

黄永玉

版面选



黑龙江美术出版社

黄永玉画集

版画



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黄永玉，湖南凤凰县人，1924年7月9日出生。受过小学至初中二年的教育。16岁开始以绘画及木刻谋生。曾任瓷场小工、小学教员、民众教育馆员、剧团见习美术队员、报社编辑、电影编剧及美术学院教授。

写过诗、杂文、小说、剧本。

出版过画册、诗集、杂文集、木刻画集。

在中国内地和香港、澳大利亚、德国、意大利开过个人画展。





姜永玉画像（油画） / 李宝瑞

示朴琐记

黄永玉

老了，才晓得世界真大。

我一辈子都忙。为吃饭穿衣；为自己艺术的长进；为自己教育自己；没有空干别的了。人家问我为什么那么多同班同学？初中三年总共六学期，我留了五次级；五五二十五，五四二十，起码五三一十五，一百五十个老同学总是有的。几十年后，回到厦门，集美的老同学聚在一起，有时也开玩笑地帮我计算老同学的名字，现在在哪里？当什么大医师、院长、教授、将领……各类专家。

我书读得所谓的“坏”，是因为学校不好吗？不是的，集美学校在全国论师资，论设备，论风水，不是第一也是第一。我不好吗？不是的，只不过那些国文课本都是我小时候念过的；另一些数、理、化、英文，费那么多脑子去记，而我长大以后肯定用不上。

一开学，我便把领来的新书卖了，换钱买袜子、肥皂。一头钻进图书馆去。懂的也看，不懂的也看。

“书读成这副样子！留这么多级！你每回还有脸借这么多书，不觉羞耻？”

这是管图书出纳的婶娘骂我的话。

有时她干脆就说“不准借！”

我问或故意从她办公桌边走过假装到报章杂志桌子那头去。让她看到我，如果她微微笑了一笑，这说明她一早起床情绪好，我马上进书库乘虚抱一堆书到她面前。她会摇摇头，再笑一笑，留下了书卡，叹口气，暗示我无可救药，而她慈祥无边。

我甚至计算着叔叔、婶婶哪天寿诞、结婚日、孩子生日之类的喜庆日子去借书，钻个吉利的空子。

是的，留那么多级还借那么多课外书，羞不羞耻？唔！不要紧的！

我只是烦！那些数、理、化、英文课本让我烦！不借书给我也烦！有不有脸借书这句话我至今好笑，借书还要脸吗？

集美学校我第一个美术老师是郭应麟，他是真正正式的法国巴黎美术学院毕业（有的人不是），油画人物和风景都行。我敬畏他是因为我不懂油画，他提到的一些外国画家我大部分不认识。他原是集美毕业才去巴黎的。他说话喉音鼻音都重，带点洋味，穿着又很潇洒，跟在他后面走到美术馆，穿过油咖喱树和合欢树林荫，心里很神气。走廊里挂着大幅大幅他从巴黎临回来的油画，装在金框子里，其中一个老头子在钢琴边教一个漂亮至极的女孩子弹钢琴的画，让人心跳，仿佛她是郭应麟先生的亲生女儿，怕郭先生生气，只好偷偷多看了几眼。

郭先生后来到了印尼去了。几十年后我们又见过一次面，不赘叙。

郭先生走后，来了也是集美校友的朱成淦先生，听说他念过中大美术系。教务处有位教务员吴廷标先生，

也是位美术家，会剪影、雕塑、漫画。

劳作教员许其骏先生是日本留学生，也画画，竹器编织真是了不得；编出的竹器像九层象牙那样，玲珑剔透，完全看不出所以然；一经他点化，只要细心却又人人会做。我佩服、欣赏这手艺却是不耐烦专心破那些根根一样齐整的篾片，所以我也少跟许先生亲近。几十年后他老了，我去拜望他的，还跟他画了张速写。

后来又来了施游艺先生和也是集美出去的黄羲先生。

施先生教音乐也教美术，教了两下子美术，见到我们这帮学生可能心里有点虚，便专门教音乐。他唱歌真好，嗓子抖得听来舒服之极，对艺术十足真诚，不知怎的却萧然地隐去。

黄羲先生在杭州美专教过国画，我们一听就佩服立正。人瘦而黑，留微微上竖的西式长头发，音声温婉，约带点仙游地区腔调的普通话让人听来舒服。

他用了不少课时讲笔墨。铺张纸在桌上，又是墨又是水的讲笔墨浓淡交错效果，浓先淡后如何，淡先浓后又如何，很抽象，除了我和另一个高师姓郑的同学听了入味之外，别的同学都希望他马上画个美人、雀鸟看看，有点等得不耐烦了。他不急，周围的人也不敢开口。

他让我们照着他的办法做，品味品味自己做不做得来？他说，凭这些笔墨水份在纸上来来去去，什么具体东西都不画，懂得到它的妙处，就算是悟得笔墨了。到时候你再写山水花鸟人物时一定就快乐得多。

他画了一些山水花鸟让那些同学去临，单叫我和姓郑的同学在他屋子里看他画人物。

福建仙游这地方非常了不起，出了许多大画家，李霞、李诘、李耕、黄羲，以后还陆续地一辈又一辈的年青画家出现。

这一帮画家都是把纸绷在墙上画画的。李耕老头用左手画画，手指夹缝握几管不同颜色的笔，可以随意地换来换去，他那时怕60多了吧，一撮又硬又短的胡子，一顶毡帽，不按季节换长袍子，趿拉着布鞋走四五里长街去吃云吞，后头跟一串小孩……

李耕是我至今还很佩服景仰的人，我暗暗受着他的影响，他的佛，他的胖弥勒，他的岩洞、山脉有很渊雅的法度。

听说黄羲先生和他有很好的关系，论年龄，该是个忘年交或是学生，我不敢说。

黄羲先生给我们两个人讲了些人物画规律的问题。头发、胡子、衣裙、面容的染色步骤……我记得点滴不漏。

我叔叔知道黄羲先生给我开“小灶”，当着许多同事说：“你们这样搞是大学专科水平了！”

他是董事长，可以打官腔：

“怎么？你画屈原？你懂得什么屈原？”

在校展上，我画了张在江边的屈原，黄羲先生给题了两句鲁迅的诗句：

“泽畔有人吟不得，秋波渺渺失离骚”

旁边的芦苇和江波都是黄先生帮着加添的，胡子他也做了些工夫。像爹妈在客人面前小儿子唱歌表演时忘形地帮腔。

我胆子来得很大，冲着叔叔说：

“我当然懂！不懂就不画！”

“喔！你讲讲看，屈原是做什么的？”

“……悲时俗之迫阨兮，愿轻举而远游，质菲薄而无因兮，焉托乘而上浮？遭沉浊而污秽兮，独郁结其谁语……”

“你唔哩唔噜什么？”训育主任王某人说。

我听到叔叔轻轻对王某人说：

“屈原的《远游》篇……”，又转过来对我：“你不好好读书，几时去啃这些东西了？”

“我小学时候啃的！”

黄羲先生为这件事偷偷得意，他怕我的叔叔，我表面怕心里不怕，我怕他干什么？有时是可以这样气气这些人的。

高中国文教员包树棠先生在场，后来他老是跟我套近乎。他是个有学问的胖老头，除了旧诗还会做白话新诗，他写了一首追悼英年早逝的国文教员温伯夏先生的悼诗我还记得：

“……这薄薄的桐棺一具，留给我伤痕深深……”

有一回他问我：

“你上回吟诵的《远游》，说是你小学读的，那时候你真懂吗？”

“小时候不懂，大了就懂！”

黄羲先生的宿舍在膳厅右侧，每次排队用餐总要经过他的门口。跟他同住一房的是图书馆的管理员徐什么衡先生。徐先生是江浙人，很和气，走起路来自我得意，摇着右手，心里想什么诗句的神气。后来黄羲先生把他打了一顿，打得很利害，黄羲先生被叫到校董办公室去挨训，我去看慰他，他说“这徐某人话多讨厌！”看起来，这是“好人打好人，误会了！”黄羲先生打了人，心里仍然不好过，后来就走了。我可以证明是他自己要走而不是给学校赶走的。打完了人仍然不好过的事是常有的，我清楚，我特别清楚。这么好，这么温和的黄羲先生悄然而去，使我难过得也想打人；后来多吃了几碗饭，总算平息好过下来。

朱先生住在一间小屋子里，他画油画，也跟我们大讲高剑父、高奇峰。经他这么一讲，看着几本高氏的画册，一页又一页地翻了又翻，毛笔在纸上梯梯突突，有种拳打脚踢的印象。朱先生喜欢得不得了。他宗的就是高剑父，画和字走高剑父的路子；要说岭南派，他应该也是

一分子。是不是一定要广东人才算岭南派？

朱先生参加学校的一切可爱的活动，他衷心热爱周围的日子，他不太按照常规控制自己情绪；比如打篮球，跑来跑去发出怪声叫好，惹得观众跟他一起欢哄，这一来，又反馈给他自己，就闹得更起劲，几乎把篮球赛变成另一种性质的节目。

朱先生心地纯良，两只眼睛像母鹿一样看着你，对你说话。又甘心情愿地去为学校剧团画布景、编壁报。我们的壁报可不是普通孩子们玩的壁报。每晚有专人收听国际和国内无线广播新闻，第二天选些新闻和有趣的图画穿插便出现在专门的壁报墙上。轮班带上耳机收听广播，画插图和军事进展形势图，朱先生都有份的。有时作一些有趣的漫画则是由姓郑的高师同学和吴廷标先生担任。

他们那时都是青年，究竟有多大年纪如今我老了之后实在也算不上来。我十二三或十三四或十四五的时候，起码他们也有二十几三十了。如今我七十几，他们呢？谁爱算就自己算去吧！

有一天在朱先生家，他正在画贝多芬的油画像，他说，贝多芬是一个伟大的、强烈的音乐家，我要把他画成一团火焰。

我没想到画家想怎么画就怎么画。

“过两天你看吧！”

过两天我去看，他不画了。他说“难”，不满意，画不下去。

一个画家什么都能画，哪有画不下去的道理？爱画不就画了？他真的不再画下去了。

“噢？——你怎么不参加木刻协会？要参加我给你介绍——”朱先生说。

“不参加！我不晓得木刻是什么？”

“不晓得？你《血花日报》上照着临摹的那些不就是木刻？”

“不就是画报上的一种画吗？”

“是画，是木刻画，是用刀子刻好再拓印出来的。”

“没见人刻过。”

“我也没见过，不过，我认识他们的一些人，我认识郑诚之，又叫野夫，是个有名的木刻家，和另一个木刻家金逢孙在浙江金华、丽水一带办了东南木刻协会，你可以参加做会员。以后，你也可以用板子刻真的木刻，不用再临摹别人的木刻画了……”

“参加了我也不会！”

“哪？参加了，你是会员，他们会寄东西给你，学习木刻的方法啦！消息啦！说不定有一天会登你的画咧！”

“唔！那倒是可以试试。我一个人不行，我要拉林振成，叶国美一齐参加！”

“是你同班罢？他们也爱画画？”

“不太爱，——我们是好朋友——底下怎么办我不

懂……”

“我今晚就写信给野夫，要他们寄简章和入会手续来！”

“你讲的那个会，有没有黄新波、温涛在里头？我《血花日报》上临摹的木刻是他们的。”

“我晓得黄新波和温涛，不过我不知道他们在哪里，也不认得他，我看我们先办这件事罢！”

过了一个多月，朱先生很机密地拉我到石碑坊底下，口袋掏出个厚信封：

“来了！”

一大叠油印文件，重要的要交一块二角钱。

“完了！”我想，好处没到手，先要我一块二角钱，我哪来一块二角钱？我身边要真有一块二角钱，用处可大了，入会才怪！

林振成急着想做不明不白的会员，叶国美不想，后来不要他；林振成沾我的光参加了东南木刻协会做了会员，我的会费是林振成出的，他父亲做过团长，有钱。

填表，亲属那一栏，朱先生说：

“……你祖母黄邓氏就不要写了。”

寄出林振成和我贴了照片的入会表，不久就寄来一包包的材料，有会员通讯，活动情况，最让人心跳的上面印有一朵小桐花的铜徽章。这要紧的狠，尤其是林振成，他出出进进都把这小徽章挂在童子军服左胸袋上头，真像是一个人物了。有时问我：

“是什么会？我忘记了，你讲！是什么会？”

跟着来的麻烦事很多，东南木刻协会代售木刻刀。做一个木刻协会的会员没有木刻刀怎么行？林振成想想也是，于是又邮购了两盒木刻刀，一盒送我。

讲到这个林振成，他一幅木刻也没有刻过。刀子呢？拿回乡里老家书桌上供着。暑假，我跟陪他去永春县考中央军校，他数理化都好就是国文不行，第二天让我混进去帮他做了作文枪手，考上了。1948年他到香港时来看我：

“你看，你害我进了中央军校！”

“你还刻木刻吗？”我问他。

“卵！一辈子没摸过。”

后来想必是到台湾去了。

我认为木刻刀是一种精密的机器，尤其是三角刀，看看去不懂得怎么用：“大概不至于仅仅为了在木板上挖一道细沟吧？”其实就是拿来挖一条细沟。

我按照野夫写的一本《怎样学习木刻》的书开始行动起来。

我还不懂得木刻工作的意义，只浅尝到它的快乐和兴奋。爱默生就说过：

“在年轻人的心里，每一件东西都是个别的。”

我一边做一边惴惴不安，这行动会不会是一个叉道？万一一直这么做下去，一年，十年，结果根本不是

这么一回事？就好像古埃及人按照正确的图纸盖一座金字塔，塔倒是盖好了；只因为颠倒了图纸，尖朝下，底座在上地完成了……

朱先生似乎也不是很有把握：“管它，刻了再说。”

好的油墨是石印铺讨来的。我试着了一幅幅刻下去，刻了就拓印。在周围人的眼睛里我开始威风起来。

朱先生像只老母鸡带着身边刚出壳的唯一的小鸡四处显颜色给人看，还把我的第七、第八或第九幅作品寄到沙县宋秉恒的“大众木刻”杂志去。发表了！

“大众木刻”有宋秉恒，荒烟，耳氏，朱鸣冈……这些专家的木刻，我能夹在他们行列中。想想看！你想吧！我是什么吧？

从此我知道世界上有一种艺术叫做木刻，木刻界有许多杰出的木刻家——野夫，陈烟桥，李桦，黄新波，罗清桢，万是思，宋秉恒，荒烟，章西厓，朱鸣冈，耳氏……连同我知道的漫画界的张光宇，张正宇，张乐平，陆志庠，叶浅予，华君武，张竹，高龙生，汪子美，黄文龙，丁聪，郁风，黄苗子，黄尧……我觉得肚子里的知识学问饱和得不得了了。

我在一些记者访问中提到我第一次拿稿费是五块钱，现在想想未必可靠；大概没有这么多。叔叔每月才给我一块钱零用；可能是两块多钱稿费吧？何况对待初出茅庐的人，“大众木刻”不会这么大方。

不管多少，反正给我以很大震动。不怕见笑，以至我约了几位铁哥们儿一起才敢上的邮局。我要他们在门口等着，一旦出事别撒开我跑了。

我心跳不止，递上了汇款单、图章和学生证。里头的老家伙慢吞吞，好像要断气的神气，又咳嗽，又吐痰，又拿一块垃圾似的手巾擦鼻子，休息喘气，这老东西真的给了我一叠钱：“你数数！”

那还用说！老子会轻易放过你？

数完钱，昂然走出邮局。那帮家伙一个个居然都健在，一拥而上；其实不一拥而上也没什么大不了！一哄而散也没什么大不了！不就是上邮局取钱吗？

请大家到中正街粥铺一人一碗牡蛎稀饭，多加胡椒多加葱姜，吃得大家像群打败了的强盗。

侯宝林有一段相声，讲到旧社会国民党的伤兵常常为非作歹，吃东西看戏不给钱，甚至身边还带了小孩子。小孩子动不动也学到伤兵的口气撒泼，遇到戏院查票不让进场的时候，小孩子就会提着嗓子学着伤兵的口气大叫：“妈拉巴子！老子抗战八年……”

我其实跟那个看白戏的小孩子差不多，我的木刻生涯就是那么糊里糊涂开始的，有时候，免不了也叫这么一声：

“妈拉巴子！老子抗战八年……”



Those Fond Memories of Mine

Huang Yongyu

As I grow older, I realize what a big world it is!

I have been kept busy all my life: for a means to keep my body and soul together, for the advancement of my artistic skills as well as for the teaching of myself--thus leaving little time for other things in life.

Some people wondered why I have so many classmates. The reason is simple: during the whole three years of junior high days, I failed to go up to a higher grade for five times, thus I had at least 150 classmates just at that time.

Decades of years later when I returned to Xiamen, a beautiful seaside city in Fujian province, we would gather together and some of my former classmates would laughingly help me to recollect the names of my classmates, where they are now, what achievements some have achieved: some have become renowned doctors, hospital directors, army generals, professors, etc.

Why did I do so "badly" at school? Was it because Mine was not a nice school? It certainly was not so. Judging by the teachers, the teaching facilities, or the location, Jimei, my former junior high school, was next to none among all the schools in the whole China. Or was it because I am foolish? Neither.

It was just because the textbooks or the subjects. Those texts in Chinese textbooks were too familiar to me to arouse my interest, as I had read them long before in my primary school days; as for the other subjects such as Mathematics,

Physics, Chemistry and English, they would take so much of my time trying to memorizing them to do me any good, so I decided to give them all up.

Upon my receiving all my new textbooks, I sold them all for socks and soaps and plunged all myself into the school library. I dipped into any book I could get my hand on, though in some books I couldn't make any sense of them.

"Such a bad student as you should have the face to borrow so many books! Aren't you felling ashamed of yourself?" are the frequent words uttered from the lips of my aunt, a librarian.

At times she would just refuse me flatly, "No, you can't borrow any books!"

At intervals I would pass by her desk and pretend to be making for the reading room, trying to observe her reaction. If she happened to give away a smile, I would know she was in a good mood and would dash into the stacks of books and in no time appear in front of her with a pile of books. She would first shake her head, then nodded and let me take away those books sighing that I was utterly hopeless. She was really a kind-hearted woman.

I tried every way to borrow books. I even figured out the birthdays of my uncle and aunt and their children, their wedding anniversary and went to the library. On these days my aunt would be so pleasant to satisfy me generously.

After all, Was not I really feeling ashamed of having

done so badly at school and still going to borrow so many books irrelevant to my studies? Oh, I did take it easy.

I was just bored! I was bored with those Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and English textbooks! I was bored with my aunt refusing to lend me books! Did I have the face to borrow books? Does borrowing books have anything to do with the FACE?

At Jimei, my first art teacher was Guo Yinglin. Unlike other people who told lies, he was a genuine graduate from the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris. He was skilled in both oil painting and landscape. I approached him with awe because I knew nothing about oil painting and all those foreign painters. He went to Paris after he graduated from Jimei. He had a strong nasal and glottal sound, with a touch of western style talking and was always dressed very neatly.

One couldn't help feeling airy following him through the big silk trees till the gallery. In the gallery, one would see a large number of paintings Mr.Guo copied from Paris. One of the paintings impressed me deeply: an old man teaching a very pretty young girl to play the piano. Whenever I saw it, my heart beat fast, as if she were the only daughter of his. Fearing it might make him angry, I had to cast a few glimpses at her. Mr.Guo emigrated to Indonesia years later and it was only after many years that we met again.

After Mr.Guo left for Paris, Mr.Zhu Chenggan came to take his place. He also graduated from Jimei and then was said to have studied art at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou.

Mr.Wu Tingbiao, a clerk in the Department of Teaching Affairs, was also an artist, expert at silhouette paper-cut, sculpture and cartoon-drawing.

Mr.Xu Qijun, who conducted a course called Activities and Labour, was a returned student from Japan. He also painted in his spare time, but he was expert at weaving crafts from bamboo. Sometimes he would make a bamboo craft just like nine-layer elephant tusks and you couldn't figure out how one could do such wonder. After he told you the simple techniques, it would be so simple that anyone could make one like it. But not me! I just admired and appreciated those wonders, but my laziness stopped me from following those complicated steps in creating a work of art, and, to tell the truth, I didn't bother to spend much time with him. Scores of years later I went to pay an visit to him and drew a sketch of him.

Then came Mr.Shi Youyi and Mr.Huang Xi, the latter being a former graduate from Jimei.

Mr.Shi taught us both music and art. Having little confidence in his competence in teaching art, he decided to specialize in music--maybe he was afraid of being found out. He was a marvelous singer, using his voice in such a vibrating way that his devotion to art expressed itself. I still haven't found out where he secluded later on.

Mr.Huang had been teaching traditional Chinese painting in Hangzhou Academy of Fine Arts before he came to Jimei. As soon as he started teaching, we were lost in wonder at his skill and knowledge. He was rather thin, dark-skinned,

with slightly brushed-up long hair--typical of western artists. He had a soft voice, and his mandarin speech with a touch of Xian You(a district of Zhejiang province) accent were pleasing to listen to.

He spent quite some time talking about the use of brush and Chinese ink. While he was conducting his teaching, he would place some water and ink on his desk and show us the effect of different proportions of combination of ink and water.

What it would be like if it was too dense. What if it was too faint. But all this was too abstract. All the other classmates were bored except for both of us: Zheng and me. Zheng was a graduate from a teacher's college. The others would be more pleased if Mr.Huang painted a beautiful woman or some birds or something. They grew more and more impatient. But he was taking his time and the others dared not to protest.

He told us to follow him in mixing water and ink, with varying proportions. According to him, just by mixing and observing the effect, we would benefit a lot later on. When we began to draw mountains, water, flowers, birds and sketches of people, we would be feeling much happier. Those were grand ideas.

He drew some landscape, flowers and birds for those students to copy. Seeing Zheng and me much superior to those, he singled us out to follow him to his own studio he observe him paint figure paintings.

Xian You, a district in the neighbouring Fujian prov-

ince, produced quite a lot of famous painters, such as Li Xia, Li Jie, Li Geng, Huang Xi as well as generations of younger artists.

Painters of this group has a peculiar way of drawing: they like to paste the paper onto the wall and paint. Master Li Geng painted with his left hand, tucking several brushes of different colors between his fingers, and could change his brushes at his free will. He must be in his sixties then, with hard and short beard, a felt hat over his head and a gown not suitable for the seasons. He liked to walk a long way to enjoy his beloved Yun Tun (dumpling soup), the heels of his cloth shoes not pulled up, followed by a long line of kids.

I still admire Master Li Geng whole-heartedly. I know he has been affecting me in a special way, with his Buddha, his fat Maitreya, his mountain and caves all having their profound and graceful laws.

I heard Mr.Huang and Master Li were good friends. Judging by their respective ages, it should be friendship between two generations or Huang must have approached Li as the latter's pupil. This I can't say for sure.

Mr.Huang taught us some basic rules about figure painting in a very detailed way: how to draw the hair, beard, wrinkles of the clothes; what the correct order in coloring the face was... I still remember them vividly.

When my uncle got to know that Mr.Huang gave me "small mess", he commented in the presence of many of his colleagues, "You are studying college courses in advance!"

Being the chairman of the board of directors, he was entitled to take on a bureaucratic tone. "What? You are drawing Qu Yuan? Do you understand so much as to draw him?"

In a show held on the campus, I displayed a picture of Qu Yuan standing by the river, with these words taken from one of Lu Xun's poems, "With the river flowing peacefully by, whoever wants to sigh would calm down."

Mr. Huang drew those reeds and waves on the river-to make that picture of mine much better, just as proud parents do when their children are cutting a figure in front of guests.

Acting boldly, I blurted out to my uncle, "Of course I understand him! Otherwise I wouldn't have painted him!"

"Is that so? Now tell me what he did."

"...He mourned over the pressure of the times on him, and decided to stay aloof. But he felt he could not tear himself away from the sufferings of the people and regretted that there was no one who could understand what he had on his mind." I recited a few lines from Qu Yuan's verses.

"Whatever are you saying?!" complained Mr. Wang, Dean of Students, Obviously He was ignorant of Qu Yuan's verse.

"He is reciting some lines from Qu Yuan's 'Going on a Long Journey'" whispered my uncle to Mr. Wang. Then to me, "Why not spend more time on some more worthwhile reading but on these worthless rubbish!?"

"I learnt it by heart years ago."

Mr. Huang was enjoying his secret pleasure at this. He

was afraid of my uncle. As for me, though seemingly afraid of him, I never really dreaded him. Why should I, anyway?

Sometimes it is fun to make such kind of people angry.

Mr. Bao Shutang, teacher of Chinese during my senior high school years, was also present. Later on he often did every way to cotton up to me. He was a learned man, rather fat, fond of writing free verses as well as some poems according to rigid rules(classical poetry). I still remember one verse he wrote in mourning over the death of another teacher of Chinese who died at his productive youthful year, Mr. Wen Boxia.

"... This thin coffin of Tung wood, leaves me such deep soffow..."

Once he asked, "last time you recited one part of Qu Yuan's 'Going on a Long Journey' and said you learnt it at primary school. Did you really understand it at that time?"

"I was not able to then, but now I am." responded I. Mr. Huang's dormitory was just on the right side of the dining hall. So whenever I went to get my meal I would pass by his door. A Mr. Xu, a librarian, seemed to live with him. Mr. Xu was a native of Zhejiang province, very kind, and always walking with an air of self-importance. He often gave one an impression of trying to compose some verse. One day, Mr. Huang gave him a hard beat. I went to see him after he was called to the office of the board of directors and was given a severe criticism.

"It serves him right! He was always talking!"

序

黄永玉画集

It seems that this is a case of "a good man beating another good man." and it must be a mistake. After this, Mr.Huang must have repented beating Mr.Xu and left Jimei not long after that.

I may serve as proof that he left out totally out of his own will. The school never thought of driving him away. I know one can't feel good beating someone, especially when you realize that you shouldn't have used your fists on a good man. I knew it. I just knew it! With such a good and tender Mr.Huang leaving, I felt like beating someone. I couldn't check my own impulse until I gulped down another more bowl of rice.

Mr. Zhu lived in small house. He painted oil paintings. He used to spend hours talking to us about Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng, the two brothers who were called the fathers of Lingnan(Guangdong) school of painting. After his teaching, we would try to get a few books of paintings by them, flipping through them and got some rough ideas of their styles. Sometimes we would even try to mime their pictures and handwriting. Mr.Zhu adored the Gao brothers. It may well be said that his own painting style and handwriting were modeled after them. Speaking of the Lingnan school, Mr.Zhu was one of those painters. In fact, can only someone from the province of Guangdong be a member of this school?

Mr. Zhu enthusiastically took part in all kinds of funny activities of the school. He just loved being with the others, though he didn't seem able to control his own emotions ac-

ording to convention. For example, when he was playing basketball, he would give out loud cheers in praise of a good pass or a good goal, causing spectators to roar with him together. In turn, he would be encouraged by the response of the spectators and became even more excited, or wild, turning the basketball match into a festival celebration.

Mr. Zhu had a heart of gold. As he talked, he would fix his eyes--like those of a doe--on you, seeming to talk to you also. He offered to paint scenes for the school theatre troupe and compile wall papers. Mind you. Our wall papers were by no means easy to compile. Every night, some students would be appointed to listen to domestic as well as international news over radio and right the next day the news would appear on the wall paper, with appropriate and interesting illustrations. Sometimes students would take turns wearing headphones and listening to radio, drawing illustrations and marking the advance of military actions. In these activities Mr. Zhu always took an active part. At times, Zheng and Mr. Wu Tingbiao would help out by drawing some funny illustrations.

They were all quite young then. I can't figure out their ages even today. At the time I was twelve or thirteen(or was it fourteen? I can't remember clearly), they should be at least in their late twenties or early thirties. And now I am over 70 and what about them? If you are interested in calculation, you may work it out for me.

One day in Mr. Zhu's room, he was drawing an oil painting of Beethoven. Mr. Zhu said he would paint Beethoven as

a fire ball since he was a great musician and had intense emotions. It had never occurred to me that a painter would be so casual in painting. Did they always paint anyone just the way he felt him to be, not exactly how he looked?

"Come back and have a look." He told me.

But when I returned two days later, I was told that he quit it.

"It's so difficult." was the only reason given.

Was there really anything a painter couldn't paint? Surely so long as he likes. He did give up painting Beethoven!

"Eh, Why didn't you join the Association of wood-cut Artists? I would like to recommend you." Said Mr. Zhu to me one day.

"I don't feel like joining. I know nothing about it." I confessed to him.

"Know nothing? Aren't those you copied from 'the Blood Flower' (a daily newspaper) wood-cutting?"

"You mean the sort of pictures in the pictorial?"

"Yes, they are wood-cutting pictures. First they cut a pattern on a flat piece of wood, then they press it on paper and they get pictures in this way--that is wood-cutting."

"But I have never seen anyone cut wood."

"Neither have I, but I know some of those wood-cutters. Zheng Chengzhi, also known as Yefu, is one of them, and he is quite famous. He and another wood-cutter Jin Fengsun set up the Southeastern China Wood-cutter's Association and members are widely distributed in districts such

as Jinhua and Lishui in our Zhejiang province. I sincerely advise that you join it. Some day you may create your own wood-cutting pictures instead of copying others."

"I can't cut even after I join the association."

"Oh no. After you become a member, they will mail you some magazines, telling you how to cut, and some other information as well. One day they may want to print your paintings. Who Can say?"

"In that case, I might as well try. But I don't want to be alone. I'd like Lin Zhencheng and Ye Guomei to join it together."

"Are they classmates of yours? Do they also enjoy painting?"

"Not quite. We are close friends. But I don't know how to go about it..."

"I will write Yefu this very night, asking them for general regulations and forms to fill in."

"Are Huang Xinbo and Wen Tao members of the association? You see, I often copy them in the daily newspaper."

"I know of these two artists, but I don't where they are and haven't had any personal contacts with them. Let's settle this matter first."

A little over a month later, Mr. Zhu motioned me confidentially to the stone memorial gateway and produced a thick envelope.

"here it finally comes!"

A thick stack of mimeograph copies. But first I had to pay one dollar twenty cents as admission fee.

"What a shame!" I thought. Before I could take advantage of it, I had to pay one dollar twenty cents. Where could I find it? If I had that amount of money, I would be a rich man, and would never have thought of joining the association.

Lin Zhencheng was very eager to become a member of it, regardless of its requirement. Ye Guomei refused to join and in the end was denied admission. Thanks to me, Lin was admitted to the association. He even paid the admission fee for me--his father was once a regimental commander and made quite a fortune.

When I was filling in those forms, Mr. Zhu told me to exclude my grandma because he thought it was quite unnecessary to include her.

Shortly after we sent our forms with photos, we got periodically mail after mail, including member correspondence, accounts about activities. What counted was a bronze medal with a little embossed flower. This was of critical importance, especially for Lin Zhencheng. He would always wear it above the left upper chest pocket of the boycott uniform and felt swell about it. Sometimes he would ask me as if he had forgotten all about it.

"What kind of association is it? I have forgotten it. Would you kindly tell me?"

Other trouble soon followed. The association wanted

to sell engravers to us. It seems natural for a member of the association of wood-cutters to have an engraver. Lin Thought it was fairly reasonable, thus he sent for two packets of engravers, one packet for me, of course.

Here I'd like to dwell more on Mr. Lin. He never cut a single piece of wood. As for the engravers, he merely left them on his desk at home. In the summer vacation, I accompanied him to Yongchun county to take the entrance exam for the Central Military school. He was good at Mathematics, Physics and chemistry, but not so in Chinese, so the next day I became the ringer student and he was admitted. Years later in 1948 when I was in Hong Kong, he came to see me.

"You see, you made me become a student in CMS."

"Do you still practice wood-cutting?" I inquired.

"Shit! I've never done a single piece of it!"

He may have gone to Taiwan later.

I think the engraver is a precision instrument, especially the triangle knife. One would be at a loss how to use it. "Will such a wonderful knife only be used to make a narrow notch on the wood board?" As a matter of fact, it is that simple.

Following the Yefu' guidelines in his "How to learn wood-cutting", I began my wood-cutting career.

I wasn't aware of the significance of wood-cutting at the time, but just enjoyed for the pleasure and excitement it brought me.

As Ralph Emerson said, "In the eyes of a young per-

son, everything is individual."

As I cut, I felt very uncertain. Was this the right approach to learn it? Suppose I followed this for ten years and then found it went completely the opposite way, what a tragic story it would be?! Just as the Egyptians finished building a pyramid according to the blueprints, but found to their disappointment that it was built upside down owing to the misinterpretation of the building plans. How terrible it was!

Mr. Zhu seemed not so sure as me, but he encouraged me, "Just go ahead."

I bought some good printing ink from a store that sold lithographic utensils. I managed to cut a lot of pictures and printed them on pieces of paper right away. Gradually I gained confidence and became a kind of authority in the eyes of those around me.

Mr. Zhu took me around just as a hen would show off her only newly-hatched chick. He also sent my seventh, eighth and ninth works to the "Popular Wood-cutting" magazine, which was edited by Mr. Song Bingheng and published in Sha Xian county. And, to my wildest joy, they were published!

"Popular Wood-cutting" published works from such wellknown artists as Song Bingheng, Huang Yan, Er Shi and Zhu Bingwang. I was thrilled to be among one of its contributors. And To be named side by side with those artists! I could hardly contain myself for joy!

Since then I got to know there was such wonderful thing in the world as wood-cutting. And I got to know about such masters in the field of wood-cutting as Ye Fu, Chen Yanqiao, Li Hua, Huang Xinbo, Luo Qingzhen, Wan Shisi, Song Bingheng, Huang Yan, Zhang Xiya, Zhu Boingwang, Er Shi as well as those I knew in the field of cartoon-drawing, Zhang Guangyu, Zhang Zhengyu, Zhang Leping, Lu Zhimo, Ye Qianyu, Hua Junwu, Zhang TingGao Longsheng, Wang Zimei, Huang Wenlong, Ding Cong, Yu Feng, Huang Miaozi and Huang Rao. To know that I was soknowledgeable made me almost swell with pride!

When interviewed by some reporters, I told them that my first contribution fee was five silver dollars. I know think I must have exaggerated a little. They couldn't have given me so much. My uncle gave me a mere one silver dollar as pocket money then. They may have given me between two and three dollars. After all, for a young and inexperienced artist like me they couldn't have been so generous. Two dollars or five dollars, they did gave me a great encouragement. You may laugh at my timidity, but I did asked several of my close friends to escort me to and from the post office to get the payment. I told them to wait at the door, and if anything should happen, they should never take to their heels.

Standing by the post office counter, I had a deep breath, telling myself to stay calm, I handed over my money order, my chop and student's identity card. The old man inside

the counter was just like a dying man. He was coughing and spitting and wiping his nose with a torn handkerchief. Finally this dying old dog handed me a pile of money.

"You check it."

Of course I would! You think I would allow you to give me one cent short?! I counted it and stepped out of the post office, holding my head high.

Those pals of mine kept their word and upon seeing me, they crowded around me like a pack of hungry dogs. But I didn't care whether they would wait for me or not. They could leave me behind and hurt a thing! Who cared? After all, drawing money from the bank was a piece of cake! Who could have hurt me even a hair?!

I invited all of them to a porridge shop in Zhongzheng Street (named after Jiang Kaishek) and ordered each a big bowl of oyster porridge.

"Quick! Add more pepper powder! Quick! Add more ginger and onions!" All of us gulped down the porridge like a gang of beaten bandits.

Hou Baolin, master of Chinese crosstalk, had an interesting episode. In it he talked about the wounded soldiers (from the anti-Japanese war)

Of the Kuomintang army. They did lots of evils, such as going to the theatres or having meals at restaurants, without paying, of course. Sometimes they even took their children with them. Under this influence, their

children were spoiled. If they went to the theatre and were demanded to show their tickets, they would imitated their father and shouted,

"Damn it! I fought the Japanese for eight long years....."

In a way, I resembled one of those children: having begun my career of wood-cutting muddle-headed and eventually made my own name. At times, I felt like shouting:

"Damn it! I fought for eight long years!"

By Huang Yongyu, at my home "Hall of Lotuses"

April 16, 1999

(Translated by Tang Yuhua, Foreign Languages Teaching Center, Jinan University)