



畫油健自書

THE ART OF LI ZIJIAN

李自健油畫

1992

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序

認識李自健先生，與其說是因緣巧合，不如說是因苦難的經歷而對愛心有著共識作為牽引。

一九九一年，我赴美雲遊弘法。有一回應邀至洛杉磯阿罕布拉市主持婦女法座會。主辦人別出心裁，在進入會場的長廊兩側展示油畫作為妝點，顯得格調高雅脫俗。我向來不擅丹青，又因時間無多，故也只能走馬觀花地巡禮一番。但是當目光掃視到一幅名為「孕」的作品時，不禁佇足片刻。畫中少婦低頭凝視，似乎正在屏息聆聽隆起腹中胎兒的悸動，而若有所思。她的眉宇間充塞著母性的慈暉，世間的一切真、善、美彷彿都集中在這名女子身上。其道何由？啊！是了！「孕」是宇宙中最善美的期待，而凡有「待」者，皆需慈忍。慈者，和也；忍者，力也。剛柔並濟，乃至天地之間生生不息。此番因緣和合之理，放諸世間，永不失真。只是這畫者是誰呢？竟能以一管彩筆，將「孕」的涵義闡釋得這麼玲瓏剔透！

『在一片誅伐擾攘的社會裡，多麼希望有人如彼，能以愛心蘸沾筆尖，繪出人間的真實苦樂，將佛教的慈悲喜捨躍然紙上！』在回程中，望著窗外川流不息的人車，我如是自忖。

幾個月後，一位年輕人在吳劍雄先生的引介下，帶著畫具來到西來寺，為我作油畫肖像。我開始一張張地翻開他隨身帶來的昔日畫作小集，當那名為「孕」的畫面，再度映入眼簾時，心中驚喜萬分。

哦，原來這幅動人的油畫，竟是這位年輕畫家為他孕中的妻子所作。畫家其他許多作品，也都充溢著真誠與質樸的美感。特別是那些情感濃郁表現深刻的鄉土生活畫面，尤其令我感動。我想，一個藝術家即使擁有雄厚的功力，若無對人生深刻的體驗，也難以達到如此之境界。

在與李自健先生不長時間的交談中，我已感覺到眼前的這位青

年畫家，有著非同尋常的生活根基和淳厚樸實的藝術氣質。他不但獨具才華，且有滿腔理想，無奈生活的壓力，使得他來到美國兩年多，一直都無法進行他的藝術創作，而只好為生活而畫。一位如此優秀的藝術人材被白白埋沒，實在可惜，實不忍心。於是，我主動提出：全力支持他繼續發展自己的藝術追求，在近年內，為芸芸眾生畫出一百幅以「愛心」為主題的油畫，並且也建議他能將中國人堅毅不拔，任勞任怨，委屈求全的民族性從他的作品中加以體現。我希望他重拾畫風，創造出屬於自己的藝術天地。李先生激動不已，欣然允諾，並且說我是他的知音。其實，我何嘗不是和他共同分享我一甲子來走過風霜雨雪所擁有的一點感受呢？

翌日，李先生離開了原處狹小的居住空間，舉家遷入了我為他提供的「蒙地拉精舍」，借此寬敞僻靜、幽雅超然的生活環境，李先生能集中全力，傾心作畫，我也得以慰藉，算是盡了自己的一點心意。

自此以後，李先生便揭開了他藝術生命中新的一頁。他的藝術靈感猶如泉涌，新作源源不斷產生。以極驚人的效率，淬勵奮發，在短短的一年半的時間裡，竟然完成了八十餘幅佳作。

我雖不會畫畫，卻獨鍾那些浸透著人間真情的畫作。每次從世界各地弘法行至洛杉磯，不管有多忙，總要抽時間去李先生畫室欣賞，拜訪。而每次面對李先生的新作，我都會激動不已。美國流浪人的真實形象，引起我沈思，而「母女系列」作品中充溢的親情，又帶給我溫馨之感，尤其是那些表現普通中國人形象與平凡生活場景的畫作，常常會把我引回孩提時代的記憶與遐想。畫是無字之書，萬言的文字皆可在一幅畫中表現，一點也不誇張。自然，欣賞李先生這一幅幅感人的作品，觀者或許都可悟到畫家對人生與世界的深刻體驗及表達。在我與李先生許多次的侃談中

自健

全



，我深感，畫家若沒有苦澀的成長歷程，沒有慈悲善良的人格，他的作品便不會擁有這般感人的魅力。「畫如其人」，果真如此。

李自健先生有著極為艱澀的人生歷程。一九五四年，他出生於湖南邵陽一個普通的家庭裡，全家兄弟姊妹十人，上有兄姊，下有弟妹。幼年時，父母經商，家境小康，不料時移世遷，家境中落。李父因食指浩繁，配給的糧餉，不足以維生，遂鋌而走險，背地行商，不幸東窗事發，十年冤獄，從天而降。隨後全家老少，無不遭殃，兄姐多人，相繼下放農村，生活無著，李母則屢遭批判管制，幾度欲以自盡了生，然顧及子女幼小，唯有苦苦煎熬，忍辱偷生。年幼的自健，尚在學齡之前，就開始以撿煙蒂、煤渣、橘皮換錢來減輕家庭生活的重擔。稍大一點，他又以捶石子，擺貨攤，當小嫖娼……維生糊口，從十三、四歲起，他瘦弱的身子骨，便扛起了一個成年人才能承擔的重擔，撈河沙，打土方，挑碼頭，當繃夫……凡是能賺錢的苦力，幾乎沒有他没幹過的。後來，他又輾轉湘西山區，參加修建鐵路的艱苦勞動。入大學前，他還在一個破爛不堪的小工廠當了六年鉗工。艱苦的生活環境，磨煉了他堅忍的意志；苦難的人生，也造就了他奮發向上的毅力。幼年儘管家境貧寒，但在學校裡，他仍然是品學兼優的好學生。而出身不好，則使他幼小的心靈屢遭欺凌與屈辱。有幸的是兄姊的影響，使他很早便閱讀到許多西方人文主義的經典名著，他著迷於托爾斯泰、巴爾扎克、海明威筆下的天地，而杰克·倫敦的傳記則躁動他對大千世界的探尋與嚮往。小小年紀，他便揣著幾塊銅板，藉著紅衛兵串連的浪潮，遊歷了上海、蘇杭。在那個喪盡良知的時代裡，他曾親眼目睹過無數悲烈的慘劇，也親身經受了野蠻的摧殘。那是一個沒有愛的世界，然而慈母的溫暖，兄姊的深情與鄰里的愛撫，卻在他的心靈中鐫刻下難忘的印象。正由於此，他內心深處才始終保有一顆愛的火種。

自健在垂髫之齡，即喜愛塗抹自娛，乃至弱冠，未嘗稍減。文革初期，科班出身的西畫家陳西川先生下放至家鄉邵陽，自健幸遇貴人，這位畢業於北京中央美術學院的美術講師，為自健刻苦好學精神所動，不但時常饋以紙筆顏料，還耐心地傾囊相授。從素描的基本功夫入手，為其繪畫生涯，打下了堅實深厚的基礎。自健十分用心地學習，日復一日，他擠盡了幾乎所有的時間空隙，埋首作畫。在那個時代裡，身為「黑五類」子弟，他被剝奪了進入藝術殿堂深造的一切機會。艱難的逆境，則更能激發他勤奮倔起的雄心。他深感要成就一番事業，就得博覽眾采，廣擴視野。於是，他常常利用辛勞加班換來的時間，揣上一點點平日節儉的工錢，背上畫箱，遠離家門，四海浪跡。他遍訪名師，廣結學友。當旅資不夠時，便爬火車，宿街頭，吞乾糧，途中的艱難，自不堪言。而坎坷的旅程，則磨煉出他堅忍的毅力和寬厚的胸懷，他所得更多的，則是寶貴的知識與靈感。在他那富有傳奇色彩的長期的自學生涯中，他的足跡幾乎踏遍了大半個中國大陸。

一九七三年，他開始第一幅油畫創作，這幅描繪鐵路勞工生活的畫作，立即在湖南省美展中嶄露頭角。此後佳作連連不斷，藝術表現技巧日趨成熟。早在考入美術學院之前，作為一名工人業餘畫家，他已有三幅油畫作品入選大陸的全國美術展覽。

一九七八年春，擇優錄取的高考制度首度恢復，他即以出類拔萃的成績，考入了廣州美術學院油畫系。然而，就在入校報到的前夕，他卻又差點因小人的誹謗而未能入院就讀，幸經老師、朋友、同事、鄰里，力持正義，才得以化險為夷，終於實現自己的夢想。良師益友，患難相助，使他感念萬分，當然，這也莫不歸功於他平日熱心爽朗的豪邁性格。可見，人間只要有真情流露的地方，永遠有著無限的希望。

縱觀李先生的藝術創作歷程，他的繪畫始終是以反應現實人生

頌揚人性情感為主。一方面，固然是因為人文主義是文藝復興後幾百年來一直歷久不衰的題裁，始終有其獨特的藝術魅力；另一方面，則是由於畫家本人在飽受冷暖無常的世間情後，心靈深處所凝聚著的一股表達人生的使命感所使然。而豐沛的人生體驗，加上堅實的藝術功力，又使他在這方面能信手拈來，揮灑自如。作為一個寫實主義的藝術家，他始終堅持自己真誠的信仰與執著的追求，他不為時尚所動，始終讓自己置根於淳厚的生活土壤之中。無論在華南的高等美術學府深造的歲月，還是在畢業後回湖南長沙藝術館任職幾年光陰中，一有時機，他便會背上畫具行囊，不辭辛勞跋涉，一頭栽進平民百姓之中，忘我的作畫，靜心地體驗，於平常樸素的日常生活之中，尋覓創作所需的寶貴靈感。他曾遠赴新疆、西藏，兩次青藏高原的涉獵，使他得以產生一大批表現中國西部古樸風情的感人作品。問及他習畫生涯中走南闖北的最愛之地，他說，還是湖南湘西山區。那是他最喜歡，也是去得最多的地方。因為在這片依然保持著淳樸民風的古老土地上，他最能找回自己許許多多童年鄉下生活的記憶，找到原始純真的人性所在。畫家筆下的「鄉土系列」中，一大批佳作的題材，便是產生於這片土地之上。《山妹》《姐姐的故事》《拔刺兒》《暖冬》《農家》《晚秋》等，在這許多畫面中，所出現的人物、家畜、道具、場景，都刻畫得栩栩如生，親切感人。孺慕情深，手足相依的人間愛，表露無遺，令人望之，不忍卒去。

畫家擅長於人物肖像。他多次畫自己的妻子和女兒，輕鬆、典雅的畫面中，總是洋溢著溫馨的情感。他畫自己年邁的父親，精細的筆法，活生生地塑造出這位普通中國老人飽經滄桑、悲忍倔強的莊嚴形象。我也非常喜歡他為我生活在大陸的九十歲母親所作的肖像。母親的慈悲、堅毅、勤勞、善良與安祥，在這幅肖像畫中表露無遺，傳神已極，尤其是母親那雙佈滿皺紋，捻動著佛珠的雙手，更道出了十分豐富的內涵。

畫家直接取材於美國現實社會的「流浪人系列」，同具有感人肺腑的魅力。畫家以精湛的表現技巧，將這些無家可歸，風餐露宿的街頭流浪人體現得逼真可觸。徬徨、苦悶、無奈的面容下，依然透露出人性的尊嚴。面對這一幅幅真切動人的畫面，我可以想象出，畫家曾多次冒著危險，深入到洛杉磯流浪人中採集素材，切身體驗的種種情景，悲憫愛心注入畫中，豈能不扣人心弦？

如今，我已年過花甲，像我這樣從戰亂年代走過來的人，也許都曾有過幾十年前戰爭災難的痛苦記憶。尤其日本侵華期間，南京大屠殺那場震驚世界的民族大災難，令人永不能忘。當時，我才十二歲，大屠殺之後，我便在母親的攜帶下，前往橫屍遍野的南京城尋找在這場血腥災難中，失蹤了的父親。結果找尋多日，一無所獲。從此，我再也沒有見到過我的父親。也就從那時起，我離開了母親的懷抱，在南京的棲霞山披剃出家。

半個多世紀雖已過去，而大屠殺中不堪入目的慘狀，至今仍常常出現在我眼前，令我激憤不平。人類這一慘絕人寰的歷史悲劇，絕不可忘記！絕不能重演！

一天，在欣賞李先生的新作後，我向他問道：是否能作一幅表現南京大屠殺的油畫？李先生隨即表示：這恰好是他曾經有過的創作欲願，只是身在大陸時，諸多條件所限，未能如願。來到美國後，現實環境更不可能實現自己的這一願望。而如今有了理想的創作環境和條件，他相信定能畫出一幅大作。

幾個月後，當我再次返回洛杉磯時，走進李先生畫室，一幅幾乎占據了整個牆面的巨作，居然真的呈現在我眼前。畫面氣勢悲壯軒宇，頗有震撼人心之勢。畫幅中間：堆積如山的屍塚頂端，一個從母親遺體血泊中爬出的孩童，對著蒼天嚎哭吶喊，撕裂人心。畫幅右側：悲憫沈默的和尚俯首收屍。畫幅左側：砍頭比賽

的日本軍官正揮刀狞笑。前者無緣大慈同體大悲的至愛與後者醜陋邪僻、獸慾橫流的法西斯暴行，形成了強烈而鮮明的對比。畫家可貴在他沒有停留在歷史事件的表層，而是大膽地運用了跨越時空的象徵藝術手法，使其作品更具深厚的含義和藝術感染力，也賦與作品更深刻的現實意義。難怪當這幅畫首次在洛杉磯展出的時候，能獲得那樣廣大的迴響，觀者或熱淚盈眶，或定神冥思，大家一看再看，流連忘返。

有人曾問我，我是出家僧眾，為何不請李先生畫佛菩薩的聖相呢？其實，觀世音菩薩「千處祈求千處應」，「應以何身說法即以何身度之。」佛陀也曾說：『若以色見我，以音聲求我，是人行邪道，不能見如來。』所謂：「聲色外威儀，處處留踪跡。」在人間落實愛心，自身便是觀音、彌勒，何須外求？大凡一個有所成就的藝術家，都有其自己特殊的氣質和執著的追求，令人可慰的是，李先生在藝術領域中面對現實，頌揚人文主義的藝術風格與人間佛教的慈悲入世精神得以自然的融合，致使他的藝術才華得以如此充分地、全面地發揮，給這個世界產生出這麼多豐厚的精神食糧。

如同許許多多來到美國的大陸藝術家一樣，初抵美國，李先生也曾歷經困頓窘厄的處境。生活、學習的雙重壓力，曾使他一直無法去表達內心的創作願望。因此，一旦理想的機運出現在他眼前的時候，他便格外地珍惜。他把自己全部的熱情都投入在創作中，廢寢忘食，夜以繼日。每天工作十幾個小時，在長達一年半的時間裡，他竟然從未度過一個完整的休息日。我讚他的工作就是最好的修行，而李先生則表示，在藝術這條道上，他永遠都會是一個苦行僧。

李先生從不滿足自己已達到的水準，他深感要使自己進入更高的藝術境界，就必須對西方傳統的藝術精湛技法，深入究研，兼容並蓄進而才能形成自己特有的藝術語言與風格。兩年前，當他還在困頓之時，他就兩度專程赴紐約、華盛頓、波士頓等地的著名藝術博物館進行研習。他認為對一個堅持寫實主義的藝術家來說，博物館是一個最好的課堂。因為他能夠從自己崇拜的歷代藝術大師的原作中，直接吸取營養。

李先生的瀝血耕耘，終於結下了成功的碩果。如今一大批凝聚著他心血的作品，已展示在人們的眼前。今年五月，他在洛杉磯的首次展覽，即以其樸實典雅、強烈而親切的嶄新面貌，吸引了無數前往觀賞的中外觀眾。在當今社會，商業化藝術和極端自我表現盛行的空間裡，這樣一批表現生活現實，凝注著人間真情的作品，猶如一朵純淨的白蓮，自迷濛之中脫穎而出，顯得格外清新絢麗、真樸自然。從而贏得廣大觀眾與評論家高度的讚賞。隨著這批作品將在世界更多地方巡迴展出，我堅信李先生的藝術定會為越來越多的人們所喜愛；隨著時間的推移，也將更顯現出他作品的藝術價值與社會價值。

「一個成功的男人背後，都有一位偉大的女性」李先生也不例外。他的夫人王丹慧女士是位溫文嫺淑、蘭心蕙質的詩人。她不惜自己的事業發展，而抽出大量時間和心力，支持丈夫的事業。除了將家庭照顧得有條不紊外，還幫助先生搜集資料、構思創作……，功不可沒。細心的觀眾，從「母女系列」中，也許不難發覺，丹慧女士還是畫中十分優秀的模特兒。

欣聞李自健先生將輯畫成冊，故不揣淺陋，為之作序。祈願大家都能用「心」來欣賞這本畫冊，更盼望藉此能喚起對生命的尊重與熱愛。

星雲 1992年10月於佛光山

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一九二七年出生於江蘇楊州，十二歲在南京棲霞山披剃出家。一九六七年開創堪稱世界佛教十二大聖跡的台灣佛光山。一生致力於人間佛教之推動，對佛教教育，文化、慈善等事業，卓然有成。信眾及佛光山分別院遍布世界五大洲，於佛教現代化和國際化的發展，厥功甚偉。

著作有《釋迦牟尼佛傳》、《玉琳國師》、《無聲的歌唱》、《覺世論叢》、《星雲禪語》、《星雲法語》、《海天遊踪》、《星雲大師講演集》等。

PREFACE

Rather than causality or coincidence, it was the bond of mutual perception towards love generated from the arduous experience which made me acquaint with Mr. Li Zi Jian.

While I was in the U.S. on an itinerant dharma preaching tour in 1991, I was invited to chair a woman's dharma preaching session held in Alhambra City, Los Angeles. Ingeniously the sponsor struck a decorative convergence by exhibiting oil paintings along the hallway which led to the venue. Due to the tight schedule and the fact that I had never been good at painting, I could only give them a hurried look. Yet, when my eyes scanned a painting entitled "PREGNANCY", I could not but stand motionless for a while. In this painting, a young woman lowers her head, stares, and ponders as she appears to be holding her breath and listening to the palpitations of the fetus in her bulging abdomen. Her face is replete with maternal love. It seems that the world's truth, kindness, and beauty all centers in this woman. Why? Oh! Yes. "PREGNANCY" is the best and the most beautiful expectation in the universe wherein all "expectations" demand kindness and patience which infer peacefulness and strength respectively. The proper combination of peacefulness and strength propels the universe to multiply endlessly. This truth of dependent origination remains genuine in the world. But, who was the painter? Who, on earth, could interpret the connotation of "PREGNANCY" so skillfully and thoroughly by a painting brush?

On the return trip, looking at the constant flow of people and cars outside the window, I reflected: in this criticizing and besetting society, how I can wish that someone could be like the painter, to dip the tip of his brush pen with love, to paint the real joy and pain of the world and to vividly display the kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity of Buddhism on the paper.

A few months later, through the introduction of Mr. Wu Chien-hsiung, a young man brought his palette to Hsi Lai Temple to portray me with oil painting. Page by page, I began to flip through a painting album which he brought along. The album collected his past works. When the painting entitled "PREGNANCY" again came into my sight, my heart was then filled with extreme surprise and joy.

Oh! That touching oil painting was done by this young painter for his pregnant wife. The sincerity and the esthetics of the material overflow in his other works as well. Pictures of country life displayed profoundly with strong affection inter alia touched my heart most. I presumed that an artist could not reach such a state if he did not possess profound experience towards life notwithstanding his ample potentiality.

During the short conversation with Mr. Li Zi Jian, I sensed that this young painter in front of me owned an extraordinary experience in life and a simple and sincere disposition of an artist. He was not only exclusively talented, but also had abundant ideals. Unfortunately, the pressure of life had ceased his artistic creation and forced him to paint for the living ever since he has arrived in the States two years ago. It was truly pitiful and hurting to let such an excellent talent be concealed from recognition. Therefore, I took the initiative to propose that I supported him whole-heartedly to carry on and develop his artistic pursuit, and within few years he should, for the sake of all beings, paint one hundred oil paintings based on the theme of "Love". In

addition, I suggested that in his paintings, he may embody Chinese ethnic traits of fortitude, complaintlessness despite hardships and criticisms, making concessions for accommodation, etc. I hoped that he could regain his painting style and create an artistic world of his own. Mr. Li was not only deeply moved and promised with joy, he also mentioned: "You are my bosom friend". Honestly speaking, was I not sharing with him my feelings toward the hardship that I had experienced in the last sixty years?

The next day, Mr. Li left his original narrow and small habitation. His whole family moved into "Montellano Lodge" provided by me. On the premises of the spacious, tranquil, beautiful and transcendent living environment, Mr. Li was able to concentrate his mind on painting. Thus it consoled me inasmuch as I had realized my humble wish.

Thereafter, Mr. Li unveiled a new page of his artistic life. His artistic inspiration outran like springs. His new works were accomplished successively. Working very hard and exerting determinedly, he, with an amazing efficiency, completed eighty and more paintings in one and a half years.

Though I did not know painting, I appreciated the works permeated with genuine feelings of human beings. Everytime I arrived in Los Angeles from a worldwide Dharma preaching tour, I always took some time to visit Mr. Li's studio to appreciate his paintings no matter how busy I was. The real image of American wanderer caused me to contemplate; and the overflowing affection permeated in the mother-and-daughter series brought me feelings of warmth. Especially those paintings displaying the image of common Chinese and the scene of ordinary life often were reminiscent of my childhood and fanciful thoughts. Painting is a book without words. Millions of words can be expressed in one single painting without the slightest bit of exaggeration. By all means, to appreciate Mr. Li's affecting paintings, the viewers might perceive the painter's profound experience and expression towards life and the world. Judging from several amiable talks with Mr. Li, I deeply felt that without the growth in adversity as well as compassionate and gentle personality, the painter's works would not embrace such a touching charm. "Like the painting, like the painter", indeed it is.

Mr. Li Zi Jian once led a real tough life. In 1954, he was born in an ordinary family in Shou-Yang, Hunan province, China. There were ten sibs in total who were either elder or younger than him. In his childhood, his parents engaged in commercial activities. His family was a well-to-do one. However, with the passage of time and the vicissitudes of life, his family fell into a predicament. As there were many mouths to feed, and the rationed food was not sufficient to sustain the livelihood, Mr. Li's father was compelled to conduct illegal trade. Unfortunately, it came to light and ten years of miscarriage of justice, like a disaster descended from the sky, fell on Mr. Li's father. Thereafter, all members of the family, from the cradle to the old, met with misfortune. Mr. Li's sibs were exiled to the rural communities to live a rootless life. Mr. Li's mother was often appraised and restrained. Several times she tried to commit suicide, but, given consideration to her young children, she carried on a life bearing disgrace and insults. Before his school age, the young Zi Jian began to share the heavy burden of the family by picking up cigarette butts, coal lees, and orange peels, and exchanging them for money. As he grew a bit older, he made

a living by beating stones, setting up vending stands, baby-sitting, and the like. At the age of thirteen and fourteen, with a skinny body, he had shouldered the burden that only adults could do. Salvaging river sands, filling and digging earth, carrying goods in the docks, towing boats, and so on. Hardly were there any money-making coolies that he had not done. Later, by taking a roundabout course, he came to the mountainous Hsian-Hsi, the western Hunan province, and took the arduous task of building railroads. Before entering the university, he had been a pincer worker in a small and shabby plant for six years. The adverse circumstances sharpened his will of fortitude and the hard life consummated him the perseverance of ever-upward invigoration.

In his youth, even though his family was poor, still, he was a morally and academically excellent student in school. His humble family background, however, repeatedly incurred him mistreats and insults. Luckily, under the influence of his elder brothers and sisters, in his early years, he read many classics of the Western humanism. He indulged himself in the worlds created by works of Leo Tolstoy, Honore de Balzac, and Ernest Hemingway. Most of all, Jack London's biography spurred him to explore and aspire after the kaleidoscopic world.

Riding on a serial waves of the Red Guard, he travelled in Shanghai, Su-Chou, and Hang-Chou with a few pennies. In a time of no conscience, he witnessed countless miserable tragedies and he also personally experienced barbaric humiliation. It was a world without love. Yet, the warmth of his loving mother, the deep affection of his elder sibs, and the caress of his neighbors had been engraved on his indelible memory. All these had contributed to the ember of love which had always been kept in the depth of his heart.

In his youth, Zi Jian amused himself by painting. This inclination did not lessen a bit even when he came of age. At the early period of the Cultural Revolution, Mr. Chen Hsi-tuang, who had received professional training of Western style painting, was exiled to Shou-Yang. Fortunately Zi Jian came across this distinguished painter. This lecturer of fine arts, who was graduated from the Central Fine Arts Academy in Beijing, was so moved by the enduring and diligent Zi Jian, that he not only often gave Zi Jian papers, painting brushes, and pigments, but patiently conferred all he had learned on Zi Jian. To start with the basic skill of sketching has firmly laid a deep solid foundation for his painting career. Zi Jian took heart to learn all the skills. Day by day, he squeezed almost all his spare time to immerse himself in painting. In that peculiar era, he, being an offspring of the "Black Five Category", was deprived of all possible opportunities of pursuing advanced study in the palace of fine arts.

The distress of the adverse environment further inspired his ambition to strive for visibility. In order to achieve his career successfully, he deeply felt that there was a dire need to extend and broaden his vision. Thus he often made use of the time earned from doing overtime work and pathetic hire saved by practicing frugality and austerity in his daily life, to lead an odyssey life by putting on his painting case and leaving far away from home. He had called on prestigious painting masters all over the places while he made friends with his fellow painting pals extensively. At moments of running out of money, he climbed up to the trains, slept on streets, and swallowed dried food. The hardship encoun-