

霍春阳中国画册

Huo Chunyang's Paintings



瓊枝
合在
瓊臺

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霍春陽 中国画集

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霍春陽

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陽春霽

简介

霍春阳，1946年生于河北省清苑县，1969年毕业于天津美术学院并留校任教，现为教授，硕士生导师。中国美术家协会会员、中国书法家协会会员、天津美术家协会副主席、天津文史馆馆员、中国青年美协顾问、《人民日报》神州书画院特聘画家、新华社新华书画院特聘画家、中央电视台书画院特聘画家，享受国务院特殊津贴。霍春阳倾心元、明、清以来的文人画传统，经过对中国传统文化深刻领悟及对自然之美的悉心体味，潜心追求虚静空灵的艺术境界，以“净化人的心灵”为创作宗旨，主攻写意花鸟画，有多幅作品在国内外展出、发表、获奖或被收藏，出版画集多种。

Postscript

Huo Chunyang was born in Qing Yuan county Hebei province in the year 1946. He was graduated from Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts in 1969 and then taught at the academy. Now he was the professor and master tutor of the academy. Mr Huo serves as the member of Chinese Art Association and Chinese Calligrapher Association, the vice president of Tianjin Artistic Association, the personnel of Tianjin Institute of Culture and History, the consultant of Tianjin Youth Art Association, and also the specially invited painter of Oriental China Painting and Calligraphy Institute of People Daily, Xinhua Painting and Calligraphy institute of Xinhua Agency and Painting and Calligraphy Institute of CCTV. At the same time he enjoys the special allowance treatment issued by the State Council. Mr Huo Chunyang prefers the tradition of Literati painting among Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasty. After grasping the traditional Chinese culture profoundly and devoting all his attention to appreciate the beauty of the nature, Mr Huo pursues the artistic level of emptiness, quiet and knngling "be flexible and unpredictable" with great concentration. Holding the principle of purifying human's soul, he focuses his attention on freehand brushwork in flower and bird painting. Up to the present, a great many paintings have been exhibited, published, awarded or collected at home and abroad. Many kinds of painting collections have been published.

静虚通大道

——谈霍春阳的花鸟画

霍春阳的花鸟画从很早就名噪四方了。20世纪70年代初期，他画的迎春花已风靡海内外，后来，天津市出版的中国画刊物命名为《迎春花》当与此不无关联。那时，他正当年华，精力旺盛，许多巨大而生机勃勃的作品给花鸟画创作增添了新的活力。但是，他更有一颗纯朴的民族之心，他重视中国画传统，更重视现实生活；干干净净、认认真真去体现当时这颇为时髦的创作思想主题。他善于学习固有的中国画技巧，刻苦训练笔墨功力，并以新鲜活泼的生命感受与激情将这些法式使用得生龙活虎，给人留下了朝气蓬勃清新感受。即使从现在的眼光看，他的这些作品仍然是正直真诚而引人注目的。

从近代中国画的发展来看，津门画派有其特殊的意义。总体上讲，它与海派、岭南派有一定的相似之处，即在所谓“求新”的旗帜下实施着“通俗”的追求。它们或借洋法，或凭己意，倾向于“状物设色”的道路；文化品格上难免有“就事论事”和“太似则媚俗”之嫌。但津门画派与海派和岭南派不同，由于特殊的地理位置与辛亥革命后的特殊人文环境，津门画派更多受到宫廷画风与民间画工的双重影响而较少“洋泾浜”的深入介入。因此，它既有重视严密技巧法度的一面，又有生动活泼的通俗的一面。近现代天津国画家们，很好地把握并利用了这些特点，将其发展成了一种以小写意笔法为主的、清新而明丽的风格。霍春阳当年正是继承和发扬这一风格的佼佼者，正因为他在处理这一风格时抓住了“笔墨”与“生活”这两个关键，使他在重视法度时没有落入“俗格”的套路之中，并能体悟出笔墨本身对中国画的关键作用与其体现的文化精神，也使他在对待现实时没有随波逐流地与世推移，而是在对自己的生活作更深的理解和发掘。

但是，说实在话，从一种已成风格的样式转向对艺术档次和品位的追求，不但是困难的，而且是有风险的。尤其是“以法入道”的路与“由象臻理”的要求，其困难就更不一而足了。霍春阳近二十年里，为此付出了巨大的努力，而且在艰辛的劳动中有了可喜的收获。多年以来，霍春阳非常重视中国画与中国文化的表里关系，他不愿停留在绘画表面形态的探索中，而是希望从绘画的特征深入到文化内涵之中。如何真正地将一种文化所包含的基本人生态度与基本精神情操，转化成一种绘画语言，而不是寄托于某种物象或情境，如何通过这种语言的个性化来主动把握绘画对文化的促进与造就。这既是中国画发展的核心问题，也是学有所成的霍春阳进一步提高品位的难题。

人们都强调着“画外功夫”的修养，对于一般意义上的努力，无非是强调从诗文、书法、篆刻等不同的民族艺术门类之中学习与吸取养分，甚至从更广阔的音乐、戏曲等其他

艺术门类或者从历史文化、山川草木的学习、浏览与借鉴中提高自身文化素养，使之具有更高的眼界和心性。但是对于一个有一定造诣的画家，相应的“画外功夫”之选择与修养，应该是对自身特征的思索与对文化个性的选择相适应的。霍春阳没有在一般性的文化修养上切入这种探索，他选取了从中国哲学思想入手，去参照自己的绘画与人生。他非常重视中国哲学中那种深远广大的统一精神，他从宇宙观和艺术精神的角度来认识和理解这种统一中的和谐。所谓“大道归一”“天人合一”等哲学思想已不再是一种抽象的原则，而是无所不在的统一和协调。他在切入这种境界时，同样由自身的合一入手，既强调了身心的同一，也强调了技术与艺术、内容与形式、题材与手法等诸多方面的同一。他喜欢从老、庄等与艺术较多直接关联的哲学流派入手，去静观默察外物与自身，他的思考也是一种宁静而自得的。这些，可从他作品的气象变化中体察出来。他选择了渐渐变得单纯的语汇，安静地琢磨这些语汇多方面的含义，不但把其中象征性和寓意性的内涵变成一种平和的平常境界，还把那些由笔墨气的直接交织而成的个性付诸形色的感受，他的花竹翎毛都变得清淡而平常，淡青、浅赭、粉红、幽白，是他常用的色彩，他以这种宁静的单纯把笔墨趣味直推观众的眼帘，并将其中所包含的哲思细细地流布出来，形成了他新的绘画风格。

在霍春阳的画中，一般意义上的标志、知识、记号等方面的干扰被降低至很低的程度，那些学问、修养、情感等方面的卖弄与夸张也难觅踪迹。他只是用极通俗的题材来作为艺术的载体，紧紧抓住了“笔墨”这一语言体系，深入到“体悟”这一文化中特有的认识境界中，他选择了一种静、虚的哲学精神，将单纯化成了一种绘画的气象表现出来。可以看出，这其中包含了他对许多前代绘画大师的仰慕学习，也包含了他对自己多种尝试的舍弃，还包含他对多种中国画语言体系，例如书法、诗文、篆刻等的个性化的追寻。我以为他的努力是成功的，他的道路是正确的。静、虚的精神是一种平和与宽容，也是一种个性的选择。我们已可感到他作品中那种宁静平和的境界慢慢滋生开去，一种个性的、耐人咀嚼的绘画技巧渐渐沉淀下来，一种既生动活泼，又通俗平常的高雅淡泊的风格正在悄悄地逐渐形成。

陈履祥写于北京

序二

守望梦中的净土

——霍春阳和他的绘画

经济基础决定上层建筑。中国经历了太多太多的苦难、曲折、破坏、运动、否定。今天终于在天时、地利、人和高度谐调统一中，使中国经济进入快车道，正加速迅猛地向大国目标。反映中国画坛——民族精神展示的舞台上，百花齐放、百家争鸣的同时，也催化了百草丛生，物欲横流。包装、炒作喧嚣尘上。作秀、媚眼充斥于大病初起的民众面前，令人炫目、令人惊悚、令人应接不暇……真有点乱哄哄。“你方唱罢我登场”的纷乱与无序、浮躁与惶恐。此时，我们来欣赏霍春阳的作品，无疑是茫然中养目、意乱时养心、纷杂之中掬山泉之水洗面，给人以清澈和冷静、陶醉和超脱。

“落花无言，人淡如菊。”这正是他人品、画品追求的理想境界。几十年书海耕探寻，几十载砚边沉思修炼，深悟出中国绘画之真谛。以简淡冲和修身养命，以天人合一中庸、中巨为理想目标，反映到他的画作之中，无论是他的梅兰竹菊，还是他的虫草秋荷，无一不显现出静寂、沉凝、淡雅、清纯。悉心隐隐体味你能被中国文化之精深、中国文化之博大而叹服，为这方水土养育了一个艺术感觉能力如此之好的民族而骄傲。我们曾经的辉煌已被百年的屈辱而黯淡，我们的圣人先贤曾被列强肢解分化，已被洋奴所出卖践踏。但民族精神、民族气节、民族的凝聚——以民族文化的形式呼唤、渗悟、传承、统领着一个民族存活下来。尘埃落定后，民族文化以其强有力的生命力迫使全球分成了东西文化两个体系。

西方艺术是科学的艺术，东方艺术是哲学的艺术，西方的艺术讲究表现，而东方艺术追求禅悟，禅悟让人在静虚中去超脱、去检点、去反省、去净化灵魂，让人的思想去体味领受天人合一、无对之境的最高境界。霍春阳深谙此理，他从中国哲学思想入手，体会于先贤至哲，精钻细研于魏晋宋元。从他的画作中，表现出一个中国文人的清高与气节，淡雅与飘逸，博学与谦恭，反映出一种内在的传统延续，又映照于现代审美，淡淡溢出清新而明目的气息，娓娓诉说着二一介书生真挚情怀。

清代王概在《画花浅说》中提及“花以形式为第一，得其形式，自然生动活泼”。霍春阳深究其理，“得其形式”，挥洒自如，迷情于笔端，融意于墨色。他所画的鸟雀，独具灵气，意态传神。他所画的花卉，纯净洒脱，雅致高古。合其花鸟绰约多姿，极富生机，又意趣盎然，传递着一种易于理解，而又耐人寻味的艺术特色，反映出画家的率真质朴。

画品即人品，画品的高低正是人品高低的展示，欣赏霍春阳的画作就如欣赏霍春阳的人品一样。他得到于“自强着强，至柔为刚”的老庄思想，取法于中庸、中正、圆通的孔儒文脉，修炼于简淡冲和，即静虚空灵的理想境界。这一切无不任在他的画中渗透泛溢出来，

他固守“以淡寓浓、以简寓繁、以疏寓茂、以轻寓重”的创作理念，不求繁芜，不重尺幅。一枝寒梅，几棵翠竹，一捧兰草，三两点秋菊，无一不给人以悠远沉静、古雅之美，让人身心清爽、神志陶醉，通过他用笔之严谨、用墨之独到，去感受他的用情至真、表意至善、造型之美，去体悟他的心思，自觉地去净化灵魂，以达到人格的过滤，潜移默化中，回归于万物之本，领会于中国传统花鸟画的精致与意韵。

霍春阳崇拜老庄，但又不妄自菲薄，又能以当代人的感受去观照审视现代，他吸纳传统精华，又表达出当代人的审美趣味。他画传统题材，又寓意表达出现代人的精神：《无言可人》一枝剪梅表露出一种坚韧顽强和严峻于孤寂中奋发，而又内蓄百折不挠的精神内涵，笔力所至，韧性如簧，展示出超然顽强的乐观。《君子之品》，中间布局不作题词，画面干净整洁，中锋行笔于枝干，浓墨铸叶，潇潇洒洒，神韵犹至。寓意为做人之高洁“贫贱不能移，富贵不能淫，威武不能屈”。这正是吾民做人之根本啊。再看他的《意清池》，一片蓬叶，几节莲藕……活脱脱一个一清二白。中国人素以出污泥而不染以澄静怀，画面简洁大方，毫无刻意雕琢之感，君子风度跃然纸上，君子品格潜入画中，他独具匠心的布局，貌似无意，实则有心。那是对周围事物的认知，也是生活积累通过艺术形式从心中的自然流露。

“触目横斜千万朵，赏心只有两三只。”霍春阳哲思融于韵致，至味化于淡泊，着墨不多，跃然临风，他画的《山葩香远》以兰抒怀，正如画题所言：“洁身自好无尘垢，一片冰心永向阳。”几丛兰草盎然生机，不与他人争宠，不与尘寰置气，从容大度不卑不亢。虚静中求淡雅，黑白中求疏密，他用娴熟精到的笔墨，准确生动地点化着谦谦君子之风，并为我们营造了一个悠然恬淡、神韵飘逸的画中境界。

苏轼曾以饮食中的梅盐为譬，指出：“梅之于酸，盐之于咸，饮食不可无盐梅，而其美常在咸酸之外。”通过梅盐咸酸，旨在告诉花卉的艺术最高表现，是在画外，而不是在画内。是的，霍春阳的花鸟画，画面洁净，用笔洗练，气韵贯通，惜墨如金，尽得风流，全得力于对中国文化传统的学习领会思考，深悟中国绘画传统哲学思想。用自己的心血和生命固守我们传统的文化精神，他认真研习黄荃父子及宋元诸家，深入到中国文化的内涵中提炼自己的绘画语言，不被外物所左右，绘制出无数面彩旗路标，告诉当今，乃至后人，此路为正道，大道可行。

当今中国画界，浮躁投机，鱼龙混杂，各种思想、各种观念充斥于中国的角角落落，更有甚者，兜售自己作品如同街头小贩，完全丧失中国文人传统，表现出猥琐与低下，平庸与世俗。此时此刻，我们欣赏霍春阳的作品，无疑是一种回归和净化，注释着一个中央与民众的共同呼声，反对自虐，共建一个和谐的社会。静下心来细细咀嚼，不自觉中我们会

穿越时空去聆听老庄、孔圣的教诲。我们的眼前会浮现出陆放翁才情回溢的咏叹：“零落成泥碾作尘，只有香如故。”我们也会徐徐走进周敦颐：“……独出淤泥而不染，濯清涟而不妖，中通外直，不蔓不枝，香远溢清，亭亭静植……”

我们的民族因有如此精深博大的文化遗产而绵延千年，我们民族代代总有像霍春阳这样的志士仁人用生命守护着中华命脉——中国文化精神并弘扬光大，这就是我们民族的传统和未来。

习成

与道适往 著手成春

——解读霍春阳的文化精神底蕴

深具文化慧根的人，其先天禀赋必依赖于后天的学养积累和品性修为得以彰显。就绘事而言，作品的艺术张力并不取决于“洛阳纸贵”或笔墨技巧，它决定于作画者的文化价值含量及其因此而产生的社会影响。霍春阳便是一位处心弘忍，耽于中国传统文化“历久弥新”的画家，他以淡远冲和、妙造天籟的画中境界伸张着中华往圣先贤的绝响与正义。

霍春阳出身并不显赫，祖上虽有出入翰林院者，但也名不见经传，更没听他与霍去病、霍光这样的高迈将相套过近乎。日本人服输的转年，霍春阳出生于冀中平原的一个普通村落，越三年，毛泽东定鼎北京，从那一时刻至今，他阅尽了共和国的沧桑变故、世事荣辱。六十年流光岁月，他的人生经历可以简括为生于战乱、长于困窘、志学于忧患之秋、成名于多事之际、不惑于改革开放之初、通会于物欲横流之今。可见，霍春阳是名副其实的困而知之，他在经历了困惑、忧虑、不解之后，义无反顾地专注于华夏文明的传统经典，数十载不坠此志，并奉之为精神圭臬，无论是艺术理念和人生追求，都能折射出他近乎殉道者的虔诚心态。

中华文明自先秦至汉唐，为后世树立了太多的文化丰碑和千古绝唱。中庸思想、仁恕之道乃至侠者风神造就了汉唐时代奋发向上，以身许国的高贵气质，而“吾善养吾浩然之气”的精神境界笃定了多少志士仁人内修独善其身、外用兼善天下的人格典范，遂能千古以还英雄不死、仁者永存。对此，瞻之弥高，唯恐不诚，不诚即是不孝——霍春阳先生如是说。

霍春阳喜欢这样的句子：“多瞻仰前辈一日，则胸中多一分丘壑，多一分丘壑，则少一分鄙陋。”文化是中华民族的血脉，它流淌了五千年延续至今从未贫血，可谓道统深厚。道统者，即文化传统，每一个中国人都应为之骄傲并欣喜不已。

作为真正孔学精神中通往仁道的根底，在乎中庸。中庸之为大道，并非是为行为认知上的折衷，它是度，是恰到好处地思想支配能力。向往古人，期待得道，遂有恒心，有恒心则能知其不可而为之，则能求仁得仁、求义得义，则能人人为我、我为人人，则能善小而为、恶小不为，终能刚柔相济、磊落泰然。刚生于柔，文源于璞，故而勇者不争，辩者无言、大象亡形、大音稀声。雄强源于至柔，因此至美，美之极即雄强至极，故天下莫能与之争。言至此，霍春阳如坐春风。

当今社会普遍存在着一种病态症候，心性浮躁加之审美疲软，面对传统文化这至纯的

母乳所抱以冷漠和不屑的态度，令人心寒。工业文明给我们带来太多的物欲实惠，然而“沉于物、溺于德”的古老忠告言犹在耳，物质享受无法提供保持赤子童心的足够养分，豪富高官未必具备高贵的人格，具备一流的人格既能拥有福祿，更能使福祿尽其所用。然而，今天人们在审美追求上已不再追求超越时空的精神意义，更多地是对稍纵即逝短期快感的沉溺与期待，仿佛瘾君子，吸罢这口，马上进入对下一口的渴望，因为肤浅无聊，于是喜新厌旧，陷入病态般的恶性循环。追星、炒股、网络漫游，无不类似女人面对“每天都有新感觉”的美容广告为表象美去忍饥挨刀……这并不稀奇，中华传统人文精神的底蕴，至宋代程朱理学已被曲解了很多，而明清两代的为政者出于私欲，在程朱学派的基础上邀圣人之名以成其牢笼天下士子的阴谋。接踵而来的新文化运动，虽然抱着富国强兵的美好愿望，却在西风东渐的历史氛围中不无盲目地托起了西方未必多圆的月亮，试图借光砸烂孔家店，加之随后的战祸频仍，以及代之而来的“文革”浩劫、中国传统文化的精髓几近面目全非。因此，当今社会需要更多像霍春阳这样宅心仁厚的人，持一己之长探古发微，以其折而不挠的精神，借助人品和画品将先贤的精神韵致通过休惕报之三五知己，推而广之，泽被当代；这便是“历久弥新”。历久不是单纯的继承，它是在与古人相互眷顾的过程中，对先贤经验的丰富与发展。时空的拉近和无限延伸，为古今主客体间的融合，创造了不断深入心灵的美的感受，故而对不断深入更新产生无限的崇敬和期待，此时的更新系于古人对我们敞开的胸怀，是对古今两个概念的双重肯定；它缘于对古人无限潜能的重新发现而产生的由衷喜悦。历久是内修而不求外用之功，因此定力深厚，生命也因文化价值的延续得以无限的扩张，这是在雄厚人文底蕴支配下的真实生命的扩张。在这个意义上，霍春阳做到了很多画家做不到的事，也正因如此，通会之际、人书俱老的艺术境界，作用于霍春阳身上较之同道提前了十年，这源于他对素朴之美的一往情深。

对于美的追求，游于艺而成大器者都会经历质文三变、周而复始的悟道过程，即由平正而求险绝再复归平正的道理。绚烂之极，归于平淡，是一种高品位的追求，是既雕且琢、复归于朴的心态，其魅力在于对华丽藻饰的超越，这是一种觉悟。而霍春阳在完成了复归于朴之后，以至情至性，本色纯真的心境突破了对朴素之美的自觉追求，下意识之间置身于不自觉的本真境界，这是对古人“素以为绚”“绘事后素”的完美诠释。

传统文化是霍春阳精神世界中的大自然，而绘画艺术则是释放这大自然中阳光雨露的最后纽带，也是霍春阳人格魅力的传神写照。他从未想过超越齐白石，也未曾攀比潘天寿，他只是想古人若见他或许会称兄道弟，他的人品、画品冲和圆融，清新得宛如新婴儿落地时的第一声啼哭。

面对他的画作，我们感受不到惊世的悲哀和骇俗的震撼，能感受到的是如沐春风般的中和之气，中则正、正则和、和则宽、宽则大度雍容，所谓喜怒哀乐之未发，发而皆中节，是为中和，致中和、天地位焉，万物育焉。正是这种安详冲和之气，才能真正孕育出中华文明魂魄中固有的元气——浩然正气。这便是霍春阳对于当今画坛乃至中国文化艺术界的存在价值和现实意义。

章 迟

Quietness and emptiness lead to great Dao

—impression of Huo Chunyang's bird-and-flower paintings

Huo Chunyang's bird-and-flower paintings have long been famous. In the 1970s, 'spring celebration flowers' he painted has received wide attention both in China and overseas. The journal 'Spring celebration flowers' published in Tianjin was named after this painting. At that time, he was at his most inspired and vigorous, creating many a vivid and graceful painting which adds color and vitality to bird-and-flower paintings. What's more, he had a unsophisticated national heart, put special stress on Chinese painting tradition, and laid more emphasis on the real life, assiduously trying to express the popular theme at that times. He was adept at learning traditional Chinese painting skills, industriously practicing the ability to wield brush and ink, and made good use of the skills, the ability to create lifelike paintings, full of vigor and vitality. Even from today's perspective, his paintings still attract attention due to their honesty and integrity.

The school of Tianjin Paintings has special significance in the development of China's modern paintings. Generally, it bears some resemblance to Hai and Lingnan schools, emphasizing popularity as well as creativity. They use traditional or western skills to paint, maybe a little bit conservative. However, there is a striking difference between Tianjin and Hai, Lingnan schools: Tianjin paintings are more influenced by court painting and folk painting styles than by western painting styles owing to special geographical location and the special cultural situation after the Xinhai Revolution. So, Tianjin school emphasizes both careful and delicate skills and the characteristics of popular folk paintings. Contemporary Tianjin painters draw on these special traits and develop them into a fresh, chaste style based on freehand brushwork. Huo Chunyang was among the best of them, just because he exactly grasp two key factors, brush and ink, and life. His paintings are professional but not secular, and he can comprehend how the brushes and ink are so important and demonstrate the spirits of Chinese culture. He didn't follow the crowd in painting and deeply appreciated his own life.

To be frank, however, pursuing from a routine style to higher artistic level and taste is both tough and dangerous. The way from outside appearance to innermost meanings is even more difficult. Huo Chunyang has been fruitful in this field through some two decades of hard work. For years, he has specially underlined the correlations between Chinese paintings and Chinese culture, not satisfied with the exploration of superficial skills, but hoping to further his adventure from the painting to the culture.

How to transform the basic outlook on life in a specific culture into a kind of painting language and how to handle the impetus paintings do to culture through individualization of the language, those are the key of the development of Chinese paintings and a difficulty Huo Chunyang has to conquer.

Everyone underscores the character and quality outside the paintings, and for most people that means the studies of poetry, calligraphy, sculpture, and more generally music, plays, history, culture and landscapes. But for a more professional artist like Huo Chunyang, that means the meditation and exploration of his own character. Huo Chunyang ponders on his paintings and his life from the angle of Chinese philosophy. He laid special stress on the far-reaching and integrated spirits of Chinese philosophy, learning and comprehending the harmony in this integration from the outlook on cosmos and artistic spirits. Philosophical ideas like 'all sound theories are basically one' and 'man is an integral part of nature' are no longer abstract principles, but the ever-present integration and harmony. He emphasizes the integration of body and soul, of art and technology, of form and content and of themes and means. He enjoys silently observing himself and the outside world, his meditation calm and content. One can feel this from the varieties of his paintings. He chooses the gradually simpler words and quietly thinks over the diverse meanings of those words, not only turning the symbolic inner meanings to comprehensible matters, but also changing personalities to forms and colors. The flowers, bamboos and feathers he painted are simple and ordinary, his commonly used colors light green, brown, pink and white. With this silent simplicity, he demonstrates the interest of brush and ink and expresses the inmost philosophical ideas in front of the spectators, which constitute his painting styles.

In his paintings, the generally seen interference of marks, symbols etc. are lowered to an almost invisible level, and the boasting and exaggerations of knowledge, integrity, and feelings can hardly be found. He simply uses popular themes as media, tightly grasps the language of brush and ink and deeply understands the special culture. He deliberately chooses the philosophical ideas of silence and infirmness, turning simplicity into an atmosphere and expresses it. From this one can see his studies from his predecessors, the abandonees of his many trials, and the pursuit for the individualization of various Chinese painting languages, such as calligraphy, poetry and sculpture. I think his endeavor is fruitful and that he is on the right track. The spirits of silence and simplicity are a kind of calmness and tolerance, and also a choice of personality. In his works we can feel a peaceful atmosphere spreading, a special and enduring skill forming, and a vivid and graceful style gradually taking shape.

by Chen Shouxiang

Cherish the pure land in dreams

—Huo Chunyang and his paintings

The economic base predetermines the superstructure. China has seen too many miseries, twists, destructions, political movements and negations. Today she finally gains the perfect harmony of good timing, geographical convenience and public support and improves rapidly towards one of the world's economic powers. As to China's painting arena, the stage on which national spirits play, different varieties and styles of art flourish and, at the same time, human desires for material comfort prevail. There are full of turbulent packaging, advertising, flattering, cheating in this newly-recovered nation. Appreciating Huo Chunyang's paintings in this background will surely make one cool, calm, collected and intoxicated..

'Silent like falling flowers and indifferent to worldly concerns like chrysanthemums', that is the lofty realm of art and personality he endeavors to attain. Through decades of study in libraries and meditation beside inkstones, he has fathomed the quintessence of Chinese traditional paintings. Be it plum flower, orchard, bamboo, chrysanthemum, insect, grass, or lotus, his paintings always exude serenity, grace and pureness. Appreciating his paintings and the aura around them, you will be deeply owed by the extensiveness and profundity of the Chinese art and culture, and sincerely proud of this land which nurtures such an anesthetic nation. Though China's glory days faded away through a century's war and pillage, her spirits and culture were inherited. When all the dust settled, Chinese culture and art tenaciously survived and divided culture in this world into two parts: eastern culture and its western counterpart.

Western art is scientific art, whereas eastern art is philosophical art. Western art lays stress on demonstration, while eastern art put emphasis on awakening of truth. Realization of truth makes one reflect, purify his soul, and savor the harmony of man with nature. Huo Chunyang deeply knows this, from understanding Chinese ancient philosophers to studying Wei, Jin, Song and Yuan dynasties. His paintings show the combination of tradition and modern anesthetics and demonstrate the moral integrity, indifference to worldly considerations, learnedness and modesty of a Chinese scholar.

'Form is first and foremost in flower paintings. Grasping the form, you will surely get a vivid painting,' said Wang Gai, an artist in the Qing dynasty, in 'A Brief Introduction of painting flowers'. Huo Chunyang deeply understand it, getting the form and expressing meanings and feelings by brush and

ink. The birds he painted are lifelike and the flowers he painted are graceful, which conveys a comprehensible and profound artistic trait and reflects his frankness and sincerity.

Paintings demonstrate one's moral quality. Appreciation of Huo Chunyang's paintings is appreciation of his personal characteristics. He learns from Laozi and Zhuangzi's ideas 'extreme flexibility is strength', draws on Confucius 'golden mean' doctrine, and benefits from the ideal realm of simplicity and serenity. All of these are found in his paintings. He cherishes the theories of 'demonstrate thick with thin, complication with simplicity, heaviness with lightness' and does not court complication and dimension. Every bamboo, plum flower, orchard and chrysanthemum he painted sparkles with tranquility and elegance and makes one refreshed and intoxicated. And through his paintings, one can touch his feelings, understand his mind, purify one's own soul and taste the exquisiteness and significance of Chinese traditional flower-and-bird paintings.

Huo Chunyang worships Laozi and Zhuangzi, Chinese ancient philosophers, without the expense of humbling himself, and he can appreciate modern art with a modern perspective. He absorbs knowledge from traditional art and at the same time demonstrates the anesthetic taste of a modern man. He paints traditional themes, which, however, conveys modern spirits. His work 'Solitude and silence', in which a branch of plum flower is painted, exhibits persistence, diligence and optimism. 'Moral quality of gentleman', another work of him, clean and tidy, without a word on it, exudes enchanting grace. And 'limpidity of pond', a lotus leaf, several lotus roots, simple and spontaneous, shows pure soul in spite of dirty mud. The composition of the painting is carefully planned, and the charm of it is the natural expression of perfect recognition of surroundings and the accumulation of life experiences.

'Thousands upon thousands of branches is in sight, but only two or three of them suit my taste', an ancient poem has the lines. Huo Chunyang melts his philosophical ideas into the grace of his works, with a few strokes, creating fascinating masterpieces. 'Enduring fragrance of mountain blossoms' he painted conveys his ideas through orchids, as the caption says, 'a clean soul free of filth, a pure heart heading for the sun.' A couple of orchids thrive, calm and graceful, creating an easy, indifferent and peaceful atmosphere.

Su Shi, a famous poet in the Song dynasty, once drew an analogy between art and flavor: 'Plum is acid and salt is salty, which are necessary to diet, but the tastefulness of a delicacy is more than that.' By the analogy he wanted to say that the highest level of flower painting is outside the painting itself and Mr. Huo's paintings are very good examples. Benefiting from the study and meditation of Chinese