯、潑辣的藝術感染力，顯示着勃勃生機。它雖然造型誇張、變形，進行超越現實的藝術處理，但毫無對生活的扭曲，反而使人感到更真實、更親切。它雖然色彩十分絢麗，却很質樸，毫無浮華的媚態。它雖然一派鄉土氣息，散發着山花般的清香，與城市繁華、喧器的環境恰成反比，但却符合現代生活的節奏和新文化層次的要求。現代民間繪畫還具有勞動人民摯熱、樸實、直率的情感和藝術氣質。從這些作品中，找不到嬌柔造作，故弄玄虛，隱晦陰澀的氣味，感受到的却是煥發着人類童年那種天真、純正、富有幻想的藝術魅力。

民間繪畫作為母體藝術之一，原本就不是什麼所謂初入藝壇的奇花異草，所以，近十年來現代民間繪畫之鄉迅速遍佈全國多數省份，當也是順理成章的必然趨勢。它們分佈在：東北的遼河、松花江流域；西北的陝甘高原、青藏高原和大漠南北；東部的黃海、東海、南海之濱；中部的中州平原、江漢平原和湘江流域，以及西南的雲貴高原。參加民間繪畫的作者，除漢族外，還有滿族、回族、藏族、朝鮮族、彝族、瑤族、維吾爾族、苗族、土家族、白族、哈尼族、布依族等等。因地域和民族的不同，民間繪畫也逐漸出現了地區特色和民族特色，呈現出百花爭艷的形勢。早在七十年代，陝西戶縣的農民畫，曾以強烈、樸實、富有關中鄉土味而著稱，後起的安塞、洛川、宜君等地的現代民間繪畫則以雄厚的民藝傳統而見長，富有大膽、神奇、高亢而強悍的藝術情調；上海金山民間繪畫則以江南水鄉為特徵，清新、恬靜、和諧；山東臨朐、日照等地

的畫風，吸收了濰坊年畫的藝術手法，富有強烈的裝飾效果；河南舞陽的畫風，渾厚率直；新疆哈密等地的畫風，則以伊斯蘭風情取勝；遼寧和吉林等地的畫風，富有民間藝術的裝飾效果，或以寫實的手法描繪東北雪原和農村風情；湖北黃岡和湖南隆回等地畫風，富有楚地文化的情調，貴州各地苗鄉的畫風，另有遠古遺風和奇幻的藝術情趣；天津北郊的畫風，有的誇張洗練，有的鄉風濃郁；廣東龍門等地的畫風又具嶺南風味，而東海舟山羣島漁民的畫風有如大海的狂濤，隨意性較大，變化奇幻。

現代民間繪畫的創作題材多以各地和各民族的風情、習俗、傳說，以及他們的生產生活為主要內容。同時，新的生活變化也漸漸出現在他們的畫面中，新的審美觀念，也與他們傳統的藝術情調相融合。雖然各地畫鄉藝術風格各異，但都具有鄉土的風味和勞動人民特有的心靈氣質。當今美術界不少人以追求西方現代藝術為時尚，漸漸與人民和生活越來越遠的時候，現代民間繪畫却牢牢扎根在自己的鄉土上，人民的生活便是他們藝術創作的靈魂。且不論什麼藝術水平誰高誰低，只就創作意識而言，現代民間繪畫始終走着自己的道路。

現代民間繪畫在短短的歷程中，也曾走過一段曲折的道路。一九五八年秋季，在北京的美術展覽中第一次出現江蘇邳縣農民畫，報刊予以高度的評價。農民們出於對建設祖國、建設家鄉的激情，以稚拙而生動的線條，幻想般地勾畫出《孫悟空來到火焰山》、《玉米長上了天》等作品。他們相信人間可以創造出從未有過的奇跡，能讓高聳的玉米擋住飛機的航線，能讓土法煉鐵的小高爐築成新的火焰山。與邳縣一同起步而知名的還有河北束鹿，陝西戶縣。農民們自發地用繪畫抒發自己的情懷是完全可以理解的，但却被人為地大力推廣，號召“人人畫畫”、“詩畫滿牆”，因而農民畫被引上了歧路。因為幻想總不是現實。此後，隨着經濟建設中浮誇風的遏止，農民詩畫運動便落入低潮，唯有陝西戶縣保留了下來。戶縣農民堅持以壁畫形式緊密為農村各項工作服務，培養出數以百計的農民作者，開創了農民畫的新畫風。

農民畫總要得到提高和發展，總要有自己的藝術語言和形式。然而，這是長期未能解決的問題。好心的美術家們曾熱心地進行培訓，用西方美術教學方法進行灌輸，使之跨上所謂

曹振峯：中國民間美術學會副會長，中國美術館副館長。

“科學”的藝術道路，此法效果並不理想。有的地方用文人藝術的技法進行輔導，但勞動人民與文人的審美情趣相悖，此路也走不通。七十年代末，上海金山縣的畫家吳彤章在試用多種輔導方法後的失敗困惑中，發現農村蘊藏着極其豐富的民間美術資源，有很多繡花、剪紙的高手。她們多是未受過現代教育的大娘、大孀，農忙時務農，農閑時為子女們的衣帽繡花，有很高的藝術造型本領。她們只是默默地為自身需要進行藝術活動。吳彤章把她們請來，讓她們按自己的願望來畫畫，用習慣的配絲綫的方法配色。雖然她們用慣鋤頭和針綫的手不習慣拿筆，調用粉色也不知所措，但經過短短的實踐和耐心的輔導，真正的農民畫之花綻開了，蘊藏數千年之久的民間藝術能量終於釋放出來了。金山農民畫在首都展出後，美術界無不為之驚奇。

上海金山的藝術實踐，改變了以往農民畫的面貌，也改變了有些人認為農民畫是低層次藝術的偏見，更重要的是，發掘出了民族民間的藝術寶藏，為現代民間繪畫開拓了廣闊的前進道路。金山的經驗為全國各地所效仿，各地又有新的創造和發展。在這種條件下，才可稱之謂現代民間繪畫崛起了。

現代民間繪畫的作者隊伍，除農民外，還有牧民、漁民、學生，再以職業區分畫種，或仍冠以“農民畫”，顯然很不科學。值得注意的是，現代民間繪畫雖然是在傳統的民族民間藝術基礎上發展起來的，但不是原株的生發，而是多種藝術的生長基因重新組合與精心培植的結果。它既保持了母體的特徵和氣質，又不同於原母體的面貌，而是從未有過的、嶄新的藝術花種。培植新花種的園丁，就是受過現代美術教育的在基層工作的美術工作者。他們是傳統民間美術的發掘者和保護者，他們從新的文化高度，發現和確認被埋沒數千年之久的民間藝術的學術價值和藝術規律，並指導人們吸取世代承傳的藝術精華，從民間剪紙、繡花、蠟染、繪畫中擷取造型的手段，進一步提煉昇華為新的藝術形式。有無這種輔導和培植，關係極大。就農民自身來說，他們雖然是燦爛的民間藝術的創造者和繼承者，由於自身文化素質的局限性，還不可能用新的審美觀念對民間藝術再認識，也不可能對其藝術規律作科學的總結。在新的歷史時期，也難與新的審美趨勢相一致。民間藝術多是自娛性的，無商品屬性，若進入文化市場的流通領域，還需要經過一段轉化過程。數千年來，民間藝術處於受人鄙視的低下

地位，因之也具有很大的脆弱性。在新文化的衝擊下，隨着經濟條件、生活條件和民間習俗的變化，人們很容易放棄自己的傳統。所以能使被埋沒的民族藝術瑰寶以新的形式大放異彩，並使不知名的勞動人民藝術家躋身於藝術的殿堂，不能忘記長期默默耕耘在基層的美術工作者的無私奉獻！

當然，輔導者有的成功，有的效果欠佳，有的畫鄉進步快，有的畫鄉進步慢，主要是工作得法與否，其中最主要的是要重視民間藝術傳統。輔導者還要讓這些從事農耕漁牧的作者們相信自己的藝術才能，以啓發的態度提高其藝術的表現能力，熟練地掌握繪製與描畫的創作技能。但是，輔導者是不能包辦代替的。

嚴格地說，農民畫並非始於江蘇的邳縣，更遠的歷史難於查考，僅以近代來說，陝北的農民在新年到來之際，就有自己動手繪製年畫的習慣，以吉祥為內容裝飾窑洞；在河北、山東等地，年節時便有手繪的年畫在農村和城鎮的集市上出售；福建、江西等地農村，喜在白粉的屋牆上繪畫。在革命戰爭年代，農民參軍的士兵們在戰鬥之餘，親自動手描繪自己或戰友們的戰鬥生活，有大量作品發表在報刊上或連隊牆報上，現在仍有不少遺物可證。這些繪畫完全是民族的風格，而又有民間的質樸特徵，只不過當時沒有冠上畫種的頭銜。

盡管如此，以往的農民畫，尚不能與現代的民間繪畫相等同，其重要區別是現代民間繪畫有機地吸收融合了傳統的民族民間藝術的精華，這些精華往往體現在民間的繡花、蠟染和剪紙的藝術語言之中，並應用於服飾和節日的習俗活動之中。其中的造型和紋樣的納吉、祛邪、婚姻、求子，以及懷念祖先、示明信仰等表徵符號，經過無數人反復再創造，在藝術表現上達到高度的凝煉，但從未有人把它作為欣賞性的繪畫藝術語言，而現代民間繪畫開始這樣實踐了，但它又不是繡花、剪紙、蠟染紋樣的複製，而是新的藝術形式和新的民間風情。由此證明，民族民間的藝術傳統，是富有生命力的。它的生命力不僅在於繪畫形式自身，更在於它本身即是藝術母體和本源之一，本身就具有生發出更新、更多具有民族氣派和時代精神的藝術新花的廣闊天地。它還證明，可以創造物質文明的勞動人民同樣是有創造精神文明的無窮創造力的。

可以預見，現代民間繪畫正在迎着明媚、和平的春天。人民將以勤勞的雙手揭開民間繪畫更加精彩的一頁。

On Modern Folk Painting

Cao Zhenfeng

In an article I wrote at the end of 1985 I renamed what had been called "peasant painting" "modern folk painting" on the grounds of the trend of development and the new elements in peasant painting as well as the changes in the ranks of the painters.

Modern folk painting is at once ancient and young. It is ancient because its mother body has an ancient history, one longer than any genre of painting; it is young because this particular genre of painting emerged less than thirty years ago. Although it embodies an ancient folk art form, it is totally free of staleness, has a vigorous artistic impact which is at once strong, sincere and bold. Its exaggerated modelling, distortion and surrealist treatment do not distort life but on the contrary give a feeling of truthfulness and closeness. Though colourful, it is simple and devoid of ostentatious pretension. Although its local flavour emits a light fragrance of mountain flowers in contrast to urban bustle and noise, it nevertheless conforms to the rhythm of modern life and meets

the requirements of a new cultural level. It possesses the fervour, simplicity and straightforward qualities of the labouring people. Rather than ostentation and obfuscation, we see here the simple purity of childhood.

As one of the origins of art, folk painting is by no means an exotic on the artistic scene, and it is natural that in the last decade it has blossomed anew in more and more provinces of China. It flourishes in the Liao and the Songhua valley in the northeast; on the Shaanxi-Gansu and Qinghai-Tibet plateaus and around the gobi in the northwest; beside the Yellow and the East and South China Seas; on the Zhongzhou Plain, the Jianghan Plain and the Xiang valley in Central China; and on the Yunnan-Guizhou uplands of the southwest. Beside Han painters are those of the ethnic minorities like the Manchus, Huis, Tibetans, Koreans, Yis, Yaos, Uygurs, Miaos, Tujias, Bais, Hanis and Bouyeis. And the varied regions and nationalities from which the painters come account for the regional and national diversity of folk painting. Already in the seventies the peasant painting of Huxian County in Shaanxi Province was known for its vigour, simplicity and typical Central Shaanxi flavour. Later the peasants of Ansai, Luochuan and Yijun were distinguished for their rich folk-art tradition and bold, mystic, strong and intrepid impact. The folk painting of Jinshan in greater Shanghai is characterized by scenes

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of fresh, tranquil Yangtze villages. The decorative Weifang new-year poster infuses painting of Linqu and Rizhao in Shandong. The style of Wuyang in Henan is straightforward, while that of Hami and other parts of Xinjiang depicts Islamic customs and habits. Liaoning and Jilin strive for a realistic depiction of the villages and snowy forests of the northeast. The style of Huanggang in Hubei and of Longhui in Hunan recall the culture of the ancient state of Chu. The style of the Miaos in Guizhou evokes their mystic past. Paintings from just north of Tianjin are either highly exaggerative or strongly rural. Longmen in Guangdong shows us the southern land, while the fishermen of the Zhoushan Islands in the East China Sea are as capricious as the raging surf.

The themes of modern folk painting are basically the customs, habits and legends and work of the various nationalities of China, with changes emerging as new aesthetic standards influence tradition. Although artistic styles differ from place to place, they are all intensely local and reflect the feelings of the labouring people. Where other artists may follow the modern Western vogue, departing further and further from everyday life, modern folk art sticks close to the land. Quality aside, modern folk painting has always followed its own path in creative awareness. Its history, though short, has been tortuous. It was in the autumn of 1958 that the first

peasant painting from Pixian in Jiangsu to appear in a Beijing art exhibition received favourable press reviews. In their enthusiasm for national and local construction the peasants had with clumsy elegance sketched *The Monky King Comes to the Fiery Mountain* and *Maize as High as the Sky*. They believed in the miraculous, that maize could block air routes and backyard furnaces form new Fiery Mountains. Shulu in Hubei and Huxian in Shaanxi made their names at about the same time. The spontaneous expression of the peasants' feelings in paint was understandable, but painting itself had been artificially boosted and led astray when everyone was called on to paint and urged to cover every wall with painting and poetry. The wishful thinking in output never came true. When economic boasting abated peasant painting and poetry plunged to a low ebb, except in Huxian, where peasants persisted in using murals to encourage rural work. Thus hundreds of peasant painters were trained, and a new style emerged.

Peasant painting needed improvement and development. It needed to have its own language and form. These had long been problems. Well-meaning artists had tried to train peasants in Western art teaching methods in order to lead them on to a "scientific" path. The results were not satisfactory. In some places peasants were coached in techniques used in the literary circles. This

was a dead end, since the peasant aesthetics were different from those of the literati. Only in the late 70s, bewildered by his many failures in coaching peasants, did Jinshan painter Wu Tongzhang discover that the countryside had its own store of folk art resources. Many village women were skilled embroiderers and paper-cutters. During the slack season they embroidered hats and clothes for their children. Others modelled for their own needs. He urged them to paint freely, using colours as they would thread. Their hands, more accustomed to the pick and the hoe and to needle and thread, were at a loss with the brush and the palette, but after a short period of practice and patient coaching, real peasant painting blossomed, and the energy of folk art, pent up for thousands of years, was finally released. The Jinshan exhibition in the capital astonished the art world.

The changed face of peasant painting dispelled the biased belief in its inferiority. More importantly Wu Tongzhang had discovered the hidden treasure of folk art and blazed the trail to modern folk painting. Painters in other parts of China copied and improved on Jinshan, which was uniquely necessary if modern folk painting was to emerge and prosper. The ranks of modern folk painters have swelled to include herdsmen, fishermen and students as well as peasants proper, and it would be unscientific to define the painting by the painters' occupa-

tions, to remain calling it peasant painting, though this is a minor issue. What is notable is that although modern folk painting has developed from traditional national folk art, it is not a growth from the original plant but a genetic manipulation of many kinds of art, the result of meticulous cultivation. Retaining the characteristics and qualities of the mother body, it is yet different, an unprecedented flower of art cultivated by artists with modern training working at grass-root level, excavators and conservationists of traditional folk art discovering and acknowledging on a new cultural level the academic values and artistic rules of a folk art overlooked for thousand of years. They make accessible an art handed down through generations, cull the methods of papercuts, embroidery, batik and painting and refine them. This assistance and cultivation are extremely significant. Although peasants are the creators and heirs of folk art, the limitations of their cultural background have restricted them in absorbing new aesthetics and formulating laws. Even after historic changes in their lot they fail to conform with the aesthetic trend. Folk art is mostly for self entertainment devoid of commerciality. It needs transformation to enter the cultural market. Folk art is extremely fragile, having been looked down upon for thousands of years. People are prone to give up the tradition under the assault of a new cultural environment

and with the transformation in economic and living standards. We must never forget the selfless dedication of field workers who have enabled this neglected national treasure of art to blossom in a new form and unknown labouring artists to achieve recognition.

Of course some coaches are less successful, and some centres do not progress as rapidly. Correct method and adequate attention to the tradition are needed for success. The coaches need to give peasant, fisherman and herdsman painters confidence in their artistic talent and inspire them to improve their powers of expression and to master technique. The coaches must never run the whole show themselves.

Strictly speaking, peasant painting did not originate in Pixian, Jiangsu. Finding out its distant history is difficult. More recently peasants in northern Shaanxi have a tradition of auspicious new-year posters to decorate their cave dwellings, hand-painted new-year posters are found at Spring Festival markets in Hebei and Shandong, and peasants in Fujian and Jiangxi like to paint on their whitewashed walls. During the war years soldiers of peasant origin painted the lives of their comrades-in-arms between battles. Much of this work appeared in newspapers, magazines and company bulletins, as is proved by the amount still extant. It was all done in a national style with the simplicity of folk art; it was merely

not regarded as a genre at the time.

Nevertheless, the peasant painting of the past is not on a par with modern folk painting, the most important distinction being that modern folk painting has organically absorbed the essential folk language of embroidery, batik and papercuts as used on clothing and during festivals. The modelling and designs of peasant painting are not solely aesthetic decorations but symbolic wishes for luck, good marriage and sons, respect for ancestors and religion and charms against evil. Recreated by many, these became highly refined in expression but never an artistic language to be appreciated. This is what modern folk painting has begun to do. Rather than a reproduction of embroidery, papercut and batik, it is a new art form and a new channel of folk expression, showing that the artistic tradition of the people has great vitality, not simply in this art form, but as the mother body and origin capable of generating a newer and more artistic flowering of the modern national spirit. It also proves that the labouring people who create material culture, have phenomenal ability to create mental culture too.

We can foresee a bright, peaceful spring for folk art. The industrious hands of the people are turning a brilliant page in folk art.



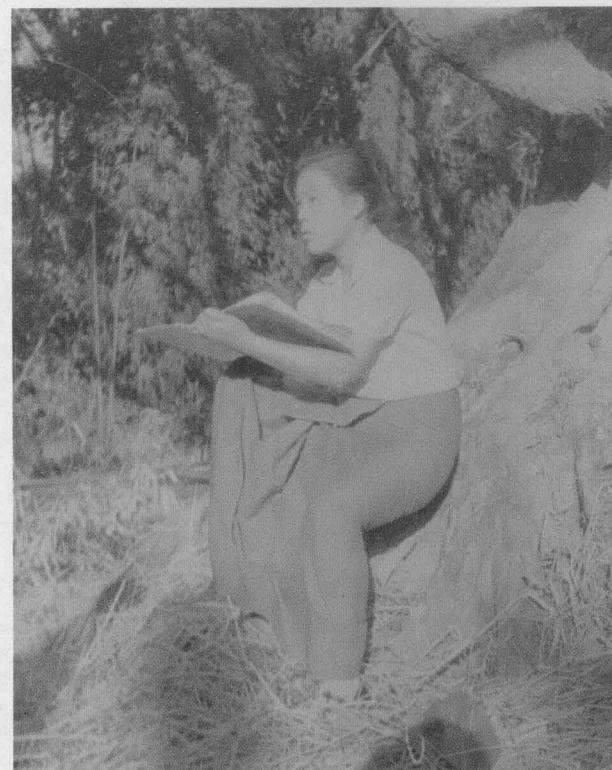
上海金山縣農民畫社外景
Outside the Peasant Painting Society
in Jinshan, Shanghai



金山農民畫社創作室一角
A studio in the Jinshan Peasant
Painting Society



遼寧農民畫家聞忠笠
Wen Zhongli, a peasant painter
in Liaoning



雲南傣族民間畫家秀英在寫生
Xiu Ying-- an ethnic painter in Ruili,
Yunnan, is sketching outdoors.



瀋陽蘇家屯區創作輔導站
A training station in Sujiatun,
Shenyang



浙江省羣衆藝術館召開創作交流會
An art centre in Zhejiang organizes
a meeting for painters to exchange
experiences