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The New Look of Mountains and Rivers:
Landscape and the Imagining of Socialist China during
The Seventeen Years Period (1949-1966)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Art History

by

Yim King Mak

2018

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2018

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The New Look of Mountains and Rivers:
Landscape and the Imagining of Socialist China during
The Seventeen Years Period (1949-1966)

by

Yim King Mak
Doctor of Philosophy in Art History
University of California, Los Angeles, 2018
Professor Hui-shu Lee, Chair

As the most dominant subject matter in the history of Chinese art, landscape representation has undergone many alternations in its form, theme, function, and context of application since its emergence as an independent artistic genre in the tenth century. For a long time, this subject of art has favored the portrayal of mountains and rivers as the key visual motifs for self-cultivation or meditation. However, during the nation-building era of the People's Republic of China in the 1950s and the early 1960s, landscape depictions began to characterize a new visual and spatial-temporal order, earning what official art critics of the time called "the New Landscape." Prior scholarship tends to consider such representations as the by-products of contemporary cultural policies, resulting in very little research that critically investigates the

visuality of those images and their functions as an instrument for shaping viewers' conceptions and interpretations of the public image of their nation-state.

This dissertation examines the function of the New Landscape as a site for political imagining during the art historically overlooked period known as "The Seventeen Years" (1949-1966) of the People's Republic of China. Unlike most scholarship which primarily examines the era's depiction of landscape within the medium of Chinese ink painting, I investigate it across different visual media and textual sources, under the critically understudied angle of imagining. This work examines the New Landscape by major art producers—including, but not limited to, painters from the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute in Nanjing, woodcut artists from the nation's collective farm in Beidahuang, and filmmakers of the Changchun Film Studio in Changchun. By critically investigating how the visual construction of their landscape arts connected to the political interpretation of the spatiality and temporality of the state's history surrounding the portrayed site, my research argues that the New Landscape served to reconfigure viewers' conceptions of the revolutionary past, socialist present, and communist future of the Chinese state. Thereby, the New Landscape served as a public art for managing the vision and the political envisioning of the viewers during the arduous process of Chinese socialist nation-building. This research intervenes in Chinese art history through its strong emphasis on the connections between landscape representation and political imagining, illuminating how the depiction of space in art could trigger affective responses in the viewer in the context of nation-building.

The dissertation of Yim King Mak is approved.

Dell Upton

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University of California, Los Angeles

2018

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Vita

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PUBLICATIONS

“Capturing the Place: Location Shooting, Medium and Politics in Shaw Brothers’ *Moonlight Serenade* (1967).” UCLA Film & Television Archive Official Website <
<http://www.cinema.ucla.edu/education/arsc-studentresearch-award-2013>>

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PRESENTATIONS

“Research Methodology and Ideology in the Study of Fu Baoshi’s Landscape Painting of the 1950s and the 1960s.” *Images and Codes: The Problem of Reading Art*. The Graduate Student Symposium in East Asian Art, Tang Center for East Asian Art, Princeton University. Princeton, NJ. February 2016.

“Format, Images and Affect in Gong Xian’s Landscape in the Manner of Dong Yuan.” *The Mellon Chinese Object Study Workshop Conference*. The Smithsonian Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art, Washington D.C. November 2014.

“Spatial Politics in Kacey Wong’s *Drift City*.” *The 59th Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs*. The East Asian Studies Center, The Ohio State University. Columbus, OH. October 2010.

“The Aesthetics of Demolition in Zhang Dali’s *Dialogue/and Demolition*.” *Urban Society: Challenges for the Present and Future, The 2nd International Congress on Chinese Studies*. Organizer: Centro de Estudios Chinos Lu Xun, Bilbao, Spain. Host: The East China Normal University, Shanghai, China. June 2010.

Introduction

Overview

In May 1961, an official art exhibition entitled “The New Look of Mountains and Rivers” 山河新貌, held in China’s capital, Beijing, caught state media attention. Co-organized by the China Artists Association (CAA) 中國美術家協會 and its regional branch in Jiangsu Province, this exhibition displayed more than 140 Chinese ink paintings created by thirteen Chinese artists primarily from the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute 江蘇省國畫院 in Nanjing.¹ According to state newspaper reports, these paintings thematized a wide range of landscapes: the heroic views of the Loess Plateau in northern China, the gigantic transformation of landscapes around the Three Gate Gorge Dam on the Yellow River, the nighttime navigation through the Three Gorges along the Yangtze River, the natural wonders of Mountain Hua, as well as the grace and peace of Lake Tai in southeast China. State media journalists praised these paintings for their capacity to embody the “great spirit of the Leaping Era,” triggering the imagining of the “heroically beautiful mountains and rivers of the great motherland” (figs. 0.1-0.2).² The question of how those representations led to the political imagining of an idealized Chinese socialist state

¹ These paintings were created during and after a three-month sketching trip to six provinces located in central, southwestern, and southern China conducted from September through December, 1960. The exhibition was held at the Shuai Fu Yuan Art Museum 帥府園美術展覽館 in Beijing. See “Shanhe xinmao: Jiangsu guohuajia xiesheng zuopin xuan” 山河新貌: 江蘇國畫家寫生作品選” (The new look of mountains and rivers: a selection of sketches and works by Chinese ink painters from Jiangsu), *Wanming ribao* 晚明日報 (Wanming daily), May 11, 1961, 4.

² Ibid., “Hua chu zhuangli shanhe, xie chu yuejin qipo” 畫出壯麗山河 寫出躍進氣魄 (Painting the heroically beautiful mountains and rivers. Sketching out the leaping spirit), *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 (People’s Daily), May 12, 1961, 4; “Shoudi guanzhong xi’ai ‘shanhe xin mao’ huazhan” 首都觀眾喜愛‘山河新貌’畫展 (The capital’s audience loves the exhibition, “The New Look of Mountains and Rivers”), *Xinhua ribao* 新華日報 (Xinhua daily), May 12, 1961, 3.

during its nation-building era in the late 1950s and the early 1960s forms the focus of this dissertation.

Undoubtedly, as the most dominant subject matter in the history of Chinese art, landscape representations had early precedents for being used as tools to define a new political identity. According to Ping Foong, the sixth emperor, Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1067-85), of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) hired the leading court painter of the time, Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1001-ca. 1090), to produce a large number of ink landscape screens as part of the art program to decorate the newly renovated imperial city spaces of the Hanlin Institute Academicians, which resulted from his political reforms between 1069 to 1073.³ Those landscapes did not simply function as objects for display. They, more importantly, embodied a new direction in the aesthetics of the court, and served as a monument of the reformist ideology advocated by the young emperor during his reign.⁴ Foong's research touches upon the idea that certain themes in those landscape paintings, particularly the historically renowned *Early Spring* (fig. 0.3), held the power to evoke the political aspiration for a sanguine leadership through its references to classical painting theory on seasonal representation and to metonymical reference in its composition.⁵ However, since her research emphasizes the historical operation of ink landscape in negotiating ritual, social, and political settings within the Song imperial city, the notion of imagining was not taken as a critical perspective itself in that publication.

Indeed, landscape representation and imagining are closely related to one another in the tradition of Chinese art in many different ways. For instance, in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD

³ Ping Foong, *The Efficacious Landscape: on the Authorities of Painting at the Northern Song Court* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 58 and 60.

⁴ Ibid., 64 and 72.

⁵ Ibid., 74-76.

220), bronze incense burners were often molded upon people's belief of the image of the immortal isles arising from the Eastern Sea shrouded in clouds. Lothar Ledderose points out that when this object was used in Daoist prayers with incense burned inside the bowl, it would facilitate a believer's transcendence of mind and vision into the clouds of incense as a visible form of their meditation.⁶ Another example comes from "Introduction to Painting Landscape" 畫山水序, by the pivotal painting theorist Zong Bing 宗炳 (375-443). In Zong's theory, the author regarded a landscape painting, if skillfully made, as a useful tool to bring one's mind closer to that of the sages and worthies as a form of "roaming travel."⁷ The question of imagination can also be extended to the century-long tradition of creating landscape painting on the theme of "Peach Blossom Spring," recounting a mythical encounter of a fisherman with a beautiful, fruitful, utopian village. Paintings on this theme often depict a convoluted spatial structure or paradisiacal landscape that, according to Susan Nelson, allowed viewers to imaginatively enter the utopian or immortals' world.⁸ Despite the diverse relationships between landscape and imagining in different practices and media of Chinese art, even now there exists no single volume exploring such an operation in both historical and theoretical contexts.

This dissertation, "The New Look of Mountains and Rivers," investigates the relationship between the representation of landscape and the imagining of an idealized Chinese socialist nation-state during the Seventeen Years period (1949-1966) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). I consider this period a pivotal era for inquiring into the connections between landscape

⁶ Lothar Ledderose, "The Earthly Paradise: Religious Elements on Chinese Landscape Art," in *Theories of the Arts in China*, eds. Susan Bush and Christian F. Murck (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 178.

⁷ See the translated version in Susan Bush, "Tsung Ping's Essay on Painting Landscapes and the 'Landscape Buddhism' of Mount Lu," in *ibid.*, 137 and 146.

⁸ Susan Nelson, "On Through to the Beyond: The Peach Blossom Spring as Paradise," *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 39 (1986): 23-47.

and imagining because it witnessed a critical reinvention of what art theorists and critics at the time would call the “New Landscape” 新山水 across different visual media.⁹ Illustrating heroic or lyrical portrayals of specific locations in China, these New Landscapes convey a grandiose sense of space and a romantic sense of place. As their appeal invited viewers to reconsider the spatiality and temporality of the represented locations in relation to different historical stages of the Chinese socialist state, they also served a new function as “public art” instead of an individual form of art for self-enjoyment or expression. Prior literature acknowledges the quantum leap of Chinese landscape representations created by specific regional painters in Jiangsu, Xi’an, and Guangdong Provinces and printmakers in Heilongjiang Province during this period.¹⁰ Nevertheless, few studies have critically analyzed the visual construction of those landscape representations by cutting across regional and medium boundaries, let alone their imaginative functions in the context of building a Chinese socialist nation-state.

Historical Context and the State of Scholarship

The Seventeen Years Period

The Seventeen Years period refers to the nation-building era of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) from its establishment in 1949 to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. During this period, China radically transitioned from its former political entity of the Republic of China (ROC) into a new socialist regime. From 1949 to 1976 when the Cultural Revolution

⁹ Ye Qianyu 葉淺予, “Guamu kan shanshui” 刮目看山水 (Seeing landscape in a new way), *Meishu* 美術 (Art) no. 2 (1961): 2-5.

¹⁰ For instance, see Ellen Johnston Laing, *The Winking Owl: Art in the People’s Republic of China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 44-47; Zou Yuejin 鄒躍進, *Xin Zhongguo meishu shi, 1949-2000* 新中國美術史 (1949-2000) (An art history of new China, 1949-2000) (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2002), 48-62; Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *The Art of Modern China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 169-177.

ended, this socialist polity was largely under the political command of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976), who arose to become the top leader of the party in the 1930s and the 1940s. The PRC proclaimed itself to be politically, economically, and militarily leaning toward the Soviet Union since 1949—although such a strategic alignment was brought to an abrupt end in 1960.¹¹ Ideologically, the PRC vowed to adhere to the Marxist-Leninist theory of practicing socialism, with the ultimate goal of advancing China to a Chinese communist state of its own through endless social, political, and economic revolutions.¹² Culturally, the PRC initially adopted the Soviet socialist realism as its officially sanctioned principle for literary and art creation, while later it devised its own through promoting the formula of “combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism” in 1958.¹³ Given the deviation between interpreting and actualizing communist revolutions, researchers often use the term “Maoism” to demarcate theories and doctrines practiced by Mao and his associates from the orthodox Marxism and the Soviet Union, labeling the CCP interest in constructing China into a distinctly Chinese socialist nation-state.¹⁴

Unlike the capitalist West which commonly held a skeptical view of this period of Chinese history, members of the CCP and its followers in their time generally held a positive view of it. They considered these early years of the People’s Republic as “the New China” 新中

¹¹ For details of the rise and fall of the Sino-Soviet alliance, see Zhihua Shen and Danhui Li, *After Leaning to One Side: China and its Allies in the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

¹² Maurice J. Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic* (New York City, NY: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1986), 204-215.

¹³ Laing, *The Winking Owl*, 20-23; and Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1979* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 41-21 and 254-259.

¹⁴ For instance, see Maurice J. Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism: Eight Essays* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

國, an era that elucidated a novel sense of temporality and spatiality. It was also regarded as a long-awaited era, full of political aspirations and socioeconomic changes. In standard Chinese Communist historiography, this period was said to have been epochally preceded by more than a hundred years of oppression by imperialistic forces from the west since the two Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860), followed by more than a decade-long Japanese invasion (1931-1945), as well as the brutal and corrupted rule of the former Nationalist Party (also called Kuomintang, hereafter KMT) from 1912 to 1949. Chinese communists propagated the ideological view that socialism could save China from further afflictions resulting from the half-colonial and half-feudal powers by embarking on the hopeful future possible under the aegis of communism by the Chinese Communist Party. All in all, this period was full of hope, imagination, and fantasy in the political narrative constructed by the Chinese communist regime. The sense of utopianism registered in the propaganda attracted not only members of the CCP within China, but also many overseas Chinese scientists, engineers, scholars, and cultural producers in all fields to return to the mainland to serve the purpose of building their motherland.

Compared to the preceding and following periods of the twentieth century, the sense of utopianism of these seventeen years of PRC history has been broadly overlooked by art historians and institutions in the Anglophone world. Certainly, the pioneering research by Ellen Johnston Laing and Julia Frances Andrews in 1988 and 1994, respectively, has offered much-needed insight into the nuanced relationships between art production and politics of this period within the larger historical framework of communist China from the revolutionary era in the 1930s through the post-Maoist era in the late 1970s.¹⁵ However, apart from that, this period is devoid of any other analytical models with which scholars could explain the trajectory, form, and

¹⁵ See Laing, *The Winking Owl*; Andrews, *Painters and Politics*.

role of the period's art. One reason behind the lack of critical input is that over the past two decades, western institutional interest in twentieth-century Chinese art has held the assumption that modernity could equally serve as a universally powerful mode of investigation in explaining a variety of historical problems in the modern period.¹⁶ While the modernity model has aptly interpreted questions concerning artistic agency in the Republican Period (1912-1949) and the post-socialist era (after 1976), it generally holds a dismissive view of post-1949 Chinese art due to the undesirable fact that art production hereafter was largely under the command of politics.¹⁷ Another reason is that many artworks of the era are held by museums or private collectors in China, or are in the hands of the artists' family. Limited accessibility to or visibility of the original objects to researchers in the West have inevitably inhibited their ability to conduct comprehensive research in the field, as well as their potential to critically reevaluate the implications of existing research models or to reconstruct or expand the field.

Seeking to reshape the research paradigm for this period in current art historical writing, I choose to examine this period as an independent temporal framework in my dissertation. In particular, I borrow the term “the Seventeen Years” 十七年 from the field of Chinese cinema and literature because its primal numeric form calls attention to its historical value. Compared to other naming methods—such as “the early socialist period,” “the early Maoist period,” or “the New China,” *the Seventeen Years* appears to be the most straightforward appellation as it directly refers to the set of years being covered by name. Generally, scholars who have adopted this term

¹⁶ For instance, see *Modernity in Asian Art*, ed. John Clark (Broadway, NSW, Australia: Wild Peony, 1993); Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York City, NY: Guggenheim Museum, 1998); *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions*, eds. Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith (New York City, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001); and *Writing Modern Chinese Art: Historiographic Explorations*, ed. Josh Yiu (Seattle, WA: Seattle Art Museum, 2009).

¹⁷ Even though some researchers do not use the *modern* or *modernity* as their research model, their writing often speaks with a dismissive tone. See, for instance, Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 128-150.

consider it a valid temporal framework due to the general assumption that most cultural productions were radically politicalized after the founding of the PRC in 1949 and that most of them were brought to a halt as it entered the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966.

Nevertheless, my adoption of “the Seventeen Years” goes beyond the simple reason of seeking numerical precision or conceding to the general assumption. Instead, I am interested in the political connotations of this term in regard to the question of how history has been written and conceived. As the period’s major daily newspaper shows, this term had been used by Chinese Communist revolutionaries during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) to condemn certain cultural productions of the period for condoning “bourgeois” values that conceptually negated Marxist-Maoist doctrines.¹⁸ After the end of the decade-long Cultural Revolution, Chinese researchers began to reevaluate the historical position of particular topics from the formerly condemned seventeen-year period.¹⁹ Later on, this term became progressively popular among Chinese literature and film scholars in both China and Euro-America in the 1990s and particularly the 2000s.²⁰ Compared to their literary and film colleagues, art researchers in China

¹⁸ See Xu Kaifu 徐開福, “Liang zhong genben duili de ‘fang’” 兩種根本對立的“放” (Two fundamentally opposing “blossoms”), *People’s Daily*, November 11, 1966, 6.

¹⁹ See Yan Yunshou 嚴云受, “Mantan shiqi nian de changpian xiaoshuo—bo ‘wenyi hei xian zhuanzheng’ lun” 漫談十七年的長篇小說——駁‘文藝黑線專政’論 (A study of the long stories of the Seventeen Years—rebuking the discourse on “the black line in literature and art”), *Anhui shida xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 安徽師大學報 (哲學社會科學版) (Journal of Anhui Normal University, Philosophy & Social Sciences) no. 6 (1977): 10-17; Shanghai Branch of the China Artists Association 中國美術家協會上海分會, “Yishu minzhu yu bai-hua-qi-fang” 藝術民主與百花齊放 (Democracy in art and the blossom of hundred flowers), *Meishu*, no. 11 (1979): 35-37; and Cai Shiyong 蔡師勇, “Xianshi zhuyi he Zhongguo dianying de liang ge shiqi nian” 現實主義和中國電影的兩個十七年 (Realism and the two Seventeen Years in Chinese cinema), *Dangdai dianying* 當代電影 (Contemporary film), no. 3 (1985): 28-37.

²⁰ For instance, see Hong Kong 洪宏, *Sulan yingxiang yu Zhongguo “17 nian” dianying* 蘇聯影響與中國十七年電影 (The Soviet influence and the Chinese “Seventeen-Year” films) (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2008); Yomi Braester, “The Political Campaign as Genre: Ideology and Iconography during the Seventeen Years Period,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 69:1 (March 2008): 119-140.

lagged by a decade because they had not implemented this term and its temporal framework until the mid-2000s.²¹ Such hesitation is likewise observed in English language of art—indeed to a greater extent since it is still absent even now. Understanding the political history and connotation of the term, I purposely adopt “the Seventeen Years” in the title and writing of my dissertation research to summon methodological reflections associated with this problem in the current state of Chinese art historiography.

The New Landscape

The Seventeen Years was an art historically contestable period in many ways, as will be shown in my research. In 1953, the Chinese Communist Party began to reinvent the traditional Chinese understanding of mountains and waters (*shanshui* 山水), as well as the received Chinese notions of European landscape (*fengjing* 風景) into personified notion of maternal or paternal land, or politicalized concept of nature for national imagining. For instance, official journalists often propagated these two cultural approaches to landscape as a vehicle to capture the beauty of “the motherland” (*zuguo* 祖國). Moreover, they reintroduced the indigenous Chinese tropes of “*jiashan*” 江山 (river and mountain), “*heshan*” 河山 (river and mountain) and “*shanhe*” 山河 (mountain and river) into the political and cultural discourse. By doing so, mountains and rivers were recast into two powerful landscape attributes of the Chinese socialist state. Thereby, they transformed the conventionally philosophical notions of mountains and rivers, and the more recently European-imported notion of depicting landforms, into sites that depicted the

²¹ For instance, see Ge Yujun 葛玉君, “Jianguo shiqi nian Zhongguohua lunzheng tanxi” 建國十七年中國畫論爭探析 (An analysis of the disputes on Chinese painting during the Seventeen Years of the founding of the nation) (M.A. thesis, Central Academy of Fine Arts, 2006); and Cai Qing 蔡青, “Xin Zhongguo ‘Shiqi nian’ Zhongguo hua yanjiu” 新中國“十七年”中國畫研究 (A study of the New China’s Chinese painting during the “Seventeen Years”) (Ph.D. diss., Chinese National Academy of Arts, 2007).

negotiation of a new national identity, as well as a tool for reconstructing the public reception of the New China.

Under this reform, landscape representation also experienced a multitude of alterations during the Seventeen Years. In terms of their relationship to the outside world, these images illustrate a high level of geographical specificity to real locations in China. One reason for the rising geographical interest in landscape representation is that, as many scholars point out, the CCP was active in financing visits by their cultural workers of different visual media to different locales across their nation.²² In terms of theme, these landscapes present imagery of unprecedented subject matter related to contemporary scenes of Chinese socialist nation-building. This includes views of labor-intensive economic production, large-scale infrastructure construction, as well as institutional spaces of collectivization that proliferated across the PRC after 1949. Moreover, this period also saw a surge in the depiction of historic sites that embodied the constructed notion of the revolutionary spirit of Chinese Communists, as well as the landscapes that were described in the poems of Chairman Mao to promote his revolutionary spirit and cult. Lastly, the Chinese state also patronized the representation of famous mountains and rivers in China in order to extol the eternal beauty of the motherland.

Therefore, during the Seventeen Years, the concept of the landscape was no longer confined to the traditionally philosophical subjects of mountains and rivers, nor to the European notion of *plein-air* sketching. Instead, the landscape was tasked with visualizing surrounding spaces that, I assert, could imagine an idealized form of the revolutionary past, industrial present,

²² For instance, see Chu-tsing Li, *Trends in Modern Chinese Painting: The C.A. Drenowatz Collection* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1979), 122; Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 169-174; and Han Lichao 韓立朝, *Zai chang de xianshi: 20 shiji 20 niandai zhi 60 niandai shanshuihua xiesheng yanjiu* 在場的現實: 20世紀 20年代至 60年代山水畫寫生研究 (Reality on-site: a study of landscape sketching from the 1920s to the 1960s) (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2015), 141-218.

and communist future of the Chinese socialist nation-state. These landscape depictions, as they are regarded by official art critics of the Seventeen Years, emblematised the “New Landscape” of socialist China. This new understanding of landscape depiction was not confined to the medium of Chinese ink painting, nor to the European-imported media of oil and watercolor painting. Instead, it was widely applied with practices in all kinds of visual media, including woodcut print, photograph, poster, and film.

The new content, approach, and geographical specificity of the New Landscapes of socialist China have attracted sporadic research interest in both the Chinese and English-speaking world over the past two decades. Most researchers hold a strong interest in exploring landscape executed in the medium of Chinese ink painting. For instance, Flora Fu’s study explores how the practice of depicting real places in Chinese ink painting articulated a rising political consciousness of the national land, as well as the formation of a new national identity.²³ Lee Ambrozy investigates the emergence of the concept of “the motherland,” also in this medium, and traces it to the influence of the Soviet Union in the 1950s.²⁴ More recently, Christine Ho investigates how the notion of mass sketching served to transform Chinese ink painters from their prior status as the sociocultural elites into a political apparatus; by extension, it transmuted “a formerly elite art into a revolutionary medium.”²⁵ Yinxing Liu examines the

²³ Flora Li-tsui Fu 傅立萃, “Shijing shanshui yu jiangtu lunshu—qi ling niandai yi qian Zhongguo dalu yu Taiwan de shanshuihua yu zhengzhi yishi” 實景山水與疆土論述——七零年代以前中國大陸與台灣的山水畫與政治意識 (Landscape discourse and national identity: political meanings in representations of specific places in China and Taiwan 1911-1970s), in *Zhonghua wenhua bainian lunwen ji* 中華文化百年論文集 1901-2000 (Chinese culture centenary 1901-2000), ed. National Museum of History (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1999), 105-133.

²⁴ An Jing 安靜 (Lee Ambrozy), “‘Zuguo’ de gainian zai gaizao guohua yundong zhong de shengcheng” ‘祖國’的概念在改造國畫運動中的生成 (The emergence of “motherland” in the guohua painting reforms) (M.A. thesis, Central Academy of Fine Arts, 2011).

²⁵ Christine I. Ho, “Drawing from Life: Mass Sketching and the Formation of Socialist Realist *Guohua* in the Early People’s Republic of China (1949-1965)” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2014).

cinematic appropriation of traditional *literati* landscape aesthetics in Chinese film from the 1950s through the late 1970s.²⁶

Likewise, scholars in China are also interested in examining ink paintings of the New Landscape, but through three distinct taxonomic models: the “landscape of the national reconstruction” 建設山水, the “landscape of the holy land of Chinese Communist revolution” 草命聖地山水, and the landscape in Mao’s poem 毛澤東詩意山水.²⁷ Certain scholarship also delves into the question of sketching and depicting real landscapes of the period.²⁸ Without a doubt, all of these studies have offered much-needed insight into the historical operation of landscape representation surrounding the practice and aesthetic of Chinese ink during the early socialist era. But, since none of these research projects has taken the visuality of the landscape

²⁶ Yinxing Liu, “The Literati Lenses: *Wenren* Landscape in Chinese Cinema” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2013).

²⁷ The Guan Shanyue Art Museum was one of the earliest Chinese art institutions to promote the idea of the landscape in national reconstruction. See *Jianshe Xin Zhongguo: 20 shiji 50 zhi 60 niandai zhongqi Zhongguo hua zhuantizhan* 建設新中國: 20 世紀 50 至 60 年代中期中國畫專題展 (Chinese national reconstruction: special exhibition on Chinese ink paintings from 1950s to mid-1960s), ed. Guan Shanyue Meishuguan 關山月美術館 (Nanning: Guangxi meishu chubanshe, 2005). As for individual researchers, Wan Xinhua 萬新華 has recently contributed various articles and publications on the different subjects of landscape: *Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao: Fu Baoshi Mao Zedong shiyi hua chuangzuo* 江山如此多嬌: 傅抱石毛澤東詩意畫創作 (This land so rich in beauty: Fu Baoshi's painting of Mao Zedong's poetry) (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2010); *Shengdi shaoguang: 20 shiji zhongqi Zhongguo hua zhi Shaoshan tuxiang* 聖地韶光: 20 世紀中期中國畫之韶山圖像 (Glory of the holy land: Images of Shaoshan in the mid-twentieth-century Chinese painting) (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2012); “Tushi gexin yu quwei zhuanbian: yi shiqi nian Jiangsu guohua jia bixia de jianshe zhuti wei li” 圖式革新與轉變: 以十七年江蘇國畫家筆下的建設主題為例, *Meishu yanjiu* 美術研究 (Art research), no. 1 (2012): 56-65. Also, see Sun Jiangtao 孫蔣濤, “Qian Songyan yu er shi shiji shanshuihua shi shang de geming shengdi ticai” 錢松嵒與 20 世紀山水畫史上的革命聖地題材 (Qian Songyan and the theme of revolutionary sacred land in twentieth-century landscape painting history) (Ph.D. diss., Nanjing University of the Arts, 2009); Sun Jiangtao 孫蔣濤, “Lun geming shengdi ticai de shanshuihua” 論革命聖地題材的山水畫 (A discussion of landscape painting on the theme of revolutionary holy land), *Nanjing yishu xueyuan xuebao* 南京藝術學院學報 (Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute), no. 3 (2009): 186-189; and Zou Yuejin, *Xin Zhongguo meishu shi, 1949-2000*, 48-62.

²⁸ Chengjun Piao 樸城君 and Guobin Fang 房國斌, *Zhen shan shi jing: 20 shiji wu liushi niandai Guangdong Zhongguo shanshuihua yanjiu* 真山實景: 20 世紀五六十年代廣東中國山水畫研究 (Real mountains and sceneries: a study of Chinese landscape painting in Guangdong of the 1950s and the 1960s) (Guangzhou: Jinan daxue chubanshe, 2013); and Han Lichao, *Zai chang de xianshi*.

images themselves as a critical problem, the value and historical position of these images remains an unresolved question in the field of Chinese art history.

Undoubtedly, the visuality of the New Landscape of the Seventeen Years deserves a critical investigation because it prompts researchers to rethink how landscape images of the period were interpreted, and how history has been, and could be, constructed. One feature, which I will demonstrate in my research, is that this period featured a parallel development of two critical modes of portraying the New Landscape, namely, a *heroic construction of space* and a *lyrical depiction of place*, and did so across several different visual media. For the former mode, art producers often experimented with the exaggeration of the form, scale, and proportion of particular landscape motifs or frameworks so that the overall image spoke to a heroic sense of spatial drama. Occasionally, some producers combined a bird's eye view with specific perspectival techniques acquired from the European artistic tradition, thereby constructing a powerful sense of spatial continuity from the foreground through the background of the work. In other cases, artists reinvented traditional Chinese painting formats and artistic idioms to construct a panoramic landscape, or a landscape with multiple perspectives, conveying a powerful sense of heroism. For the mode of lyricism, some of those landscape representations showed a skillful exploitation of the spatial-temporal dimension of the work that invoked sensual and imagined phenomenological experiences for the viewer. Doing so resulted in images that would amply complicate the viewing experience of and the messages carried by the work beyond what was literally depicted.

Certainly, in the age when art production was subsumed within a political purpose, the New Landscape was inevitably empowered with a sociopolitical role to impact society. One way that the Chinese Communist Party sought to implement such impacts is that they circulated these

landscape depictions around the country, to its people, through the newly established art institution called the China Artists Association (CAA) 中國藝術家協會.²⁹ Having its main office in Beijing and regional offices in different provinces around the country, the CAA played a central role in sponsoring and organizing the exhibition of these new landscape arts at museums and exhibition halls in major cities. To disseminate their images, the Party's art journal, *Meishu* 美術 (*Art*)—operated by CAA—constantly published landscape art in Chinese ink painting, oil painting, water color, and print that depicted the changing surroundings all over the country. The Party's newspapers, such as *Remin ribao* 人民日報 (hereafter *People's Daily*), and the Party's illustrative pictorials, such as *Remin huabao* 人民畫報 (hereafter *China Pictorial*), regularly published landscape photographs for mass circulation. Furthermore, state art and cultural publishers also produced a large number of art catalogues on landscape artworks created by individual or institutionally-bonded artists. Lastly, the state also began to explore the production of what critics would later call “landscape film” 風景片 in recognition of the potential of film in promoting the new Chinese landscape beginning in 1956.³⁰ When these images were circulated to the public, their reception was often mediated by a text written by official art critics who sought to utilize specific elements in those landscapes to construct a narrative of imagining the glory or political aura of socialist China. Through these narratives, the New Landscape was transformed into a site for imagining an idealized socialist China.

²⁹ CAA was first established under the name of the Art Workers Association (AWA) 中華全國美術工作者協會 in 1949. It was later renamed as such in 1953.

³⁰ See Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, Zhang Ding 張仃, Huang Yongyu 黃永玉, and Huang Dizi 黃苗子, “Cong ‘Guilin Shanshui’ kan fengjingpian de wuxian qiantu” 從桂林山水看風景片的無限前途 (Seeing the unlimited prospect of landscape film through *Guilin Landscape*), *Zhongguo dianying* 中國電影 (Chinese cinema), no. S1 (1956): 55.

The synopsis outlined above shows that landscape depictions produced during the Seventeen Years was operating within a myriad of forces quite dissimilar to prior periods. These depictions no longer featured the representation of the idealized notions of mountains and rivers in the philosophical senses of traditional China. Instead, they exploited new modes of visual-spatial articulation, which would allow artists to charge the locales portrayed with the varying temporality of the authoritarian Chinese socialist state. These articulations, when interpreted and orchestrated in official institutional contexts, infused new power into the imagining of an idealized political state. The imagining power of these landscape depictions demands new methods of examination, which allow scholars to see, as W.J.T. Mitchell asserts, how landscape serves as an “instrument of cultural power,” and how it functions as a medium instead of an object, a verb instead of a noun.³¹

Intervention: Imagining

In this dissertation, I intervene in the study of Chinese Socialist Landscape through the angle of “imagining.” In addition to its everyday meaning of daydreaming or fantasizing, I define the conceptual meaning of imagining as the capacity to form a mental image, with which the visualized idea itself can be manipulated to carry traits different from reality. Here, the visual dimension of imagining shares an etymological root with the words “image” and “imaging.” Similarly, I recognize its conceptual relationship to the Chinese translation of the same term, “xiangxiang” 想像, in which the first character of this term “xiang” 想 means *to think*, and the second character “xiang” 像 means *image* or *figuration*. With this interpretation, I consider the

³¹ W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1-2.

representation of the New Landscape to be a dual site for both fantasizing and visualizing one's imagination of an idealized socialist China during the Seventeen Years.

In utilizing this concept, I argue that the New Landscape was not simply a byproduct of mass on-site sketching or different cultural policies. Instead, it was both the process and result of imagining an ideal socialist China among the party leaders, officers, art critics, artists, and viewers during the Seventeen Years. As my research shows, these landscape representations allowed these social agents to vividly document what they had seen and experienced from physical sites. More importantly, through the act of commissioning, producing, and receiving them, they were able to use the landscape depictions to imagine an idealized form for the past, present, and future of socialist China. Landscape imagery claimed its power from both its subject matter and its forms. For instance, images that used a heroic visual language to portray the scene of a present-day construction site could embody the state's fantasy of an epic leap forward in its industrial development. Alternatively, a landscape image that emblematized a plentitude of national ideals could summon the viewer's imagining of the advent of the Chinese communist utopia. Considering the fact that many of these landscape images were produced and received at time when the nation was confronting devastating social and economic challenges nationwide—including the economic recession and great famine in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960),³² I am interested in the ways in which these landscape imageries offered their viewers an alternative reality to imagine the ideal in the midst of the arduous process of nation-building.

³² For details about the great famine resulted from the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward, see Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962* (New York City, NY: Bloomsbury, 2011).

I assert that imagining is a vital angle to investigating the proliferation of the New Landscape during the Seventeen Years of the PRC for several reasons. To begin with, ideologically, the endeavor to build a Chinese socialist nation-state itself required engagement with different capacities of imaginative powers. As noted by Maurice Meisner, the Marxist assertion that human society would leap from “the realm of necessity” to “the realm of freedom,” embraced by the socialist states, remained a utopian concept.³³ Espousing these utopian visions, the Maoist approach to implementing communism necessitated an even greater sense of fantasy. China, an economically backward agrarian society in 1949, was devoid of the necessary economic and industrial foundations described in the Marxist doctrines that would facilitate its advancement into a communist society.³⁴ Therefore, to reach this utopian goal, Mao relied on the propagation of numerous ideals or discourses in order to fuel peoples’ enthusiasm for these utopic visions of social and economic progress. Moreover, the ubiquity of these propagated discourses forged the public belief that the epic tasks of socialist construction could be achieved by the superhuman of the era, supported by the fantasy that state industrial development would never fall short of resources due to the endless provision of fuels and mines by the motherland. The plethora of faiths and fantasies that prevailed during the Seventeen Years contributed to the mythical dimensions in the building of a Chinese socialist nation-state. Therefore, I regard imagining as a pertinent angle to investigate the social and cultural life of landscape representations charged with these public fantasies.

Historically speaking, my research shows that imagining had become an indispensable component in the production of art during the Seventeen Years of the PRC. Benefiting from extant textual accounts, my research demonstrates that this period witnessed a deep interest in

³³ Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*, 6-7.

³⁴ Ibid., 52-53.

engaging with the faculty of imagining when it came to the commissioning of and interpreting landscape art. In their writings or speeches delivered to artists, Chinese communist leaders, art officials, critics and theorists frequently used terms such as “imagine” 想像 and “imaginative power” 想像力 to embolden artists to depict and subjectively transform what they saw and felt in their surrounding spaces within the parameters of political discourses. Art officials also encouraged artists to explore novel techniques in constructing their art for the “new look” 新貌 of the nation that could serve as archetypal images of the New China. Some of the rhetorical statements frequently used by the state in their attempts to reshape the artists’ reception included, “Look at the grandeur of the Chinese socialist reconstruction!” “Look at the heroic beauty of the motherland!” and “This land is so rich in beauty!” All in all, landscape production during the Seventeen Years was resituated in a context in which Chinese socialist imagining was highly encouraged, and for which grandiose and romanticist representations of the landscape were highly extolled.

I will also discuss the ways in which imagination emerged when these landscape images were circulated and received. Many New Landscapes featured depictions of places that were either remote or beyond the immediate access of most civilians. These include, for instance, the construction sites of dams or highways on the outskirts of provincial or cross-provincial regions. Some landscapes thematized the newly exploited agricultural or industrial zones located in the remote countryside or in the frontier lands of the country. Many of these landscape images portrayed sites that were historic to the Chinese Communist revolution, or located in militarily strategic zones in remote areas. These landscape images, which the state considered as emblems of the New China, circulated through exhibition or other reproducible means to urban viewers who had never visited those locations in person. Therefore, within the institutional mechanism of

producing and receiving those images, an experiential gap existed between the site of depiction and the site of reception. As many textual accounts show, art critics often made use of this gap to imagine unseen and faraway places. In their writings, such landscapes offered readers and viewers sites to fantasize about the condition of the depicted site as a form of national imagination.

Finally, this research also ponders the role of imagination in nation building from a theoretical perspective. As Benedict Anderson proposes in his theory of imagined community, all communities that are larger than the scale of primordial villages are primarily imaginary in nature. This is because most members within those communities will never come to know or meet with the rest of the members. Nevertheless, each of those members are bound together through certain cultural forces such as text or language, which serve to offer them a means of communion.³⁵ While Anderson primarily constructs his theory through textual materials, my research focuses on the visual depiction of the landscape, which I consider to be a form of visual imagination in connection with the surrounding space.

Methodology and Scope

Methodologically, this dissertation conducts visual analyses of the depictions of landscape across different visual media, including Chinese ink painting, oil painting, watercolor painting, woodcut print, photograph, and film. In canvassing so broad a scope, I seek to transcend the limits imposed by each media, focusing instead on the visual construction of the image of landscape within a framed space. One way I have adopted in analyzing those images

³⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016), 15.

across such a vast array of visual media is to examine how they construct a heroic sense of space within their pictorial, photographic, or cinematic frames. Another approach I have taken is to examine how they construct a prolonged sense of time through the strategic use of scenic images and topographic spaces. By analyzing the spatiality and temporality in the depictions and constructions of the New Landscape images, I have identified the primacy of the heroic and lyrical languages in offering a new visual experience to viewers of the period. I consider the two modes of articulation to be the most archetypal approaches in facilitating imagination. I have also observed that in some cases these two approaches might intermingle to produce compelling imaginative effects.

Apart from visual analysis, this dissertation also conducts discourse analysis by examining a variety of primary textual materials published during the Seventeen Years. These include the Party's art journal *Meishu* (*Art*), the Party's art and literary journal *Wenyi bao* 文藝報 (*Literary and Art Journal*), the Party's newspaper *People's Daily*, the Party's illustrative magazine *China Pictorial*, and a variety of other texts. I consider this research methodology crucial because this period exhibited a surge of discussions concerning the depiction and the reception of the New Landscape. In order to elucidate the operations of landscape imagining during this period, I explore how these conversations constituted a discursive field within which the artists and their critics were directed to reinvent ways of depicting the New Landscape, and how these concepts impacted the way of reading and imaging the landscape. Nor can one dismiss the role some of these concepts had as they were proposed by the party leaders, and were passed down by the state press media as a form of cultural policy. These ideas were conducted primarily top-down, however, to a certain extent, the top-down mode was also off-set by the artistic interpretation and negotiation by certain artists.

In terms of research scope, this dissertation fully makes use of the geo-temporal framework of the first Seventeen Years of the PRC to reconstruct the history of landscape imagining. Within this temporal structure, I have identified the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) as the apex of this politically-motivated artistic movement as it witnessed the most vibrant creative vigor in imagining the New Landscape for the PRC. Therefore, this is also the period from which I have drawn most of the visual materials for this research. Geographically, this dissertation covers landscape depiction produced by artists from major art centers all over China. Certainly, some artistic institutional forces have received a greater share of research attention as they inhabited a more critical position in terms of devising new ways to construct the New Landscape for the nation. For instance, assembled in the former ROC's capital of Nanjing, the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute led by painters Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904-1965), Qian Songyan 錢松嵒 (1899-1985), and Song Wenzhi 宋文治 (1919-1999) arose as a pivotal regional force in using the medium of traditional Chinese ink painting to create the New Landscape. Based in a national collective farm called Beidahuang 北大荒 (the Great Northern Wasteland/Wilderness) in Heilongjiang Province in northeast China, local woodcut artists such as Chao Mei 晁楣 (b. 1931) emerged as representative regional powers in the portrayal of agricultural landscape in that medium from 1958 through the early 1960s. Inheriting the institutional infrastructure and technical foundation from the previously imperialistic Japanese force in northeast China, the Changchun Film Studio 長春電影制片廠, located in Jilin Province, arose as a leading national film company shooting landscape scenery around the country in their story films from the late 1950s onward. Comparatively, photography, oil painting, and watercolor painting were likewise invested in by the state to construct the notion of the New

Landscape. Beyond their contribution to this thesis, however, other questions of provincial regionalism will not be addressed here.

Structure

This dissertation consists of four chapters, each investigating a specific way in which landscape representation functioned as a site for the imagining of an idealized socialist China. This investigation begins with an inquiry into the rise of the discourse of the New Landscape by tracing relevant discussions as a *discursive* field in official art journals. Then, it will examine two critical modes of depicting the landscape—the *heroic* and *lyrical*—across different visual media, although Chinese ink painting remains the focus of analysis due to its privileged position as *the* national art medium. Finally, this project proceeds to examine how the discursive, the heroic and lyric modes all intersect with one another in one of the most important national art productions on the tenth anniversary of the PRC in 1959. In this context, I argue that it had generated another critical mode which I call the *intertextual* landscape for national imagination. From this conceptual sketch, one can see that these four models of imagining—discursive, heroic, lyrical, intertextual—are not exclusive of each other. Instead, they coexist and interact with one another in order to generate immense imaginative power for landscape representation.

The first chapter, “New Landscape: Discourse and the Institutional Imagining of a New Nation-State,” examines the formation of the new institutional environment during the early years of the Seventeen Years and examines how this new political setting created a discursive field in which both physical and depicted landscapes were reimagined as the New Landscape of the New China. The second chapter, “Heroic Landscape: Aggrandizing Space and Evoking the ‘Spirit of the Times’,” investigates how the discourse of heroism was translated into the New

Landscape through the technique of aggrandizing spaces. I argue that the resulting senses of spatial continuity and monumentality embodied the political myth of “the spirit of the times,” thereby evoking a temporal fantasy of entering into a new political era. In the third chapter, “Lyrical Landscape: Poeticizing Places and Extolling the Motherland’s Beauty,” I analyze how different models of lyrical depiction served to beautify the viewer’s reception of specific places. In doing so, I examine the way in which they echoed the official discourse of extolling various places around the country, thus the beauty of the motherland. Finally, the fourth chapter, “Intertextual Landscape: Reconstructing Geography and Envisioning the Chinese Communist Utopia,” focuses on a monumental landscape painting called *This Land So Rich in Beauty*, tailor-made for prominent display in front of the grand staircase at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing in 1959. By analyzing how this painting utilized a poem, “Snow,” written by Chairman Mao during wartime and how its spatial and temporal structure intersects with the discourses of imagining a powerful and glorious socialist Chinese state, I elucidate how the intertextual quality of the landscape conjures up a political envisioning of the Chinese communist utopia.

Chapter 1 The New Landscape:

Discourse and the Institutional Imagining of a New Nation

Published in the fifth issue of the Party's art journal, *Meishu*, in 1954, the following excerpt powerfully announced the newly installed political function of the representation of landscape:

Landscape painting, albeit not bearing any figure, can be associated with the nation-state. It can also be associated with the Communist Party, Chairman Mao, and the socialist construction. It can even connect with the notion of labor-intensive input in economic production. Therefore, one cannot say that landscape painting is not something needed by the working people. Instead, one should consider what kinds of landscape the working people most desire and concern.³⁶

Written by high-ranking art theorist Cai Ruohong 蔡若虹 (1910-2002) of the Chinese Communist Party, this passage was one that spearheaded official party interest in developing a new kind of landscape representation between 1954 and 1966. In this category, the depiction of landscape was employed as a tool to guide viewers to imagine a promising future for the People's Republic of China based on what they beheld within a landscape representation. This passage announced what artists within the official art institutional system in the following decade would be conditioned to actively pursue and what official art critics in the late 1950s and the early 1960s would define as "the New Landscape." Since these statements were published in the Party's official print media, they formed a peculiar discursive environment for the New Landscape in the early period of the Seventeen Years.

Despite its critical role in the politicization of landscape and landscape art, this discursive field has received little scholarly attention or critical problematization in the study of Chinese

³⁶ Cai Ruohong 蔡若虹, "Nianhua chuangzuo ying fayang minjian nianhua de youlian chuangtong" 年畫創作應發揚民間年畫的優良傳統 (The creation of new year print should carry forward the fine tradition of folk new year print), *Meishu*, no. 5 (1954): 7.

socialist art in the Anglophone world. For one thing, discourse analysis has rarely been adopted by art historians of modern China as a critical research methodology. Even though some scholars have identified a few texts from the 1950s as critical agents in the political reform of Chinese ink painting, few have considered the role of those texts in the formation of a discursive field within which the notion of the landscape could be reinvented.³⁷

This chapter investigates the emergence of the discourse of the New Landscape in the formative years of the People's Republic of China. I understand *discourse* to consist of a body of statements which are expressed in textual or visual languages around a specific subject matter.³⁸ First, I examine how the new institutional environment established after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 facilitated the formation of a new notion of landscape and landscape representation. Then, I examine the ways in which these statements were circulated and actualized within the institutional framework of art within the PRC. Therefore, my approach marks its difference from scholarship that positions the *oeuvre* itself as the site of discourse formation.³⁹ My research does not examine whether those statements authentically represented the opinion of their named authors, nor do I seek to demonstrate if this discourse has ever operated as a public sphere—naturally, the answer to both questions would be a definite *no* in the severely censored cultural environment of Maoist China. Instead, I examine how the formation, circulation, and actualization of these statements created a new cultural habitat for the reconceptualization of landscape representation across different visual media in the early part of the Seventeen Years.

³⁷ See Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 111-118.

³⁸ Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods* (London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999), 41-42.

³⁹ For an example in the Chinese cinema, see Ching-Mei Esther Yau, "Filmic Discourse on Women in Chinese Cinema, 1949-65: Art, Ideology and Social Relations" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1990).

New Institutional Environment

The year 1949 marked a watershed in the institutional history of Chinese art. Prior to the official establishment of the PRC, representatives of cultural workers in all fields were summoned to Beijing to convene for the All-China National Congress of Literary and Arts Workers 中華全國文學藝術工作者代表大會, from July 2-19, 1949. This convention was politically important because Vice Premier Zhou Enlai 周恩來 (1898-1976) had stipulated that both the old content and forms of literature and art must be remolded for the purpose of building a new Chinese socialist nation-state.⁴⁰ Another remark was delivered by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978), then the poet-official who rose to dominate the top leadership position in the cultural field of the Chinese Communist world since the 1940s. Reinforcing the centrality of Mao's remark delivered in the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942, Guo asserted that both art and literature should function as a political weapon to serve the proletariat.⁴¹ Soon after this convention, two official bodies were founded: the All-China Federation of Literary and Arts Circle (FLAC) 中華全國文學藝術界聯合會, chaired by Guo, and the Art Workers Association (AWA) 中華全國美術工作者協會, chaired by realist painter and educator Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895-1953).⁴² In 1953, the AWA was renamed the China Artists Association (CAA).

The establishment of FLAC and AWA/CAA centralized human resources in the fields of literature and art within an overarching institutional framework governed by the Chinese

⁴⁰ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 36.

⁴¹ Guo Moruo 郭沫若, "Guo Moruo xiansheng kaimu ci" 郭沫若先生開幕辭 (The opening remarks of Mr. Guo Moruo), *People's Daily*, July 3, 1949: 1.

⁴² Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 36-7.

Communist Party. Both new establishments enjoyed a national network, and both had their headquarters in the capital of Beijing, with regional branches in different provinces and cities. This structure facilitated the passing down of cultural policy from the central government to regional offices throughout the country. However, FLAC and AWA/CAA each played a slightly different but interconnected role in this process. FLAC served to coordinate cultural policy and activities between the fields of literature, art, and other cultural productions. Such an institutional framework led to the seemingly cross-disciplinary interaction surrounding specific cultural policies. The AWA/CAA was an art institution subordinated to FLAC, and beneath it were numerous sections, notably the Membership Section, the Exhibition Section, the Editorial Section, and Foreign Affairs.⁴³ Such an infrastructure allowed the state to easily mobilize resources in the creation, exhibition, and publication sectors for implementing state cultural policy at national and international levels.

Rejecting the Old

This new institutional environment had a strong impact on official interpretations of the meanings of landscape during the Seventeen Years. Having attended the All-China National Congress of Literary and Arts Workers, many high-ranking committee members of FLAC and AWA became the key agents in rearticulating the new cultural policy in the official print media. Early on in the Seventeen Years, state cultural leaders generally disapproved of the functionality of landscape painting—particularly those executed in the medium of traditional Chinese ink—to serve the ideological interest of the New China. Many Chinese communist cultural bureaucrats adopted a Marxist perspective in evaluating the position of traditional Chinese landscape

⁴³ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 6.

painting within the conceptual framework of the class structure, one in which the bourgeoisie had a conflicted relationship with the proletariat—i.e. working-class people—precisely because landscape painting was considered bourgeois.

For instance, in an article published in the official journal, *Xin jianshe* 新建設 (New reconstructs) in 1950, AWA Chairman Xu Beihong publically criticized Chinese landscape painting as a bourgeois leisure activity. He deemed it vitally important for painters to radically reinvent themselves by confronting reality and using their art to serve the proletariat.⁴⁴ He considered Chinese landscape painting to be a form of art inherited from the old, pre-Communist society. This understanding jeopardized the medium of painting because, as Premier Zhou Enlai had previously asserted in the 1949 congress, the new political regime must eradicate the old in the name of founding the new. Accordingly, in the face of an environment hostile to traditional Chinese art, cultural leaders publicly denounced Chinese ink painting, especially on the subject of the landscape, in their speeches and writings. They circulated their views through spoken or written form in order to radically change the reception of that medium of art.

Further consolidating this dismissive voice was the publication of three incisive remarks in the first issue of a newly launched official art journal called *Remin meishu* 人民美術 (hereafter *People's Art*).⁴⁵ Members of FLAC and AWA were major contributing authors of those articles. For instance, Li Hua 李樺 (1907-1994), one of the authors, was a member of the National Committee of FLAC and a member of the Standing Committee of AWA. Before 1949,

⁴⁴ Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻, “Mantan shanshuihua” 漫談山水畫 (A discussion of landscape painting), *Xin jianshe* 新建設 (New reconstructs), no. 12, February 12, 1950; reprinted in *Xu Beihong yishu wenji* 徐悲鴻藝術文集 (An anthology of the art writing of Xu Beihong), ed. Wang Zhen 王震 and Xu Boyang 徐伯陽 (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1994), 562 and 568.

⁴⁵ The journal was published biweekly for six issues from February 1, 1950 through the end of that year. It was later resumed in 1954, under the name of *Meishu*.

he was a left-wing woodcut artist in pre-1949 China and had been appointed professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing after its establishment in April 1949. In an article written on November 25, 1949, Li Hua asserted that painters who aspired to reform Chinese ink painting must reconstruct a new aesthetic within the new order of the society. That is, they must shift their goal of making art to serve only a small number of people to a goal of making art that benefited and interested the values of the masses. They must also shatter the traditional aesthetics of mountains and groves, creating a new social aesthetic that can fully engage viewpoints and the passions of the working people. In doing so, artists would be able to turn art into a potent weapon of transforming the society.⁴⁶

Li Keran 李可染 (1907-1989), another artist-professor from the Central Academy of Fine Arts as well as a member of the National Committee of AWA, expressed his view on the urgent need to reform Chinese painting in the founding issue of *People's Art*. As a Chinese ink painter whose fame had already been established in the Chinese art scene prior to 1949, Li Keran took a practical approach to rethinking how to politicize Chinese ink painting in the new era. In his view, the most fundamental condition for reforming Chinese painting among painters was to encourage them to step out of their studios to observe the lives of real people and sketch from their real surroundings. Li derived this tenet from the notion of “learning from life”—the contemporary version of the traditional notion of “learning from nature”—which had been sporadically practiced by classical painting masters as a key method of accessing inspiration. By doing so, Li argued that present-day painters would be able to develop both new contents and

⁴⁶ Li Hua 李樺, “Gaizao Zhongguo hua de jiben wenti—cong sixiang de gaizuo kaishi jin'er chuangzao xin de neirong yu xingshi” 改造中國畫的基本問題——從思想的改造開始進而創造新的內容與形式 (On fundamental issues of reforming Chinese painting—from reforming thoughts to creating a new content and form), *People's Art*, no. 1 (1950): 41.

artistic forms for the new political era in their art.⁴⁷ Li Keran's writing powerfully proposed a manageable way to reform Chinese painting without completely abandoning it. Through combining theory with practice, indeed, Li became one of the first Chinese ink painters to successfully actualize the notion of "learning from life" and brought experimentation to the act of depicting the landscape of socialist New China in 1954.

Li Hua's and Li Keran's views were also shared by the art educator and theorist Hong Yiran 洪毅然 (1913-1990). In his article of November, 1949, Hong heavily criticizes the historically elitist nature of Chinese ink painting. He asserts that Chinese painters must completely reeducate themselves by abandoning their old conception of themselves as bourgeois intellectuals and leave behind the ideological and emotional baggage associated with those self-conceptualizations. They must realize that they are no longer unique artists, but merely art producers.⁴⁸ Certainly, this article demonstrates a radical transformation in the ways the author examined art. Such a radical public call for self-reform was essential for an artist like Hong, who himself had once studied under the Paris-trained modernist Chinese artist Lin Fengmian 林風眠 (1900-1991). Some scholars believed that after 1949, Hong felt confronted to take seriously the Marxist art and literary theories widely propagated by the Chinese Communist Party. Such denouncements of traditional Chinese ink painting enabled him to publicly demonstrate his

⁴⁷ Li Keran 李可染, "Tan Zhongguohua de gaizao" 談中國畫的改造 (On reforming Chinese painting), *People's Art*, no. 1 (1950): 36.

⁴⁸ Hong Yiran 洪毅然, "Lun guohua de gaizao yu guohuo jia de zижue" 論國畫的改造與國畫家的自覺 (On reforming Chinese painting and the self-awareness of Chinese painter), *People's Art*, no. 1 (1950): 43.

dedication to the new political ideology and become more readily acceptable to the official cultural institution after the founding of the PRC.⁴⁹

Printed consecutively within the middle section of *People's Art*, these articles collectively constituted a discursive field that fueled a widespread rejection of traditional Chinese painting. Further reinforcing this rejection were a few other texts published within the same issue of the journal. This included an editorial article authoritatively stipulating the new role of artists as merely cultural workers propagating the guiding principles of “The Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference” 人民政治協商會議的共同政治綱領, passed by the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People on September 29, 1949.⁵⁰ Another text, published under the name of Hu Man 胡蠻 (1904-1986), a member of the National Committee of AWA, argued that artists must thoroughly re-orient their concerns to the interests and needs of the peasant.⁵¹ This inaugural issue of *People's Art* meticulously assembled articles that celebrated the notion of politicizing art. It generated a discursive field in which traditional Chinese painting and aesthetics were intentionally devalued, if not forbidden.

This discursive field was an official production. Among the four authors named above, three were core members of FLAC and AWA: Li Hua was a member of the National Committee of FLAC and a member of the Standing Committee of AWA, whereas both Li Keran and Hu

⁴⁹ Liu Junping 劉軍平, “Bu de bu de gaizao—xin Zhongguo chuqi Hong Yiran meixue sixiang de zhuanbian” 不得不的改造——新中國初期洪毅然美學思想的轉變 (The transformation of Hong Yiran’s aesthetic thoughts in the early period of New China), *Fei tian* 飛天, no. 16 (2012): 24 and 26.

⁵⁰ Consisting of seven chapters, these guiding principles covered institutional issues ranging from the organs of state power to the military, economic policy, the cultural and educational policy, policy towards nationalities, as well as foreign policy. They offered negligible room for the continual development of Chinese landscape painting. “Wei biaoxian xin Zhongguo er nuli—dai fa kan ci” 為表現新中國而努力——代發刊辭 (To work hard for representing the New China—the published word), *People's Art*, no. 1 (1950): 15.

⁵¹ This article was written on November 25, 1949. See Hu Man 胡蠻, “Nongmin xuyao xin meishu” 農民需要新美術 (Peasants are in need of new art), *People's Art*, no. 1 (1950): 52-53.

Man were members of the National Committee of AWA. Apparently, apart from administrative and decision-making duties, these members were in charge of articulating new cultural policies approved by their respective institutions in oral or written form. By publishing essays under their own names in official journals, they turned officially-approved cultural policies into ideas circulated within the discursive field.

The publication of these textual documents created a hostile environment surrounding the continuing production and exhibition of landscape painting. The first two years in particular after the founding of the PRC saw many Chinese ink painters withdraw themselves from engagement with the subject of landscape. Some turned to depicting contemporary subjects, such as the new socio-economic life of the proletariat under the land reform, or the heroic history of the Chinese Communist Party's Red Army.⁵² A good example for the latter is Nanjing-based painter Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904-1965), who later became the artistic leader of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute when its preparatory committee was founded in 1957. Fu had already established his fame as a versatile Chinese ink painter capable of depicting both landscapes and figures by the mid-1940s. However, after 1949, Fu switched to history painting in the medium of Chinese ink. Created in 1951, his work *Undefeatable Crossing of Dadu River* 強渡大渡河 (fig. 2.8) portrays the legendary scene of the Red Army heroically crossing the Dadu River in Sichuan Province during the Long March in 1935. Another artist who shifted out of landscape to contemporary subjects is Wuxi-based landscape painter Qian Songyan 錢松嵒 (1899-1985), who later became another key artist of the Jiangsu group, and compromised his role as a Chinese ink

⁵² James Z. Gao, "War, Culture, Nationalism, and Political Campaigns, 1950-1953," in *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases*, eds. C. X. George Wei and Xiaoyuan Liu (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 179-203.

painter by using a compositional structure of traditional landscape painting to depict contemporary socio-political subjects such as land reform or agricultural campaigns.

Clearly, in this period one can observe a widespread suspicion and rejection of the traditional role of Chinese landscape painting. Even though research institutes had been established with the goal of examining how to reform Chinese painting,⁵³ these institutes played a limited role in uniting the artistic forces. This adverse environment led to a low visibility of landscape as a painting subject matter in the public domain in the formative years of the PRC.

Creating the New

Although cultural leaders from AWA and FLAC did not generally possess an approving attitude to landscape painting in the beginning years of the PRC, other political units employed landscape photography to visualize the national territory of the PRC. Starting from January 1, 1951, the Party's newspaper, *People's Daily*, officially launched an illustrative section called "Our Great Motherland" 我們偉大的祖國, printed to the left of the newspaper's title on the cover (fig. 1.1a). Published almost on a daily basis, this section was meant to redefine the national boundaries as well as to serve as a pictorial window into the new life of the great nation in the socialist era. The first image published in this section was a line drawing of the new national map (fig. 1.1b), defining the nation's boundaries from the eastern end of the island of Taiwan to the western end of Lhasa on the Tibetan Plateau. In terms of the north-south axis, the nation extended from the northern edge shared with the Mongolian People's Republic to the

⁵³ See *Liushinian wenyi dashiji, 1919-1979* 六十年文藝大事記 1919-1979 (A record of major literary and art events of the past sixty years) (Hong Kong: Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu zhongxin, 1979), 133.

southern end of Hainan Island. The second image published on the next day was a black-and-white photo of the Tiananmen Gate, symbolizing the political authority of New China (fig. 1.2).

From the fifth day of launching this section onward, *People's Daily* began to publish a series of photographs that featured numerous culturally or politically meaningful sites within China. On January 6, it published a photo of a view of the Yellow River, located in northern China (fig. 1.3); on January 9, a black-and-white photo of the Himalayas on China's southwestern border (fig. 1.4). A week later, on three different days, it featured a photo of the Yellow Sea situated at the far east of China, the Leizhou Peninsula on the southern border of China, and the Mt. Tian Shan standing on the border between northwestern China and Kyrgyzstan. Published under the section "Our Great Motherland," these landscape photographs demonstrated the official interest in using landscape photos to define the political authority and national geography of the PRC. By doing so, the state was able to construct a visual narrative of the extensive territorial borders of the newly founded nation.

The year 1951 also witnessed a strong interest in using landscape to extol the glory of the Chinese socialist nation. To celebrate the lunar new year that year, the Committee of the Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Nanjing 南京市文物保管委員會 collaborated with local universities, museums, and research institutes to organize an exhibition called, "Showcasing the Great Motherland" 偉大的祖國展覽. This exhibition displayed pictures, maps, and objects that collectively illustrated, as commented by *People's Daily*, the "vastness of the national territory, the abundance of its natural resources and produce, and its people."⁵⁴ Again, landscape was appropriated as an agent to construct a narrative of the extensive nature of the PRC. An article

⁵⁴ "Nanjing juban 'weida de zuguo zhanlan'" 南京舉辦‘偉大的祖國展覽’ (Nanjing organizes the exhibition, 'Showcasing the Great Motherland'), *People's Daily*, February 9, 1951, 3.

written by the Jiangsu-based expert of cultural heritage Zhu Xie 朱偰 (1907-1968) also asserts this new function of landscape:⁵⁵

This exhibition shows us the heroically beautiful mountains and rivers, the rich and manifold resources and the profound labor forces of our motherland. Look! The Himalayas are so noble! Mt. Kunlun is so imposing! The Yangtze River is so mighty! The Yellow River is so unrestrained! Our plain is so vast and broad. Our ocean is so powerful and vast! All of these famous mountains and rivers interweave to create this beautiful and brocade-like image of mountains and rivers! ... After having seen so many of these maps, charts, photos and objects, who wouldn't foster a sense of affection for the motherland?⁵⁶

This text shows how landscape also became a site for the viewer's emotional engagement with nature, by which the author could show his affection for the national territory of the "motherland." This political use of landscape photography displaced the traditional function of landscape as a subject of interest primarily appealing to China's social and cultural elites. In pre-Communist China, landscape photography was often used to promote the culture of travel among the socially privileged, as shown in the pictorial magazine *Liang you* 良友 (*The Companion Pictorial*; fig. 1.5).⁵⁷ At times, it was also published as photographic art in the magazine (fig.

⁵⁵ Trained as an economist in Beijing and Berlin in the 1920s and the 1930s, Zhu was also an amateur writer of cultural heritage as he had published a trilogy of his study on sites and monuments in Nanjing in 1936. After 1949, he promptly remolded himself by turning his personal interest into the political tool of glorifying nationhood.

⁵⁶ Original Chinese text: “這個展覽會顯示給我們祖國壯麗的山河，豐富的資源，眾多的資源，眾多的人力。看：喜馬拉雅山是多麼崇高！崑崙山是多麼偉大！長江是多麼浩蕩！黃河是多麼奔放！我們的平原，是多麼遼闊廣大！我們的海洋，是多麼波瀾壯闊！多少名山大川，交織成這一片美麗的錦繡山河！……看了這許多地圖、圖表、照片、標本實物以後，有誰不對祖國起親愛寶貴的感想呢？” Zhu Xie 朱偰, “Kanle ‘Weida de zuguo zhanlan’ yuzhan yihou” 看了‘偉大的祖國展覽’預展以後 (After seeing the preview of the exhibition of “Showcasing the Great Motherland”), *Nanjing Xinhua Daily* 南京新華日報; reprinted in *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 文物參考資料, no. 82 (1951): 82.

⁵⁷ *Liang you huabao congshu bianwei hui* 良友畫報叢書編委會, ed., *Minguo duzhe luxing ji* 民國讀者旅行記 (Reader's travelogue of the Republic period) (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu wenxian chubanshe, 2015).

1.6).⁵⁸ The connection between landscape and the modern idea of nationhood was rather unprecedented in the history of Chinese photography.

Apparently, the subject matter of landscape came to two contrasting fates in the early years after 1949. While Chinese landscape painting was not given an ideal environment in which to thrive, landscape photography, promoted by the state, insinuated itself into the daily visual experience of civilians. One reason for the downfall of Chinese landscape painting during the early years of the PRC is that this form of art was still bound to its traditional conception as an elitist art. Few artists succeeded in immediately inventing new ways of recasting this centuries-old visual medium into a new political tool. In contrast, landscape photography took as its subject of representation real places on earth. The indexicality of photography led to a widespread assurance of its documentary quality so that it could function as a window on objective reality. By using photography to capture specific locations in the PRC, Chinese cultural officials appropriated the cultural geography or history of real locations in service of constructing the myth of nationhood. This gesture paved the way for reconceiving the relationship between man and nature in the new political era.

The Discourse of the New Landscape

Despite the ambivalent attitude towards landscape representation in the first three years of the PRC, this subject thrived uniformly across different visual media beginning in late 1953. One impetus behind the resurrection of the landscape was the official interest in exploring the political functions of the landscape for the new era known as the First Five-Year Plan (1953-

⁵⁸ Timothy J. Shea, “Re-framing the Ordinary: The Place and Time of ‘Art Photography’ in Liangyou, 1926-1930,” in *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, eds. Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 46-49, 54-55.

1957). Among top-ranking cultural leaders who wrote in search of a new definition of the New Landscape, Cai Ruohong epitomized this effort in his widely published views on the landscape, published in the official journals or newspapers from 1951 to 1954. His writings demonstrated a consistent interest in guiding readers to rethink the role of landscape in relation to the nation.

The Principal Art Theorist

Cai Ruohong was a fervent Chinese communist whose artistic life was inseparable from his politics. Trained at the Shanghai Art College in the 1930s, Cai was a member of the League of Left-wing Artists in Shanghai in the 1930s and specialized in political caricature. During the war, he relocated to a Chinese communist base located in Yan'an in Shaanxi Province, where he joined the Chinese Communist Party and taught caricature at the Party's Lun Xun Art and Literature Academy.⁵⁹ After 1949, Cai became a key leader in the establishment of the cultural infrastructure of the state. He was a member of the National Committee of FLAC, as well as a core member of the Standing Committee of AWA.⁶⁰ He was also Director of the Editorial Department at AWA, which gave him direct access to and control over the editorial work of *People's Art*. Additionally, he held a top leadership position at the Art Department of the Cultural Ministry from 1949 to 1952.⁶¹ It was around this time when Cai undertook the solemn duty of

⁵⁹ See the artist profile in the caricature catalogue, Cai Ruohong 蔡若虹, *Zuori de huaduo: qishi nian hou de zuozhe zibai* 昨日的花朵——七十年後的作者自白 (Yesterday's flowers: the author's confession seventy years later), ed. Gao Xin 高信 (Beijing: Xi yuan chubanshe, 2003), 7.

⁶⁰ Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui xuanchuan chu 中華全國文學藝術工作者代表大會宣傳處, ed., *Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui jinian wenji* 中華全國文學藝術工作者代表大會紀念文集 (The proceedings of the All-China National Congress of Literary and Arts Workers) (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1950), 579 and 588.

⁶¹ China Artists Association 中國美術家協會, "Shenqie huainian Cai Ruohong tongzhi" 深切懷念蔡若虹同志 (In memory of comrade Cai Ruohong), *Meishu*, no. 6 (2002): 12.

drafting a wide range of official documents on the cultural reform of different visual media, and it was within this body of work that he formulated his views on the landscape.⁶²

From 1951 to 1954, Cai published numerous articles on a range of themes, detailing his growing political interest in instrumentalizing landscape painting to serve political commands. In an article published in *People's Daily* in February, 1951, Cai proposed the need to popularize landscape into a subject of consumption for the masses in the socialist era. While other cultural officials, educators, artists were fiercely debating the role of landscape painting in the new era, Cai believed that art workers should continue to produce landscape painting. According to him, given the rising position of the people as the new masters of the nation-state, landscape painting should no longer be enjoyed by solely the small group of socially elite people, but it should be reoriented for mass consumption.⁶³ Cai instrumentally proposed a new way of perceiving the landscape. He took two primary approaches: firstly, to consider the beautiful dimension of landscape as a sign of the emergence of good life, and secondly, to draw an analogy between the people's passion for these beautiful landscapes and their enthusiasm for the motherland.⁶⁴

Cai's reinterpretation of the landscape as a beautiful subject for the masses altered the conventional approach to interpreting landscape. In pre-modern China, landscape was often received as a philosophical subject for self-cultivation or meditation among the social or cultural elites instead of as a beautiful subject for political glorification. The author's idea of "the beautiful landscape" poses the question of whether this idea found its precedent in the European

⁶² See Chen Poping 陳泊萍, *Cai Ruohong wenji* 蔡若虹文集 (The anthology of Cai Ruohong) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1995), 675; and Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 38.

⁶³ Cai Ruohong 蔡若虹, "Jiu caiyin tuhua de gaige wenti" 舊彩印圖畫的改革問題 (On reforming old color print), *People's Daily*, February 11, 1951, 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

notion of “the beautiful” as proposed by Edmund Burke in the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ Cai reconceived the landscape as a multifunctional site for the imagination of the good life and the cultivation of patriotism among civilians in the process of nation-building. His article was circulated to a wide public readership through its publication in *People's Daily*, announcing the official interest in popularizing landscape painting through the perspective of the beautiful.

The year of 1953 was a year of change. Cai, already a high-ranking member of the Standing Committee of AWA, was promoted to Vice-Chairman of the China Artists Association (CAA), newly renamed from AWA.⁶⁶ This high-ranking position enabled him to become a critical player in the development of the nation's cultural enterprise. In an article published in another key cultural periodical *Wenyi bao* in 1953, Cai proceeded to reframe the perception of the landscape in an industrial context through a new concept, the “landscape of the construction industry” 建設事業的風貌.⁶⁷ He discussed how large-scale infrastructure projects in industrial construction, water conservancy, plantation and conservation of forestry, development of public transportation, and in the exploration of new mineral mines—all of which arose after the founding of the PRC in 1949—generated a range of “heroically beautiful scenes” 壯麗的風景. These landscapes, in his view, were the result of the nation's progressive transition to socialism. They were also scenes of humans conquering over nature in the new era. He argued that the nation's people were in need of this kind of new landscape painting 新的風景畫 because it could

⁶⁵ See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley; Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Library, 1757) and (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁶⁶ Zhongguo wenxue yishu jie lianhehui 中國文學藝術界聯合會, ed., *Zhongguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe di er ci daibiao dahui ziliao* 中國文學藝術工作者第二次代表大會資料 (The proceedings of the Second Congress of Chinese Literary and Artistic Workers) (s.l.: Zhongguo wenxue yishu jie lianhehui, 1953), 206.

⁶⁷ Cai Ruohong 蔡若虹, “Guanyu meishu chuangzuo de ticai yunyong wenti” 關於美術創作的題材運用問題 (On the issue of utilizing theme in artistic creation), *Wenyi bao*, no. 21 (1953), and *Xinhua yuebao* 新華月報.

excite viewers' enthusiasm for engaging in labor-intensive work, as well as help them visualize the well-being these works would bring to their lives.⁶⁸

Certainly, the concept of using painting to visualize the new infrastructure of a political state was not historically unprecedented. As early as the Northern Song dynasty (960-1126), the Northern Song court had already commissioned its professional painters to produce a category of Chinese painting called *jiehua* 界畫 (ruler-lined painting) to depict new architectural subjects such as dwellings, boats, transportation tools, and other mechanical apparatus of the time.⁶⁹ Cai's proposal of industrial landscape as a subject was, however, idiosyncratic. Aesthetically, this kind of landscape representation not only illustrated a neutral scene but also infused it with a powerful sense of heroic beauty. Functionally, his idea of the landscape of the new infrastructure emphasized the political endeavor of the Chinese socialist state to improve the lives of its people. It symbolized the power of men to conquer nature under the ideological guidance of Chinese socialism. Due to its multiple significations, this landscape was endowed with the power to evoke the imagination of the good life in a way promised by the Chinese socialist state.

In Cai's conceptual framework, landscape of the new infrastructure could be aestheticized. In 1954, Cai took different approaches to glorifying the landscapes of the new infrastructure constructed after the founding of the PRC.⁷⁰ In three sentences, he aestheticized those landscapes through the literary techniques of pictorialization and personification. First, Cai extolled the Huaihe River Gate and the Guanting Reservoir for their heroic roles in controlling

⁶⁸ See footnote 67.

⁶⁹ Heping Liu, "The Water-Mill and Northern Song Imperial Patronage of Art, Commerce, and Science," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (December, 2002): 566.

⁷⁰ Cai Ruohong 蔡若虹, "Kaipi meishu chuangzuo de guangkuo daolu" 開闢美術創作的廣闊道路 (On exploring a broaden avenue for artistic creation), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1954): 11.

potentially disastrous floods. Secondly, he beautified the industrial landscape by pictorializing the scene of factory chimneys rising one after another above the horizon. Thirdly, he personified the role of the windbreak in safeguarding the territory of the motherland.⁷¹ Accordingly, infrastructure scenes were aestheticized into a series of aesthetically pleasing and touching landscapes, mobilizing the imaginations of their viewers.

Cai's theorization on the nationalistic power of landscape became even more fully developed in mid-1954. In an article published in *Meishu* in the middle of that year, Cai pointed out the distinct power of the natural landscape to evoke a national imagining among its viewers. In his theorization, landscape could provoke associative thinking of the nation-state, the Chinese Communist Party, and Party Chairman Mao Zedong. It could also evoke a viewer's mental association of the landscape with the state construction and his own physical participation in nation-building. The difficulty for artists in activating this imaginative power of landscape was to identify the right type of landscape to depict.⁷²

Published between February 1951 to April 1954, these four excerpts demonstrated a rising official interest in building a narrative of the affective power of landscape painting. It began with Cai, one of the top cultural essayists and theorists of the PRC, proposing a means for reconceiving landscape as a beautiful subject in service of developing patriotism among the masses in 1951. Then, in 1953, Cai zoomed in on the potential for heroic beauty in depictions of the landscape within the new infrastructure, considering its capacity to mobilize viewers' physical participation in and emotional engagement with Chinese socialist nation-building. In 1954, Cai proposed methods of aestheticizing the infrastructural and industrial landscapes. By

⁷¹ Ibid., 11.

⁷² Cai Ruohong, "Nianhua chuangzuo," 7.

doing so, he accentuated the power of landscape to activate viewers' associative thinking of notions of Chinese socialist nationhood. Within three years, landscape and landscape representation were popularized as subjects for the masses. They were also reinterpreted as the agents capable of evoking the imagination of abstract concepts of the party-state and Chinese socialist nationhood among their viewers.

Subsidiary Voices

While Cai Ruohong emerged as the principal theorist of the new landscape, other cultural leaders from CAA and FLAC assisted in consolidating this narrative into an official discourse of the New Landscape of the PRC. Many of them spoke or wrote to laud the instrumentality of this newly reinvented concept of landscape due to its elating or mobilizing powers. One was Ai Qing 艾青 (1910-1996), a member of the national committees of FLAC and AWA since 1949.⁷³ Ai delivered a speech in a political workshop organized for art workers in Shanghai on March 27, 1953. Contrary to his prior disapproving voice in 1949, in this speech, Ai asserts that Chinese landscape painting can provoke viewers' strong affection for the national territory of their country. Ai Qing emphasizes that there are two prerequisites for painters to activate this function of landscape. Firstly, they need to depict a genuine landscape that they have seen in life instead of blindly following stylistic conventions established by previous painting masters.⁷⁴ Secondly,

⁷³ Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui xuanchuan chu, ed., *Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui jinian wenji*, 579 and 587.

⁷⁴ Original Chinese text: “畫人必須畫活人，畫山水必須畫真的山河。畫你自己所看見過的，不畫人家已畫過很多次的重……中國這麼大，人這麼多，風景這麼美麗，生活這麼豐富，難道你會沒有可畫的東西麼，可必一定要畫死掉了的人呢？”(In painting landscapes, one must paint real mountains and rivers. You must paint what you have seen, not what people have already painted many times. Paint what no one has yet painted... China is so large, its people are so numerous, its scenery is so beautiful, and its life is so rich; how can there be nothing to paint? Why must you plagiarize someone else's thing? Why must you paint people who are dead?) Ai Qing 艾青, “A Talk on Chinese painting” 談中國畫 (On Chinese painting), *Wenyi bao*, no. 15 (1953): 8.

they need to emotionally engage with nature so that they can depict this intimate relationship in landscape.⁷⁵ Ai Qing's emphasis on depicting real places from life displaced the long-standing practice of composing landscape painting by following artistic conventions within a studio. It resonated with the Marxist historical materialism as practiced by the Chinese socialist state in emphasizing a solid foundation in the material conditions of a society, and it echoed Cai's earlier assertion of the power of landscape to evoke nationalistic sentiment among viewers.

The notion of the mobilizing power of landscape on viewers was further endorsed by other top art leaders from the Chinese Communist Party. One of them was Jiang Feng 江豐 (1910-1982). In Beijing in September, 1954, Jiang fervently endorsed landscape painting due to its capacity, as long as it was well painted, to motivate the viewer's passion in favor of engaging in labor-intensive production or struggles, no matter whether they were soldiers or peasants.⁷⁶ He recalled numerous examples, including how the Chinese People's Volunteers Warriors fighting in North Korea once demanded that more landscape photos of the motherland be published in the pictorial journals due to their power to mobilizing the soldiers' fighting passion. Elsewhere, peasants stated that they felt great and became more driven to work after having seen a landscape painting. In Jiang Feng's view, these two stories illustrate the positive role of landscape painting in real life as they offered viewers the spiritual power to love the motherland and life.⁷⁷ Another bolstering voice came from Lai Shaoqi 賴少其 (1915-2000). At the opening ceremony of the

⁷⁵ Original Chinese text: “畫新畫要有新的感情，要對活著的、勞動着的、戰鬥着的人有感情。即使畫風景畫，也要對與人和社會發生密切的關係的自然有感情。” (To paint new paintings, you must have new feelings, you must have feelings toward living, laboring, struggling people. Even if painting scenery, you have feelings toward nature, which has close relationships to people and society). *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁶ Jiang Feng 江豐, “Muke yishu de xin chengjiu—‘quanguo banhua zhanlan hui’ guan hou” 木刻藝術的新成就——‘全國版畫展覽會’觀後” (The new achievement of woodcut art—after viewing the “National Exhibition of Print”), *Wenyi bao*, no. 18 (September, 1954): 39.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

eastern regional branch of CAA in spring 1954, Lai credited landscape painting with the power to exhilarate viewers, as long as it captured the heroic transformation of the motherland. This was particularly true for those depicting industrial landscapes such as the water conservancy project on the Hui River or the construction of factories.⁷⁸

The articles of Jiang Feng and Lai Shaoqi found wide readership. Both Jiang and Lai were high-ranking art leaders of the PRC. As an active revolutionary woodcut artist in wartime China, Jiang Feng became a Vice-Chairman for AWA in 1949. He was also appointed president of CAFA and was a member of the National Committee of FLAC. Similarly, Lai Shaoqi was an artist-turned-cultural leader, deeply engaged in the propagandist woodcut art movement during the Second Sino-Japanese War. In 1949, he became a member of both the National Committee of FLAC and the National Committee of AWA.⁷⁹ In 1953, Lai was further promoted to councilor of the newly reformed CAA,⁸⁰ and the Vice-Chairman of its eastern regional branch in Shanghai in 1954. Given the top-rank cultural positions held by Jiang and Lai, their articles were widely published in a variety of official media: Jiang's article was published in *Wenyi bao* in September, 1954. Lai's article was first published on *Liberation Daily* 解放日報 on May 6, 1954, and was later highlighted as the first article in the sixth issue of *Meishu*. The circulation of their writings not only laid out the official approach of reconceptualizing landscape in their respective spheres, but theirs became two weighty voices in the changing discourse on the New Landscape.

⁷⁸ Lai Shaoqi 賴少其, "Jin yi bu fazhan huadong meishu chuangzuo" 進一步發展華東美術創作 (Further developing art creation of East China), *Meishu*, no. 6 (1954): 7.

⁷⁹ Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui xuanchuan chu, ed., *Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui jinian wenji*, 579 and 587.

⁸⁰ Zhongguo wenxue yishu jie lianhehui, ed., *Zhongguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe di er ci daibiao dahui ziliao*, 205.

Lastly, artist-official Wu Zuoren 吳作人 (1908-1997) further advanced the discourse of New Landscape to the spiritual realm. Wu became a member of the Standing Committee of AWA (and later CAA) in 1949,⁸¹ and a member of the National Committee of FLAC in 1953.⁸² In his article on the practice of sketching published in *Meishu* in 1954, Wu considered the heroic beauty of nature as the source of the moving power of landscape. Thus, he asserted that painters should depict this heroic beauty at the level of the spiritual realm if they wanted to touch the hearts of their viewers.⁸³ This statement elevated the discourse of New Landscape to a spiritual level to instead of merely addressing what one literally sees.

The statements cited above demonstrate an official interest in building a narrative of the New Landscape between 1951 and 1954. In this narrative, both the subject of landscape and landscape painting were imagined as dynamic sites for the representation of the new condition of the Chinese socialist state and for the romantic imagination of its promising future. Although these publications were delivered as short statements within a speech or an article, they were proposed by top artist-officials, and were widely circulated in a textual form in official journals or newspapers. When read or cited by a large number of people, they formed a discursive field which guided their readers to reconceive the meaning and function of landscape and landscape painting. These new understandings, which asserted the emotive or nationalistic dimension of landscape, became a new condition for the depiction of landscape in different visual media in the 1950s.

⁸¹ Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui xuanchuan chu, ed., *Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuo zhe daibai dahui jinian wenji*, 588.

⁸² Zhongguo wenxue yishu jie lianheshui, ed., *Zhongguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe di er ci daibiao dahui ziliao*, 197.

⁸³ Wu Zuoren 吳作人, “Tan Suxie” 談速寫 (Discussing sketching), *Meishu*, no. 9 (1954): 19.

The Collective

Despite the essential role played by the writings of Cai Ruohong and other top art leaders, the discourse surrounding the New Landscape was by no mean an oligarchic invention. Instead, it should be analyzed as a collective strategy devised by the cultural authority of the PRC to cope with the new political reality. To begin with, all of the art leaders mentioned above continued to be appointed as key cultural officials at FLAC and CAA after 1953. Many of them had attended another important convention held for the nation's cultural representatives, namely the Second Congress of Chinese Literary and Artistic Workers 中國文學藝術工作者第二次代表大會, held in Beijing from September 23 through October 6, 1953. This congress featured an examination of existing problems occurring in the greater cultural field. One issue raised by FLAC Chairman Guo Moruo in his opening speech on the first day of the congress was that the development of art and literature was not currently fast enough to keep pace with the accelerating socio-economic advancement of the state. Accordingly, he stressed that artists and writers should improve the quality and quantity of art productions in order to catch up with the needs of the new political era. Zhou Yang 周揚 (1908-1989) also criticized the formulaic language commonly manifested in the art and literary works by the PRC in recent years, calling for an improvement of the artistic power of visual and literary arts. Specifically, figure painting should capture the heroic spirit of workers, peasants, and soldiers. Landscape painting should depict beautiful scenery in life for the interest of the masses.⁸⁴ Zhou Yang's idea was buttressed by Premier Zhou Enlai, who encouraged artists to deeply explore reality as a source of artistic creation.⁸⁵ This congress

⁸⁴ Zhou Yang 周揚, “Wei chuangzao geng duo de youxiu wenxue yishu er fendou” 為創造更多的優秀的文學藝術作品而奮鬥” (Work hard to create more excellent literary and art works), *People's Daily*, October 9, 1953, 3.

⁸⁵ *Liushinian wenyi dashiji*, 1919-1979, 147.

concluded with the remark that both artists and writers must explore new subjects and styles in art. Compared to the highly rigid cultural environment from 1949 to 1953, this congress facilitated the rise of a relatively freer environment for art production in subsequent years.

The official call for a broadened scope of subject matter and techniques in art and literature was political in many ways. First, the year 1953 marked a watershed in the history of the PRC because that was when the nation entered into a new economic period known as the First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957). Before that, the PRC was preoccupied with radically transforming the country into a new socialist system through socio-political campaigns such as the land reform and the building of various centralized socio-cultural institutions. The PRC was deeply involved in the Korean War, also known as the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-1953). Not only did the state send military troops to North Korea to intervene in this war, but they also sent artists to produce illustrative records of the war for propaganda purposes. As soon as the war was ended and the PRC declared that it was entering into a new economic phase in 1953, the state reevaluated the direction of literary and artistic development to ensure that they could cope with the political needs of the ever-changing reality of the country.⁸⁶ Articles published in the official press encouraged a greater diversity in both the subjects and forms of art production, marking a critical turn in the official conception of art in the new socio-economical era.

Secondly, the call for an advancement of artistic techniques can also be seen as a strategy devised by the state to resolve the problem of the formulaic language in art that had arisen in the founding years of the PRC. Between 1951 and 1953, cultural leaders often commented on, even

⁸⁶ Zhou Yang, “Wei chuangzao geng duo de youxiu wenxue yishu er fendou,” 3.

criticized, the platitudes in the visual language of art.⁸⁷ In December 1952, many top cultural leaders, including Ai Qing, were sent down to rural areas with the goal of searching for new methods of making art.⁸⁸ The official call for sketching from life was applied to both literary and art workers, and we see relevant articles being published in *Wenyi bao* in January 10, 1953, to this effect.⁸⁹ Apparently, the problem of artistic banality was not resolved immediately. For instance, in a Chinese painting exhibition held in Shanghai in 1953, mayor Chen Yi 陳毅 (1901-1972) adopted the phrase “half-cooked rice” 夾生飯 to satirize the partial achievement in the reform of Chinese painting.⁹⁰ In this context, the official call for building the affectability of art can be seen as an artistic strategy deployed by the state to address the problem of formulaicity of language in art. The artist-officials resorted to the affective power of art to explore solutions to address this problem.

The Discourse’s Components

The Textual

Certainly, the discourse of the New Landscape would not effectively exert its impact without a substantial textual system. In considering the statements proposed by these cultural leaders, we can see that many of them heavily rely on terms that connote the politicization of land. This includes “*shanhe*” 山河 (mountain and river), which can be used interchangeably with two other terms, “*heshan*” 河山 and “*jiangshan*” 江山. Not only do these terms all literally share

⁸⁷ *Liushinian wenyi dashiji*, 1919-1979, 139.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 142.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 144.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 146.

the same meaning, but they also metaphorically connote territorial power. In addition, “*guotu*” 國土 is another term frequently used in this discourse, which means *state* or *national territory*. These four terms have a history of being used in a variety of Chinese texts published to provoke patriotism during the Republican Period (1912-1949) and the Korean War (1950-1953). They were often used in ways that suggested the vulnerability of the national territory, which urgently demanded sacrificial behavior from or defense by its people.

The ways in which these terms were used altered drastically in the demilitarized context after 1949. Words often used to describe the landscape gained new connotations from many authors of patriotic texts. For instance, in a statement written by Cai in 1951 and 1954, *shanhe* is described as a beautiful or lovable entity with which the masses have a strong affection. Similarly, in Ai Qing’s 1953 article, *shanhe* is described as a beautiful subject that can provoke a strong affection among the viewers for their national territory. In the discourse of the New Landscape, these terms have been relieved of their formerly military denotation. Instead, they are tasked with a new role of summoning their readers’ intense affection. The new way of using these words reconfigured the relationship between *shanhe* and men. They brought people’s attention to the loveable dimension of landscape.

Apart from the four cited terms, “*zuguo*” 祖國 (motherland) is another key term in the linguistic formation of the discourse of the New Landscape. The term *zuguo* stands as a translation of the term “motherland.” It was used in Chinese writing as early as the turn of the twentieth century.⁹¹ Many studies suggest that this term has its root in Europe and Russia in the

⁹¹ See Ziyu gai zhuren 自由齋主人, “Ai zuguo ge” 愛祖國歌, *Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說, no. 8 (1903): 174-175; and “Shiba sheng zuguo ge” 十八省祖國歌, *Tongzi shijie* 童子世界 (The children’s world), no. 8 (1903): 4.

form of “fatherland” or “motherland.”⁹² Similar to its western counterpart, *zuguo* denotes a patriotic feeling for the nation-state. The second word, “guo” 國, means the *state* or the *nation-state*. The first word “zu” 祖, meaning *ancestral* or *forerunner*, stands parallel to the notion of “mother” or “father” in the terms “motherland” or “fatherland.” Accordingly, the presence of the word *zu* modifies the word *guo* in a way that turns *zuguo* into a term denoting kinship. The personified relationship between man and the state motivates men to willingly sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the country.⁹³ The application of this term played a critical role in patriotic texts written by state officials during the Seventeen Years. Not only did it instantly summon a patriotic response from its readers, but it also configured people’s imagination of the relationship between man, nature, and the state.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the term *zuguo* (hereafter, the *motherland*) was often adopted in the titles of artworks. In the painting of Guangdong-born painter, Li Xiongcai 黎雄才 (1910-2001) of south China, we see the painting titled *Searching for More Resources for the Motherland* 為祖國尋找更多的資源 (1954, fig. 1.7). This painting confronts the viewer with a rather conventional composition featuring an evolving mountainscape penetrated by a running stream. But, instead of depicting a scene of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, the painting depicts a team of explorers fearlessly walking on a plank road built along the side of a

⁹² For the application in Europe, see Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, *Keepers of the Motherland: German Texts by Jewish Women Writers* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). For application in Russia, see Melissa K. Stockdale, “‘My Death for the Motherland Is Happiness’: Women, Patriotism, and Soldiering in Russia’s Great War, 1914-1917,” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 109, no. 1 (February, 2004): 78-116; Euridice C. Cardona and Roger D. Markwick, “‘Our Brigade Will Not Be Sent to the Front’: Soviet Women Under Arms in the Great Fatherland War, 1941-45,” *The Russian Review*, vol. 68, no. 2 (April, 2009): 240-262; and David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (London, England: Harvard University Press, 2002), 28.

⁹³ Gary R. Johnson, “In the Name of the Fatherland: An Analysis of Kin Term Usage in Patriotic Speech and Literature,” *International Political Science Review*, vol. 8, no. 2 (April, 1987): 165-174.

precarious cliff. As suggested by the title, these figures are adventurous explorers who altruistically risk their lives in search of more resources for the motherland. The idea of sacrificial behavior for the motherland is equally seen in the work of the Shandong-born painter, Liu Zijiu 劉子久 (1901-1988) of north China, entitled *Searching for Resources for the Motherland* 為祖國尋找資源 (1956, fig. 2.9), which was exhibited in the Second National Exhibition of Chinese Painting and published in color in *Meishu* in July 1956. Obviously, the term “motherland” offers a peculiar context for both the artists and viewers to rethink the relationship between men and nature. The primacy of using this term in the discourse of the New Landscape dictates a new way of visualizing this relationship in landscape painting.

Certainly, this discourse would not be fully formulated without the application of terms that directly point toward the concept of landscape itself. Apart from terms on the politicization of land and landscape, this discursive field privileged the use of the term “*fengjing*” 風景 (scenery) over “*shanshui*” 山水 (mountain and river). Standing as a Chinese translation of the French notion of *paysage* (landscape), *fengjing* was often deployed in contexts in which the painted landscape manifested a scientific approach to constructing space. Thus, when applied in situations of discussing art, it conveyed a higher sense of spatial accuracy than the traditional Chinese notion of *shanshui*, which emphasized a philosophically dynamic way of organizing space. As the cultural leaders of the PRC often adopted the term *fengjing* in their writings, they displaced the traditional Chinese approach of conceiving of landscape with a western approach. Landscapes were re-characterized, as shown in the use of phrases such as “the beautiful landscape” 美麗的風景 or “the heroically beautiful landscape” 壯麗風景 in the writings of Cai Ruohong, Ai Qing, and Wu Zuoren. These phrases guided, even taught, readers new approaches to considering and interpreting landscape as something visually pleasing.

The Emotional

Official interest in the patriotic dimensions of landscape art resulted from the rising interest in the emotional power of art in general. Again, it was Cai Ruohong, Vice-Chairman of CAA and its principal art theorist who played an important role in defining this power of art. In January 1954, *Meishu* published an article entitled “Exploring New and Broad Avenues of Art Creation,” in which Cai described two critical problems that he had observed in the art industry of the PRC over the past few years. First, artworks were generally narrow in theme. Secondly, their visual language was banal, devoid of expressive power. Cai ascribed these problems to the widespread misconception of the function of art for “moral indoctrination” 說理 since 1949. Instead, he asserted that the key function of art was to “mobilize the feelings” 動情 of its viewers. Only by doing so could art operate as a political weapon through its unique power of organizing the thoughts and feelings of its viewers.⁹⁴

Cai’s view on the importance of the emotional power of art was apparently influential. Published as the second article in the first issue of *Meishu* in 1954, it spoke to readers with an authoritative voice that was ultimately successful in reshaping the direction of developing art in the upcoming years. On the one hand, it encouraged artists to explore the emotive power of all genres of art, including landscape. On the other hand, it promoted the capacity “to move/affect” 感染 viewers, as a major criterion for evaluating art. One impact that his article had was that art critics in the PRC began to adopt his perspective when evaluating landscape painting. This notion is exemplified in an art review written by Li Qun 力群 (1912-2012) on the first National Exhibition of Watercolors and Sketches, held in the Palace Museum in Beijing in summer 1954. In his review, Li Qun criticizes the lack of affective power in some of the exhibited landscape

⁹⁴ Cai Ruohong, “Kaipi meishu chuangzuo de guangkuo daolu,” 9-10.

paintings, which he deemed to have been the fundamental power of art to mobilize viewers to imagine the new spirits of the motherland.⁹⁵

Meishu's Input

The discourse of the New Landscape did not simply end at the statements cited above. Instead, it was further intensified by the circulation of textual or visual materials that promoted the reinstallation of the notion of the landscape. Among the official print media, the Party's art journal *Meishu* was the major platform for publishing many of these materials. Established by the Editorial Section of CAA in January 1954, *Meishu* was a revamped version from the short-lived art journal *People's Art*, which had lasted only for one year (1950). *Meishu* would become the leading official journal dedicated to the visual arts throughout the Seventeen Years.⁹⁶ Its strategy of publishing a large number of texts or images of landscapes critically intensified the discourse of the New Landscape in numerous ways.

Reinstating Landscape Painting

Since top leaders from FLAC and CAA had publically announced their interest in reconceiving the function of the landscape in the new political era, *Meishu* had been actively publishing a variety of essays and images of landscape art from different countries. Most importantly, it promoted landscape painting from the Soviet Union. In April, 1954, the journal

⁹⁵ Li Qun 力群, “Geng hao de miaoqua women de shenghuo—quanguo shuicai, sxie zhanlanhui guan hou” 更好地描畫我們的生活——全國水彩、速寫展覽會觀後 (Depicting our life even better—after seeing the national exhibition of watercolor and sketch exhibition), *Wenyi bao*, no.15 (August, 1954): 28.

⁹⁶ The publication of *Meishu* was suspended during the Cultural Revolution. See Li Zhaoxia 李朝霞, “Xin Zhongguo shiqi nian meishu huayu de ‘shengchan’ you ‘chuanbo’” 新中國十七年美術話語的‘生產’與‘傳播’, *Journal of Xinjiang Arts Institute* 新疆藝術學院學報, no. 9.1 (March, 2011): 48-49.

featured an article on the art and life of the Russian landscape painter, Ivan Shishkin (1832-1898; transliterated as *Shishjin* 什施金 in Chinese).⁹⁷ In July, 1956, it published another article on another Russian landscape painter, Alexei Savrasov (1830-1897; transliterated as *Shafulasuofu* 沙弗拉索夫 in Chinese).⁹⁸ Printed along with these essays were reproductions of sketches and paintings by the two painters (fig. 1.8a-b). Both Shishkin and Savrasov were leaders of the landscape school called the *Peredvizhniki* (aka. the Wanderers or the Itinerants, or the Society for Travelling Art Exhibitions), from 1870 to 1880. They were considered canonical Russian landscape painters of the nineteenth century.⁹⁹ In the context of learning from the Soviet Union, the publication of these paintings in *Meishu* served as models of landscape painting from which Chinese painters could learn. Accordingly, *Meishu* played the role of shaping the artistic development of landscape through its editorial strategy.

While the promotion of these Russian paintings was a logical result of the PRC's political strategy of leaning toward the Soviet Union, *Meishu* also actively introduced the canon of traditional Chinese landscape painting to its readers. From mid-1954 through mid-1956, the journal frequently published images and articles of major Chinese landscape painters from the classical period. For instance, in May 1954, *Meishu* reproduced the images of three Chinese landscape paintings from what they considered to be from Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) (fig. 1.9). These included *Early Spring* 早春圖 (1072) by the eminent Northern Song court

⁹⁷ Liu Xun 劉迅 and Liu Yalan 劉亞蘭, “Eluosi weida de fengjing huajia Shishjin” 俄羅斯偉大的風景畫家什施金 (Russia's great landscaper painter Shishkin), *Meishu*, no. 3 (1954): 47-49.

⁹⁸ Chang Youming 常又明, “Shafulasuofu de ‘Bai zui ya fei lai le’ 沙弗拉索夫的‘白嘴鴉飛來了’ (The arrival of Savrasov's white crows), *Meishu*, no. 7 (1956): 61-63.

⁹⁹ See Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art: The State and Society: the Peredvizhniki and Their Tradition* (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989).

painter Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1001-ca. 1090), *Red Cliff* 赤壁圖 ascribed to Zhu Rui 朱銳, and *Reading the Ancient Stele* 讀碑窠石圖 by Li Cheng 李成 (919-967) and Wang Xiao 王曉. These three works were illustrated full-page in black and white.¹⁰⁰ Supplementing these images were brief descriptions published elsewhere within the same issue.¹⁰¹ A full-length article was also published two months later in the same journal.¹⁰² *Meishu*'s interest in promoting classical Chinese landscape painting persisted, when, the following year, it published reproductions of works attributed to three other landscape masters. These included Dong Yuan 董源 (d. 962) from a slightly earlier period called the Ten Kingdoms (907-979), and Juran 巨然 (active ca. 960-985) and Fan Kuan 范寬 (died. C. 1023) from Northern Song Dynasty.¹⁰³ *Meishu*'s intention to promote canons of traditional Chinese landscape painting became even more intense in April, 1956, when the journal published a comprehensive article on key landscape painters from the late Tang dynasty (618-907) to the early Song dynasty.¹⁰⁴ Again, the paintings of some artists were highlighted by being reproduced in full-page, black-and-white images within the issue.¹⁰⁵

The publication of the landscapes of classical Chinese painting masters was politically meaningful. The period from the Tang Dynasty to the Northern Song Dynasty encompassed

¹⁰⁰ See the reproductions in *Meishu*, no. 5 (1954): 28-30.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰² Yu Qizhuo 于其灼, “Song dai de san fu shanshui hua” 宋代的三幅山水畫 (Three landscape painting of Song Dynasty), *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954): 48-49.

¹⁰³ See the reproductions in *Meishu*, no. 9 (1955): 26, 31, and 32.

¹⁰⁴ Chang Qing 長慶, “Tang mo dao Song chu de ji wei shanshui huajia” 唐末到宋初的幾位山水畫家 (Several landscape painters from late Tang to early Song Dynasties), *Meishu*, no. 4 (1956): 55-56.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

seminal eras of the emergence of what Wen Fong called “monumental landscape painting.”¹⁰⁶ Increasingly monumental in size and scale, landscape painting produced during this period privileged depictions of mountains and rivers as their main subjects when compared to former periods. In particular, the Northern Song Dynasty signifies the golden period of landscape painting in Chinese art history. Although some of the published paintings named above had already been relocated by the Nationalist Government as they retreated to Taiwan after they were defeated in the Chinese Civil War in 1949, those paintings were still chosen to be featured in *Meishu*. In doing so, the cultural authorities of the PRC claimed agency in constructing a canon of Chinese landscape painting that they deemed important when reinstating official interest in supporting landscape painting.

Apart from presenting canons of landscape painting from Russia and China, *Meishu* also promoted the spirit of depicting landscape in contemporary art. The year 1954 witnessed the reproduction of a plethora of landscape representations created by contemporary artists from both the Soviet Bloc and the PRC in *Meishu*. These included *intaglio* landscape prints from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, published in the fourth issue of *Meishu* in 1954 (fig. 1.10),¹⁰⁷ accompanied by an article on the visual effects of these landscape prints.¹⁰⁸ After June, 1954, *Meishu* turned to publishing landscapes depicted by living Chinese artists specializing in different visual media on subject matter such as civilians consuming newly-produced public leisure places, such as the Beihai Park in Beijing and the People’s Park in Shanghai. The journal also published landscape representations that featured scenes of the construction of new

¹⁰⁶ See Wen Fong, “Monumental Landscape Painting,” in *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, eds. Wen Fong and James C. Y. Watt (New York City, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 121-137.

¹⁰⁷ See reproductions in *Meishu*, no. 4 (1954): 22-25.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 5-9.

infrastructure (fig. 1.11). Furthermore, *Meishu* also served as a portable exhibition site by reprinting landscape art that was displayed in national exhibitions, including the Second National Exhibition of Chinese Painting and the Second National Exhibition of Print, both in the second half of 1956. The publication of these contemporary landscape arts facilitated a congenial environment for the redevelopment of landscape art. In this context, *Meishu* served as CCA's agent in reinstating landscape painting as an officially approved genre of art.

Promoting an Affective Judgment

The language of the articles published in *Meishu* contributed to the practice of examining landscape representation from an affective perspective, which was foundational for engaging with the faculty of imagining. Many writers of *Meishu* resorted to their own sensual responses when interpreting a landscape portrayal. For instance, when analyzing Shishkin's oil painting *Oak Tree* 橡樹 (fig. 1.6b), the two authors Liu Xun 劉迅 (1923-2007) and Liu Yalan 劉亞蘭, discuss how the pictorial elements activated their senses of sight, touch and smell:

Oak Tree demonstrates a free, optimistic and refreshing spirit. The pictorial space is full of elating daylight. The oak trees sway in the fresh and cool air. The air is full of the fragrance of wild flowers and withered leaves.¹⁰⁹

The two authors also project Shishkin's emotional stimulation by nature, even though they were in no way acquainted with the nineteenth-century Russian painter in person:

...for the genius painter Shishkin, [every aspect in nature such as] a flower, shrub and pine tree that are bathing in sunlight can mobilize the feeling or emotion in his heart. He studies all of these natural elements with a deep sense of affection.

¹⁰⁹ Original Chinese text: “《橡樹》表現了自由、樂觀、清爽的精神。畫面上充滿了使人興奮的日光，清爽的風搖動着橡樹，空氣中充滿野花的芳香和往年積剩的枯葉發出的氣味。” Liu Xun and Liu Yalan, “Eluosi weida de fengjing huajia Shishijin,” 49.

The lofty emotions revealed in his art are something that none of the naturalists can be compared with...¹¹⁰

With these analyses, the authors subsequently interpret that "...Shishkin loves his motherland. Under his hand, even an ordinary landscape can be depicted in an extraordinarily beautiful and romantic mood, taking viewers to a heroically sublime realm."¹¹¹

These three quotes illustrate an analytical approach commonly employed by art writers in the PRC during the 1950s. Authors often mobilized their own feelings and senses, which are critical components of imagination, to interpret a work of art. Their strong interest in the subjectively emotional dimension of art contrasts sharply with the scientific method of formal analysis applied by writers in Euro-America. Interestingly, affect became a methodological strength among Chinese art writers regardless of the date and origin of the works they were commenting upon. One explanation is that many art writers were not trained in a western approach of analyzing art. For instance, Liu Xun, one of the authors of the article on Shishkin, was an artist of print and propaganda art in Yan'an in the 1940s. In the mid-1950s, while working at the People's Art Publishing, Liu continued to engage in art production by attending oil painting classes led by Russian oil painting instructor Konstantin Maksimov at the Central Academy of Fine Art.¹¹² Occasionally, he published a few articles in *Meishu* and *Wenyi bao* in

¹¹⁰ Original Chinese text: “對於天才的畫家什施金，浸浴在強烈的日光下的每一朵花、每一株矮灌木、每一株松樹，都能使他引起內心的情感。他帶着愛的情感深刻地研究了這一切。什施金創作的高尚情感是一切自然主義者所永遠不能相比擬的。” *Ibid.*, 47.

¹¹¹ Original Chinese text: “什施金對於祖國的愛，使他把普通的風景用極美的、浪漫的情調表現了出來，像詩一般地使普通題材具有雄偉的、崇高的境界。” *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹² Yin Shuangxi 殷雙喜, “Huishou baiyun di—Liu Xun xiānshèng de youhua yishu” 回首白雲低——劉迅先生的油畫藝術, *People's Daily*, September 25, 1998, 11; and Song Ge 宋歌, “Yuan Beijing shi meixie zhuxi Liu Xun xiānshèng qushi,” 原北京市美協主席劉迅先生去世, *Dōngfāng yishu* 東方藝術, no. 3 (2008): 26.

the 1950s.¹¹³ Another reason behind the methodological interest in feelings is that they were highly promoted by the cultural authorities, exemplified in the aforementioned seminal article by Cai Ruohong in 1954. Because writers of the Seventeen Years often resorted to their emotional responses when studying a work of art, doing so continued to strengthen the role of the introspective response as a criterion for imagining in the discourse of the New Landscape.

Theorizing Affective Landscape

Meishu functioned as a platform to deepen the theoretical discussion of the affective dimension of landscape. As mentioned earlier, the notion of affective power in art was first officially proposed by Cai Ruohong in 1954 in the first issue of *Meishu*. Subsequently, the question of affect became a subject of discussion among many art writers in later issues. For instance, in an article written by Jin Ye 金治 (1913-2006) an art professor at the East-China Campus of Central Academy of Fine Arts,¹¹⁴ the author buttresses Cai Ruohong's argument by confirming that the power to emotionally affect viewers is the source of the power of a work of art.¹¹⁵ In order to achieve this goal, he asserted that artists should utilize their memory and

¹¹³ See Liu Xun 劉迅, “Tan Liu Jiyou de lianhuanhua chuangzuo” 談劉繼卣的連環畫創作, *Wenyi bao*, no. 10 (1953); Liu Xun 劉迅, “Lianhuahua chuangzuo zhong de jige wenti” 連環畫創作中的幾個問題, *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954); and “Yishu chuangzaoxing de laodong: cong ‘bolan xuanchuan hua he shuji chatu zhanlan’ suo xiang qi de” 藝術創造性的勞動: 從‘波蘭宣傳畫和書籍插圖展覽’所想起的, *Meishu*, no. 12 (1955): 15-16.

¹¹⁴ Trained as an oil painter, Jin Ye became an art professor at the East-China Campus of Central Academy of Fine Arts 中央美術學院華東分院 (later renamed as Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts 浙江美術學院 in 1958) in Hangzhou. See “Zhejiang gaodeng xuexiao fan youpai douzheng gao hao” 浙江高等學校反右派鬥爭搞好 (On the Anti-Rightist campaign in colleges and universities in Zhejiang), *People's Daily*, August 13, 1957: 3. Also Zheng Zuoliang 鄭作良, “Wo de yishu shengming hai hen nianqing” 我的藝術生命還很年輕 (My art life is still very young), *National Art Museum of China* 中國美術館, no. 11 (2005): 69-71. Before this, Jin Ye had published a few articles on subjects ranging from the importance of learning from life experience, the proper way of using nude model, as well as impressionist painting. After that, he was labelled as a rightist during the Anti-Rightist Campaign in 1957.

¹¹⁵ Original Chinese text: “任何一種藝術達到教育作用的目的，都是依靠於形象的感染力，而不是依靠於勉強要人接受的方法或是邏輯的說理……美術工作者進行創作時，如果不能使用生動的視覺形象來反映人們的

imagination in the process of making art in order to reinforce the emotional power of their artwork. In his view, memory painting and imagination painting were two additional strategies of strengthening the spiritual power in art.¹¹⁶ Jin Ye's view was further supported by an article published immediately after that emphasized the importance of imbuing an artist's emotion into his artwork in order to mobilize viewers' feelings.¹¹⁷

Artistic interest in the affective dimensions of landscape painting became even more eloquent within *Meishu*'s discursive environment in the following years. In 1957, the journal published for the first time an article dedicated to the New Landscape painting. Ge Lu 葛路 (1926-2015), its author, criticized the reductive interpretation of the function of landscape painting as simply offering people a pleasant viewing experience. Instead, he asserted that landscape painting could function as an ideological tool by provoking viewers' imagination of a better life.¹¹⁸ To do so, artists must creatively develop the "poetic conception" (*shiyi* 詩意) and "sentimental tune" (*qingdiao* 情調) of landscape painting in order to recreate its beauty and affective power.¹¹⁹ Ge Lu strongly encouraged artists to explore these two aesthetic techniques in

生活感受，如果不能使自己所要表達的思想內容滲透在形象的塑造上，如果不能用藝術形象的感染力來打動觀者的感情，結果也就只能變成空洞的說教。” Jin Ye 金治，“Tan muqian meishu chuangzuo zhong cunzai de wenti” 談目前美術創作中存在的問題 (On problems in present-day art creations), *Meishu*, no. 11 (1956): 17-20.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 19-20.

¹¹⁷ See Ma Xianghui 馬祥徽, “Meishu de ‘dongqing’ ‘shuoli’ ji qita” 美術的‘動情’‘說理’及其他 (On emotion, reason, and others in art), *Meishu*, no. 11 (1956): 20-21.

¹¹⁸ Original Chinese text: “我們對風景畫的思想性應如何估量呢？好的風景畫能激勵人思想情感向上，能鼓舞人熱愛生活，熱愛祖國……那麼藝術勢必要反映人的理想、願望和情感。真正的風景畫以客觀的自然為依據，而不是自然的簡單的模仿，它是通過藝術家的獨特感受，創造性地再現自然的美。” Ge Lu 葛路, “Chuangzuoxing di zaixian ziran di mei—tan fengjing hua changzuo wenti” 創造性地再現自然的美——談風景畫創作問題 (Creatively represent the beauty of nature in landscape—on question related to creating landscape painting), *Meishu*, no. 7 (1957): 12.

¹¹⁹ Original Chinese text: “藝術家被各色各樣的自然事物所激動，孕育了詩情畫意之後，對它們進行不同的藝術典型概括時，在藝術形象中能夠滋生出詩意和情調。詩意，好像很神密，看不着，摸不到，實際上是存在於生活之中，可以為藝術家所辨別和掌握，不過不是能順手拿來的，它需要藝術家深深地挖掘。情調的

order to strengthen the ideological power of landscape painting. As a former assistant editor of *Meishu*, Ge Lu's proposal of the ideas of poetic conception and sentimental tune elevated the discourse of the New Landscape to a theoretical level. It prompted artists to strengthen the imaginative power of landscape painting by exploring these two aesthetic components, the impacts of which will be examined in the third chapter of this dissertation.

Actualization

Certainly, the New Landscape operated on a discursive level, but it was also realized through different forms of institutional action in China starting in 1953. As the national art institution, CAA played an important role in reinstating landscape painting as an officially endorsed genre. Beginning in 1953, CAA resumed landscape painting as a major category in the national art exhibition, exemplified in the organization of the first National Exhibition of Chinese Painting in Beijing from September 16 to October 10, 1953. Among various genres, Chinese landscape painting was introduced as one of the major categories in the exhibition.¹²⁰ In addition, CAA also promoted landscape in other visual media, such as watercolors and sketches. When organizing the National Exhibition of Watercolor and Sketches in the second quarter of 1954, CAA openly called for the submission of watercolors and sketches on various themes, among which the topic of “heroically beautiful mountains and rivers of the motherland” was strongly

造成，離不開事物本身的特殊情，離不開造型表現上的形狀、色彩、明暗等等因素，然而觀察和操縱它們的終歸離不開藝術家。因此，我們要求風景畫上富有詩意和情調，首先還必需要求畫家重視藝術的創造工作，重視藝術的美。”*Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹²⁰ See *Quanguo guohua zhanlan hui jinian huaji: 1953 nian* 全國國畫展覽會紀念畫集: 一九五三年 (Commemorative catalogue of the National Exhibition of Chinese Painting: 1953) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1954).

welcomed.¹²¹ The widespread acceptance of landscape as a legitimate category in official art exhibitions in 1953 signified an alteration in the attitude towards this genre compared to its complete dismissal in years prior. It encouraged artists to reengage with this subject matter as a fundamental condition in the rebirth of landscape painting.

Apart from exhibition, sketching trips also played an important role in actualizing the discourse of the New Landscape. From 1954 onward, artists in major artistic regions were mobilized to leave their studios to visit different places for sketching activities. Oftentimes, they were sent down to the nearby rural or industrial areas to draw from scene on-site. Sometimes they were organized as a group to visit those locations in other cities or provinces. For instance, in April and May of 1954, several Beijing-based Chinese ink painters were sponsored by CAA to conducting sketching trips to scenic areas, mountains, lakes, and rivers in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui Provinces. By doing so, they rejected the formulaic way of creating landscapes, and sought to learn from nature.¹²² In Beijing, CAA organized a Chinese painting symposium on the theme of sketching the Yellow Mountain so that these painters could share their experience of depicting the site with other art practitioners.¹²³

¹²¹ Original Chinese text: “本會在今年第二季度，將舉辦一次全國情的水彩、速寫展覽會。作品的內容可以表現祖國壯麗的山河，反映我國的經濟建設，描寫勞動人民的生活，刻劃人物的形象，以至祖國的一草一木，凡一切能反映今天新生活新氣象的人像、風景、靜物及作為創作的畫稿，無論水彩、水墨、速寫，本會會員或非會員自一九五零年至現在的作品，皆可應徵。”“Zhongguo meishujia xiehui zhuban shuicaihua he suxie zhanlanhui zhengji zuopin” 中國美術家協會主辦水彩畫和速寫展覽會徵集作品 (A call for submission to the exhibition of watercolor and sketch, organized by the China Artists Association), *Meishu*, no. 3 (1954): 36; and Li Qun, “Geng hao de miaohua women de shenghuo,” 27.

¹²² Xu Yansun 徐燕蓀, “Beijing guohua jia shanshui xiesheng huodong” 北京國畫家山水寫生活動 (Sketching activities of Chinese landscape painters in Beijing), *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954): 46-47.

¹²³ This includes Wu Jingding 吳鏡汀 (1904-1972), Hui Xiaotong 惠孝同 (1902-1979) and Dong Shouping 董壽平 (1905-1997). See “Zhongguo meishu jia xiehui chuangzuo weiyuan hui zhaokai guohua jia Huangshan xiesheng zuotan hui” 中國美術家協會創作委員會召開國畫家黃山寫生座談會 (The art committee of the China Artists Association organized a Chinese painting symposium on sketching the Yellow Mountain), *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954): 14.

Some of these sketching trips were even followed by the organization of an exhibition or the production of a publication to showcase the achievement of the sketching trip. For instance, under CAA's sponsorship, aforementioned Beijing-based Chinese ink painter Li Keran, as well as Zhang Ding 張仃 (1917-2010) and Luo Ming 羅銘 (1912-1998) conducted a three-month sketching trip to various scenic places in Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces in southeast China. After returning to Beijing, their paintings and sketches of the trip (figs. 1.12-1.14) were exhibited in Beihai Park, and later reported in official journals such as *Meishu* and *Xin guancha* (*New Observations*) 新觀察.¹²⁴ Apparently, the organization of these sketching trips was politically meaningful for, not only, as Christine Ho argues, did they function to reform the artists' mind in a way that they could become a state apparatus,¹²⁵ but they also patronized artists to depict what they saw in pictorial form as the visualization of the New China to urban viewers.

In addition to CCA, regional art institutes also actively promoted a new way of producing landscape painting. For instance, the Beijing Chinese Painting Research Association 北京市中國畫研究會, established in September 1949, mobilized its members to conduct sketching trips that would allow them to depict life both nearby or afar. Not only did they send painters to railway construction sites in suburban areas of Beijing, they also sent them to as far away as the northeastern border to depict scenery of the modernization of northeastern frontier.¹²⁶ Research institutes such as the Institute of National Art 民族美術研究所 at the Central Academy of Fine Art gathered senior and junior Chinese painters on December 19, 1955, to view and discuss

¹²⁴ *Xin guancha* 新觀察 (*New Observations*), no. 23 (1954): 20-21.

¹²⁵ Ho, "Drawing from Life".

¹²⁶ Xu Yansun, "Beijing guohua jia shanshui xiesheng huodong," 46.

issues of sketching from life.¹²⁷ Two days later, they organized an internal exhibition of sketches to showcase a hundred of the sketches produced by their artists from life.

Beyond Beijing, cultural institutions in other artistic regions were also active in promoting sketching. Jiangsu Province arose as one of the major regional powers in organizing sketching activities for their painters due to its profound cultural history and artistic resources. The Jiangsu provincial office of FLAC was particularly active in organizing sketching events for their artists. In July, 1954, the municipal office of FLAC in Nanjing organized more than a dozen art workers to visit the construction site at the Foziling Reservoir in west Anhui Province.¹²⁸ On February 12, 1956, they organized thirteen art workers to visit villages for sketching in the cities of Suzhou and Xinghua, in south Jiangsu Province. Months later, they organized another sketching trip for artists to visit north Jiangsu Province.¹²⁹ Following this was the organization of a mini-exhibition and symposium in Nanjing to showcase and discuss the practice of sketching. All of these institutional activities turned the discourse of the New Landscape from a written discourse into a discourse of institutional action.

To Sum Up

Since its inception in late 1953, the discourse of the New Landscape constituted a unique environment for the production and reception of landscape art during the Seventeen Years. This

¹²⁷ Yi Bo 易波, “Lianghao de kaiduan—ji guohua xiesheng wenti zuotan hui” 良好的开端——記國畫寫生問題座談會” (A good beginning—a record of the symposium on issues related to sketching practice in Chinese painting), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1956): 56.

¹²⁸ Zhongguo meish jia xiehui Jiangsu fenhui chouwei hui 中國美術家協會江蘇分會籌委會, *Jiangsu sheng shi nian meishu huodong dashiji 1949-1959 chugao* 江蘇省十年美術活動大事記 1949-1959 初稿 (A draft of major art events of Jiangsu Province in the past ten years of 1949-1959) (1959), 15.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 21-23.

discursive field was first formed by top cultural leaders from CAA and FLAC through their speeches and writings. Later, it was consolidated, expanded, and actualized by art bureaucrats, critics, and artists both inside and outside these two institutions. In this field, landscape was redefined as a subject that could embody the well-being and future prospects of the Chinese socialist nation-state. On the one hand, artists were mobilized to leave their studios to depict what they saw, felt, and imagined from reality into pictorial landscape art. On the other hand, viewers of these landscape artworks were positioned within the discursive environment to interpret what they saw in nationalistic and emotional terms. This new discourse played an important role in shaping the way in which artists and viewers engaged with landscape and landscape art. Despite their contrasting positions, both were encouraged to make feelings and the imagination key conditions for both the production and reception of the art of the New Landscape.

The discourse of the New Landscape was a highly dynamic field, involving challenging current scholarly assumptions about the one-directional power relation between the state and artist during the Seventeen Years. Despite the unquestionably uneven power relationship between the two, researchers ought not to underestimate the role of this discursive field in channeling ideas within and beyond the art world. It was the discursive field which produced a new way of producing, receiving, and interpreting landscape and landscape art. In the next chapter, I will examine how artists engaged the discourse of heroism, hinted at by some of the remarks discussed earlier in this chapter, to develop what I call the “heroic landscape” as a site for imagining a new temporality for the new era.

Chapter 2 Heroic Landscape: Aggrandizing Space and Evoking the “Spirit of the Times”

In the inaugural years of the People’s Republic of China (1950-1953), the State Council 國務院 worked with its national bank, the People’s Bank of China 中國人民銀行 and numerous artist-professors, to design a new edition of its banknote for the nation. For the front design of the two-yuan bill, officials-in-charge had chosen a landscape representation of the Baota Hill in Yan'an as the key central image (fig. 2.1).¹³⁰ Portraying the site from a low viewpoint, this print humanizes the hill and the pagoda erected on top as if the pair were a colossal structure overseeing a broad expanse of lands and its environs below. Meanwhile, by depicting the entire Pagoda Hill on the far left and a boundless sense of void on the far right, this landscape presents an air of monumentality through the sense of spatial continuity across the width of the picture, which obliquely traverses the pictorial space from the foreground through the background. Compared to a historical photo that depicts military life at this same site during wartime (fig. 2.2), the Yan'an engraving on the two-yuan bill is characterized by a sense of spatial drama, conjuring up the discourse of heroism that the Chinese Communist Party had been propagating since the founding of the PRC. This engraving, depicting the iconic presence of the New Landscape, shows that a new political era was figuratively imagined through a manipulation of space rather than time.

This chapter examines the imagining of socialist China through the concept of heroic landscape. Throughout the Seventeen Years period, *heroism* 英雄主義 emerged as a powerful

¹³⁰ This edition of banknote was finally issued nationwide on March 1, 1955. Meng Xiangsheng 孟祥生, Xin Zhongguo zhibi jianshang yu yanjiu 新中國紙幣鑑賞與研究 (The appreciation and research of paper currency of new China) (Shanghai: Shanghai yuandong chubanshe, 2015), 71-74; and “Xin reminbi piaomian shuoming” 新人民幣票面說明 (An explanation of the design of the new edition of reminbi), *People’s Daily*, February 21, 1955, 2.

belief system propagated by the state to mobilize cultural producers in all fields to populate their works with images of gallant figures with tremendous fortitude, and with landscapes, sites, or themes that personified a spirit of daring. While Ban Wang's research has contributed to a theoretical understanding of the operation of this spiritual elevation in Mao Zedong's poem and the revolutionary cinema of the 1950s and the 1960s through the concept of the "sublime" (*chonggao* 崇高), little research has critically examined its construction or operation in the representation of the New Landscape.¹³¹ By analyzing different ways of aggrandizing the pictorial space in the depiction of landscape, this chapter investigates how depictions of landscape could embody a sense of heroism, thereby envisioning "the spirit of the times" (*shidai jingshen* 時代精神) as a temporal marker of the New China.

Heroism During the Seventeen Years Period

Without a doubt, heroism as an ideological belief system had many precedents in pre-1949 China. As shown in the research of literary scholars, Chinese writers of the early twentieth century had been constructing the concept of "hero" (*yingxiong* 英雄) in their depiction of the protagonists of the works to provoke readers' recognition or empathy with their epic deed or plight.¹³² During the Second Sino-Japanese War (or, the War of Resistance against Japan) from 1937 to 1945, heroism gained a nationalistic turn. Many Chinese filmmakers and playwrights resorted to narrating historic legends of heroic ideals which incited among their audiences a

¹³¹ For literary research, see Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), chapters 3 and 4. For art research, see Wang Jia 王嘉, *Shiye zhong de shidai* 視野中的時代 (The era in vision) (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang meishu chubanshe, 2007), 17-35.

¹³² See Mau-sang Ng, *The Russian Hero in Modern Chinese Fiction* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press; New York City, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 2-8.

sense of patriotism or hatred against the military aggression of the Japanese armies.¹³³ Heroism took a proletarian turn in the Chinese communist world as it was used by its leaders, generals, and officials to mobilize people to participate in the communist revolution. To this end, the Chinese communists employed terms such as the “hero model” 英雄模範, the “labor hero” 勞動英雄, the “militia hero” 民兵英雄, and the “battlefield hero” 殺敵英雄 to glorify the selfless or sacrificial acts of the peasants, workers and soldiers who had contributed to the building of Chinese socialist society or to safeguarding their territories against the Nationalist armies during wartime.¹³⁴ In the communist world, heroism was not exclusively applied to male but also the female through the use of the term “heroine” 女英雄 in the communist press.

After 1949, the communist notion of heroism became unshakable in the political culture of the People’s Republic of China. Visual material from this period demonstrates a keen interest in exalting the proletarian heroes or heroines of the new political epoch. In the award-winning new year’s poster *Zhao Guilan at the Heroes Reception* 群英會上的趙桂蘭 (1952, fig. 2.3), the Central Academy of Fine Arts instructor Lin Gang 林崗 (b. 1924) depicts female model worker Zhao Guilan being received by Mao Zedong in an official ceremony.¹³⁵ This poster was produced at a sensitive moment: in the early years of the Republic, Zhao Guilan was honored as

¹³³ For instance, Tian Han 田漢’s play *Heroic Stories of New Sons and Daughters* 新兒女英雄傳 (1940) dramatizes the fighting of a Ming dynasty hero against foreign invaders. See Xiaomei Chen, “Performing the Nation: Chinese Drama and Theater,” in *The Columbia Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), 197.

¹³⁴ These terms became popular lexicons in the everyday language of the Chinese communist. For instance, see Zhao Han 趙寒, “Yingxiong mofan qi daitou zuoyong” 英雄模範起帶頭作用 (Hero models take a leading role), *People’s Daily*, August 27, 1946: 2; “Laodong yingxiong yao zuo sha di yingxiong” 勞動英雄要作殺敵英雄” (Labor heroes aspire to become killing heroes), *People’s Daily*, November 22, 1946: 1; “Huazhong shiba wei minbing yingxiong, kangji Jiang jun zhuanglie xisheng” 華中十八位民兵英雄 抗擊蔣軍壯烈犧牲 (Eighteen militia heroes heroically sacrificed one’s life on battlefield against Chiang’s armies in central China), *People’s Daily*, November 9, 1946: 1.

¹³⁵ This poster was awarded the first prize in the 1951-52 National New Year’s Poster Competition.

a model worker for her sacrificial act in rescuing a state-owned factory from destruction in an explosion. In honor of her heroism, she was received by Chairman Mao at the Chinese Communist Party's new headquarter at Zhongnanhai in Beijing.¹³⁶ In this poster, Zhao is depicted as the center of attention despite her humble, working-class background. Further honoring Zhao are the gazes cast by the two revered leaders, Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai, who stand to either side of her, as well as a crowd of party leaders inside the room.¹³⁷ This new year print heralded a new era of interest of celebrating proletarian heroism in art, which was practiced throughout the Seventeen Years period.

During the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), heroism became an even more pronounced concept when it was appropriated by the state to mobilize civilians to participate in the nationwide campaign of radical economic production. Formally introduced by Mao at the beginning of 1958, the Great Leap Forward was a complex socio-economic campaign that aimed to accelerate industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture in China under the slogan of producing “more, faster, better, and cheaper” 多快好省. Principally, the Maoist economic strategy asserted a decentralization of socio-economic life as well as the cultivation of communist consciousness among the population.¹³⁸ Cadres from the central bureaucratic offices were sent out to farms or factories in the countryside to engage with the masses for agricultural or industrial productions. Cooperatives were amalgamated to form a new social organization called “the people’s commune” 人民公社, in which members were organized into different

¹³⁶ Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 141; and Chang-tai Hung, *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 199.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 199.

¹³⁸ Maurice J. Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic* (New York City, NY: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1986), 222-223 and 229.

production brigades, teams, and groups for full participation in local irrigation, terracing, and construction projects.¹³⁹ Most controversially, these communes established small and indigenous blast furnaces in rural areas in order to actualize the “All People Smelt Steel” 全民煉鋼 campaign.¹⁴⁰ This period was marked by a plethora of fiercely motivating slogans: “one day is equivalent to twenty years,” “fear only the limitation of your vision, never your capability to achieve,” “men are more important than machines,” etc.¹⁴¹ The frantic enthusiasm for socio-economic radicalization also spread into art. Not only were artists sent to farms, factories, and construction sites to explore and depict heroic subjects related to the Great Leap Forward, but art institutions were also instructed to propose ambitious goals to keep pace with the frantic spirit of the campaign.

Apart from socio-economic production, heroism was widely celebrated by the state in building a propagandist narrative that glorified sacrificial acts for the People’s Republic. As argued by Chang-tai Hung, the newly founded PRC needed to construct a master narrative to explain the sacrifice of countless blood and life in the battles before 1949.¹⁴² Manifested in Mao Zedong’s proclamation of the founding of the PRC, this narrative often began with an epic description of turbulence and suffering of the Chinese people during the Republic Period (1912-1949), especially under the command of the KMT party leader Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975). Then, the Communist martyrs and the People Liberation Army (PLA) arose as the superheroes

¹³⁹ Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York City, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 578-580; and Henry J. Lethbridge, *The Peasant and the Communes* (Hong Kong: Dragonfly Books, 1963), 73.

¹⁴⁰ Alfred L. Chan, *Mao’s Crusade: Politics and Policy Implementation in China’s Great Leap Forward* (Oxford; New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 178.

¹⁴¹ Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 211; and Chan, *Mao’s Crusade*, 78.

¹⁴² Hung, *Mao’s New World*, 15.

who eradicated the reactionary troops and overthrew the rule of the Nationalist government.¹⁴³ This epic narrative was solidified by the official commission of the Monument to the People's Heroes, at the center of Tiananmen Square in Beijing, from 1949 to 1958. On the front of this monument an epitaph reads: "Eternal Glory to the Heroes of the People," first written by Mao Zedong in the form of running script the day before the founding of the PRC in 1949, and later inscribed by artisans and builders. In Mao's words, this monument glorified "the heroes of the people" who had contributed to the "struggles against domestic and foreign enemies for national independence and the freedom and well-being of the people" over the past hundred years.¹⁴⁴ In this political environment, heroism became a sanctified theme in many artistic productions. Often, artists constructed the image of heroes and heroines by depicting them in a situationally challenging environment (fig. 2.4). In other cases, artists sought to monumentalize their subject by depicting them from a low viewpoint (fig. 2.5). The heroic portrayal of martyrs, be they male or female, constituted a key strand of representation in the visual culture of the Seventeen Years.

As it entered the first half of the 1960s, heroism reached a new stage of popularization in visual culture of the PRC. In the wake of the catastrophic failure of the Great Leap Forward in the early 1960s, Mao Zedong stepped down from his position as the Chairman of the CCP as his vision of governing the country through endless revolutions was severely challenged. To perpetuate the significance of revolutionary values, Mao and his comrades resorted to the People Liberation Army and launched the "learn from the PLA" campaign, which aimed to popularize the self-sacrificing acts of revolutionary soldiers, in early 1963.¹⁴⁵ In this context, civilian life

¹⁴³ Mao Zedong, "Proclamation of the Central People's Government of the PRC (October 1, 1949)," in *The Writing of Mao Zedong (1949-1976), vol. 1 September 1949-December 1955* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1986), 11.

¹⁴⁴ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, vol. V (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), 22.

¹⁴⁵ The center of this campaign was to glorify a young PLA soldier called Lei Feng, who had heroically sacrificed himself for the country. Meisner (1986), 293-5; Spence, 596-8.

had become increasingly militarized. Not only did the state assign army personnel to establish offices in educational, administrative and economic organizations, but they also stipulated that cadres of professionals should receive military training from the army. By 1964, the military force of the PLA had become deeply penetrated at all levels of civilian affairs, which included the domain of art production. *Meishu* often propagated the importance of revering the PLA and of visualizing their heroic spirit in art. The field also generally promoted the technique of monumentalizing figures, which was not only applied to the portraiture of Mao Zedong (fig. 2.6), but also to the depiction of nameless proletarians (fig. 2.7). By the end of 1965, heroism had become a radically politicized concept in both the socio-political and artistic domains. Despite its primacy as a concept to characterize figures, its elusive and malleable nature also enabled it to become a transferable concept in other artistic genres.

Heroism in Landscape Representation

Heroism was widely pursued in the representation of landscape during the Seventeen Years. Due to rich cultural resources, a profound regional history of landscape painting, and a deep impact of ideological control in the 1950s, painters based in Jiangsu Province became the most prominent group of regional artists to produce heroic landscape painting throughout the Seventeen Years. The first half of the period saw the rise of the portrayal of a topographically or climatically challenging setting which groups of figures carefully traversed while fulfilling a mission related to Chinese socialist nation building. The ink painting *Undefeatable Crossing of the Dadu River* 強渡大渡河 (1951, fig. 2.8) by Fu Baoshi, the aforementioned Jiangsu painting leader, portrays a scene of the Chinese Red Army risking their lives to cross the rolling waves of the wide Dadu River, Sichuan Province, on a small and ill-equipped boat during the legendary

military retreat called the Long March in 1935. Positioned at the center of painting, Red Army soldiers are depicted surrounded by billows of stream and a scatter of pointed rocks without any physical support. By creating a visually destabilized composition for the centrally-located soldiers to confront and overcome, Fu created a topographically precarious environment in which he could contextualize the soldiers' heroic actions. This technique of producing images of heroes was also employed by artists from other regions and who specialized in other media, in an array of works depicting different geographic locations (fig. 2.9).

Apart from creating a single scene in which the notion of heroism is immediately conveyed, artists of the Seventeen Years also constructed a complex narrative in which heroism had to be read and interpreted. Produced at the climax of the Great Leap Forward in 1959, the hanging scroll painting entitled *Canal Building* 運河工程 (fig. 2.10), by another Jiangsu painter Qian Songyan 錢松嵒 (1899-1985), portrays the scene of hundreds of peasants engaging in the laborious construction of a canal in the city of Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, during the Great Leap Forward. While *Undefeatable Crossing of the Dadu River* features a specific scene in which a team of figures are uniformly executing the same mission, *Canal Building* portrays a panoramic scene in which countless figures are filling up the entire landscape, each of whom is engaged in his or her own individual task of canal building on-site over time. Since each action is a temporal unit unto itself, this painting summons temporal commitment from the viewer to take the time to read the painting from the foreground through the background in order to fully comprehend its narrative. As we examine this painting closely, we can see that some peasants are busy digging the soil. Some of them are carrying or transporting loads. Some of them are resting, discussing, or directing the construction project. Furthermore, our reading is dramatically enriched by the heterogeneity of this landscape, exemplified by the irregularity of the rock formations in the

foreground and the streamlined canal's ridge that runs diagonally from the middle-ground through the background. This heterogeneous spatial setting offers its viewers a context to interpret the role of human actors in the production of new spaces. Apparently, in this pictorial mode, heroism is not simply revealed by the configuration of the figures' action in landscape. It is produced by viewer's reading of the motifs, syntax and spatial variations of the entire landscape as a visual narrative. Since the late 1950s were inundated with everyday scenes and reports of collective endeavor in transforming nature, artists were given a new context for exploring new techniques of articulating heroism in art.

The arts of the Seventeen Years also manifested the personification of landscape itself as a heroic being. In the discourse of the New Landscape, party leaders often utilized heroic terms, such as “*xiongwei*” 雄偉 (heroically grand) and “*zhuangli*” 壯麗 (strong beautiful), to reshape people's reception of landscape in the new political era. As this discourse prevailed, it offered artists the option to portray landscapes in different ways. In *Foziling Reservoir* 佛子嶺水庫 (1954, fig. 2.11), Jiangsu painter Tan Yong 譚勇 positions the dam of the site at the center of the painting. The centrality of this dam contrasts sharply with the marginalized position of the dam in *Ming Tombs Reservoir* 十三陵水庫 (1959, fig. 2.12) by a group of painters from the Beijing Painting Academy 北京畫院. By focusing on it as he does, Tan places the dam under the spotlight for examination. By further depicting the body of the dam from an eye-level view and in single-point perspective, Tan monumentalizes the dam endowing it with a heroic task. The dam arises like a heroic being standing boldly in an open landscape. It oversees the construction site at its foot and the distant mountains that are proportionally diminished in the background.

Landscape of the Great Leap Forward particularly demonstrates what I call a “graphical reconfiguration of space.” During this new socio-economic period, artists were motivated to

explore novel methods to visualize the new landscape of the country. Artists from the preparatory committee of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute became a pioneering regional force in developing the aforementioned technique to construct a series of idealized landscapes. For instance, in *Busy Harvesting at the Foot of Lingyan Hill* 灵岩山下麥收忙 (1958, fig. 2.13), Yu Tongfu 余彤甫 (1897-1973) combines a bird's eye view and a single-point perspective to depict a collective farm's agrarian landscape as spatially systematized and well-organized. Moreover, peasants are arranged in a linear fashion to symbolize the spirit of collectivism and militarization that were heightening nationwide. In *Meishan Reservoir* 梅山水庫 (1958, fig. 2.14), Zhang Wenjun 張文俊 (1918-2008) utilizes numerous sketches that he made to compose an idealized landscape of the construction site of the titled reservoir.¹⁴⁶ Cutting through the space from the foreground to the middle-ground, the zig-zag curve serves numerous functions. It visualizes a winding wooden bridge where intensive labor takes places; it animates the foreground space before directing visual momentum to the construction site and the mountain in the background. In traditional Chinese landscape, a graphical approach of slicing and animating the pictorial space is uncommon because it violates the long-established Daoist belief of humans leading a harmonious relationship with nature. Yet, as this technique visualizes the political interest of men in regulating the relationship between man and nature, which had become a ubiquitous scene during the Great Leap Forward, it was widely adopted to depict the new landscape of the heroic period.

As the discourse of glorifying of heroism, martyrdom, and revolution become more intense in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, heroism in landscape acquired a new form. For one

¹⁴⁶ See the artist's elaboration of the creation process in his article, Zhang Wenjun 張文俊, "Xuexi Zhongguohua chuangzuo de tihui" 學習中國畫創作的體會 (The experience of learning Chinese painting), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1959): 6-7 and 20.

thing, after 1949, the PRC built ample memorials around the country in order to commemorate the loss of life in battles leading to the founding the PRC. These sites were celebrated as the national monuments, some of which would become the theme of many landscape representations. A good example is the series of landscape paintings titled, *Ode to Yuhuatai* 雨花台頌 (fig. 3.3, 3.8-3.14), created by Fu Baoshi from 1958 to 1960. In these paintings, which I will discuss in Chapter 3, Fu Baoshi increasingly monumentalized a hilly site in Nanjing called Yuhuatai, where a memorial stele was erected in the 1950s to commemorate the Chinese Communist martyrs who lost their life in prior decades. In addition, the Chinese socialist state also glorified localities that were associated with the revolutionary history of the CCP. These include the first Soviet base of the Red Army in Jinggangshan Mountain in Jiangxi Province, and the wartime communist stronghold in Yan'an in Shaanxi Province. In the face of the rising cult of Mao since 1958, the revolutionary red culture was also extended to Mao's hometown in Shaoshan in Hunan Province, as well as revolutionary landscapes described in Mao's poetry. Artists around the country were compelled to create thematic works for these physical or poetic landscapes for propagandist purposes. Oftentimes, they depicted these sites from a low angle in order to monumentalize the site as a great hero in a way that was comparable to some of contemporary figure paintings (fig. 2.7-2.8).

Imagining Through Heroic Landscape

Given the profound history of creating heroic landscape throughout the Seventeen Years discussed above, we arrive at this vital question: how did these landscape paintings translate the spirit of Chinese socialist heroism so that they could function as a site for political imagining during the Seventeen Years? In this section, I will scrutinize several landscape representations

through which I will interpret three modes of constructing and imagining heroic landscape during the Seventeen Years.

Mode 1: Dramatization of Mountains and Rivers

Taking advantage of the traditional painting format of handscroll, *A Leap in the Mountain Village* 山村躍進圖 (1958) by Guan Shanyue 關山月 (1912-2000) narrates the story of the transformation of the life and landscape around mountain village in a linear manner (fig. 2.15). According to the inscription written by Guan himself at the beginning of the painting, he created this work based on his experience of witnessing a building project for a local transportation and irrigation system executed by villagers and the sent-down party officials in northern Hubei Province, central China, in 1957.¹⁴⁷ A native from Guangdong Province in south China, Guan relocated to the city of Wuhan (then Wuchang) in Hubei Province at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan in 1953 when the state was integrating art institutional resources in Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hubei Provinces into a single system based in Wuhan. As an art professor at the Central South College of Fine Arts in Wuhan, Guan joined an official sketching trip organized by the local school system in fall 1957 to visit a few construction projects in the province. Returning to Wuhan, he spent three months producing this handscroll in the summer of 1958.¹⁴⁸

The subject matter of this scroll was generally known to its contemporary viewers because the state had been actively promoted a water conservancy campaign throughout the

¹⁴⁷ Original Chinese inscription: “一九五七年 根據鄂北山區社會主義建設所見所感構成斯圖，一九五八年夏畫成於武昌揚子江之濱，一九八〇年初夏關山月補識於珠江南岸。”

¹⁴⁸ Huang Xiaogeng 黃小庚, ed., *Guan shanyue lun hua* 關山月論畫 (A discussion of painting by Guan Shanyue) (Henan: Henan meishu chubanshe, 1991), 3; and Chen Junyu 陳俊宇, “Jiangshan jiao wo tu—Guan Shanyue *Shancun yuejin tu chutan*” 江山教我圖——關山月山村躍進圖初探 (Learning from river and mountain—a preliminary study of Guan Shanyue’s *A Leap in a Mountain Village*), *Guohua jia* 國畫家 (Traditional Chinese painter), no. 6 (2016): 6.

1950s. After the founding of the PRC, the Chinese socialist state had launched nationwide water conservancy programs in particular regions in the hope of circumventing local topographic and climatic limitations, thereby boosting agricultural production for the nation-state.¹⁴⁹ While the First-Five Year Plan (1953-1957) was preoccupied with large-scale government-initiated projects such as dam construction, starting in 1955, the Communist state began to promote the values of enforcing small-scale projects implemented by the province, the county, or the cooperative through local and labor-intensive means. This led to an upsurge in the mobilization of peasants around the country to engage in their local irrigation projects in the following years.¹⁵⁰ State media frequently reported cases of regional success in transforming nature. In particular, from 1958 through 1959, it was reported that a cooperative in the Jun county in northern Hubei Province led by a model peasant called Li Dagui 李大貴 had employed local means to build an irrigation system, which had successfully transformed the barren hillocks into arable fields.¹⁵¹ This example served as a national model of how regional governments could bypass environmental challenges posed by nature and climate by mobilizing its people. It illustrated the power of socialist collectivism, which enabled people to reverse the age-old Chinese cosmological belief that humans were in a subordinate position to nature.

Unfurling over more than fifteen meters long from right to left, *A Leap in a Mountain Village* depicts a continuous narrative through a strategic exploitation of the temporality and spatiality of the painting format of the handscroll. Certainly, one possible way of analyzing this

¹⁴⁹ *The Program for Water Conservancy in Communist China, 1949-1961* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Research and Reports, 1962), 1.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵¹ For instance, see Tian Zhuang 田庄, “Jiao heshui liu shang shanpo—fang zhishui yingxiong Li dagui” 叫河水流上山坡—訪治水英雄李大貴”(Making rivers to flow uphill), *People’s Daily*, December 25, 1958, 3; “Li Dagui he shui” 李大貴和水 (Li Dagui and water), *People’s Daily*, December 10, 1959, 3.

painting is based on the four seasons—winter, fall, summer, and spring—that it depicts.¹⁵²

Alternatively, I thematically divide it into three main sections, within which each section can be further subdivided into individual scenes, skillfully interconnected by transitional elements. The first section consists of four scenes. Each depicts how peasants and sent party officials collaborate in various types of manual labor in an attempt to build a system of irrigation and a transportation network deep in the mountains during winter and fall (fig. 2.15a-c). The second part turns to the scenes of agricultural domestic life in a village on the green mountains in summer (fig. 2.15c-e). The third part portrays an open scene where peasants are busy harvesting and processing crops on a collective farm in spring (fig. 2.15f-g). This section ends with an expansive riverscape and a glimpse of factory scenery in the distance (fig. 2.15h). As this scroll depicts a panoramic landscape of which the seasonal order is reversed, it takes the viewers through a miraculous journey from the site of the deep mountain in the cold winter to the countryside in the blossoming spring. The spatial and temporal complexity of this scroll demand viewers to scrutinize it over and over again in order to fully comprehend the operations and implications of the narrative.

By the time Guan produced this long handscroll in the summer of 1958, he had already accumulated significant experience constructing visual narratives by employing this century-old painting format. His handscroll entitled *Hundred Miles along Li River* 漓江百里圖 (1941), fully utilizes the pictorial space of the handscroll to depict the landscape and life along the Li River in Guangxi Province during wartime. A little-known, shorter scroll of his is, *A Busy Winter in the Mountain Village* 山鄉冬忙圖 (1958, fig. 2.17; hereafter “the shorter scroll”), which was

¹⁵² See Chen Junyu 陳俊宇, “Jianguo chu Guan Shanyue yishu lichen jiedu zhi yi” 建國初關山月藝術歷程解讀之一 (An interpretation of the artistic development of Guan Shanyue in the early PRC period), in *Jianshe Xin Zhongguo*, 54-55.

produced on the same subject as *A Leap in a Mountain Village* (hereafter “the longer scroll”).

Produced a few months earlier in spring 1958, the shorter scroll emerged as the sister of the longer scroll, for—structurally speaking—it parallels the labor-intensive scenes depicted in the first section of the longer scroll. However, since it is much shorter in length, it depicts only a few scenes, excluding the idyllic and the harvesting scenes in the second and third sections of the longer scroll. Temporally, the longer scroll illustrates a much more complex narrative, carefully constructed over four seasons in reverse order, their distinctions demarcated by appropriate iconography. This temporal complexity far outstrips the shorter scroll, which primarily features the same season throughout the scroll. Coupled with the aspects that I am going to examine in the following paragraphs, we can see that the longer scroll was indeed a revised version of the, I believe, experimental shorter scroll in order to intensify the narrative of heroism on the verge of the Great Leap Forward.

A Leap in a Mountain Village shows the intensification of the spirit of heroism through a careful rebuilding of the relationship between figures’ bodies and space. While both the shorter and longer scrolls begin with the scene of a few figures working on the edge of a mountain plateau, the shorter one depicts a lush, misty, and serene valley (fig. 2.18a), whereas the longer one takes place within a snowy landscape while a dynamite explosion is happening nearby (fig. 2.18b). In the second scene, both scrolls feature a panorama in which a massive number of peasants and cadres are collectively engaging in digging and marching to one direction with their loads. However, while the shorter scroll portrays the mild climate of the early winter (fig. 2.18c), the longer scroll depicts the deep winter in which the houses, ground, and the mountains are covered in thick snow (fig. 2.18d). The longer scroll also shows a higher level of militarization of peasant life by showing highly regularized marching. The sense of environmental adversity is

further intensified in the third scene where peasants are excavating or transporting soil to either side of the river valley. While the shorter scroll features a gentler spatial setting of a shallow valley perforated by a running stream (fig. 2.18e), the longer scroll shows a deep valley without revealing its bottom (fig. 2.18f). In the longer scroll, some cadres and workers are pushed to stand at the end of their work platform in close proximity to the two dynamite explosions (fig. 2.16a). Apparently, even though these two scrolls share a similar structural order within these three scenes, the longer scroll creates a physically more hazardous environment that is full of risk and danger. It transforms the peasants and cadres into fearless individuals who are risking their life for the benefits of others, thereby eliciting surprise and reverence from its viewers.

By virtue of its extended length, the longer scroll enables Guan to develop additional scenes for further contextualization of the subject depicted in the prior section of the painting. Immediately following the last dynamite explosion scene is a transitional scene that shows countless peasants digging out an artificial lake in the fall (fig. 2.16b). This sunken ground serves as a motif for the theme of the water conservancy. Following this is the second section which bears a variety of symbolic elements revealing the achievement of the irrigation project. This includes, first, the lush rendering of the mountaintops. Not only does it indicate the euphoric feeling of entering the warmth of summer, but it also signifies the successful transformation of the once barren hillocks into gratifying green fields due to the newly constructed irrigation system. Moreover, the entire mountain village is encircled by a system of irrigation networks built with indigenous materials, including two wooden aqueducts that are meticulously depicted at the beginning and the end of this part (fig. 2.16c & d). As these aqueducts are connected to two different water sources, they serve as a physical device that delivers water up to the village. The mountain village is also irrigated by a wooden watermill that brings water from a low-lying

river to the village up the mountain (fig. 2.16e). The rendering of other motifs of irrigation further construct the notion of progress in mountainous regions. This includes a limpid pond where villagers engage in fishery or animal husbandry (fig. 2.16f), and a stream where people can acquire water for daily use (fig. 2.16g). With all of these placid water motifs, this section of the handscroll illustrates an idealized site where peasants lead a peaceful life in a self-sustainable agricultural system.

Following the mountain scenes is the third section that offers a new subject matter for further contextualizing the narrative. This section brings viewers into the open landscape of a collective farm where peasants engage in a range of activities related to crop harvesting, including crop cutting, hauling, stacking, drying, threshing, and storing (fig. 2.15f & g). Towards the end of the scroll, viewers are exposed to the fringe of the countryside with a range of urban motifs: a pier, a truss bridge, and the factory landscape in the distance (fig. 2.15h). This countryside landscape contributes to the reinforcement of the narrative of “a leap in a mountain village” in various manners. First, it functions as a transitional space between the mountain scene and the urban scene. Indeed, unlike most handscrolls that conventionally emphasize the right-to-left reading order, this part offers a counter-reading dynamic by depicting several wagons transporting crops from the fields on the left to the crop-processing community on the right (fig. 2.16h). Accordingly, it creates a multi-directional reading momentum, prompting the viewer to return her attention to the connection between this harvesting scene and the prior mountain scene. Indeed, the depiction of a wagon running on a road in the mountain (fig. 2.16i), and the arrival of the urban cadres to the mountain village also contribute to this backward-reading dynamic (fig. 2.16j). Secondly, the scroll ends with the landscape of a pier and the Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge (fig. 2.15h), which was newly constructed in the fall of 1957. This

landscape serves an important function by situating the mountainous site within the geography of northern Hubei. Since the Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge was celebrated as a symbol of modernization when it was constructed, this scene also serves as a finale to conclude the scroll with a promising industrial landscape of Hubei Province.

Certainly, a spatially and temporally complex painting like this one welcomes viewers to interpret it in multiple ways. However, if we analyze the narrative structure of this scroll linearly, we soon find that it was developed following a narrative mode in Chinese literature called, “introduction, development, contrast, and conclusion” (*qi-cheng-zhuan-he* 起承轉合). This narrative structure emphasizes the building of four sequential movements similar to a story. Accordingly, this scroll can be read sequentially as follows: the beginning scene of the scroll serves as the “introduction” (*qi* 起), in which the image of a Chinese Communist Party officer raising a red flag serves as a signal for the launching the narrative. The following construction and explosion scenes serve as the “development” (*cheng* 承) of the narrative by further expanding on the theme of constructing irrigation with a mountainous context. The idyllic scene in the second part functions as the “contrast” (*zhuan* 轉), because it introduces the contrasting development of peaceful agricultural life in the mountain. Finally, the harvesting scene in the third part operates as the conclusion (*he* 合), as it serves as a finale to conclude the narrative of the scroll in a sanguine mood. Emerging as early as in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Yuan drama, this narrative structure has been continuously adopted by writers and playwrights in the succeeding centuries up until the present-day.¹⁵³ Therefore, this structure was familiar to modern Chinese people who had encountered it in everyday life. By adopting this renowned

¹⁵³ Wang Kuiguang 王奎光, “Zhongguo gudai wenxue Yuan dai shi fa yanjiu” 中國古代文學元代詩法研究 (A study of poetic law of Yuan dynasty) (Ph.D. diss., Fudan University, 2007), 37-45.

narrative structure in his construction of *A Leap in a Mountain Village*, Guan fully utilized the temporal and spatial dimensions of this visual form to construct an easily understandable visual narrative to effectively tell the story of a contemporary myth.

In this work, the landscape plays a vital role in constructing the drama of this visual narrative. As the handscroll unfolds from right to left, it showcases a variety of physically distinctive settings through which a basic spatial framework for all kinds of action may take place. For instance, the first section features a geographically inaccessible landscape formed by an alternation of protruding and receding topographical elements, such as mountain ridges and penetrating space, as well as the sharp contrast between mountain tops and deep valleys. The second part features a geographically less-isolated environment, devoid of those physical barriers. Instead, it is perforated by roads and rivers which suggest the connectedness of the mountain spaces with the outside world. Finally, the third section is staged in an open field with which the sense of spatial continuity marks its difference from the undulating topographical profile of the prior two sections. Certainly, the idea of constructing a topographically-convoluted landscape in a handscroll format has its precedence in premodern Chinese painting when painters tended to apply this technique to create a secluded landscape where they could seek philosophical or mental refuge.¹⁵⁴ As Guan reinvented this technique to depict the contemporary subject of human transformation of nature, he further dramatized mountains and waters as a narrative device. By revising the manner of using this traditional Chinese painting format and narrative structures to display life of the new China, Guan participated in the political culture of using landscape to imagine the power of man in the heroic era.

¹⁵⁴ For instance, see Peter C. Sturman and Susan S. Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China* (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2012), cat. nos. 1, 17, 24, and 30.

Mode 2: Idealization of Space

While landscape was used by Guan as a narrative device for the transformation of nature by humans, it was widely used by artists during the Great Leap Forward to visualize the idealized landscapes that resulted from the construction of massive social and physical infrastructure. Artists from the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute emerged as the pioneering regional group exploring this technique. Assembled as a preparatory committee in 1957, they became key members of the fully-established institute in 1960, and demonstrated an ongoing interest in reconfiguring the space of landscape through a strategic use of graphical elements. The following artworks show how graphically configured spaces can embody the heroic landscapes imagined by party leaders, the artists, and people in different contexts of socialist construction during the period.

Collectivization

*Meals Are Free to All*¹⁵⁵ 吃飯不要錢 (1958, fig. 2.19) is a hanging scroll depicting the scenery of the public canteen of a people's commune set in the countryside. The foreground features an upscale traditional two-courtyard house that has been collectivized and transformed into a commune's canteen. The middle-ground depicts a factory complex to the right, and a series of dwellings and thatched huts standing by a river to the left. The background features a golden field sitting in front of a village and the green mountains. According to Chen Lusheng, this painting was commissioned by Vice Premier Chen Yi, who instructed the Jiangsu Provincial

¹⁵⁵ This translation is adopted from the English version of *China Pictorial*, no. 102 (1958): 33. Apart from that, scholars have translated it as *People's Commune Dining Hall (Free Food for All)* or *People Eat for Free*. See Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 170; and Christine I. Ho, "The People Eat for Free and the Art of Collective Production in Maoist China," *The Art Bulletin* 98:3 (2016): 348-372.

Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (JPCCCP) to appoint artists from the preparatory committee of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute to produce a series of Chinese paintings on the theme of three newly implemented socio-economic policies in the fall of 1958. These include the public canteen, the campaign of steel smelting, and the notion of workers declining piecework remuneration, all of which centered around the newly-founded institution called the people's commune.¹⁵⁶ The Jiangsu artists were hired for this political assignment because of their capacity and innovative spirit, which emerged as a rising regional force unmatched by any other group of regional artists.¹⁵⁷ Accordingly, the Jiangsu artists were organized to visit the October People's Commune and the Morning Light Machinery Plant in the suburbs of Nanjing to collect visual materials. Returning to the city, these artists collaboratively produced these paintings, during which party leaders from the Propaganda Department of the JPCCCP shared input on how to strengthen the painting's theme. As noted by Fu Baoshi himself and scholars such as Christine Ho, the mode of collective production exemplifies the notion of collectivism promoted by the state at the height of the Great Leap Forward.¹⁵⁸

The commune's public canteen was a subject of utopic imagination from late 1958 through early 1959. At the climax of the Great Leap Forward in August 1958, the CCP passed the policy to establish the rural people's commune as an experimental institution to reorganize

¹⁵⁶ Chen Lusheng 陳履生, "Lixiang hua de renjian leyuan—guanyu Renmin gongshe shitang" 理想化的人間樂園——關於《人民公社食堂》(The ideal paradise of the world—on *The Canteen of the People's Commune*); reprinted in *Chen Lusheng meishu shi lunji* 陳履生美術史論集 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2016), 501.

¹⁵⁷ Comparatively, paintings produced by Chinese painters based in Beijing were less revolutionary in terms of the artistic language and value. See "Shoudi Zhongguohua jie juxing Dayuejing chuangzuo zhanlan" 首都中國畫界舉行大躍進創作展覽 (The Chinese painting circle in Beijing organized the exhibition on theme of the Great Leap Forward), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1959): 11.

¹⁵⁸ Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, "Zhengzhi guale shuai, bimo jiu butong" 政治掛了帥, 筆墨就不同, *Meishu*, no. 1 (1959): 4; and Ho, "The People Eat for Free," 364.

the social structure in Chinese rural communities.¹⁵⁹ This institution was to integrate industrial and agricultural production with trade, education, and military affairs. Ideally, each commune should be equipped with its own welfare enterprises such as a public canteen, nursery, kindergarten, primary school, social hall, etc.¹⁶⁰ Among these, the public canteen was highlighted as the key facility of collectivization. By acquiring a fixed amount of food based on the ration pre-established by the state, these canteens centralized food distribution and consumption as a way to fulfil the Marxist ideal of egalitarian distribution of wealth and resources.¹⁶¹ Besides, as these canteens provided free meals to all of the commune members, they liberated women from the drudgery of domestic duties in exchange for full participation in agricultural or industrial labors. Furthermore, they accelerated the practice of collectivism by reorganizing all household units around the centralized public canteen. Therefore, the commune's canteen was celebrated as the emblem of China's transition from socialism to communism. The state media often published articles, photos, or visual, or literary works to glorify the advent of utopian communist life (fig. 2.21).¹⁶² State publishers produced brochures on the art of operating and managing the public canteens.¹⁶³ The slogan "Meals are free to all"

¹⁵⁹ Before that, the first commune was founded on an experimental basis in Henan Province in April 1958. Gradually, it was quickly extended to Henan and Hebei Provinces and certain areas of Manchuria in July. See Maurice, *Mao's China and After*, 231; and Lethbridge, *The Peasant and the Communes*, 70.

¹⁶⁰ Duanfang Lu, "Modernity as Utopia: Planning the People's Commune, 1958-1960," in *Remaking Chinese Urban Form: Modernity, Scarcity and Space, 1949-2005* (London; New York City, NY: Routledge, 2006), 101 and 112.

¹⁶¹ Li Chunfeng, "Historical Observations Regarding the Large-scale Establishment of Rural Public Canteens in Hebei Province," in *Agricultural Reform and Rural Transformation in China Since 1949*, eds. Thomas DuBois and Huaiyin Li (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2016), 118.

¹⁶² For a visual example, see *Meishu*, no. 9 (1958): 39. For literary example, see Xu Chi 徐遲, "Chifan bu yao qian" 吃飯不要錢 (Meals are free to all), *People's Daily*, October 10, 1958, 8.

¹⁶³ See a series of booklet titled, *Zenyang banhao gonggong shitang* 怎樣辦好公共食堂 (How to make a good job of running the public canteens), published by different publishers: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe in Nanjing (1958), Zhejiang tushuguan in Hangzhou (1959), Henan renmin chubanshe in Zhenzhou (1959), Nongye chubanshe in Beijing (1959), etc.

(*chifan buyao qian* 吃飯不要錢), which was also adopted as the title of this painting, was one of the most frequently cited quotes at the beginning of the commune's campaign.¹⁶⁴ It had embodied people's utopian ideas about a limitless food supply by this novel state-catering enterprise.¹⁶⁵

Commissioned in October 1958, *Meals Are Free to All* joined this culture of glorifying this idealized social institution. It demonstrates a strong interest in adopting graphical elements to compose the space of this institution set in a Chinese landscape. Most distinctively, it captures a wide scope of space from an aerial oblique perspective. The orientation of all buildings fall within a two-point perspectival system: if we extend the line of the walls of the courtyard house and the factory complex backward, they will converge on two vanishing points lying on the either side of the painting beyond its frame (fig. 2.19b).¹⁶⁶ Therefore, the spatial regularity of this painting distinguishes itself from other paintings, including *Engaging in Steel Smelting as if on a Battlefield* 為鋼鐵而戰 (1958, fig. 2.22) and *Launching the Patriotic Hygiene Campaign* 開展愛國衛生運動 (1958, fig. 2.23), both of which adopt the aerial oblique angle of viewing. The pictorial space is animated by the zig-zag pattern of the roads running from the foreground to the middle-ground of the work. This artificial way of composing space displaces the traditionally more harmonious ways of visualizing the concept of “animation through spirit consonance”

¹⁶⁴ For instance, see Liu Zaijin 劉載金 and Tong Meng 童猛, “Lun chifan buyao qian” 論吃飯不要錢 (On meals are free to all), *People's Daily*, October 24, 1958, 8; and “Ban hao gonggong shitang” 辦好公共食堂 (Make a good job of running the public canteens), *People's Daily*, October 25, 1958, 4.

¹⁶⁵ Wang Xiao 王逍, “Renmin gongshe gonggong shitang xingshuai zhi lishi yanbian” 人民公社公共食堂興衰之歷史演變 (The historical trajectory of the rise and fall of the public canteens of the people's communes), *Dang shi yanjiu yu jiaoxue* 黨史研究與教學, no. 1 (2001): 14.

¹⁶⁶ Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen have also noted the use of “unitary western vanishing-point perspective” in this painting. See Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 170. Yet, their approach is different from my interpretation of this as a combined use of the two-point perspective and aerial perspective in the making of the aerial oblique perspective.

(*qiyun shengdong* 氣韻生動), theorized by painting theorist Xie He 謝赫 (ca. 500) in the Southern Dynasties (317-589).¹⁶⁷ Instead, with this artificial language, this painting glorifies the idea of institutional reorganization of society as a manifestation of heroic spirit of the Great Leap Forward.

There are several factors that explain the proliferation of a graphical reconfiguration of space during the Great Leap Forward. After 1949, the everyday experience of interpreting space in China had become more complex. The state propagated an official discourse of human conquering nature at all levels throughout the 1950s. Not only were farmlands rapidly collectivized from small and scattered pieces of land into large collective fields, but nature itself was reconfigured through infrastructure projects both large and small. Under all of these socio-cultural forces, it is not surprising to see that even journalistic photography increasingly adopted characteristic angles to capture these new socialist landscapes in which graphical elements become a key device in the configuration of space (fig. 2.24 & 2.25). The use of graphical elements in vertical or diagonal ways divides the composition in half, symbolizing man's power to intervene upon nature. Confronting these abrupt changes of conceiving space, artists were motivated to look for new formal strategies to visualize all these changes. A good example is a Jiangsu artist named Song Wenzhi 宋文治 (1919-1999), whose landscapes will be discussed in the next section, as exemplars promoting a rising interest in using curves to form the main structure to reconfigure the pictorial space through the 1950s and the early 1960s. Certainly, the new modes of conceiving and visualizing space across different media in the 1950s offered

¹⁶⁷ The English translation of this term is adopted from Wu Hung, "The Origins of Chinese Painting," in *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, eds. Richard M. Barnhart et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1997), 48-49. For an in-depth discussion of this classical Chinese aesthetic, see John Hay, "Values and History in Chinese Painting, I: Hsieh Ho Revisited," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 6 (Autumn, 1983): 96-101.

landscape painters a complex context to reinvent the traditional spatial aesthetics, by which they characterize their spatial experience in the heroic era.

The adoption of this technique of spatial rendering of the landscape is political in many ways. First, it imbues the painting with the ability to showcase the idealized configuration of social life within the commune's canteen.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, compared to the architectural photos and other collaborative paintings by the Jiangsu artists (fig. 2.22 & 2.23), this painting features an even higher angle of aerial perspective to an extent similar to Qian Songyan's version (fig. 2.21), which Christine Ho believes is “a study for the collective version.”¹⁶⁹ In so doing, it fully showcases the activities both inside and outside of the canteen. Outside of the canteen, we can see a few production brigades marching in a group towards the front door gate. Inside the first courtyard, we can see that the commune's members are sitting in an orderly fashion around a table to enjoy their free meal provided by the canteen staff. A big noticeboard is erected on the ground, proclaiming “Today three dishes and one soup are being served. Everyone enjoys an additional half a catty of pork” 今日三菜一湯，每人增加豬肉半斤. Deeper into the second courtyard, a butcher is captured at the moment of slaughtering a pig suspended in a house for cooking. Three commune members are reading a notice posted on the “bulletin board of honor” 光榮榜 at the center of the courtyard. A few members are occupied with musical enjoyment inside the main building that bears a red banner that says: “Meals are free to all. Happiness for thousands of years” 吃飯不要錢，幸福萬萬年. By depicting the site with a privileged angle of viewing, this painting fully depicts activities taking place both inside and outside of the canteen.

¹⁶⁸ Andrews and Shen also noted the function of this “sharply tilted ground plan” in showcasing details. See Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 170.

¹⁶⁹ Ho, “The People Eat for Free,” 360.

The commune's public canteen is portrayed as a heaven on earth because workers' basic needs in life are well provided by the state.

Secondly, this perspective allows artists to construct an idealized spatial configuration of the people's commune. First, the communal nature of this architectural space is marked by the red banner suspended between the powerline posts saying, "Congratulations on the establishment of the people's commune" 慶祝人民公社成立, as well as the little red flags in the distant village. While scholars generally agree that this landscape operates as an image of a utopian collective life, I argue that it also imagines town-planning in an idealized socialist society, in some ways echoing Christine Ho's argument of it as a new community of "social bonds and economic efficiency."¹⁷⁰ Structurally, the painting visualizes the beauty of an idealized, self-sustainable agricultural and industrial town. The public canteen is standing side-by-side with an industrial plant that, we learn from the plaques on the wall, is a grain-processing plant and storehouse. Behind it is the agricultural landscape. Furthermore, this landscape is supported by a good river and road transportation network, suggested by the river and the wide roads for wagons and donkeys to transport grains to the factory. Thematically, the entire landscape scrutinizes the spaces of the people's commune under the theme of food, from the provision of free meals in the foreground, to a food-processing plant and storage space in the middle ground, to the open granaries and a collective farm in the background. It shows an ideal configuration of the social, industrial and agricultural space of a rural commune, as well as the beauty of modern town planning meticulously applied in a Chinese socialist context.

Thirdly, the spatial regularity projects an image of architectural modernity promised by this new institutional framework. Indeed, the technique using an oblique aerial perspective

¹⁷⁰ Ho, "The People Eat for Free," 358.

resonates with a range of architectural illustrations propagated through the print culture of the PRC. In the 1950s, the state media, such as the Party's illustrative magazine *China Pictorial*, often published photos or illustrations showing models of new architectural sites of the PRC that feature an oblique aerial perspective (fig. 2.26). Photos that compare the old versus new were published extensively in the 1950s; as Duanfang Lu has noted, they operate "as a testimony to the success of nation building."¹⁷¹ Seemingly, this technique had become the visual language for depicting new architectural complexes during the Seventeen Years. Artists in other media also adopted this technique to visualize the spaces of new architectural proposals. For instance, the illustrator Zhang Yuqing 章育青 frequently applied this technique in spatial renderings of a range of "new" architectural sites or infrastructure in the 1960s, including *The New Estate of the Commune* 公社新村圖 (1961, fig. 2.27) and *The New Look of Transportation Network* 交通新貌圖 (1966). As this technique was often used to render idealized architectural space during the Seventeen Years, it became a visual language for imagining new life promised by architectural and possibly urban planning.

Meals Are Free to All is not a simple appropriation of these techniques from the photographic or architectural fields. The late 1950s witnessed the rise of the discourse of promoting national cultural heritage in all media. *Meishu* increasingly published articles on theories and practices of inheriting or reinventing traditional Chinese painting.¹⁷² It was partially the result of the rising interest of the Chinese socialist state in redeveloping its national identity in the face of shifting political dynamics in the Communist world. In *Meals Are Free to All*, we can see traces of an artistic attempt to strengthen the nationalistic quality of the painting. For

¹⁷¹ Lu, "Modernity as Utopia," 86.

¹⁷² See relevant articles in *Meishu* from 1957 to 1958.

instance, instead of adopting a modern horizontal frame to render a panoramic view, this painting adopts the format of a hanging scroll to depict the entire landscape within a vertical frame. Despite the strong attempt to introduce spatial regularity in the painting, the skyline of the architectural space of the public canteen is punctuated with trees. Whether or not *Meals Are Free to All* is faithfully depicting the topography of a real location is questionable. Yet, as shown in this painting, a combined use of visual strategies from traditional Chinese painting and architectural drawing produces an idealized image of a Chinese socialist institution. It embodies the notion of regularizing civilian life as well the sense of good life promised by this new social institution.

Conquering Nature

Song Wenzhi's *The Great Transformation of Mountains and Rivers* (1960, fig. 2.28) projects an image of man's capacity to control nature during the Seventeen Years. The painting takes a real location called the Three Gate Gorge (Sanmenxia) Dam, constructed in the middle reaches of the Yellow River on the border between Henan Province and Shanxi Province, as its subject. Built from 1957 to 1960, the Three Gate Gorge Dam was celebrated by the Chinese socialist state as the first large-scale infrastructure project realized by the PRC to control the water of the Yellow River. It was fully promoted by the state as a monumental construction that could achieve multiple functions: controlling flood, holding sediment upstream and releasing only clear water to the lower reaches, irrigating millions of *mu* of farmland, and generating a hundred thousand kilowatts of power.¹⁷³ As a painting master at the newly-founded Jiangsu Traditional

¹⁷³ Shang Wei, "A Lamentation for the Yellow River: The Three Gate Gorge Dam (Sanmenxia)," in *The River Dragon Has Come! The Gorges Dam and the Fate of China's Yangtze River and its People*, eds. John G. Thibodeau and Philip B. Williams (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 147-148.

Chinese Painting Institute, Song Wenzhi visited this site during the three-month sketching tour organized by the Institute in the fall of 1960. Noted in the memoir written by one of the participants, Huang Mingqian, an artist delegation toured around the site from September 22 to 24, 1960. During that time, the artists created many sketches, some of which were later turned into paintings.¹⁷⁴

The Three Gate Gorge Dam was a critical site for the national imagination of the state's capacity in water conservancy during the early Seventeen Years period. As Judith Shapiro points out, for thousands of years, it was a long-held cultural belief that the Chinese emperor had the responsibility to safeguard the civilian's life by controlling flood, providing irrigation, and facilitating navigation along major waterways such as the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, as well as their tributaries. This notion had become even more intense in the Maoist era.¹⁷⁵ After 1949, the young Chinese socialist state had conducted many surveys to explore the best location for building a huge water conservancy facility that could control the dreadful Yellow River.¹⁷⁶ Finally in 1955, under the recommendation of the Soviet engineers, the state confirmed a plan to build a master dam and reservoir at the site of the Three Gate Gorge Dam. This dam was widely celebrated in official discourse as being able to control the catastrophic floods of the Yellow River while generating hydroelectric power. More importantly, it could hold sediment upriver and release only clear water downstream, actualizing the traditional folk saying that, "when a

¹⁷⁴ Huang Mingqian 黃名芊, *Bimo jiangshan: Fu Baoshi shuaituan xiesheng shilu* 筆墨江山: 傅抱石率團寫生實錄 (Ink landscape: a documentation of sketching trip led by Fu Baoshi) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2005), 23-28.

¹⁷⁵ Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge; New York City, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 48-9.

¹⁷⁶ "Xin Huanghe de guangming qiantu" 新黃河的光明前途 (The bright future of the Yellow River), *People's Daily*, November 15, 1949, 2.

Great man emerges, the Yellow River will run clear” 聖人出，黃河清.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the state also publicized that this dam would realize the dreams of “conquering the Yellow River” 征服黄河 as well as “turning a harmful river into a profitable river” 變害河為利河.¹⁷⁸ Compared to many other dam constructions during the Seventeen Years, the Three Gate Gorge Dam functioned as the most powerful nexus of hope, trust and manifestation of the political statement that “Man must conquer nature” 人定勝天 yet propagated by the PRC state.

Political interest in glorifying the Three Gate Gorge Dam project romanticized the site among artists in the mid-1950s. Long before any construction took place, *The Three Gate Gorge of the Yellow River* 三門峽工地 (1956, fig. 2.29), an oil painting by the CAA and FLAC artist-official Wu Zuoren, idealized the landscape of the Three Gate Gorge by taking a bird’s eye view that depicted its precarious topographical environment before the launching of any construction work. Having visited the site towards the end of its completion in the fall of 1960, both Fu Baoshi and Qian Songyan were interested in visualizing the aforementioned saying: “When a Great man emerges, the Yellow River will run clear” in two different approaches. In *A Clear Yellow River* 黃河清 (1960, fig. 2.30), Fu Baoshi depicted the meaning of the saying by literally depicting the miraculous scene when the muddy Yellow River became completely clear. In *The Three Gate Gorge of the Yellow River* 三門峽工地 (1960, fig. 2.31), Qian Songyan reinvented the classical composition of “two riverbanks separated by a river” to depict the contrasting

¹⁷⁷ Shapiro, *Mao’s War Against Nature*, 49-50.

¹⁷⁸ See Junqian 君謙, “Bian hai he wei li he—zhi Huaung zhanlan canguan ji” 變害河為利河——治黃展覽參觀記 (Turning a harmful river into a profitable river—on visiting the exhibition on harnessing the Yellow River), *People’s Daily*, April 26, 1955, 2; and Huashan 華山, “Sanmenxia” 三門峽 (Three Gate Gorge), *People’s Daily*, July 21, 1955, 2.

scenery of the old King Yu Temple in the foreground with the spectacular scenery of a busy construction site on the mountain tops in the background.

As for Song Wenzhi, he had repeatedly explored visualizing the theme of “the great transformation of mountains and rivers” 山川巨變 from 1960 through 1963. Apparently, this theme was adopted from the title of a story by Zhou Libo 周立波 (1908-1979), “The Great Transformation of Mountain Villages” 山鄉巨變, written between 1958 to 1960. Widely promoted in official press media and journals, the title of this story became one of the most popular phrases adopted by creative individuals in China in their visualization of the immense transformation happening in and around the territories in the second half of the Seventeen Years. In May 1960, Song Wenzhi reinvented this theme by depicting the historical moment when water was being released from the floodgates of the downstream façade of the dam in a painting of the same title (fig. 2.32). In September 1960, the artist revisited this theme by romanticizing the scene of the radical transformation of the southern bank of the Yellow River from the yellow loess to arable fields due to the irrigation brought by the dam, equally in a painting inscribed with the same title (fig. 2.33). In October 1960, Song devoted himself to reconstructing the topography of the entire site within the format of the short handscroll (fig. 2.28). In this scroll, the foreground captures the undulating profile of the southern bank where signs of modernity, such as power lines, roads, factories and houses, are located. The middle-ground features the Yellow River flowing to the right, and the downstream façade of the Three Gate Gorge Dam standing heroically on the left. The background portrays the landscape of the yellow loess located to the north of the river. Accordingly, this scroll distinguishes itself from other paintings by carefully reconstructing the topography of the site. Furthermore, through depicting the site

from a vantage point, it empowers viewers with the capability to fully behold the physical transformation of the location brought by the dam construction project.

Song's handscroll demonstrates a strong interest in adopting a graphic manner for rendering space to symbolize the physical transformation of mountains and rivers through the construction of the dam. Most distinctively, it portrays the body of the dam from an eye-level view so that it appears to be a monumental structure truncating the flow of the Yellow River. The application of one-point perspective, suggested by the tapering effect of the dam, further reinforces its monumentalizing effect. The rest of the painting features a curvy composition resulting from the disposition of the Yellow River that flows into the distant background on the right. The curvature of the Yellow River is further accentuated by a system of parabolic arches that are formed by the orientation of the flushing outlet of the dam, the shape of the roads, and the alignment of the houses in the lower right corner of the painting. Indeed, Song's interest in using mathematically rendered curves to reconfigure natural space is not found only in this painting, but was a feature of his ongoing interest in devising a new pictorial language to visualize the industrial landscape of the new political era.

We can trace Song's exploration of graphical reconfiguration in landscape representation from 1949 through the late 1950s. In *Composing Verses in the Seclusion of Pine Trees* 松隱覓句圖 (1949, fig. 2.34), Song was still attached to a traditional way of depicting a reclusive landscape through the use of a typically Ming-dynasty Wu School composition rendered in a level view. In a later painting, *Timber Rafts on Tongjiang River* 桐江放筏 (1956, fig. 2.35), Song chose a bird's eye view to portray the scene of timber rafts floating along the Tongjiang River in a parabolic form. Cutting through the space of the landscape, these parabolic forms constituted a new visuality in the mid-1950s, offering a sense of spatial regularity and continuity

from the foreground to the middle-ground. Song's interest in a curvy reconfiguration of waterway was exploited to an even greater extent in his painting *The New Look of Canals* 運河新貌 (c. 1957, fig. 2.36),¹⁷⁹ which features a system of parabolic curves to configure the shape of the canals and the route of the boats after the construction of a new Shaobo Lock 邵伯船閘 in northern Jiangsu Province. Song's approach of configuring the space of waterways constituted a new pictorial language while other artists, as shown in Yang Taiyang's 楊太陽 (1909-2009) watercolor *Rafting on the Li River* 瀚江木排 (1954, fig. 2.37), were still privileging a ground-level naturalistic mode of depicting watery landscapes.

There were political overtones to the combined use of a bird's eye view and a graphical approach of rendering space during the Seventeen Years. For one thing, timber rafting, adopted from the Soviet Union during the early years of the First Five-Year Plan, arose within the new industrial landscape in the PRC in the early to mid-1950s. This technique of transporting lumber was celebrated by the state as an economical way of boosting the timber industry at a low cost.¹⁸⁰ As a result, a prioritization of the spatial order of this technique over the spatial order of nature in *Timber Rafts on Tongjiang River* symbolizes an inverted power relationship between man and nature. Similarly, in *The Great Transformation of Mountains and Rivers* and *The New Look of Canals*, the subject matter of the construction of dams and canals was widely publicized as great achievements of the PRC in water conservancy. Accordingly, the artificial use of graphical elements in configuring space symbolizes man's capacity to conquer China's great rivers and

¹⁷⁹ Although this painting is not dated, it was published in *Xin mao*, plate 1. Moreover, according to the artist's biography compiled by Song Wenzhi's son, Song created a painting titled *Shaobo Lock* 邵伯水閘 in 1957. Coupled with its style, this painting can be dated to around 1957.

¹⁸⁰ “Changjiang shang de hangyun” 長江上的航運 (Shipping on the Yangtze), *China Pictorial*, no. 11 (1953): 12-13; “Shuiyun mucai” 水運木材 (Timber Rafting), *China Pictorial*, no. 7 (1954): 34-35; and “Haiyun mu pai” 海運木排 (Timber Rafting by Sea), *China Pictorial*, no. 4 (1956): 30.

bring them under human control. By visualizing man's imagination of the power of dams in regulating watercourse, it translated the political discourse of "Man must conquer nature" into a new visual language of the new political era.

Utopia and Dystopia

Landscapes of the graphical configuration of space functioned as a vehicle for glorifying the socialist construction of the PRC. As cultural institutes in Jiangsu gained greater momentum in the context of regionalism in the late 1950s, the headquarters and Jiangsu branch of CAA co-organized the "Jiangsu Provincial Chinese Painting Exhibition" 江蘇省中國畫展覽會 in Beijing from late 1958 to early 1959. It was reported that 161 Chinese paintings produced by the Jiangsu artists were displayed. In particular, the three collaborative paintings—*Meals Are Free to All* (fig. 2.19), *Engaging in Steel Smelting as if on a Battlefield* (fig. 2.22), and *Launching the Patriotic Hygiene Campaign* (fig. 2.23)—were subjects of media and political attention. Reproducing two of the paintings in the first issue in 1959, *Meishu* considered the three paintings named above as artworks with "a surging wave of momentum" since they had captured people's fervor of engaging in the socialist constructions of the new era.¹⁸¹ The Secretary of the JPCCCP Chen Guan 陳光 praised these three landscapes for their "breadth of spirit."¹⁸² The Director of

¹⁸¹ "Jiangsu sheng Zhongguohua zhanlanhui zai Jing zhan chu" 江蘇省中國畫展覽會在京展出 (The Jiangsu Provincial Chinese Painting Exhibition in Beijing), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1959): 8.

¹⁸² Chen Guan 陳光, "Fanying woguo shehui zhuyi jianshe zhong weida xianshi shenghuo" 反映我國社會主義建設中偉大現實生活 (Reflecting the great reality and life in our socialist national constructions), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1959): 2.

the Propaganda Department of the JPCCCP, Ouyang Huilin 歐陽惠林, exalted two of these works for their stylistic novelty as well as for their capacity to manifest the communist spirit.¹⁸³

Apart from the media coverage, these paintings gained a high visibility both inside and outside the PRC through print culture. Most importantly, *Meals Are Free to All* was reproduced in both *China Pictorial* and *Meishu*, which were circulated both domestically and internationally.¹⁸⁴ *China Pictorial* even printed out the slogan inscribed on the painting in order to highlight the utopian nature of the depicted canteen:

Meals are free to all, Both old and young beam with smiles. Everyone works harder than ever, For the good of all generations to come. ¹⁸⁵	吃飯不要錢， 老少齊開顏。 勞動更積極， 幸福萬萬年。
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In the print culture of fine arts, these three paintings were also widely reproduced in art catalogues published in Shanghai and Nanjing in 1959 and 1960.¹⁸⁶ Current evidence shows that *Meals Are Free to All* has at least three versions with the same composition. The minor differences lay in how each of them altered the type and orientation of the vegetation in the foreground and the middle-ground, as well as the shape of the mountains in the background. The version housed by the M K Lau Collection in Hong Kong (1958, fig. 2.20a) was exclusively reproduced in the two official periodicals, *China Pictorial* and *Meishu* in 1958 and 1959,

¹⁸³ Ouyang Huilin 歐陽惠林, “Jiangsu Zhongguohua de ‘bai hua qi fang, tui chen chu xin’” 江蘇中國畫的“百花齊放，推陳出新” (“Let a hundred flowers bloom and new things emerge from the old” in Jiangsu Chinese painting), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1959): 3.

¹⁸⁴ See *China Pictorial*, no. 102 (1958): 33; and *Meishu*, no. 1 (1959): 22.

¹⁸⁵ This translation is adopted from the English version of *China Pictorial*, no. 102 (1958): 33.

¹⁸⁶ See *Xin mao* 新貌 (The new look) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1959), plates 21 and 22; *Jiangsu shi nian meishu xuanji* 江蘇十年美術選集 (A selection of Jiangsu arts of the past ten years) (Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1959), plates 2-4; and *Jiangsu sheng guohua yuan huaji* 江蘇省國畫院畫集 (A painting catalogue of Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute; Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1960), plates 4 and 6.

whereas one of the versions collected at the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute (fig. 2.20b) was exclusively reproduced in two catalogues produced by the Jiangsu Literary and Art Publishing House in Nanjing in 1959 and 1960. The social significance of these paintings seems to explain why this subject was repeatedly reproduced in many versions.

On top of political function within the PRC, these landscapes served as a political medium for projecting an idealized national image of the PRC abroad. In an unpublished letter addressed to the Propaganda Department of the Jiangsu Provincial Committee 江蘇省省委宣傳部 of the Chinese Communist Party, the Jiangsu branch of the All-China Federation of Literary and Arts Circle 江蘇省文聯黨組 remarks that the Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations of the PRC 中華人民共和國對外文化聯絡委員會 in Beijing had requested that they select some of the paintings displayed in the “Jiangsu Provincial Chinese Painting Exhibition” for exhibition in countries of the Third World and the Soviet Union. Although the letter did not specify which paintings were selected, ultimately seventy of them were displayed first in Burma in early May 1959, and later in Pakistan in early June of the same year. After that, some of these paintings were sent to additional countries of the Communist world, including Hungary and North Korea.¹⁸⁷ Organized in the middle and second half of 1959, these overseas exhibitions did not only serve as a form of cultural exchange and commemoration of the upcoming tenth anniversary of the PRC in October 1959, as claimed in the letter. These paintings, more importantly, by projecting a utopian image of the PRC, functioned as a mediating agent of the image of the PRC as a rising leader in both the Communist and Third Worlds. This cultural diplomacy was particular vital to the geopolitical prospect of the PRC as it negotiated its international position on the verge of the deteriorating Sino-Soviet relationship in the late 1950s and the 1960.

¹⁸⁷ An unpublished letter issued on September 11, 1959. Private Collection.

Such utopian landscapes would remain castles on a cloud. First, in the case of *Meals Are Free to All*, while the public canteen was theoretically an ideal way to accelerate collectivism, in reality, it was proved to be difficult to sustain and ultimately failed.¹⁸⁸ These canteens demonstrated poor organization and management. By the end of 1958, a variety of problems came to the surface. There was a tremendous waste of food, an inefficient use of fuels and resources, tight supply of food, and rampant corruption.¹⁸⁹ Some party leaders were skeptical about the efficacy of this manner of collectivization. During the famous Lushan Conference, held at Mount Lu, Jiangxi Province, in July 1959, party leaders from the Central Committee of the CCP held different views about whether or not the state should disband the public canteens.¹⁹⁰ Although they were forcefully reinstated in March 1960 due to the dominance of another anti-rightist movement, they confronted unanimous disapproval in the face of the disastrous catastrophe of the great famine in the second half of 1960. Finally, after the top party leaders themselves had conducted a critically in-depth investigation in rural areas around the country, the canteen system was completely abolished in August 1961.¹⁹¹ Situating the production and reception of *Meals Are Free to All* in the painful and short-lived history of the commune's canteen movement, we can see that the heroically utopian landscape depicted in this painting is indeed a dystopian space that had since become a shady part of the PRC's history.

As for *The Great Transformation of Mountains and Rivers*, the imagination of the human capacity to conquer the Yellow River via the Three Gate Gorge Dam remained a self-deceiving plan. To begin with, this painting was produced at the climax of the great famine that resulted

¹⁸⁸ Li Chunfeng, "Historical Observations," 115.

¹⁸⁹ Wang Xiao, "Renmin gongshe gonggong shitang xingshuai," 14-15.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 16-18; and Li Chunfeng, "Historical Observations," 129.

from the Great Leap Forward in the fall of 1960. Located on the border between Henan Province and Shanxi Province, the Three Gate Gorge Dam was the third location in Henan visited by the Jiangsu artists during their sketching tour. Before that, the artists had already visited Zhengzhou, the provincial capital of Henan, which was the province suffering the most catastrophic consequences from the nationwide great famine.¹⁹² Despite the idealized spatial order portrayed in Song's handscroll, the dam project had generated a great deal of debate and concern regarding its technical aspects among nearby provincial and city governments. One of the most controversial problems was the need to relocate the approximately 100,000 people to elsewhere since millions of *mu* of farmland would be inundated, not to mention the potential environmental problems of landslides being induced in the area.¹⁹³ Yet, a year after its operation, the Three Gate Gorge Dam had confronted many technical and environment problems as predicted by a few experts. This included the accumulation of sediment in the reservoir and river channel in the upstream, which posed threats to farmlands and the industrial city of Xi'an in the upper reaches of the Yellow River. Accordingly, the site had to be rebuilt to release the flood water and accumulated sediment in March 1962. As the water level of the reservoir dropped, the capacity for generating of electricity immediately became defunct, and the useless turbines were relocated at a high cost. The dam underwent a further series of rebuilds between 1965 and 1968.¹⁹⁴ Of course, one would argue that some of these problems might not have been known to the artists during the time of their visit. Yet, as their paintings embodied the official imagination in 1960, they likewise functioned as an agent of constructing national utopianism of the Seventeen Years.

¹⁹² See Huang Mingqian, "Bimo jiangshan," 10, 13 and 14.

¹⁹³ Shang, "A Lamentation for the Yellow River," 150-154.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 154-155.

Mode 3: Monumentalization of Land

Qian Songyan's *Ode to Yan'an* 延安頌 (1962, fig. 2.38) confronts viewers with the third mode of constructing heroic landscape. Yan'an is a city located in the middle of Shaanxi Province in northwest China. It was celebrated by the CCP as the cradle of Chinese socialist revolution due to its position in the history of the CCP. This city became the stronghold of the Chinese communists after their military retreat from the first Soviet base in Jiangxi Province through the Long March (1934-1935). During the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945) and the Chinese Civil War from the mid-1930s to 1949, Yan'an became the revolutionary base where the Communists strengthened their guerrilla warfare techniques and peasant-based land reform.¹⁹⁵ Politically, it was also the location where Mao Zedong firmly consolidated his leadership in the CCP through a series of anti-rightist campaigns. Due to its military and historical role, Yan'an was glorified as the sacred place of Chinese communist revolutions after 1949. In particular, the historical monument called the Baota Pagoda, erected on top of the Baota Hill at the center of Yan'an, was celebrated as a symbol of the revolutionary spirit of the CCP. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this particular site was reproduced on the front side of the two-yuan banknote designed in the early 1950s (fig. 2.1) as well as in other visual formats (fig. 2.39) for national celebrations.

The production of *Ode to Yan'an* took a winding path. As a painting master of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute, Qian Songyan visited Yan'an in the fall 1960 as part of the itinerary of a three-month sketching tour organized by the institute. During their visit, the artist delegation was hosted by the Xi'an branch of CAA and the local government; both parties introduced the artists to the revolutionary history of the city as well as provided reminders

¹⁹⁵ Mark Selden, "Yan'an Communism Reconsidered," *Modern China*, vol. 21, no. 1: 8.

of the need to visualize the “Yan’an Way” 延安作風.¹⁹⁶ While the Yan’an Way is considered by present-day scholars to be a comprehensive political concept,¹⁹⁷ it was interpreted by the CCP in the early 1960s as the lofty spirit of self-reliance and endurance for socialist revolutions.¹⁹⁸ Accordingly, the Jiangsu artists selected different locations around the city to visualize the Yan’an spirit in their paintings. Yu Tongfu’s 余彤甫 (1897-1973) *Yanhe River* 延河 portrayed the landscape along the sacred river named in the title. Wei Zhixi’s 魏紫熙 (1915-2002) *Yangjialin* 楊家嶺 (1960) and Fu Baoshi’s *Spring in Date Garden*棗園春色 (1960) depicted two different old residences of the CCP located on the outskirts of this sacred city. Fu Baoshi also took the Baota Pagoda as a painting subject (fig. 2.40). Qian Songyan was one of the few artists who committed himself to portray all of these locations. Interestingly, he dedicated himself to a continuous exploration of the manner of depicting the Baota Pagoda from 1960 through 1965 (fig. 2.38 & 2.41-2.43).

The topography of the Baota Pagoda offered Fu Baoshi and Qian Songyan a characteristic spatial setting to visualize the “Yan’an Way.” In reality, as shown in a photograph published in 1964 (fig. 2.39), the Baota Pagoda was erected on top of the southeastern bank of the Yanhe River in a basin surrounded by hills. The western side of the river featured a series of hillocks, whereas the northern side was the developed area, full of indigenous houses and connected to the other side of the riverbank by a modern bridge. There was also a series of house caves, a form of vernacular architecture used by the Chinese communists for residency during

¹⁹⁶ Huang Mingqian, “*Bimo jiangshan*,” 34, 40, 44-45, and 46.

¹⁹⁷ Mark Selden, *China in Revolution: The Yenan Way Revisited* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 10; and Pauline Keating, “The Yan’an Way of Co-Operativization,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 140 (Dec., 1994): 1025-1051.

¹⁹⁸ Huang Mingqian, “*Bimo jiangshan*,” 34.

wartime, carved out of the hillside. Fu Baoshi and Qian Songyan utilized this topographical setting to create two different yet comparable landscapes. In *Yan'an Pagoda* (c. 1960s, fig. 2.40), Fu Baoshi turns the pagoda into a tiny motif standing on top of a hill in a distinctive profile in the middle-background. In front of it is a series of bulky hillocks where house caves are carved on the side. This composition constructs a metaphorical meaning in the landscape by turning the communist symbols into a hidden yet potent power. This message is also revealed in Qian Songyan's *Yan'an* (1961, fig. 2.41), since the artists likewise relegated the pagoda, the hill, and the house caves to the middle-background of the painting. What is highlighted in the foreground is a layer of trees, a pavilion, and the side of a hill that collectively functions as a screen. Qian further imparts sublimity to the painting by emphasizing the effect of verticality via a referential use of vertically-shaped scenic elements both in the foreground and the middle-background.

A year later, Qian Songyan adopted a new approach to revisit the subject of Yan'an. Produced in 1962, *Ode to Yan'an* (fig. 2.38) was from the artist's personal memories and feelings from visiting the site of more than a year prior. The context of production is recorded in the long inscription by Qian himself at the top of the painting:

Formerly I visited Yan'an, where I looked up to and admired the commemorative revolutionary monuments. I thought of the arduous, bitter and unadorned life of the past. Moreover, I thought of the heroes who had struggled through their life in the hope of making the country strong. I could not help standing up with profound respect. I lingered around the site for a long time. Even until now, the scene and the feeling are still striking me strongly. Therefore, I made this painting in order to glorify it. I will preserve this painting for commemoration. Qian Songyan, inscribed in 1962.¹⁹⁹

This inscription takes the reader through a journey of emotional resonance with the revolutionary history symbolized by the monuments. The heartfelt sentiment revealed in the

¹⁹⁹ Original Chinese inscription: “延安頌。疇昔遊延安，仰瞻革命紀念文物，緬懷當年艱苦樸素，發憤圖強，英雄鬪爭事例，不禁肅然起敬，低回久之。此情此境，至今猶懸眉睫，爰而製圖，聊示歌頌。並留永念。一九六二年錢松岩。”

language of this long inscription contrasts sharply with the documentary tone of the short inscription on the 1961 version, in which the artist simply records, “Qian Songyan sketches Yan’an in February 1961.” In addition to emotional engagement, the painting also served a dual purpose since Qian entrusted his wish for personal longevity, revealed in the application of one of his personal seals which reads “Long live Songyan” (*Songyan changshou* 松岩長壽) in the lower left corner of the painting. This seal had been used by the artist since early the 1950s in paintings that bore an auspicious meaning. Apparently, Qian was in search for alternative ways to translate his unending emotional connection with this site in textual and visual forms.

Qian pursued this by reinforcing the Baota Pagoda and Hill as a site for glorification. While the 1961 version was simply given “Yan’an” as the painting title, the 1962 version was affixed with the word, “*song*” 頌 (ode), in the title. This approach of naming artwork had become increasingly popular since the late 1950s. A good example is Fu Baoshi’s painting series, *Ode to Yuhuatai* (fig. 3.3), which he produced from 1958 through 1960. Paintings taking this approach were expected to explore the affective power of the art. As argued in a contemporary article published in *Meishu* in 1962, these works must arouse an “emotional resonance” 情感共鳴 in the viewer. Moreover, these works should also evoke “the heroic spirit” 豪邁感 and “a sense of happiness” 幸福感 in the viewer, through which their confidence in the future can be strengthened. Otherwise, these images will merely serve as a literal representation of a site instead of fully exerting its affective power.²⁰⁰

Qian pursued this by monumentalizing the landmark of the Baota Pagoda and Hill into a structure for spiritual reverence in the 1962 version of *Ode to Yan’an*. We can gain an idea of

²⁰⁰ Ce Gong 車工 and Sun Jianren 孫鑒仁, “Tan ‘song’” 談‘頌’ (Discussing ‘ode’), *Meishu*, no. 3 (1962): 28.

how Qian achieves this by comparing it with the 1961 version. While the 1961 version shows an early interest of creating a sense of the sublime in the pagoda and hill by elongating their proportions, the 1962 version reinforces this sentiment by further distorting their proportions in comparison to reality. Unlike the 1961 version, which stages the pagoda and the hill in the background, the 1962 version pushes them further to the middle-ground so that they become the key subjects of the painting. Furthermore, instead of clearly delineating the form of the Yanhe River as a way to articulate the spatial relationship between the foreground and the middle-ground, the 1962 version obscures it by leaving the space in-between empty. In doing so, Qian creates a spatial illusion that the Pagoda Hill can be perceived as either standing far away or rising as a monumental structure in the landscape. Lastly, the 1962 version shatters the law of western perspectival recession that was used in the 1961 version. Instead, it reverses the scale between the images in the foreground and the Baota Pagoda and Hill in the middle-ground. As a result, the landscape manifests a new spatial order because the Baota Pagoda and Hill are now monumentalized as the dominant structure in this hierarchical landscape. They stand prominently as if there were a colossal stele in the middle-ground of the landscape.

The idea of constructing a monumental landscape like this was by no means a technical novelty of the Seventeen Years. Indeed, it has a strong precedent in theories and historical practices from the long history of Chinese landscape painting. In particular, the technique of building a hierarchical landscape echoes the Li-Guo school of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), the golden age of monumental landscape in Chinese art. This tradition of landscape emphasizes the construction of a hierarchical and well-ordered landscape by monumentalizing the scale of the central peak in comparison with the surrounding hills and ranges.²⁰¹ Apparently,

²⁰¹ Richard M. Barnhart, “The Five Dynasties (907-960) and the Song Period (960-1279),” in *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, 100 and 119.

this effect is partially pursued in *Ode to Yan'an* as the central mountain is monumentalized compared to the hill and shore in the foreground. Instead of using this technique to visualize the metaphor of the hierarchical relationship between an emperor and his ministers and associates,²⁰² Qian Songyan uses this landscape to construct the image of a hero overseeing the rest of the landscape. It appears that Qian has taken a detour before arriving at this composition. If we compare the 1962 version with another smaller version of *Ode to Yan'an* (c. 1960s, fig. 2.42), we can see that the notion of a hierarchical landscape is less pronounced. This is because the lower half of the painting is merely decorated by a cluster of blossoming trees and an array of travelers instead of being constructed as hilly structures subordinate to Baota Hill.

Apart from the mode of hierarchical landscape from Northern Song, the 1962 version of *Ode to Yan'an* also shows the translation of theories and practices from a broader historical period. While the other two paintings on Yan'an feature either a cluster of pine trees or plum blossom trees in the foreground (fig. 2.41-2.42), the 1962 version shows a combined use of these two kinds of vegetation in the foreground. In addition, Qian affixes to the top of this vegetation the motif of an empty pavilion. The empty pavilion had long been established as a metaphorical resting or contemplative place for the intended receiver or viewers within the landscape.²⁰³ An empty pavilion can be even more engaging as it invites both the artist and viewer to imagine his or her own physical presence inside the structure to behold the surrounding scenery. Accordingly, similarly to what Richard Barnhart has argued for the function of figures in landscape, this empty pavilion serves as the “eye” of the painting as it allows both painters and

²⁰² Ibid., 100; and Wen Fong, “Monumental Landscape Painting,” 144-145.

²⁰³ Most scholars believe that this practice was initiated by the landscape master Ni Zan 倪瓈 (1301-1374) in Yuan dynasty. See James Cahill, “The Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368),” in *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, 173-175.

viewers to imagine their presence inside the landscape.²⁰⁴ Qian's interest in using the motif of the building as the surrogate for the artist or viewer is also revealed in his earlier painting, *The Three Gate Gorge of the Yellow River* (1960, fig. 2.31), in which the artist uses the old King Yu Temple in the foreground as an eyewitness for the great transformation of the Three Gate Gorge resulted from the construction of the dam. In the 1962 version of *Ode to Yan'an*, the metaphysical experience of the painting is that viewers can imagine themselves resting underneath this refined pavilion and looking up to the Baota Pagoda constructed on the summit of the hill. They can also imagine themselves looking straight across the misty space to a series of house caves carved out of the bottom of Baotao Hill as another way of meditating upon the notion of the Yan'an Way.

Through the placement of the eye, *Ode to Yan'an* further engages with the canonical “Three Distances Theory” (*san yuan fa* 三遠法). This theory was summed up by the aforementioned imperial painting master Guo Xi of the Northern Song in an important essay on landscape painting called “The Lofty Power of Forests and Steams” (*Lingquan gaozhi* 林泉高致). This theory eloquently argues that there are three ways to build the distance of a mountain. These includes the “high distance” (*gao yuan* 高遠), the “deep distance” (*shen yuan* 深遠), and the “level distance” (*ping yuan* 平遠).²⁰⁵ First, the placement of an empty pavilion in the foreground activates the upward movement of the gaze of the viewer as a way to construct the “high distance” of the Baota Hill. Secondly, the spatial recession created by the Yan'an bridge

²⁰⁴ Richard M. Barnhart, “Figure in Landscape,” *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 42 (1989): 64.

²⁰⁵ This technique was discussed by *Meishu* writers in the 1950s. See Hui Kaotong 惠考同, “Mingci jieshi: ‘san yuan’” 名詞解釋: ‘三遠’ (Term explanations: ‘three distances’), *Meishu*, no. 4 (1956): 63; and Zhang Xiukai 張秀楷, “Yi bu zhuoyue de minzu gudian hua lun---dui ‘linquan gao zhi’ de yishu sixiang de pingjia” 一部卓越的民族古典畫論——對‘林泉高致’的藝術思想的評價 (An excellent theory of national classical painting: evaluation of the artistic ideas of ‘the lofty power of forests and steams’), *Meishu*, no. 9 (1956): 21.

and the factories at the bottom of the hill echoes the “deep distance” as it emphasizes the sense of depth in the painting. Third, the pavilion in the foreground also invites the viewer to imagine himself looking straight across to the house caves carved out of the side of the hill. This form of gazing constructs the “level distance” of the hill. By flexibly intermingling these techniques in his composition of this monumental landscape, Qian constructed a dynamic landscape in which views can maneuver through space to make an ode to the city.

Monumentality in landscape was variably pursued by artists in the second half of the Seventeen Years. Among them, Qian Songyan was one of the few who, due to his comparatively prestigious social background, could competently translate traditional landscape principles within the discourse of the new landscape of the Seventeen Years. Born into a scholarly family in Yixing in Jiangsu Province in 1898, Qian had received a solid training in traditional Chinese art in his youth. His paintings from the 1950s show a strong interest in reinventing the landscape techniques and principles of the past by constructing monumental landscapes that use the vernacular of traditional Chinese landscape. Qian’s reinvention of his own art in the 1950s has also been noted by scholars such as Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen.²⁰⁶ In a series of paintings titled *Red Crag* 紅岩 (fig. 2.44), Qian repeatedly experimented with the use of monumentalizing the size and scale of the red crag in the painting. This technique was also reinvented in the series of paintings produced under the title of *The Fields of Changshu* 常熟田 (1963), in which Qian monumentalizes the scale of the green fields into the heroic subject of the painting. It was also used by other artists, including by Li Keran in his *Thousand Mountains Bated in Red* 萬山紅遍、層林盡染 (1963, fig. 2.45), in a different way. Certainly, the official reinvigoration of traditional Chinese landscape art since the second half of the 1950s contributed to the revival of

²⁰⁶ Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 170.

this technique.²⁰⁷ A strong political interest in building the discourse of revolutionary landscape around the same time turns this into one of the most sought-after techniques collectively used by artists in the second half of the Seventeen Years.

The technique of monumentalizing mountains proved to be meaningful for propaganda purposes. In particular, this composition of the 1962 version of *Ode to Yan'an* was adopted by Qian in a copy which was reproduced in the format of poster for distribution (fig. 2.43). Visually, this poster version resembles the 1962 version closely except for the fact that it articulates a less powerful sense of verticality because the proportion of this version is less elongated compared to the 1962 version. Textually, Qian altered the way of inscribing on the painting in three main ways. First, while the 1962 version bears a long inscription recording the artist's memory and feelings about the site in great detail, the poster's version bears a much shorter text that includes only the painting title, the artist's name, and the location of production. Secondly, while the former is inscribed in the traditional narrative order from right to left, the latter is uniquely inscribed in a reversed order from left to right. Third, the poster version is highly politicized because the white-character seal "Long live Songyan" (*Songyan changshou* 松岩長壽) in the lower left corner is replaced by another white-character seal "Serve the People" (*wei renmin fuwu* 為人民服務), which had become a ubiquitous slogan during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Although this poster version is not dated, I believe that it was specifically produced for the consumption of overseas audiences in the 1960s and 1970s. First, as indicated on the poster, it was published by the Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Publisher 上海書畫社 and distributed

²⁰⁷ See the publication of relevant articles and pictures in *Meishu*, no. 5 1954: 28 and 46; *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954): 48-49; and *Meishu*, no. 9 (1955): 26, 31, and 32.

by the China Publications Center 中國國際書店. Established in the early 1960s, the China Publications Center was responsible for the overseas distribution of printed materials published in China. It had also collaborated with another publisher to reproduce a range of paintings of political subjects in poster format. Secondly, the reverse of the inscription practice indicated above shows a concern for making the text legible to a non-culturally-fluent audience. By shortening the inscription, Qian downplayed the personal dimension of the painting by giving agency to the image. The inscription from left to right followed the direction of reading in modern publishing industry of the PRC. Apparently, this painting was not produced for personal consumption. Rather, it was repackaged for international consumption in the 1960s and the 1970s.²⁰⁸ As this painting reached different parts of the world in poster form, it confronted audience overseas with a heroic landscape that perpetuated the revolutionary spirit of the CCP.

Political Significance: Evoking “The Spirit of the Times”

These three modes of landscape constitute some of the finest examples of translating the political rhetoric of heroism into a visual form in the second half of the Seventeen Years. As is apparent, these modes are different in their visual-spatial construction due to their varying subject matters and concerns: Guan Shanyue engaged with the traditional format of Chinese handscrolls to create a well-planned landscape that narrated the heroic transformation of nature of the present. Jiangsu artists collectively employed a graphic approach of organizing space to visualize their imagining of the idealized society as promised by the Chinese communist party

²⁰⁸ Established after the founding of the PRC, the China Publications Center was active in presenting reproductions of artwork and other publications at international book fairs in the 1960s. See “Qiuji laibixi bolanhui bimu, woguo zhanchu di meishu zuopin fuzhipin shoudao huanyi” 秋季來比錫博覽會閉幕, 我國展出的美術作品複製品受到歡迎 (The autumn show at Leipzig came to an end. China's reproduced artworks were well-received), *People's Daily*, September 14, 1961, 5.

through their construction. Qian Songyan reinvented the traditional approach of constructing a monumental landscape painting by which he glorified the revolutionary history of the CCP. Despite their heterogeneous forms and functions, these three modes uniformly functioned as a political apparatus through visualizing the imagined heroic spirit of the past, present and future of the Chinese socialist state. They arose as a constellation of heroic landscapes, evoking the mythical notion of the heroic spirit of the Seventeen Years.

Certainly, after waves of intellectual movements in the Anglophone academic word, the notion of the “spirit of the times” may sound reductive, if not problematic, to scholars who question the validity of having certain agents or forces governing the characteristics of a given period. However, during the Seventeen Years, evidently, this notion was popularized by the Chinese Communist Party as a rhetoric to mobilize artists to search for new formal languages that could characterize the temporality of the era from the others through the captivating notion of the heroic spirit. The state bureaucrats often promoted the importance of turning the concept of the “heroic era” or “the spirit of the times” into a style in *Meishu*.²⁰⁹ As these concepts were often discussed, they encouraged a generation of artists to use landscape representation to visualize the heroic spirit of the times as a distinctive characteristic of their epoch.

²⁰⁹ See “Cujin shehui zhuyi meishu shiye de fanrong” 促進社會主義美術事業大繁榮 (Promoting the prosperity of the art enterprise of the socialism), *Meishu*, no. 3 (1958): 3.

Chapter 3 Lyrical Landscape: Poetizing Places and Extolling the Motherland's Beauty

While landscape representation can offer viewers an aggrandized spatial experience, it also shapes (and reshapes) their reception of a place through its lyrical dimensions. The issue of the *lyrical*, *lyric*, and *lyricism* in landscape in socialist China has attracted preliminary scholarly attention over the past three decades. In her study of Chinese painting created in China from 1960 to 1965, Ellen Johnston Laing points out that many works on the themes of landscape and bird-and-flower compositions evoke lyrical feelings through the depiction of nature “in subdued images and colors.” Such techniques, which often obscured the clarity of the depicted images, constitute poetic effect.²¹⁰ In his study of Chinese woodcut prints from 1949 through 1966, Zhou Yuejin identifies a lyrical turn in the portrayal of both landscape and figure.²¹¹ Certainly, the emergence of the lyrical within landscape representations across different visual media illustrates certain mechanisms at work, making such modes of depiction one of the major artistic rhetorical devices during the Seventeen Years period. The question of how the lyrical operated within the historical context of the Seventeen Years, and how it engaged with viewing experiences of the audience has not been critically explored.

This chapter examines the ways in which the lyrical was brought to serve as a mode of landscape representation across different visual media during the Seventeen Years. First, it investigates how lyricism was politicized within the discursive environment of the Seventeen Years and how Chinese artists within the state cultural framework strategically negotiated their

²¹⁰ Laing, *The Winking Owl*, 43-47.

²¹¹ Zhou Yuejin, *Xin Zhongguo meishu shi, 1949-2000* 新中國美術史 (1949-2000) (An art history of New China, 1949-2000) (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2002), 93-99.

position from within. It also examines three critical modes of political lyricism commonly used at the time to reshape the appealing qualities of various locations to enhance nation-building. These lyrical modes, which either co-existed or overlaped with one another include: (1) softening a hard subject, (2) fantasizing the mundane, and (3) emotionalizing the transient. By investigating how lyricism served to recharacterize the portrayal of specific places, this chapter argues that the lyrical in landscape poetized viewers' reception of specific places, thereby extolling the beauty of the motherland during the Seventeen Years.

Lyricism as a Research Question

The lyrical has a long history in the aesthetics of Chinese art. For decades, the English term “lyrical”—together with “lyric” and “lyricism”—has been used by historians of Chinese art to describe the ink paintings of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). Most distinctively, Valérie Malenfer Ortiz cogently explains that Southern-Song landscape painting speaks to its viewers with a “lyrical” quality because its spatial and temporal structure resembles that of poetry. With this structure, the viewer’s mind is carried beyond the painted images into the realm of dreams.²¹² In his analysis of landscape-and-figure paintings created in the academy style of Southern Song, James Cahill uses the term “lyric” to describe works that, for example, depict scenes of a scholar or a retired official setting off a journey or contemplating a view in a secluded setting. By beholding this scene or imagining oneself through the perspective of the painted scholars, the viewers can acquire from the depicted “subtle and ephemeral effects of

²¹² Valérie Malenfer Ortiz, “The Poetic Structure of a Twelfth-Century Chinese Pictorial Dream Journey,” *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 76, no. 2 (June, 1994): 257.

space, atmosphere, light, and surface” a soul-nourishing experience.²¹³ Both Ortiz’ and Cahill’s research suggests that the mode of the lyric/lyrical, within the context of the Southern Song, demands the manipulation of the spatial-temporal dimension of the painting in order to facilitate a soul-nourishing, sensually rich experience. Through this artistically manipulated spatial-temporal work, the viewer can experience a prolonged, sensual engagement with the work, absorbing herself within an introspective act of imagination.

Historically, the notion of the lyrical is rooted in the scholarly discourse of poetic evocation in painting, which arose in the second half of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) in the late eleventh century.²¹⁴ Led by the eminent scholar-official Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), this discourse was joined by a coterie of other like-minded scholar-officials—all of whom were poets, painters, and calligraphers—who wrote about their views on the newly-established equivalency between painting and poetry. According to Susan Bush, this discursive field emerged as a socio-cultural reaction to the artificial conventions that had prevailed in the Song court.²¹⁵ One notion commonly shared by scholarly official-artists in this group was that poems were considered to be “paintings with sound,” whereas paintings were seen as “soundless poems.”²¹⁶ In this view, the union of painting and poetry was a potent vehicle for expression because painting that resembled poetry could “fuse mood and scene,” thereby merging the subjective and objective worlds together in the artist’s vision.²¹⁷ In some cases, scholar-artists of

²¹³ James Cahill, *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 58 and 64.

²¹⁴ Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch’i-ch’ang (1555-1636)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 4.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

the time such as Li Gonglin 李公麟 (c. 1041-1106) proclaimed that making paintings was, according to his experience, not unlike composing poems, as it allowed him to “recite his feelings and nature.”²¹⁸ This quick historical sketch illustrates the inseparable links between lyricism and poetry that are traceable to a thousand years prior to their application in the modern era. Therefore, all concepts related to poetry, the poetic, and the poem—such as temporal and spatial structure, sensual experience—are indeed vital to the operation and critical understanding of the mode of lyricism, lyrical, and lyric.

The lyrical has also seized the attention of literary scholars who consider it to be an epistemological question along with the aesthetic. In his research on the expression of the lyrical in modern Chinese culture, literary scholar David Der-wei Wang points out that the lyrical in Chinese, “*shuqing*” 抒情, indeed has a long literary tradition. Some of its earliest applications can be traced back to ancient texts such as *Chu-ci* 楚辭 (hereafter, *Songs of the South*), an anthology of Chinese poetry attributed to Qu Yuan 屈原 (340-278 B.C.). After the May Fourth Movement in China in 1919, *shuqing* gained a broader connotation as it was considered by Chinese intellectuals to be a concept equal to the Western notion of “lyricism” within the vein of romanticism and revolutionism.²¹⁹ In modern China, lyrical/*shuqing* was often associated with a variety of concepts, discourses, or values in which one’s subjectivity was articulated through poetic means, received as a broad spectrum of articulations in which both “formal inputs and affective outcomes” constitute the lyrical experience.²²⁰ As shown by Wang, with its capacity to

²¹⁸ Ibid., 27.

²¹⁹ David Der-wei Wang, *The Lyrical in Epic Time: Modern Chinese Intellectuals and Artists Through the 1949 Crisis* (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 2015), 1-2 and the relevant footnote on page 376.

²²⁰ Ibid., 1; see page 376, footnote 5 of the book for more in-depth discussion on the connotations of the words “lyric” in English and “*shuqing*” in Chinese.

engage with the sensory or imagistic faculties of the audience, lyricism had been pursued by modern writers, painters, calligraphers, and filmmakers as a means to assist the construction within their works of a complex relationship between the self and the society. While Wang's analytical framework of lyricism primarily ends by the year of 1949, this chapter focuses specifically on how lyricism continued beyond this watershed moment of history as it was reinvented by the state and artists in the representation of Chinese socialist landscape.

Chinese Socialist Reinvention of Lyricism

Lyricism, as a mode of articulation, had its own vicissitudes during the Seventeen Years period. The first three to four years was unquestionably a downturn within the new cultural institutional framework constructed by the state. As the Chinese Communist state sought to radically popularize art for the consumption of the masses, they also radically disapproved of Chinese painting due to its prolonged historical association with artists of elite socio-cultural status in the pre-Communist era. Such disapproval implied a rejection of most of the rhetorical modes—including lyricism—associated with the traditional medium. Instead, the art officials advocated more popularized artistic medium, such as the reinvented new year's pictures (fig. 2.3), by means of which messages could be conveyed to the masses in a more descriptive, straightforward and didactic manner.²²¹

Early Proposal

Although it was largely suppressed for a few years after 1949, lyricism resurrected itself to become a widely-adopted mode of articulation across different visual media starting 1954.

²²¹ Andrews, *The Art of Modern China*, 36-39.

One impetus leading to this revival came from an official interest in re-installing the emotional power of art. In an article published in the first issue of the Party's art journal *Meishu* in 1954, the aforementioned Party's art theorist Cai Ruohong 蔡若虹 (1910-2002), who had been newly promoted to become the Vice-Chairman of CAA, asserted the urgency to shift the common understanding of the role of art away from “moral indoctrination” to “mobilize the feelings” of the viewers. Cai explained that when an artwork was created or imbued with profound feelings or emotions, it could powerfully shape the spirit and mind of the viewers as the “engineers of the human soul” 人類靈魂工程師. In his opinion, these sentiments were by no means aligned with the decadent emotions depicted in the art and literature of the bourgeoisie. Instead, it epitomized the spirit of the proletariat under the aegis of socialism.²²²

According to Wang Qi's 王琦 (1918-2016) memoir, Cai's assertion that art mobilized its viewers' feelings was proposed at the Socialist Realism Symposium held by CAA in fall 1953, in Beijing. This colloquium was attended by high-ranking art officials and experts who held different understandings of the nature and function of socialist realism.²²³ Although more extensive research is needed in order to fully unveil the power dynamics between these officials and attendees, the editorial decision to publish this article in the first issue of *Meishu* signified official interest in pursuing this key direction of art development among the art bureaucrats of the Chinese Communist Party. This article communicated to its readers a form of published cultural policy, announcing the state's interest in exploring the power of art in mobilizing viewers in the socialist era.

²²² See Cai Ruohong, “Kaipi meishu chuangzuo de guangkuo daolu,” 9-10.

²²³ Wang Qi 王琦, *Yi hai feng yun: Wang Qi huiyi lu* 藝海風雲 : 王琦回憶錄 (Storms in the art scene: Wang Qi's memoir) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998), 175-176.

Nurturing a political interest to inspire feelings in viewers of art in order to bind them emotionally to the state was a strong Soviet influence. For one thing, the notion of the “engineers of the human soul” was imported from the Soviet art and literary theorists. In September, 1953, the CCP officially proclaimed the Soviet socialist realism as the authorized model of artistic creation within the institutional environment of the PRC.²²⁴ In the spirit of learning from its Soviet “big brother,” CAA extended its promotion to include the late-nineteenth-century Russian neo-realist and nationalist art group called the *Perevizhniki* (i.e. the Wanderers or the Itinerants in English; *Xunhui zhanlan hua pai* 巡迴展覽畫派 in Chinese), which was typified by leading painters such as Ivan Kramskoy, Ilya Repin, Vassily Surikov, and Valentin Serov.²²⁵ This realist group had dominated the Russian art scene for almost thirty years before it became the model for Russian socialist realism in the 1930s. Emphasizing the value of social and humanitarian ideals, these artists depicted pathetic or inspiring subjects from the life of Russian middle class or peasant in an easily understood realist manner.²²⁶ Visually, these artists often framed their subjects in a specific time and space, thereby inviting the viewers to enter into the scene and imagine the progression of certain narratives or dramas.²²⁷ Russian experts called this genre of

²²⁴ See Zhou Yang’s 周揚 speech delivered on September 29, 1953. Zhou Yang, “Wei chuangzao gengduo de youxiu de wenxue yishu zuopin er fendou—yijiuwusan nian jiu yue ershisi ri zai zhongguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe dierci daibiao dahui shang de baogao” 為創造更多的優秀的文學藝術作品而奮鬥—1953年9月24日在中國文學藝術工作者第二次代表大會上的報告 (Struggle to create even more excellent works of literature and art—report on September 24, 1953, at the Second National Congress of Literary and Arts Workers), *Wenyi bao*, no. 96 (1953, no. 19): 12.

²²⁵ Michael Sullivan was also aware of this phenomenon in his research. See Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China*, 135. Also, see Liu Xun and Liu Yalan, “Eluosi weida de fengjing huajia Shishijin,” 47-48.

²²⁶ See Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art: The State and Society: the Perevizhniki and Their Tradition* (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989).

²²⁷ Zhu Sha 朱沙, “Sulian meishu dui Zhongguo youhua de yingxiang (1949-1965)” 蘇聯美術對中國油畫的影響 (1949-1965) (The influence of Soviet art on Chinese oil painting) (Ph.D. diss., Southeast University, 2008), 118-121.

painting “тематическая картина” (thematic or narrative painting), whereas Chinese writers of the mid-1950s translated it as “*qingjie xing huihua*” 情節性繪畫.²²⁸ Informed by this mode of visual construction, Chinese artists began to construct their works in a way that demonstrated an expansive spatial and temporal structure, which was reflected in the artworks published in *Meishu*. This wholesale borrowing from the Soviet artistic tradition in the early to mid-1950s would prepare Chinese artists to become more receptive to literary meanings in art.

The official promotion of the Soviet doctrine of mobilization of the feelings and the Russian tradition of thematic painting played a critical role in the Seventeen Years, but Chinese art writers also probed into their own traditions as a way to contextualize the imported Soviet art practices within the indigenous Chinese context. This gesture was also a cultural reaction to the recent official promotion of China’s national heritage in 1953.²²⁹ For instance, art educator Mo Pu 莫樸 (1915-1996) published an article on traditional Chinese painting in *Meishu* in July, 1954. In this article, Mo emphasized how traditional Chinese painting was characterized by an urge to capture the “inner spirit” of the depicted subject instead of merely delineating its external form.²³⁰ He explained that even a landscape painting as simple as those depicting the conventional elements of a bridge, a stream, and a house, could precipitate an imagining of the serenity and restful sentiments of the region of Jiangnan. For painting with complex temporal and spatial structures such as Zhou Chen’s 周臣 (ca. 1455-after 1536) *The North Sea* 北溟圖, choreographing the scene of a villa standing between a cliff, a rapid stream, and a roaring sea

²²⁸ Zhu Sha, “Sulian meishu dui Zhongguo youhua de yingxiang (1949-1965),” 118-121. Also, see Bo li shu ke 波里舒克, “Suwei’ai qingjie xing huihua li de chongtu wenti” 蘇維埃情節性繪畫裡的衝衝突問題 (The question of conflict in the Soviet plotted painting), *Meishu*, no. 1 (1955): 49-52.

²²⁹ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 110-123.

²³⁰ Mo Pu 莫樸, “Tan xuexi Zhongguo huihua chuangan de wenti” 論學習中國繪畫傳統的問題 (On problems related to learning traditional Chinese painting), *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954): 12.

could powerfully arouse a majestic musical experience in the minds of its viewers. Mo Pu ascribed these effects and affects not simply to the artist's imagination and skill, but to the artistic interest to imbue in these works a feeling or emotion that could carry the viewers' mind to a supreme mental or spiritual "realm" (*jingjie* 境界).²³¹ Mo's article was a revelation of a widespread intellectual struggle among Chinese cultural workers of that time, who sought to justify their adoption of foreign ideas within their own cultural heritage, or to take advantage of certain political trends reasserting their own artistic interest. Apparently, as Perry Link shows in his research on the literary politics of socialist China, the cultural system—be it literary or visual—of the PRC was never as monolithic as either its proponents or its opponents might have imagined. Instead, it contained many gaps through which cultural officials or producers could carefully maneuver in order to craft a space for their own existence.²³²

In this politically-tinged environment, words and terms played an important role in facilitating art leaders' and agents' description of the emotional resonance that they could experience in art. The words "*qing*" 情 (feeling, emotion, sentiment, affection), "*shi*" 詩 (poem, poetry), and "*yi*" 意 (idea, intention, conception), all address the introspective dimensions of a viewing experience and constitute the three main lexica of this language. These three words have long been used by Chinese writers or art theorists in their writings to describe the conditions in which they found emotional resonance from a lyrical work of art. During the Seventeen Years period, these three words became even more frequently applied. They were often used with other words to form a compound term that could convey an extended meaning. For instance, the word

²³¹ Mo Pu, "Tan xuexi Zhongguo huihua chuangtong de wenti," 12.

²³² Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

“*qing*” often fused with the word “*jing*” 景 (scene) to form the term “*qingjing*” 情景 (feeling and scenery). “*Qing*” also combined with the word “*diao*” 調 (tone) to produce the term “*qingdiao*” 情調 (sentimental tune). Furthermore, “*qing*” could integrate with the words “*shi*” and “*yi*” to form the compound term “*shi-qing-hua-yi*” 詩情畫意 (poetic sentiment and affective image). This linguistic mechanism was highly versatile as it also extended its application to the other two words, “*shi*” and “*yi*. For example, “*shi*” could fuse with the word “*yi*” to form the term “*shiyi*” 詩意 (poetic conception). “*Yi*” could combine with the word “*jing*” 境 (realm) to produce the term “*yijing*” 意境 (spiritual realm). The versatility of these words in the discursive environment of the Seventeen Years shows the value of emotion and poetic thinking in art. An employment of these terms in the writing would automatically charge the text with a highly emotional tone.

Intensification

The year 1958 saw a radicalization in the use of senses and emotions as at the time, CCP leaders turned to promoting a sublime form of sentiment in literary and artistic creation. A catalyst for this redirection came from the doctrine of “combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism” 革命現實主義與革命浪漫主義相結合, allegedly introduced by Chairman Mao in spring 1958, and later promoted by two high-ranking Chinese Communist cultural leaders, Zhou Yang and Guo Moruo, in spring and summer 1958.²³³ As remarked by D.W. Fokkema, this slogan was introduced at a time when the CCP was in search of a new

²³³ Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Guo Moruo tongzhi da *Wenyi bao wen*” 郭沫若同志答《文藝報》問 (Guo Moruo answering a question posed by *Wenyi bao*), *Wenyi bao*, no. 7 (1958): 2; Zhou Yang 周揚, “Xin Minge kaituole shige de xin daolu” 新民歌開拓了詩歌的新道路 (New folk songs open up new paths for poetry), *Hongqi* 紅旗 (Red flag), no. 1 (1958): 33; and Guo Moruo 郭沫若, “Langman zhuyi he xianshi zhuyi” 浪漫主義和現實主義 (Romanticism and realism), *Hongqi*, no. 3 (1958): 1.

model to develop a more national form of artistic creation, first in the field of literature, but which later spread to other fields of cultural production.²³⁴ Although Mao himself had offered negligible clarification to the meanings of this slogan, it was widely interpreted by Zhou Yang and Guo Moruo that its first half, “revolutionary realism,” was unquestionably based upon the doctrine of socialist realism. The second half, “revolutionary romanticism,” was appended in order to encourage cultural workers to be bold and imaginative at the moment of making art so that their work could speak a “romantically sentimental tune” in addition to capturing the inner spirit of the depicted subject.²³⁵ Some poet-critics clarified that while the word “romanticism” might echo romanticist practice in the Republican era, it was undoubtedly a revolutionary concept as it conveyed a forward-looking attitude aligning with the spirit of the proletariat.²³⁶

This slogan had a strong impact on the cultural environment of the PRC in the following years. First, introduced by Mao in the context of developing the new national poetry, this slogan encouraged Chinese cultural workers to delve into their own literary heritage to explore the technique of creating indigenous heroic and romanticist forms. For contemporary work, the CCP endorsed Mao’s latest poem, “To Li Shuyi—set to the tune of ‘*Dielianhua*’ (Butterflies courting flowers)” 蝶戀花·答李淑一 (1957), as a paragon of the new national cultural slogan due to its capacity to articulate a powerful revolutionary sentiment and a lofty spiritual realm.²³⁷

²³⁴ D.W. Fokkema, *Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet Influence, 1956-1960* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), 196-202.

²³⁵ Laing, *The Winking Owl*, 30.

²³⁶ See He Jingzhi 賀敬之, “Mantan shi de geming langman zhuyi” 漫談詩的革命浪漫主義 (Talk on revolutionary realism in poetry), *Wenyi bao*, no. 9 (1958): 2; and other relevant articles in the issue.

²³⁷ See Guo Moruo 郭沫若, “Guo Moruo tongzhi da wenyi bao wen” 郭沫若同志答文藝報問 (Comrade Guo Moruo responding to Literary Criticism), and Xie Sijie 謝思潔, “Du Mao zhuxi xin ci *Die-lian-hua* de yidian tihui” 讀毛主席新詞蝶戀花的一點體會 (An understanding of reading Chairman Mao’s new poem “Butterflies Courting Flowers”), both published in *Wenyi bao*, no. 7 (1958), page 2 and 3 respectively.

Additionally, the Chinese socialist state also promoted historically canonized poets, such as Qu Yuan 屈原, Li Bai 李白, and Dufu 杜甫, due to the heroically romantic spirits conveyed in their poems for contemporary cultural workers to emulate.²³⁸ Highly admiring the combative spirit in Qu Yuan's poem, Mao even ordered his secretary to compile a bibliography of research studies, that later he personally approved, on Qu Yuan's *Songs of the South* (as mentioned earlier, *Songs of the South* was one of the earliest classical texts exploiting the mode of the lyrical). This bibliography was circulated among his statesmen during the seminal Lushan Conference, held at Mount Lu, Jiangxi Province, in summer 1959.²³⁹ Since poetry was promoted by the Chinese Communist Party as a national form of art in the second half of the 1950s, it encouraged artists to adopt poetic thinking as a critical way to reconceptualize their creation in visual art.

Second, this slogan also created the cultural environment in which artists and writers were encouraged to be more imaginative in their artistic production. Among various qualities, many official literary and art critics, including the *Meishu*'s editor Ge Lu, indicated that "imagination," "fantasy," and "exaggeration" were some of the key approaches artists and writers could employ to construct revolutionary romanticist effects in their works.²⁴⁰ Nevertheless, those authors often stressed that such imagination and fantasy must have a realist

²³⁸ Wang, *The Lyrical in Epic Time*, 372, footnote 11.

²³⁹ See Chen Jin 陳晉, *Mao Zedong zhi hun* 毛澤東之魂 (The heart and soul of Mao Zedong) (Hong Kong: Mingliu chubanshe, 1997), 484-485; also see Qian Liqun 錢理群, *Mao Zedong shidai he hou Mao Zedong shidai* 毛澤東時代和後毛澤東時代 (The Mao era and post-Mao era) (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 2012), vol. 1, 183-184.

²⁴⁰ See Ge Lu 葛路, "Wo dui geming xianshi zhuyi he geming langman zhuyi jiehe de lijie" 我對革命現實主義和革命浪漫主義結合的理解 (My understanding of the combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism), *Meishu*, no. 2 (1959): 9-11; and "Geming xianshi zhuyi he geming langman zhuyi xiang jiehe" 革命現實主義和革命浪漫主義相結合 (Combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism), *People's Daily*, January 21, 1959, 7.

foundation. In other words, cultural workers must utilize romanticism based on realism in order to construct a powerful sense of idealism and revolutionary spirits in their artworks.

The Artists' Reinterpretations

With the heightened political interest in romantic, realist depictions, many artists joined in exploring the role of feelings in art creation. In particular, the year of 1959 and the early 1960s saw numerous Chinese ink painters publishing their writings in major print media where they defined their understandings of the aforesaid term, “*yijing*” (spiritual realm). For instance, in an article titled “The *Yijing* of Landscape Painting,” published in *People's Daily* in early 1959, the Beijing-based Chinese ink painter Li Keran 李可染 (1907-1989) asserts that *yijing* is the soul of landscape painting. According to Li, *yijing* describes the spiritual realm when an artist's own feeling (*qing* 情) is skillfully unified with the depicted scene (*jing* 景).²⁴¹ In order to foster a powerful, sincere, and unadorned feeling for a landscape representation, he asserts that an artist must devote a long time to observe and examine the portrayed subject. This is because, as he points out, each location and view have its own personality, like humans. As soon as an artist has identified the character of and developed a feeling for the landscape he is going to paint, he must carefully decide what artistic devices to use in order to visualize them on paper.²⁴² Li Keran believes that the unification of feeling and scene—the precondition for creating *yijing*—is shared by painters and poets who seek to construct a superior landscape in their visual or literary works

²⁴¹ Li Keran 李可染, “Shanshui hua de yijing” 山水畫的意境 (The spiritual realm of landscape painting), *People's Daily*, June 2, 1959, 7. This article was excerpted from an article titled “Mantan shanshuihua” 漫談山水畫 (Talk on landscape painting), *Meishu*, no. 5 (1959): 15-17.

²⁴² Ibid., 7.

in both historical and contemporary times. With a skillful construction of *yijing*, an artist is able to create a particular character for the landscape and can use it to emotionally move his viewers.²⁴³

Apart from articulating his interpretation of *yijing*, Li Keran actualized his theory through the practice of sketching and making landscape painting. For one thing, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Li Keran was a leading painter who conducted multiple sketching trips to southeast and central China in 1954, 1956 and 1957 in order to explore ways of reinventing the subject and form of Chinese ink painting for New China. Many of his landscape paintings created between 1954 and the early 1960s show his strategies using the form and medium of painting to construct particular feelings or a spiritual realm for the selected sites. For instance, in *A River City in Morning Mist* 江城朝霧 (1956, fig. 3.1), Li portrays the scene of a canal town located in the Wan County in Sichuan Province from a bird's eye view. The canal's water on the left is unpainted. However, the artist applies patches of ink to depict the reflection of the nearby structures and vegetation, creating an optical effect of a high intensity of illumination casting off the water's surface from an unspecific light source in the back. Contrasting with the emptiness of the canal on the left, the right-hand side of the painting displays a variety of brushwork. Each portrays a wide range of images: houses, figures, and possibly vegetation. The ink washes applied on the far right, the top, and in other sporadic areas of the painting create a misty effect, as alluded to in the painting's title, "a river city in a morning mist." The concept of the "river city" becomes the personality of the Wan County in the artist's vision. It has also become the spiritual realm, the *yijing* of this spectacular landscape painting of a canal town in Sichuan Province.

²⁴³ Ibid., 7.

Li's exploration of characteristic forms and back-lit effects became more pronounced in his later work, *The Hometown of Lu Xun, Shaoxing* 魯迅的故鄉紹興城 (c. 1962, fig. 3.2). This painting was based on a painting that he made earlier during his 1956 visit to the city of Shaoxing, located in Zhejiang Province. In this later version made in the early 1960s, Li exaggerates the spatial effect of the scene by reorienting both the trail and the canal perpendicular to the picture plan from the foreground to the background. He reinforces the back-lit effect that he had been experimenting with in his earlier work by darkening the ink for the houses' rooftops and their environs. This creates the dramatic contrast of the back tile against the white wall, the white road, and the canal. This image, as he indicates in the inscription written on the left, presents his conception of "the epitome of the watertown of Jiangnan" 江南水鄉典型. It is the artist's spiritual realm, *yijing*; his fusion of feeling for the scene. This *yijing* not only captured the sentimental characters of his vision of Jiangnan, but also touched the hearts of the viewers.

Apart from Li Keran, the Nanjing-based painter and regional art leader Fu Baoshi also developed a theoretical language to explain his own understanding of *yijing*. In his art lectures given in the early 1960s, Fu defined *yijing* as a masterful "fusion of feeling and scene" (*qingjing jiaorong* 情景交融).²⁴⁴ To create a spectacular *yijing*, an artist must develop a unique artistic concept—"yi"—before applying his brush (*yi zai bi xian* 意在筆先).²⁴⁵ *Yi* can be fostered through four essential steps. Step 1, "to roam" (*you* 遊): the artist has to fully travel around a site

²⁴⁴ These ideas were delivered by Fu in a few lectures delivered in the early 1960s. They were later transcribed and published by his student-assistant Wu Linsheng 伍霖生 as a compilation of Fu Baoshi's art theories, under the title of "Tan shanshuihua xiesheng" 談山水畫寫生 (About landscape sketching). See *Fu Baoshi hualun* 傅抱石畫論 (Fu Baoshi's painting theory), ed. Wu Linsheng 伍霖生 (Taipei: yishujia chubanshe, 1991), 51.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 53.

in order to gain a comprehensive and deep understanding of its physical, topographical, and climatic conditions. In step 2, “to apprehend” (*wu* 悟), he should vigorously translate his understanding of the objective reality of the site into his own subjective feeling. In step 3, “to record” (*ji* 記), he must record the essence of his subjective perception of the location both on paper and in his heart and mind. Lastly, in step 4, “to sketch” (*xie* 寫), he should use an external means—the brush and ink—to visualize the internal concept of *yi* so that a beautiful *yijing* can be constructed in painting.²⁴⁶ Fu’s insistence on the value of *yi* demonstrated his keen interest in this concept which he had already explored in the 1940s. In his lecture delivered in Nanjing on August 13, 1947, Fu Baoshi, then an art professor, emphasized the significance of *yi* through the traditional concept of “*xieyi*” 寫意 (spontaneous style)—in which an artist spontaneously paints with his brush based on his feeling and mood without any advanced planning or preoccupied thought.²⁴⁷ In the socialist era when sketching was appropriated by the state to reform the artist’s mind and the medium of Chinese painting, Fu endeavored to reinvent *yi*, a quintessential concept in Chinese art tradition, within the parameters of the new institutional practice of sketching landscapes.

Political Lyricism in Poeticizing Places

Certainly, *yijing* can be used in a way to evoke a poetic feeling for the depicted scene. When this aesthetic concept was used to depict locations related to the political or sociocultural

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 51-59.

²⁴⁷ This lecture was published as an article titled “Zhongguo huihua zhi jingshen” 中國繪畫之精神 (The spirit of Chinese painting), *Jing Hu zhoushan* 京滬周刊 (Beijing-Shanghai biweekly), *juan* 1, no. 38, September 28, 1947. It was reprinted in *Fu Baoshi meishu wenji* 傅抱石美術文集 (Anthology of Fu Baoshi’s art writings), ed. Ye Zonghao 葉宗鎬 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), 510.

history of the PRC, it contributed to reshaping the public reception of those sites by charging them with a poetic sentiment. Fu Baoshi's ink painting, Chao Mei's woodcut print, and musical film produced by the Changchun Film Studio epitomized three modes of poetizing places that art agents of the late 1950s and the early 1960s frequently employed.

Mode 1: Softening a Hard Subject

Created in 1958, Fu Baoshi's painting *Ode to Yuhuatai (Terrace of Rain Flower)* 雨花台頌 (1958, fig. 3.3) demonstrates the use of the lyrical to soften the “hardness” of a landscape subject. The word “hard” here is a concept that I employ from the critical debate of “hard film and soft film” in the history of Chinese cinema between 1931 and 1935. In this debate, “hard” was used by Chinese film critics to describe movies that predominately portrayed a left-wing communist subject.²⁴⁸ In the context of my research, I employ this word to identify landscape subjects that thematically fall into the ideological interests of the CCP. This includes the sites of Chinese Communist revolutions, the hometowns of the CCP party leaders, as well as locales undergoing rapid industrialization and collectivization. Emphasizing the idea of self-sacrifice and the radicalization of everyday life, these subjects glorify the immediacy of political intervention, challenging traditional Chinese aesthetics that favored a more poetic way of engaging with time and space. The question of how to transform these hard subjects into visually pleasant landscapes within the Chinese practice of viewing and making art posed great challenge to Chinese artists throughout the 1950s.

²⁴⁸ See Huang Jiamo 黃嘉謨, “Yingxing dianying yu ruanxing dianying” 硬性電影與軟性電影 (On hard film and soft film), *Xiandai dianying* 現代電影 (Modern screen), no. 6 (1933): 3.

A key term in the painting's title, “Yuhuatai” (Terrace of Rain Flower 雨花台) was taken from the name of a hilly area located immediately south of the Gate of China (Zhonghua men 中華門) in the city of Nanjing, Jiangsu Province.²⁴⁹ Associated with different structures, legends, and histories, Yuhuatai, in Foucauldian terms, can be described as a heterotopic site by the time of the 1950s.²⁵⁰ For one thing, the name of this site came from a legendary story. It is said that an eminent Buddhist master named Yunguang 雲光, who lived at the time of the reign of Emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty (AD 502-549), used to teach Buddhist scriptures to large audiences on this hilly site. His sermons were so well-delivered that heaven was gratified and responded by bestowing upon him a shower of flowers, as if it were raining flowers.²⁵¹ Some accounts further fantasized that the flowers were later turned into multicolored pebbles on the hill. The place soon became widely known as the Terrace of Rain Flower—Yuhuatai in Chinese.²⁵² Another legend associated with the site is that the hilly mount was renowned for a natural spring called the Spring of Eternal Peace (Yongning quan 永寧泉), historically affiliated with a nearby temple located east of the main peak. Over the centuries, it was said that this natural spring had been praised by eminent scholars, including the Southern Song poet Lu You 陸游 (1125-1210), as “the Second Spring South of the Yangtze River” 江南第二泉 due to its refreshing and tasty

²⁴⁹ Yang Xinhua 楊新華 et al., eds., *Nanjing shi Yuhuatai qu wenwu zhi* 南京市雨花台區文物志 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1994), 92.

²⁵⁰ See Michel Foucault's lecture, “Des espaces autres,” delivered in French in March 1967; first published in French in *Architecture, mouvement, continuité: bulletin de la Société des architectes diplômés par le gouvernement*, no. 5 (October, 1984): 46-49; later translated and published as Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22-27.

²⁵¹ Roland Altenburger, “Early Qing Yangzhou in Shi Chengjin’s Vernacular Vignettes,” in *Lifestyle and Entertainment in Yangzhou*, eds. Lucie B Olivová and Vibeke Børdbahl (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009), 154.

²⁵² Yuhuatai lieshi lingyuan guanlichu 雨花台烈士陵園管理處, ed., *Yingxiong Yuhuayai* 英雄雨花台 (Heroic terrace of rain flower) (Nanjing: Yuhuatai lieshi lingyuan guanlichu, 1959), 1.

water. It was once adorned with a pavilion where people could rest, and taste tea made out of the spring water.²⁵³ It was also said that Yuhuatai was associated with another kind of history, namely military, having been the location for many battles, including the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) in the Qing Dynasty, as well as the Xinhai Revolution (1911) that overthrew the last imperial dynasty of China.²⁵⁴

Despite its multiple histories, in Chinese communist historiography, Yuhuatai was often portrayed as a tragic site where countless Chinese communist martyrs were executed during the annihilation program operated by the KMT from 1927 to 1949.²⁵⁵ As the CCP began to construct a national history to commemorate their fallen martyrs, the People's Government of Nanjing, beginning in 1950, progressively transformed the Yuhuatai mound into a public memorial called the “Yuhuatai Memorial Park of Revolutionary Martyrs” 雨花台烈士陵園. Not only did they build a green terrace at the top of the main peak, but they also erected at the center a huge stele inscribed with Mao's calligraphic text, “Long Live Martyrs” 死難烈士萬歲.²⁵⁶ In the 1950s, municipal, provincial, and national government bodies frequently organized its people, officials, armies, and even foreign delegations to visit the monument to mourn collectively (fig. 3.4).

As the CCP promoted the site to a national memorial, artists and writers were summoned to depict this location as the theme of their visual or literary works. Living and working in Nanjing, Fu Baoshi had visited numerous times between 1956 through 1958. One reason for his sensitivity to the subject was that he had recently been appointed a member of the Second

²⁵³ Yang Xinhua et al., eds., *Nanjing shi Yuhuatai qu wenwu zhi*, 306.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 95.

²⁵⁵ See Yuhuatai lieshi lingyuan guanlichu, ed., *Yingxiong Yuhuayai*, 1.

²⁵⁶ Wei Wenhua 魏文華, “Qingming qian pingdiao Nanjing Yuhuatai” 清明前憑弔南京雨花台 (Mourning at Nanjing's Yuhuatai before Qingming Festival), *People's Daily*, April 6, 1957, 4.

Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference 中國人民政治協商會議 at the beginning of 1956. Presumably, this was a meaningful promotion to him as he had undergone years of political demotion due to his prior work relationship with the antagonistic party, the KMT, in the 1930s and the 1940s.²⁵⁷

The Second Spring of Yuhuatai 雨花台第二泉 (1956, fig. 3.5a) was an early example in this series. In this painting, Fu uses the motif of a traditional Chinese pavilion to represent the subject in the title, the Second Spring, located at the left-hand side of the painting in the middle-ground. Preceding it in the foreground is a rich layer of tall bare trees and low-lying leafy bushes. To the right-hand side of the pavilion, Fu depicts an array of miniature hikers who trek up the hill with umbrellas in their hands (fig. 3.5b). These hikers walk up from the lower left corner of the painting along a winding path to the middle-ground. They finally reach the top of the hill in the background in rain. This work presents itself to viewers as a genre painting, depicting the customary scene of pilgrims going up the hill to sweep the tombs of their ancestors. This notion is confirmed by the calligraphic text, “Qingming Festival” 清明節 (Tomb-Sweeping Day), inscribed on the upper right corner of the painting. The painting invites the viewer to ponder the goal of the pilgrims hiking up the hilly mound of Yuhuatai on Qingming Festival and the purpose of creating this painting.

The Second Spring of Yuhuatai describes a political subject through its allusive symbols strewn throughout the topography of the site. Fu painted a large number of red flags along the hikers’ path from the bottom to the top of the hill (fig. 3.5b). As an international communist symbol, the red flag was often adopted by Chinese artists in the 1950s to define the communist

²⁵⁷ See Ye Zonggao 葉宗鎬, *Fu Baoshi nianpu* 傅抱石年譜 (Fu Baoshi's chronicle) (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2012), 261.

revolutionary nature of a location in their artwork. Depicting a large number of red flags at the hilltop alluded to the existence or occurrence of certain communist structure or event. The meticulous spatial construction in this painting can be examined along with another painting of the artist, titled *Yuhuatai in Rain* 雨中雨花台 (c. 1950s, fig. 3.6). In this work, Fu took a different approach as he depicted the site from a more southern angle, which allowed him to clearly reveal the spatial relationship between the path and the stele installed at the top of the Yuhuatai hill. In *The Second Spring of Yuhuatai*, Fu depicted the site from a more eastern angle. In doing so, he concealed the memorial through the use of seemingly apolitical motifs such as trees and dwellings, producing a lyrical image in which visitors are travelling along a hilly path on a rainy day.

Apart from twisting the spatiality of the painted location, Fu employed numerous tropes that had the effect of offering viewers a phenomenological experience. First, he depicted the bare trees in the foreground with a spontaneous use of calligraphic brushstrokes. This technique emphasizes a direct application of the brush on the paper, leaving powerful traces of ink marks of varying tonality, strength and speed on paper. Clearly, Fu was fond of this technique, as he further accentuated its scale and effects in another similarly composed painting (fig. 3.7). With this visual device, viewers' gazes are choreographed to examine the varying effects of the brush and ink in the foreground before they can see the Second Spring and the pilgrims in the middle-ground. Second, Fu used a broad brush to apply a layer of alum water—a chemical compound that restrains the absorbency of water—on paper in a slightly off-vertical linear manner before applying a layer of light ink. In doing so, he created a series of ink marks that resembled the effect of heavy rain.²⁵⁸ Fu had already mastered this technique in the 1940s, though he often used

²⁵⁸ David Clarke, "Raining, Drowning and Swimming: Fu Baoshi and Water," *Art History* vol. 29, no. 1 (2006): 116-117.

in paintings in a more lyrical setting.²⁵⁹ By applying this technique in his depiction of the site of Yuhuatai, Fu complicated the viewers' sensual experience of the transient effects of the scene. Viewers are invited to imagine the sound, the weight, the temperature, and the feeling of the rain water. All in all, Fu's application of the tropes of bare trees and rain enabled him to obscure the political immediacy of Yuhuatai, thereby turning it into a lyrical image for viewers to savor as their gaze travels throughout the pictorial space.

Fu's construction of a lyrical effect in his depiction of the site altered dramatically in summer 1958. That July, Fu returned to the site to produce a number of sketches. As shown in a sketch created on July 9, 1958 (fig. 3.8), he adopted a more southern angle in his portrayal. By doing so, he was able to depict the Yuhuatai Monument and the grand staircase laid in front from a three-quarter view, portraying the entire structure as a free-standing mound. This gesture can be seen as a reaction to the rising official discussion of the doctrine of "combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism," which had been published in the Party journals, *Wenhui bao* and *Hongqi*, earlier that year in April and June. Furthermore, Fu contextualized his depiction of the site with an industrial landscape packed with chimneys and smoke in the background. In doing so, Fu brought the monument of the revolutionary past of the Chinese Communist into conversation with the contemporary industrial development promoted by the state, forming a landscape solidifying the inseparable relationship between the revolutionary past and the industrial present. This composition was realized in an ink and color painting created around the same time. In this painting, Fu further contextualized the site by adding a mountain, which can be traceable to Mount Zhong located northeast of Yuhuatai, in the background, as well as three leafy trees in the foreground (fig. 3.9).

²⁵⁹ See Anita Chung, ed., *Chinese Art in An Age of Revolution: Fu Baoshi (1904-1965)* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), plate 10-12.

Fu's depiction of the site entered its final stage in August 1958. In a sketch produced on July 30, he replaced the motif of upright trees with a few branches of pine tree, entering the pictorial space from the upper left corner (fig. 3.10). In another sketch, he relocated it to the upper right corner (fig. 3.11). Finally, on August 1, Fu consolidated this composition by depicting a large canopy of pine trees entering from the upper right corner of the painting (fig. 3.3a). This canopy occupies almost half of the pictorial space, pushing the images of the Yuhuatai monument and hilltop to the lower left corner. Fu introduces for the first time the motif of the overhead power lines in the lower right corner to symbolize the modernization of the site. Furthermore, he replaces the monument visitors with a group of children, all of whom are wearing white and blue uniforms with a red scarf around their neck (fig. 3.3b). This revision is a highly political, because children in this uniform are powerful iconography of a youth organization, known as the Young Pioneers of China (*Zhongguo shaonian xianfeng dui* 中國少年先鋒隊, a.k.a. *shaoxiandui* 少先隊), run by the Chinese Communist Party. Fu was satisfied with this composition as he had concluded the work by horizontally inscribing the text, "Ode to Yuhuatai" (*Yuhuatai song* 雨花台頌) as the painting's title on the upper left corner. He wrote the date, his name, and impressed his personal seal, "The Work of Baoshi" (*Baoshi zhi zuo* 抱石之作) immediately following the painting's title.

This final version exploits several techniques to engage the beholder's viewing experience of the painting. One possible reading it invites is to contemplate the temporal relationship between the scenic motifs in the painting. Compared to prior versions, this work brings together three images that symbolize different stages of CCP history: the revolutionary past, the industrial present, and the communist future. The Yuhuatai monument itself is a powerful symbol of the past given its association with the CCP's history of martyrdom. It is

depicted as a structure on top of the Yuhuatai hill, overseeing the contemporary industrial landscape of southern Nanjing flourishing at the bottom of the hill. Further counter-balancing this present-day landscape at the right are the Young Pioneers who dash into the scene from the left. These cheerful youths symbolize the future of the Chinese communists. Within this landscape, the Yuhuatai monument stands as a nexus of different spaces that connect different historical moments of the CCP's history. Such spatial configuration invites the viewer to contemplate the role of this complex site through its networks of sociocultural and political relationships within its immediate spaces. It also expands the viewer's reception of the Yuhuatai monument beyond its immediate role as a commemorative structure of the past.

Secondly, the 1958 landscape painting demonstrates the use of a rich sample of brushwork and ink effects to entertain the viewer's artistic experience. Compared to his prior painting *The East is Red* 東方紅 (1954, fig. 3.12), in which the branches of the pine tree are carefully delineated and colored, *Ode to Yuhuatai* adopts a gestural use of brushstrokes to sketch out the front layer of the branches and the needle-shaped leaves of the pine trees in dark ink. Dots in different sizes and colors are dynamically added around the branches to animate the composition of the painting. Similarly, in the lower left corner, the vegetation of the Yuhuatai hill exhibits carefully-rendered and subtle tonal changes through the use of multiple layers of dark and light ink. The tonal effect between these two patches of ink invites its viewer to maneuver her gaze across the diagonal of the painting. It engages with one's vision before their attention finally falls onto the miniature motif of the Yuhuatai monument in the middle-ground of the painting.

Thirdly, *Ode to Yuhuatai* entertains the viewer by evoking their phenomenological experience within the painting. For one thing, the painting has depicted numerous transient

phenomena on-site. The form of the tree branches contributes to the idea that they are being caught in the fleeting moment of swaying in the wind coming from the right. Smoke emitted from the chimney tops in the background further reinforces this notion being depicted as though being blown from the right. The sky portrays a moment of sunset, subtly transitioning from crimson red into golden yellow. The serenity of the imagery contrasts with the motifs of the Young Pioneers, shown marching and dashing down the path to the Yuhuatai monument filled with excitement and energy. Their uniformity and staccato footsteps breaks the silence portrayed in the painting.

Fu Baoshi revised his approach of visualizing the location of Yuhuatai by gracefully twisting and counter-balancing the dynamics of various images. The painting offers the beholder a complex viewing experience that vacillates between the visual and the phenomenal, as well as the material and the metaphysical. While the idea of portraying transient moments in a day may echo some of the lyrical techniques commonly seen in the painting of Southern Song Dynasty, this painting does not speak a meditative language in the traditional sense. Instead, it compels viewers to enter into the painting through a variety of politically-coded motifs. The resulting lyrical structure in the painting is by no means traditional, but a revolutionary Chinese communist one.

Without a doubt, the sentiment imbued in this painting is politically-tinted. Such notion is best exemplified by Fu's adoption of the concept of "ode" (*song* 颌) in the title of the painting. Traditionally, *ode/song* is a literary genre originated from the classical poetry anthology, the *Classic of Poetry* (*shijing* 詩經, Western Zhou Dynasty, ca. 1100-771 B.C.).²⁶⁰ In the late 1950s,

²⁶⁰ Stephen Owen, ed., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York City, NY: W.W. Norton, 1996), 10-11.

classical modes of articulation were largely received by state cultural critics as a literary technique traditionally used to praise the virtues of the Son of Heaven in each dynasty in premodern China. Yet, in the 1950s and the 1960s, it was widely adopted by the state cultural agents as a mode to glorify the nation, as shown in the widespread use of the concept of “Ode to the Motherland” (*zuguo song* 祖國頌), and to name a variety of cultural productions, including a chorus song composed in 1956 and a documentary film produced in 1957.²⁶¹ In this context, as argued by poet-critic Xu Chi 徐遲 (1914-1996), in the late 1950s, *ode/song* should be viewed as a mode of “political lyricism” (*zhengzhi shuqing* 政治抒情).²⁶² By critically reinventing this form of lyrical technique from the past, contemporary writers and artists are able to summon emotional responses from the viewers at the service of the politics.

Displayed at “Jiangsu Provincial Chinese Painting Exhibition” 江蘇省國畫展 in Beijing in December 1958, *Ode to Yuhuatai* was lauded by critics for its capacity to trigger viewers’ associative thinking. A writer for *People’s Daily* analyzed that this painting

...does not simply describe the landscape of Yuhuatai in a straightforward way, nor does it rigidly combine all scenic elements together. Pictorially, the martyrs’ monument only occupies a small corner of the painting. Moreover, it is partially covered by the tree branches. Between the bushes, one can see a row of Young Pioneers visiting the site on their day trip. The author used powerful brushwork to depict the branches of the pine tree which have covered up the sky. Under the branches, one can vaguely see the scene of

²⁶¹ See Ye Lin 葉林, “Zuguo song he Changzheng dahechang” “祖國頌”和“長征大合唱” (*Ode to the motherland and Chorus of the Long March*), *People’s Daily*, August 14, 1956, 8; and Hu Yifu 胡儀甫, “Xinnian li youxie shenme xin xi xin yingpian” 新年裡有些什麼新戲新影片 (What new movies are coming out in the new year?), *People’s Daily*, December 31, 1957, 8.

²⁶² See Xu Chi 徐遲, “‘Zuguo song’ xu” 祖國頌序 (Preface to *Ode to the Motherland*), in *Zuguo song: Zhonghua Renmin gongheguo jianguo shi zhounian 1949-1959* 祖國頌: 中華人民共和國建國十週年 1949-1959 (*Ode to the motherland: the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China 1949-1959*), ed. Shikan she 詩刊社 (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1959), 3.

smoking chimneys set beneath Yuhuatai... the whole painting can effectively trigger associative thinking of the viewers.²⁶³

Well-received in the political culture in the late 1950s, this painting offered Fu a readily reusable template for some of his later art commission projects. In 1959, Fu was commissioned to produce an unusually sizable painting, at least four times larger than the 1958 version, for decorating the Jiangsu Provincial Meeting Hall at the newly constructed the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. For this project, Fu revisited the subject twice. He produced one work in May when he was still in Nanjing (fig. 3.13), and the second in September (fig. 3.14) when he was physically in Beijing to undertake another official painting project.²⁶⁴ The 1959 Beijing version was even larger than the Nanjing version, though the two paintings essentially share the same composition as the 1958 version. In the 1959-Beijing version, the pine tree's branches in the foreground were strengthened through the use of a darkened ink color, a larger brush, and a more powerful calligraphic effect of the brushwork. In this, Fu added visual strength to the vegetation, turning them into more eye-catching visual elements within the pictorial frame of the work.

Mode 2: Fantasizing the Mundane

The technique of softening a hard subject for imbue it with lyrical effect could be applied to a wide range of landscape subjects. When it came to banal and ordinary locations, artists were compelled to deploy a different approach to make them more appealing to viewers. The woodcut

²⁶³ Original Chinese text: “這位畫家就沒有單純的只是去描寫雨花台的山水草木，也沒有作其他生硬的結合。從畫面上看，烈士紀念碑只佔了一個不大的角落，而且半截被樹木遮掩，樹叢中隱隱地出現了來過隊日的少先隊員。但是，作者也用了飽滿的筆墨畫出了蒼勁遮天的松柏樹，樹下又淡淡地顯出雨花台下一片冒煙的煙筒……很能啟發人聯想。” Qin Li 秦犁, “Guohua li de shidai qixi” 國畫裡的時代氣息 (The spirit of the era in Chinese painting), *People's Daily*, January 10, 1959, 8.

²⁶⁴ Wan Xinhua 萬新華, *Fu Baoshi yishu yanjiu* 傅抱石藝術研究 (A study of the art of Fu Baoshi) (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu chubanshe, 2009), 173.

prints produced by artists who were based in Beidahuang 北大荒 (Great Northern Wasteland or Wilderness) in the late 1950s through the early 1960s offered a range of pertinent examples. In particular, the prints of Chao Mei 晁楣 (b. 1931) demonstrate how ordinary scenic elements in the northern borderland can be transformed by the artist into a fantasy capable of stimulating the viewer to a range of sensorial experiences.

Situated near the Russian border, Beidahuang generally referred to the northeastern borderland in Heilongjiang Province. It covered the north of the city of Ha'erbin, the mountain of Yilehuli, the Three River Plain, and Mudan River Plain.²⁶⁵ In Chinese communist narratives, this territory was described as an uncultivated land. Seeking to open up this territory into a state collective farm, the Chinese socialist state dispatched a large number of soldiers to exploit this wasteland, which had been newly “liberated” by the Chinese Communist Red Army in 1946.²⁶⁶ The size of the labor forces at the Beidahuang farms continued to grow after 1949. It was drastically expanded in the years of 1957 and 1958 due to a large number of “sent-down” laborers, many of whom were officers, intellectuals, and cultural agents purged as “rightists” during the Anti-Rightist Movement, launched first in the summer of 1957.²⁶⁷ As the local land reclamation bureau sought to promote the life and work in Beidahuang through a range of

²⁶⁵ Ning Wang, *Banished to the Great Northern Wilderness: Political Exile and Re-education in Mao's China* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2017), 6.

²⁶⁶ See Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Heilongjiang sheng weiyuanhui wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui 中國人民政治協商會議黑龍江省委員會文史資料委員會 and Heilongjiang sheng guoying nongchang zongju shizhi bangongshi 黑龍江省國營農場總局史志辦公室, eds., *Huanxing chenshui de tudi: shi wan guanbing kaifa Beidahuang* 喚醒沉睡的土地: 十萬官兵開發北大荒 (Awakening the sleeping land: Hundreds of thousands of officers and soldiers developing the Great Northern Wilderness) (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1988), 1.

²⁶⁷ Wang, *Banished to the Great Northern Wilderness*, 3-6.

campaigns, they recruited talented individuals to work at their propaganda units to engage in the production of visual and textual promotional materials.

Chao Mei was a leader of one of the Beidahuang artist groups. A native of Shandong Province, Chao grew up in the city of Nanjing. He joined the People's Liberation Army in 1949 and was assigned as a farm laborer in the Beidahuang farms in 1958. Recognized for his art and literary background, Chao was first reassigned to work for the propaganda team of the Beidahuang in May 1958. Later that year, he was transferred to the editorial unit to assist Zhang Zuoliang 張作良 (b. 1927) in issuing a new pictorial called *The Pictorial of the Great Northern Wilderness* (*Beidahuang huabao* 北大荒畫報).²⁶⁸ Over the years, this editorial team assembled cultural forces in the region, forming a regional group of woodcut artists whose works depicted the scenery of the northern wilds and the lives of the agricultural settlers in their prints.²⁶⁹ Among them, Chao's print epitomized local artistic interest in romanticizing the scenes and lives in the northeastern wasteland from 1958 through 1963.

Created in 1960, Chao Mei's *Black Soil Steppe* 黑土草原 (fig. 3.15) was acclaimed for its lyrical quality in the depiction of the life on a mechanized farm in Beidahuang. In the upper-left corner of this work, Chao portrays the scene of an operator standing on a large barrel of diesel oil to refill the fuel tank of a nearby tractor. The foreground features a mass of wild grasses and flowers viewed from an extremely low angle. The artist's interest in highlighting mundane subjects is reminiscent of a shot from the film *Heroes Defeating Beidahuang* 英雄戰勝北大荒, produced by the August First Film Studio 八一電影製片廠 in 1958, in which the

²⁶⁸ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 278; and Chao Mei 晁楣, *Huajing zhong de shenmei guiji* 畫境中的審美軌跡 (Locus of aesthetics in the pictorial realm) (Chengdu: Sichuan meishu chubanshe, 1988), 56-57.

²⁶⁹ Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 181.

cinematographer captures a scene of the demobilized soldiers marching on the site from a low-lying angle (fig. 3.16). While some scholars aptly explain that the use of an extremely low viewing angle in Chao's print forms a sense of vastness of the natural environment, little research has considered how this manner of composing allowed the artist to transform an ordinary object into a visual field for contemplation.²⁷⁰

In *Black Soil Steppe*, the wild grasses and flowers in the foreground not only serve to reflect the location of the site, but also as a field for visual enjoyment. For one thing, the grasses and the flowers illustrate a sophisticated use of different wood carving skills. The blades of the grasses and the stems of the flowers are outlined by a meticulous incision of elongated, parallel, and curvy lines into the wood, whereas the flowers petals are suggested by an abstract use of biomorphic forms. Moreover, the figure-ground relationship of the grasses and the soil in the foreground and middle-ground are suggested ambiguously. On the right-hand side, black is used to indicate the positive spaces of the blades and the stems. In contrast, on the left-hand side, black is used instead to symbolize negative spaces between the plants' structures. The interplay between the positive and negative spaces turns the foreground into an indistinguishable field of abstract forms and patterns. The rhythmic placement of brightly printed flowers on top of the grasses further enriches the viewing experience of this field. By experimenting with the forms, the figure-ground relationship, and the color of the images, Chao transformed a humble subject into a field that was full of visual pleasure and surprises.

Apart from engaging with the viewers' visual experience, the grass and flower motifs also evoke the sensual experience of the nature. Instead of depicting the grasses and flowers uniformly in the same direction, this print features the carving of these motifs in two opposite

²⁷⁰ See Julia Andrews's analysis of the use of low angle in this print. Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 280.

directions: the first layer of grasses in the foreground are leaning to the left, whereas the second layer in the foreground and the middle-ground are leaning to the right. This compositional design evokes the presence of the wind as if the grasses are being blown by air currents coming from two different directions, producing the auditory experience of rustling sounds, or the haptic experience of the fluidity of air. The visual-auditory effect is not unlike the image captured in the panoramic shot from the film *Heroes Defeating Beidahuang*, where layers of wheat are captured moving and rubbing against one another in the wind in an open field (fig. 3.17). This early print of Chao juxtaposes images of two strongly-scented objects: the flowers, which occupy almost the entire foreground and middle-ground, and the barrels of diesel oil at the far right of the print. Under Chao's hand, the wild grasses and flowers are depicted as a stimulating site where the prior visual, auditory, and olfactory experiences of the viewers can be evoked. These senses carry the viewers' mind beyond the boundaries of the frame as a form of lyrical experience.

Chao's interest in re-characterizing mundane subjects into certain stimulating forms became more pronounced in his prints created later in the period. *Prelude to Wheat Harvest* 麥收序曲 (1961, fig. 3.18) depicts the scene of three settlers riding to the middle of a field for engaging in agricultural work. Similar to *Black Soil Steppe*, this print foregrounds the depiction of the humble vegetation, leaving a small area in the upper half for the portrayal of human activities. Compared to his prior work titled *Sea of Wheat* 麥海 (1959, fig. 3.19), this print shows a dynamic reorientation of the stalks and grains of the wheats at slightly varying angles one from the other. Through this meticulous way of positioning the stalks and grains, the artist creates a wavy pattern of the wheat flowing from the left to the right, which for some viewers may

resemble a succession of musical notes or a wave of sea.²⁷¹ By reinventing the form of the wheat based on its conceptual connection to other imageries, Chao infused his personal imagination into his representation of this humble subject, transforming it into a site for musical experience among the viewers.

While the former two prints provoke the viewers' senses through the association of the forms of the images, Chao's later work, *Northern China in September* 北方九月 (1963, fig. 3.20) arrests the viewers' eyes through its optical effect. This print depicts the scene of a team of farm laborers engaging in a bountiful harvest on the frontier's sorghum field. Unlike the use of a low viewing angle in the former two prints, this work takes an aerial perspective to describe an endless vista of sorghum standing upright from the foreground through the background. The use of color in this print is extremely daring because it uses bright crimson red to portray the sorghum heads that are normally earthier in tone. Notably, Chao Mei has fastidiously encircled almost all of the red paint of the sorghum heads by black paint. In doing so, the brightly-hued red color is juxtaposed against the black ground, creating the illusion of a field of glowing red lights. The entire print speaks an alluring quality of red as if visual fantasy.

The three prints discussed above demonstrate the artistic transformation of the territory of the great north wilderness through the artist's imagination. Under Chao's hand, mundane subjects such as the soil, the wild plant, or the crops grown on-site have become a vehicle to evoke the sensory experience of the viewers. The color black plays a vital role in producing these

²⁷¹ This notion echoes what Deng Fuxing 鄧福星 has analyzed in his article, "Guangda heitu de huashen—Bedahuang banhua yishu lun" 廣大黑土的化身——北大荒版畫藝術論 (The incarnation of the black soil—the print art of the Great Northern Wilderness), in *Tuntu dahuang: Beidahuang banhua sanshi nian lunwen xuanji, 1958-1988* 吞吐大荒：北大荒版畫三十年論文選集, 1958-1988 (Memoir of the Great Wilderness: selected writings of the thirty years of print from the Great North Wilderness), edited by Beidahuang banhua sanshi nian wenxian bianji weiyuanhui 北大荒版畫三十年文獻編輯委員會 (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang meishu chubanshe, 1988), 104.

stimulations. Not only does it portray blackness as a locational quality of Beidahuang,²⁷² but it also serves as the embedded color that, when combined with a primary or brightly hued color, can critically complicate the visual effect or the state of being of the plants. This manner of exploiting color and form was distinctively pursued by Chao while his fellow woodcut artists in Beidahuang tended to use black as a simple tool to outline the shape of the plants or objects in a naturalistic manner (fig. 3.21). When Chao Mei later summed up his artistic theory in the 1980s, he asserted that to create a spectacular visual effect in art, an artist must mobilize his own feelings for the scene before he can subjectively transform the images in his art. In doing so, he is able to combine feeling and scene together in order to produce a captivating *yijing*.²⁷³

The Beidahuang prints were widely displayed at numerous exhibitions held at a regional, national, and international levels. First, they were displayed at the Ha'erbin Workers Cultural Palace 哈爾濱工人文化宮 through the institutional effort of the Mudanjiang Land Reclamation Bureau 牡丹江農墾局 of Beidahuang in June 1960. A few months later in November and December, they were displayed in Beijing through a collaboration between the Bureau and the China Artists Association. When these works were exhibited in Beijing in 1960, they were widely reported in the two Party's print media, *People's Daily* and *Meishu*.²⁷⁴ Chinese art critic Shao Dazhen 邵大箴 (b. 1934) later recalled that the 1960 exhibition offered viewers a breath of fresh air through its renewed visual form. It gave viewers a sense of hope during the difficult socio-economic time of the Great Famine that emerged in the aftermath of the industrially radical

²⁷² See Chao Mei's discussion in *Tuntu dahuang*, 83.

²⁷³ Chao Mei 晁楣, “Yijing de qiusuo” 意境的求索 (The search for spiritual realm), *Meiyuan* 美苑, no. 1 (1982): 5.

²⁷⁴ See Zhang Zuoliang 張作良, “Zai Beidahuang laodong he chuangzuo” 在北大荒勞動和創作 (Labor work and creation in Beidahuang), *People's Daily*, November 18, 1960, 8; and relevant articles in *Meishu* no. 12 (1969): 3-18.

era of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960).²⁷⁵ Among the works displayed in 1960, *Black Soil Steppe* was highly regarded for its capacity to trigger viewers' associative thinking. For instance, according to CAA official Wang Zhaowen in 1960, for him, the wild grasses and flowers symbolized the prosperity of the soil and the availability of unexploited land to be reclaimed in Beidahuang. These motifs coordinated with the posture of the tractor's operator and the neatly reclaimed farmland in the background to create an image in which viewers could feel the operator's aspiration in reclaiming the unexploited land.²⁷⁶ CAA officer Li Qun also remarked that *Black Soil Steppe* evoked the imagination of fragrance of the grass and flowers and a sense of fresh air. It beautified the viewers' conception of labor work on-site as a pleasant experience.²⁷⁷

These two exhibitions contributed to shaping the public reception of the life and scenery in the northeastern frontier through different geographical concepts. Entitled "The Art Exhibition of the Mudanjiang Land Reclamation District" 牡丹江墾區美術作品展覽, the first exhibitions introduced the art to audiences in Ha'erbin through the geographical concept of "Mudanjiang." Widely known as "The Art Exhibition of Beidahuang" 北大荒美術作品展覽, the second exhibition introduced it to the urban viewers through the romanticized concept of "Beidahuang."

²⁷⁵ Shao Dazhen 邵大箴, "You shengming de yishu" 有生命的藝術 (The living art), in *Tuntu dahuang*, 44.

²⁷⁶ Original Chinese text: “在《黑土草原》裡，那個為機車加油的拖拉機手，他那熱情充沛的神氣，和遠景中那一片廣袤而整齊的耕地，近景中那一片尚未開墾的草地聯繫起來，使人感到他將為獲得豐碩的戰果而大顯身手的澎湃的熱情。” Wang Zhaowen 王朝聞, “Zhengfu huangyuan” 征服荒原 (Conquering the wasteland), first delivered as a speech in the symposium organized in association with the art exhibition of Beidahuang. It was later published several sources, including *Meishu*, no. 12 (1960): 11-12; *Guangming ribao* 光明日報, December 13, 1960; and *Tuntu dahuang*, 5-6.

²⁷⁷ Li Qun 力群, “Zhongguo xinxing banhua de jiao’ao” 中國新興版畫的驕傲 (The pride in China's emerging print art), in *Tuntu dahuang*, 29.

The Beijing exhibition later travelled to other Chinese cities, such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Chongqing.²⁷⁸

Mode 3: Emotionalizing the Transient

In addition to softening or fantasizing a landscape subject, Chinese artists of the 1950s and 1960s also featured transient effects occurring on-site as a form of spectacular scenery in their art. In the hands of those artistic agents, effects such as different times and climates of a day or seasonal change over a year themselves became sites with which human emotions could be metaphorically imbued through specific techniques. Among those works, *Third Sister Liu* 劉三姐, a musical film produced by the Changchun Film Studio 長春電影製片廠 in 1961, is a prime example of this practice.

Third Sister Liu was a signature film production that combined story telling, music design, and landscape portrayal. Adapted from a local folk story of the Zhuang ethnic group 壮族 based in Guangxi Province, this tale narrates the life of a legendary song goddess called Third Sister Liu, who was highly talented in composing and singing a musical genre called the “mountain song” (*shan’ge*) 山歌.²⁷⁹ This folk story had been passed down over generations in both oral and written form.²⁸⁰ It captured filmmakers’ attention in 1959 because the folk story

²⁷⁸ Beidahuang huabao she 北大荒畫報社編 ed, *Beidahuang banhua xuan* 北大荒版畫選 (A selection of Beidahuang’s print) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1962), 1.

²⁷⁹ In Chinese, the folk story was titled *Liu Sanjie* 劉三姐 or *Liu Sanmei* 劉三妹. It is said that Third Sister Liu was active in Tang Dynasty (618-907). There were also records saying that she has lived in the time of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). Mark Bender, “Mountain Songs from Liuzhou, Guangxi (Interethnic),” in *The Columbia Anthology of Chinese Folk and Popular Literature*, eds. Victor H. Mair and Mark Bender (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 158.

²⁸⁰ Some written versions portray Liu as young talented singer who goes against patriarchal will to pursue her truth love before she was eventually transformed into supernatural beings with her lover. See the *kunqu* 昆曲 opera script, “*Liu sanmei*” 劉三妹 (Third Sister Liu) written by Jiang Shiquan 蔣士銓 in Qing Dynasty, reprinted in *Liu Sanjie*

itself was reinvented and performed in a regional drama called “*caidiao ju*” 彩調劇. The enormous success of the drama attracted state interest in adapting it into a musical film. Finally, the state appointed film director Su Li 蘇里 (1917-2005), lyricist and screenwriter Qiao Yu 喬羽 (b. 1927), and music composer Lei Zhenbang 雷振邦 (1916-1997), all eminent cultural producers of the time, to work on the production.

While this film takes the life of the legendary mountain-song singer as its subject, it also features a large array of mountainous and river scenery. According to various accounts, *Third Sister Liu* was shot in the most breathtakingly beautiful landscape in the city of Guilin, the county of Yangshuo, and the township of Xingping, all of which were located in Guangxi Province in south China. Situated along the Li River, these locales were renowned for their distinctive karst formations, formed by a variety of tall limestone plateaus standing on the ground in a needle shape. For a long time, some of these places have been boasted about by the Chinese saying, that “Guilin landscape is the best under heaven, but Yangshuo landscape surpasses even Guilin” 桂林山水甲天下，陽朔山水甲桂林. Since 1956, the Chinese socialist state had invested many financial and cultural resources to renovate some major attraction sites that had become dilapidated or destroyed around Guilin, promoting the landscape of Guilin both nationally and internationally.²⁸¹ In particular, the years of 1959 and 1960 saw keen official interest in promoting the landscape of Guilin as one of the beautiful natural wonders of the

juben ji 劉三姐劇本集 (Collection of Third Sister Liu's scripts), ed. Deng Fanping 鄧凡平 (Nanning: Guangxi minzu chubanshe, 1996), 266-269. Also, see the modern drama script, titled “*Liu sanmei*” 劉三妹, written by Ouyang Yuqian 歐陽予倩 in 1929, reprinted in *Liu Sanjie juben ji*, 270-324.

²⁸¹ “Guilin xiushan fengjin qu” 桂林修繕風景區, *People's Daily*, June 11, 1956, 3; Su Fang 蘇方, “Yinmu shang de jinxiu heshan. Jieshao fenjing pian ‘Guilin shanshui’ ‘Huangshan’” 銀幕上的錦繡河山, 介紹風景片“桂林山水”“黃山”, *People's Daily*, March 21, 1956, 3; and “Di jiu jie guoji dianying jie bimu ‘Guilin Shanshui’ he ‘Tongxiang Lasa de Daolu’ liang pian huojiang” 第九屆國際電影節閉幕“桂林山水”和“通向拉薩的道路”兩片獲獎, *People's Daily*, July 31, 1956, 1.

nation.²⁸² As Su Li, the director appointed to the production, later recalled, he aspired to use the beautiful landscapes of Guilin and Yangshuo as the set of the film. His strong interest in the landscapes there had outweighed the widespread concern that the legendary figure, Third Sister Liu, herself was biographically described as a native of a small city called Liuzhou elsewhere in Guangxi Province instead.²⁸³ After having captured the indoor shots in the sound stages at the Changchun Film Studio in northeast China in the late spring of 1960, the film production team traveled to these three regions in Guangxi in the summer to shoot the outdoor scenes along the Li River.²⁸⁴

The filmmakers exploited the power of cinemawork and editing to capture a large number of landscape scenes with transient climatic effects along the Li River for the film. Within the first three minutes and five seconds of the work, the filmmakers presented fifteen different landscape shots. Three feature transient phenomena, with layers of mist hovering around the waist of the hills, adding a sense of mystery to the eccentric shapes of the limestone hills (fig. 3.22). As the camera moves along the river, shots capture the reflections of the light and the hills in the flickering water. A moment later, the film cuts to another five shots, each capturing the green hills on a clear and sunny day (fig. 3.23). The sunny weather in these five shots make a sharp contrast with the misty scenery captured in the prior scenes. After the debut of the two male protagonists, the film cuts to two spectacular shots, each framing the perfect image of the

²⁸² “Guilin taohua jiang” 桂林桃花江, *People’s Daily*, April 22, 1959, 8; “Guilin shanshui” 桂林山水, *People’s Daily*, June 6, 1959, 7; and “Shan qi shui xiу hua Guilin” 山奇水秀話桂林, *People’s Daily*, January 12, 1960, 8.

²⁸³ See Bai Xiaoding 白小丁, “‘Pinming Sanlang’ Su Li” 拼命三郎蘇里 (Exerting the outmost strength: Su Li), *Dianying yishu* 電影藝術 (Film art), no. 1 (1995): 29.

²⁸⁴ See Meng Xiongqiang 蒙雄强, “Dianying Liu Sanjie paishe de tai qian mu hou” 電影《劉三姐》拍攝的台前幕後 (Behind-the-scene story of film *Third Sister Liu*), *Wenshi chunqiu* 文史春秋, no. 2 (2008): 22; and Wanqiu Huang 黃婉秋, *Wu yu Liu sanjie: Huang Wangqiu zi zhuan* 我與劉三姐: 黃婉秋自傳 (Third Sister Liu and I: autobiography of Huang Wangqiu) (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1988), 24.

physical forms of the hill, the sky, and the clouds, and mirroring their reflections in the water (fig. 3.24). Later on, the camera also takes a closer shot to capture the scene of two exceptionally pointed peaks bathing in the golden radiance of the sun (fig. 3.25). It confronts the audience with the scene of two peaks dressed in a “purple robe with a golden belt.” Placed at the beginning of the film, these shots play a vital role in shaping viewers’ impression of the ever-changing landscapes along the Li River in Guilin, Yangshuo, and Xingping. They also present audiences with the shifting climatic conditions surrounding the mountains and rivers along the Li River, turning these places into a region of natural wonders onscreen.

These landscape shots exemplify the pursuit of the aesthetic of *yijing* in a cinematic medium, particularly because these landscapes were not captured as stand-alone images. They were edited with a female solo in the genre of mountain song for more than four minutes (1:07-5:11). Symbolizing the singing of Third Sister Liu herself, the mountain song plays an important role in re-characterizing the mood of the landscape scenes. The filmmakers carefully cut together shots to demonstrate a conceptual relationship between the contents of the lyrics and the landscapes. For instance, for the second to the sixth lines, which articulate how the mountain song helps release Liu’s grievance, the film editor cuts together two shots taken along the misty river (fig. 3.23), then three shots captured on clearer days (fig. 3.24). The progressive transition from a foggy landscape to a sunny landscape metaphorically turns the sequence into a vehicle for releasing the singer’s sentiment. The fourteenth line of the song sings “a dead dragon has its scales remaining in the deep water” (龍死龍鱗在深潭); for this, the filmmakers cut a shot that shows the Li River as if it were a deep water (fig. 3.25). A line that sings “passing one sandbar after another” (過了一灘又一灘), inspired the editor to illustrate the lyrics by aligning it with a panoramic shot capturing the image of one cluster of hills after another as it pans rightward (fig.

3.26). These lyrics serve as the background music of the landscape, imbuing a politically-tinged sentiment to the landscape imagery. In other words, the landscape is not merely the setting in which the action unfolds. Rather, it is the image which illustrates the symbolic drama in the manner of *yijing*.

As these landscape shots demonstrate a skillful combination of scenes and feelings, the resulting *yijing* is a politicalized one. Recall that the feelings being promoted in this film were connected to the ideological, Marxist-Maoist notion promoting class struggle. The lyrics of the song powerfully convey the resentment of Liu herself as the victim of political persecution by an evil local landlord. In particular, Liu's emotion crescendos as it enters the middle section of the song, in which the fifteenth and sixteenth lines says, “I sing without worrying of death. I'd continue to sing even in hell for three years” (唱歌不怕頭落地, 閻王殿上唱三年). In the twenty-first to twenty-fourth lines, Liu vows to condemn the landlord through her songs: “The blatant landlord, trying to sway his killer knife at midnight. Not having pushed to death, I insist on singing to the extent that my voice can agitate waves in the big river” (財主囂, 半夜舉起殺人刀。害我不死偏要唱, 唱的大河起浪滔). Composed by the Chinese communist lyricist Qiao Yu, the lyrics of this song figuratively depict the antagonistic class conflict between the proletariat and the landlord. As this song is placed the beginning of the film, it imbues the film with a politicized sentiment, setting up the ideological tone for the rest of the film.

Third Sister Liu had a high visibility in the 1960s. First, it was widely circulated in the PRC for two years, and was awarded Best Cinematography and Best Art Direction at the Second Hundred Flowers Awards, organized by the China Film Association under the sponsorship of the official film magazine *Popular Cinema* 大眾電影 in 1963. Beyond the PRC, this film was widely distributed in Chinese diasporic communities in Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, and

Malaysia.²⁸⁵ The landscape scenes in *Third Sister Liu* exerted a strong impact on public reception of natural scenery around the Li River in Guilin and Yangshuo both domestically and internationally.²⁸⁶ It offered the viewers a musical experience in which political messages and sentiments were artistically conveyed.

Political Significance: Extolling the Motherland's Beauty

During the Seventeen Years, when artists were compelled to portray political landscape subjects, many of them turned to lyrical modes of depiction through which they could indulge both themselves and entertain viewers in sensory experiences facilitated by this technique of portrayal. The ways in which some of the landscape imagery analyzed above triggered sensual responses in viewers is not unlike the lyrical painting of the Southern Song. Pictorially, those landscape representations demonstrate a careful organization of the spatial-temporal structure in a way that prolonged the viewing time by the beholders. Through the process of viewing, the beholder could acquire a cluster of poetic sensations arousing specific experiences. The result is not unlike the way in which James Cahill described the nature of poetry in painting: “it will be more oblique in its effects, ambiguous rather than explicit; its language will imply far more than it directly signifies, through such devices as metaphor and synecdoche.”²⁸⁷ All in all, the viewer’s reading experience of lyrical landscape is not narrative but highly introspective.

²⁸⁵ *Third Sister Liu* had its premiere screening in Hong Kong on May 17, 1962. See “*Liu Sanjie shiqi lianying*” 劉三姐十七聯映, *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, May 10, 1962: 3; “*Ceng hongdong Gang-Jiu Xingzhou Liu Sanjie juangtuchonglai*” 曾轟動港九星洲劉三姐捲土重來 (The coming back of *Third Sister Liu*, the once highly popular film in Hong Kong and Singapore), *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, July 1, 1964: 5.

²⁸⁶ See “*Guanzhong kanguo zan jia miao. Liu Sanjie jin shangying*” 觀眾看過讚佳妙, 劉三姐今上映 (*Third Sister Liu* is played at theater today. Audience who have watched it like it), *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, May 17, 1962: 3.

²⁸⁷ Cahill, *The Lyric Journey*, 7.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Chinese socialist state actively promoted the notion of the motherland in the 1950s and the 1960s. In the Chinese socialist definition, all territories within its national boundaries could be regarded as its motherland. In particular, due to strong cultural affiliation, the tropes of mountains and rivers epitomized this political notion of national territories. The production and circulation of lyrical landscapes depicted in different modes and media help promote a poeticized notion of the national landscape. They also contributed to propagating the highly political notion of the rich beauty of the motherland.

Chapter 4 Intertextual Landscape: Reconstructing Geography and Envisioning the Chinese Communist Utopia

While landscape depicted in a heroic or lyrical mode could summon national imagining during the Seventeen Years, it could also integrate the two artistic modes and other political symbolism to produce an ideologically loaded image for the envisioning of the Chinese Communist utopia. Commissioned by the Central Committee of the PRC on the tenth anniversary of founding the nation in 1959, the monumental painting titled *This Land So Rich in Beauty* 江山如此多嬌 (fig. 4.1) invites viewers to imagine a boundless and eternal territory of the Chinese socialist state as their utopian dream. Art historians or researchers such as Julia Andrews, Kuiyi Shen, Anita Chung, Wu Hung, and Wan Xinhua have broadly discussed the creation and stylistic significance of this painting.²⁸⁸ Recently, Christine Ho has interpreted how the collaborative dimension of this work epitomizes the practices of collective production in the Maoist era.²⁸⁹ Nevertheless, none of these studies have investigated this painting through the perspective of the power of the landscape representation itself, nor have they considered how its production allowed the mental visualizing of the Chinese communist utopia among its patrons and artists, as well as comparable imagining from its viewers.

This chapter examines this landscape painting beyond the typical approach of considering it as a mere framed image, or as the mere product of a top-down political commission. Rather, it investigates the work as a site where the party leaders, artists, and viewers from all walks of life

²⁸⁸ See Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 229-236; Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 175-176; Chung ed., 142-146; Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and The Creation of A Political Space* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 124; and Wan Xinhua 萬新華, *Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao: Fu Baoshi Mao Zedong shiyi hua chuangzuo* 江山如此多嬌: 傅抱石毛澤東詩意畫創作 (This land so rich in beauty: Fu Baoshi's paintings on Mao Zedong's poetry; Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2010), 50-57.

²⁸⁹ Ho, "The People Eat for Free," 369.

could collectively envision a utopian image of a powerful Chinese socialist state.²⁹⁰ I argue that the imagining power of this landscape painting comes from the monumental political frameworks to which it is attached, as well as a multitude of extraneous visual, textual, and semantic references to which it is connected. Finally, this chapter interprets how the transposition of these sign systems into the production of this single monumental landscape painting constitute its unique form of “intertextuality”—theories about which were proposed by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s to explain how the assimilation of or reference to exterior texts in a given textual arrangement of a literary work would shape its meaning within the context of a society or history.²⁹¹ I conclude that this intertextuality of the landscape has played a critical role in triggering viewers to envision the utopia of the Chinese socialist state as a form of national imagining.

A Monumental Production

Occupying immense dimensions (5.5 x 9 meters), *This Land So Rich in Beauty* features an intricately composed landscape each component of which can refer to different regions of the Chinese territories. The lower right corner of the painting depicts a cluster of lush mountains that symbolize the landscapes of southeast China. A dense layer of pine trees coats their rocky crags, as a waterfall gushes from a crevice. Conversely, the lower left corner of the painting features the hilly mountainscapes of northern China. These mountains are capped with watchtowers and fortifying walls that collectively symbolize the Great Wall in the north. The upper left section of

²⁹⁰ For the notion of art as an agent, see Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford; New York City, NY: Clarendon Press, 1998).

²⁹¹ See Julia Kristeva, *Desire to Literature and Art: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York City, NY: Columbia University Press, 1980), 15 and 36-38.

the painting looks upon a massive group of snowy mountains that symbolizes the Himalayas located on China's western border. To its right, an expanse of water on flat ground symbolizes the Yellow River traversing a plain. Nearby, a red sun illuminates the gentle crests of a seascape, evoking the imagery of a rising sun above the Eastern Sea. Clearly, a composite landscape like this one can generate different interpretations: it can be read as a panoramic landscape that visualizes the boundless territories of mainland China, or as an emblematic landscape that conceptualizes the eternal Chinese national geography.

Produced in the summer of 1959, this painting was part of a vast array of momentous art projects commissioned by the CCP to celebrate the upcoming tenth anniversary of the PRC on October 1, 1959. Seeking to mobilize all of its cultural forces, as early as in fall 1958, the State Council began to summon cultural institutions around the country to launch their own flagship projects that would mark their position in history.²⁹² In the architectural domain, a series of grand state buildings were rapidly designed and constructed in the capital of Beijing by Chinese architects and engineers from the fall 1958 through September 1959. Branded as the “Ten Great Buildings,” these buildings showcased state-of-the-art construction techniques, facilities, and national designs of the newly founded Chinese socialist state in its time.²⁹³ With their enormous

²⁹² See Han Zi 涵滋, “Yinyue jie ye yao fangshe ‘weixing’” 音樂界也要放射‘衛星’ (The music industry also needs to emit a “satellite”), *Renmin yinyue* 人民音樂 (People’s Music), no. 10 (1958): 7; Liu Zhiming 劉芝明, “Wenhua bu fu buzhang Liu Zhiming zai shoudu chuban jie yingjie guoqing shi zhounian xiang dang xianli dongyuan dahui shang de baogao zhaiyao” 文化部副部長劉芝明在首都出版界迎接國慶十週年向黨獻禮動員大會上的報告摘要 (A summary of the report made by the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture Liu Zhiming on mobilizing the publishing industry in the capital for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the nation), *Dushu 讀書* (Reading), no. 21 (1958): 3; and Cai Chusheng 蔡楚生, “Xiangqi chuangzuo gaochao lai!—Zhunbei yingjie mingnian guoqing shi zhounian” 掀起創作高潮來!——準備迎接明年國慶十週年 (To set off a climax in creation! Getting prepared to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the nation of the next year), *Dianying yishu*, no. 10 (1958): 2.

²⁹³ For historical description about these ten buildings back in 1959, see Wu Han 吳晗, “Beijing, juda bianhua de shinian” 北京、巨大變化的十年 (Peking After Ten Years), *China Pictorial*, no. 19 (October 5, 1959): 16-19; and Liu Pao-hsi, “Renmin da huitang” 人民大會堂 (The Great Hall of the People), *China Pictorial*, no. 20 (October 20, 1959): 8-9.

size and scale, these ten great buildings were in need of a large number of artworks to adorn both the walls or spaces in their interiors and exteriors. Accordingly, CAA, the Ministry of Culture and other relevant departments organized three phases of art campaigns commissioning a number of paintings, sculptures, and decorative works for this purpose. The first campaign was held between 1958 and 1959. The second and third were history painting campaigns that occurred in 1961 and between 1964 and 1965, respectively.²⁹⁴

As the largest work commissioned in the first art campaign, *This Land So Rich in Beauty* was momentous in many ways. In terms of the location where it was made to be displayed, this painting was tailor-made for a prominent space on a giant wall standing across the grand marble staircase at the Great Hall of the People (fig. 4.2a-b). Exhibiting this monumental painting in this particular location of the Great Hall was critical to its fame and visibility. For one thing, this building not only housed the offices of the Standing Committees of the National People's Congress of the PRC but was also the most dignified venue for hosting national events that involved eminent guests from different parts of the world. Therefore, this painting uniquely enjoyed audiences of political elites who would view the painting on-site. This giant wall, located right across the grand marble staircase, was the key structure connecting the grand foyer on the first floor to the banquet hall on the second floor. The public display of the painting in this particular locale would guarantee its visibility to visiting political elites attending events in the banquet hall.²⁹⁵

In terms of patronage, the painting was directly commissioned by top leaders from the Central Committee of the CCP. These included individuals who have been mentioned in prior

²⁹⁴ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 228-250.

²⁹⁵ For the function designs of the Great Hall of the People, see Liu Pao-hsi, "Renmin da huitang," 8-9.

chapters, namely the Premier of the State Council Zhou Enlai, the Vice Premier and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Chen Yi, and the Chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Arts Circles (FLAC) Guo Moruo. Zhou, Chen and Guo were the three core leaders in the political, military and cultural domains of the PRC during its nation-building era. Skillful in political negotiation and diplomacy, Premier Zhou Enlai became a key member of the decision-making body of the CCP as early as the 1930s.²⁹⁶ His political status and power were second only to Chairman Mao. Vice Premier Chen Yi became a party functionary, and subsequently embarked on a career in the military within the CCP as early as the late 1920s.²⁹⁷ Guo Moruo possessed an eminent literary background as a leading member of the literary movement of Western romanticism and individualism during the May Fourth Movement in 1919. In the mid-1920s, he converted to communism and joined the CCP during his participation in the Northern Expedition (1926-1928). From that point, Guo became an influential communist cultural leader, especially in the fields of literature and theater.²⁹⁸ Considering the prominent and diverse backgrounds of these three leaders, their active participation in the conceptualization of this landscape painting illustrates how the CCP envisioned its function and effect in this flagship state building.

In terms of the artistic agents, this landscape was executed by two renowned painters, Fu Baoshi from Jiangsu Province and Guan Shanyue from Guangdong Province, both of whom have been studied in prior chapters.²⁹⁹ Their role as the collaborative painters of this work was clearly inscribed in standard script, “drawn by Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue in September 1959,” in the

²⁹⁶ Dick Wilson, *Zhou Enlai: A Biography* (New York City, NY: Viking, 1984).

²⁹⁷ Lanxin Xiang, *Mao's Generals: Chen Yi and the New Fourth Army* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 3-28.

²⁹⁸ Xiaoming Chen, *From the May Fourth Movement to Communist Revolution: Guo Moruo and the Chinese Path to Communism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), 1-2.

²⁹⁹ For Fu Baoshi, see pp. 32, 95, 105-6, 129-141 of this dissertation. For Guan Shanyue, see pp. 77-84.

lower right corner of the painting. Stylistically, Fu and Guan demonstrate contrasting painting styles: Fu was acclaimed for his liberated method of applying brush and ink in the creation of a dynamic yet lyrical language, whereas Guan Shanyue was skilled in using the same media to model images to create naturalistic effects. Despite their stylistic differences, the two artists were paired with one another for the production of this single painting. The practice of putting together two artist leaders from different parts of China in a single art production also contrasted with other projects that generally involved art practitioners who were trained or working within the same art institutions. Different theories have been proposed to explain the reason behind the arbitrary pairing of these two artists in this commission. A practical concern was that this would immediately double the artistic labor required to realize this huge painting within the given limited period of time frame for completion. However, more importantly, as Christine Ho argues, the capacity to harmonize the hands of two different artists within an official commission would exemplify the Chinese socialist ideology of relinquishing individualism for collectivism. Therefore, any stylistic inconsistencies in this painting could be interpreted as a deliberate gesture to symbolize the triumphant achievement of collectivism in socialist China.³⁰⁰

Certainly, Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue demonstrated much strength and quality to be selected as the ideal candidates for this political commission. In terms of the social status, Fu and Guan were not only notable regional art leaders,³⁰¹ but they had also developed their reputations

³⁰⁰ Ho, "The People Eat for Free," 348-349.

³⁰¹ After the founding of the PRC, Fu Baoshi resumed his teaching position at the Nanjing University (formerly National Central University). He held several positions in regional art institutes in Jiangsu province: he served as a member of the standing committee of the Nanjing Federation of Literary and Art Workers in 1951; as a member of the preparatory committee for the Jiangsu Federation of Literary and Art Workers in 1953; and as councilor of the East China Artists' Association in 1954; and as chairman of the preparatory committee for the Nanjing branch of the Chinese Artists Association in 1956. By the time he accepted this commission project in the summer of 1959, Fu was the director of the preparatory committee for the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute, which was later officially established in March in the following year. See Chung, *Chinese Art in An Age of Revolution*, 216-8. Guan Shanyue held several key positions at art institutions since the founding of the PRC: he was hired as the Professor

in the communist world during their sketching tours and exhibitions in socialist countries that took place in the late 1950s.³⁰² As for social connections, both painters were personally acquainted with Guo Moruo, the poet-party leader who physically participated in commissioning this project. Fu Baoshi became acquainted with Guo when he studied Japan in 1934, during which time they developed what would become a life-long mentorship and friendship, lasting until the death of Fu Baoshi in 1965.³⁰³ Guan Shanyue's painting was made known to Guo Moruo in 1944 when he organized his exhibition in Chongqing. Guo Moruo expressed his appreciation for Guan by composing and inscribing six poems in the panel above a painting of Guan, titled *Camel Bells Beyond the Great Wall* 塞外駝鈴 (1944, fig. 4.3).³⁰⁴ Artistically, both painters demonstrated a high level of dedication to serving politics in their art.³⁰⁵ Both painters

and Deputy Head of the Art Department of the Huanan Arts Institute in November 1949; he served as Professor and Deputy Director of the Zhongnan Art Academy in 1953. He became a member of the Communist Party of China in 1956. By the time he undertook this commission, he was Professor and Deputy Director of the newly founding Guangzhou Institute of Fine Arts, as well as Vice Chairman of the Guangdong branch of the China Artists Association. See *Chinese Painting – Works Painted in Co-operation by Four Masters of the Lingnan School: Zhao Shaoang, Li Xiongcai, Guan Shanyue and Yang Shanshen* (Hong Kong: Pung Ping Shan Museum, University of Hong Kong, 1983), 12; and Oriental Gallery, *A Collection of Guan Shanyue's Paintings from Life in America* (Hong Kong: Dongfang wenhua shiye gongsi, 1991), 68.

³⁰² Fu Baoshi led a delegation of five artists in an official tour of Czechoslovakia and Romania from May 25 to August 21, 1957, during which he had produced more than fifty paintings. See Chung, *Chinese Art in An Age of Revolution*, 218.

³⁰³ See Ye Zonggao 葉宗鎬, *Fu Baoshi nianpu* 傅抱石年譜 (Fu Baoshi's chronicle) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), 19.

³⁰⁴ To learn about the six poems, see Meng Gu 孟固, “‘Su dao jia shi zi rushen’—du Guo Moruo’s ‘ti Guan Shanyue hua’” 俗到家時自入神——讀郭沫若《題關山月畫》, in *Guo Moruo mingshi jianshang cidian* 郭沫若名詩鑒賞辭典, eds. Zang Kejia 段克家 and Qian Guangpei 錢光培 (Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1993), 467-473. Scholars such as Chen Junyu also noticed this. See Chen Junyu 陳俊宇, “Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao - shilun Guan Shanyue zaonian shanshuihua yishu de fazhan quxiang” 江山如此多嬌——試論關山月早年山水畫藝術的發展趨向 (Such a beautiful landscape: discussing the early developmental trend of Guan Shanyue's landscape painting), in *Guan Shanyue yu ershi shiji Zhongguo meishu* 關山月與二十世紀中國美術 (Guan Shanyue and Chinese Painting in the 20th Century), ed. Guan Shanyue meishuguan (Nanning: Guangxi meishu chubanshe, 2013), 336-338.

³⁰⁵ Since the establishment of the PRC, Fu swiftly reoriented his artistic production to fit the political needs of the new political era: In the 1950, Fu painted “in the style of new year's picture and began to “adopt Mao Zedong's poems as painting theme;” in 1953, he engaged in the production of revolutionary paintings. See Chung, *Chinese Art in An Age of Revolution*, 218-219. Guan was equally a significant painter from the south who fervidly engaged his

were experienced in the production of large-scale Chinese painting.³⁰⁶ These qualifications, experiences, and their backgrounds made Fu and Guan two optimal candidates in the commission of this monumental landscape painting.

“Snow” as an Eminent Prototype

The eminence of this painting also stemmed from the glories associated with its literary sources. Unlike other landscape paintings that drew from the scenery of a single location, this painting was based on the landscapes described in a poem titled “Snow—set to the tune of ‘*Qin yuan chun*’ (Springtime in Qin’s Garden)” 沁園春 · 雪 (hereafter “Snow”).³⁰⁷ Consisting of lines of unequal length, this poem was written in the form of classical *ci* poem, composed based on a specific tune pattern. “Snow” is the poem title, whereas “*Qin yuan chun*” is the tune title. “Snow” held a legendary position in the history of the Chinese socialist state. According to the standard official narrative, this poem was created by Chairman Mao Zedong when he was one of the top military leaders of the Chinese Communist Party during wartime in February 1936. At that time, Mao was leading the People’s Red Army of the CCP in a military expedition to cross the Yellow River in northern China in order to combat Japanese forces to the northeast.³⁰⁸ Before

artistic creation to the building of the New China. After the founding of the PRC, he successfully created a series of paintings that fitted the need of the new era.

³⁰⁶ In April 1959, Fu directed the Jiangsu artists in a collaborative painting project that produced four monumental paintings that would decorate the Chinese Embassy in Russia. A month later, he was commissioned along with other Jiangsu artists to produce a painting for the decoration of the Jiangsu Hall at the Great Hall of the People. His painting, *Yuhuatai*, is one of the four paintings decorating the hall. Chung, *Chinese Art in An Age of Revolution*, 219.

³⁰⁷ The translation of “*Qin yuan chun*” came from Jeremy Ingalls, *Dragon in Ambush: The Art of War in the Poems of Mao Zedong* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 358.

³⁰⁸ The dating of “Snow” was not investigated until the publication of *Mao Zedong shici sanshiqu shou* 毛澤東詩詞三十七首 (Thirty-seven poems of Mao Zedong), collaboratively by the Wenwu Press and the Renmin wenxue chubanshe (People’s literature press), in December 1963. See Yin Ling 尹凌, “‘Qin yuan chun’ yong xue ci zai Chongqing chuansong qijian de yichang douzheng” 《沁園春》咏雪詞在重慶傳誦期間的一場斗争 (The battle in

that, Mao had just completed the legendary excursion known as the Long March (1934-35).³⁰⁹

The adoption of a wartime poem as the prototype for this painting suggests its commemorative value to the CCP. The disparity between the year of the poem's creation and that of the painting suggests that a certain mechanism was at work to enable this poem to attract national interest in 1959.

As a poem, "Snow" held an irreplaceable position in the collective memory of the CCP. Composed in 1936, this poem was not circulated until 1945. On August 28, 1945, Mao Zedong flew from the Communist stronghold of Yan'an to meet with Chang Kai-shek, the commander-in-chief of the Nationalist Party (a.k.a. the KMT) of the Republican government at the wartime capital of Chongqing with the goal to form a post-war government after the end of the World War II.³¹⁰ During his stay in Chongqing, Mao Zedong shared this old poem with his old friend, Liu Yazi 柳亞子 (1887-1958).³¹¹ After Mao had left Chongqing, the poem was published for the first time in *Xinmin Evening News* 新民報晚刊, a mainstream newspaper temporarily based in Chongqing, on November 14, 1945. Two weeks later, it was republished in another mainstream

the dissemination and recitation of "Snow—set to the tune of 'Qin yuan chun'" in Chongqing), first written in April 1978; reprinted in *Qin yuan chun xue kaozheng* 《沁園春·雪》考証 (An evidential study of "Snow—set to the tune of 'Qin yuan chun'"), ed. Zhou Yongli 周永林 (Chongqing: Chongqing difang shi ziliao zu, 1983), 4-5; and 8-9.

³⁰⁹ In this march, Mao led the Red Army in fleeing the military purge by the Chinese Nationalist Party from the former soviet military base in Jiangxi province in the south and finally arrived at the new base in Shaanxi province in the north.

³¹⁰ It was a decisive moment for the CCP and the KMT to renegotiate their powers due to the shifting global dynamics as the Japanese military powers in Asia was tremendously impaired by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki two to three weeks prior. See Yin Ling, "yichang douzheng," 5 and 9.

³¹¹ Mao Zedong became friend with Liu Yazi, then a Nationalist, in Guangzhou in the mid-1920s. See Yin Ling 尹凌, "'Qin yuan chun' yong xue ci zai Chongqing chuansong qijian ruogan shishi cailiao buyi" 《沁園春》咏雪詞在重慶傳誦期間若干史實材料補遺 (Addendum to historical facts in the dissemination and recitation of "Snow—set to the tune of 'Qin yuan chun'" in Chongqing), first written in April 1981; reprinted in Zhou Yongli, ed., *Qin yuan chun xue kaozheng*, 19-20.

newspaper called *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報 based in the same city on November 28, 1945.³¹² The publication of this poem occurred at a sensitive time and place. Accordingly, “Snow” had generated intensive debates and discussions between the CCP and the KMT in the following two months. Poets, writers, and bureaucrats from both parties held varying responses to “Snow” depending on their ideological stances. Members from the two camps launched a discursive debate in the press on the contents of this poem. Some even responded in poetic form by writing other poems to the linguistic tonal patterns of “*Qin yuan chun*” as political affirmations or parodies.³¹³ “Snow” thus became a site for both literary creation and power struggle from late 1945 through early 1946.

“Snow” was also promoted as a literary canon by the CCP in the following decade. Written in classical *ci* poetic form, the poem was translated into vernacular language to allow broader public access in the party’s newspaper, *People’s Daily*, a year later in October 1946. The poem was given a musical tune so that it could be sung as a song.³¹⁴ Accompanied by the rising cult of Mao in the late 1950s, this poem was even more widely published. It was circulated in the first national periodical on poetry called *Shi kan* 詩刊 (Poetry periodical) in 1957.³¹⁵ It was also published in a variety of poetry and poem-song volumes of Mao in both Chinese and other

³¹² Xinmin Evening News 新民報晚刊 published the poem on November 14, 1945. *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報 published it two weeks later. For the full story of publishing this poem, see Yin Ling, “yichang douzheng,” 5-9; and Yin Ling, “shishi cailiao buyi,” 21-23.

³¹³ Yin Ling, “yichang douzheng,” 12-17; and Yin Ling, “shishi cailiao buyi,” 24-33.

³¹⁴ See Fan Wenlan 范文瀾, “*Qin yuan chun yiwen*” 沁園春譯文 (The translations of *Qin yuan chun*), *The People’s Daily*, October 20, 1946, 3. This restored the long-lost musical dimension of this classical literary genre because traditionally it should be given a musical pattern so that it could be sung. See Kang-i Sun Chang, *The Evolution of Chinese Tz’u Poetry: From Late T’ang to Northern Sung* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 1.

³¹⁵ See Mao Zedong 毛澤東, “Jiu ti shici shiba shou” 舊體詩詞十八首 (Eighteen poems in the old style), *Shi kan*, no. 1 (1957): 11-12.

languages for international distribution in the communist world.³¹⁶ Within the educational institutional setting, this poem was chosen as a key subject to be taught in middle-school language education, as shown in its publication in the textbook by the People's Education Press 人民教育出版社 in the early 1960s.³¹⁷ To facilitate teaching and learning, it was made into an audio version on vinyl record by the state-owned China Record Group 中國唱片社.³¹⁸ All in all, "Snow" was institutionalized as a repertoire of collective memory for the generation of Chinese youth who grew up in the new political era.

Outside China, "Snow" served as a national monument constructed through a network of institutional system in the Communist World in the year of 1959. First, the poem was translated into foreign languages along with other selected works of Mao for international distribution in socialist communities overseas.³¹⁹ As it approached the tenth anniversary of the PRC in 1959, the poem was published alongside congratulatory remarks for the tenth anniversary of the PRC in

³¹⁶ For poetry volumes, see Mao Zedong 毛澤東, *Mao Zedong shi ci shiji shou* 毛澤東詩詞十九首 (Nineteen poems of Mao Zedong; Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1958); and Zang Kejia 臧克家 and Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫, eds., *Mao Zedong shici shiba shou jiang jie* 毛澤東詩詞十八首講解 (Explanation of eighteen poems of Mao Zedong; Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1958). For poem-song volumes, see Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe 春風文藝出版社 ed., *Mao zhuxi shi ci gequ xuan* 毛主席詩詞歌曲選 (Selected poem-songs of Chairman Mao; Shenyang: Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 1959). For publications distributed outside of China, see Mao Zedong 毛澤東, *Mao Zedong shici shiji shou* 毛澤東詩詞十九首 (Nineteen poems of Mao Zedong) (Hong Kong: Xin minzhu chubanshe, 1958); Tse-Tung Mao, *Mao Tse-Tung: Nineteen Poems* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1958); and Zedong Mao, *Osmnáct básní na staré nápěvy* (Eighteen poems on old tunes) (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1958).

³¹⁷ Sun Haizhen 孫海震, "Fanwen buneng ji jiao kewen" 範文不能擠掉課文 (Textbook essays should not be fully replaced by extraneous model essays), *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 (People's education), no. 3 (1963): 61.

³¹⁸ Wang Huanliang 王煥良, "Jieshao zhongxue yuwen, yingyu jiaoxue liushengpian" 介紹中學語文、英語教學留聲片 (Introducing phonograph records for middle-school Chinese and English language education), *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 (People's education), no. 9 (1962): 9.

³¹⁹ For instance, see Mao Zedong 毛澤東, *Mao Zedong shici shiji shou* 毛澤東詩詞十九首 (Nineteen poems of Mao Zedong) (Hong Kong: Xin minzhu chubanshe, 1958); Tse-Tung Mao (Zedong Mao), *Mao Tse-Tung: Nineteen Poems* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1958); Zedong Mao, *Osmnáct básní na staré nápěvy*.

the foreign press.³²⁰ Furthermore, it was also printed as a decorative image on the surface of national diplomatic gifts.³²¹ In this context, “Snow” exerted power far beyond its original scope as a literary creation. It glorified the PRC’s imagined triumph on its tenth anniversary in 1959.

“Snow” as a Malleable Site

In this commission, the artists were instructed to visualize the landscape described in “Snow.” This political assignment posted numerous technical challenges to the two artists due to the complex literary structure of and condensed messages in this *ci* poem. Here is the Chinese and the English translated versions of this *ci* poem:

The scenery of the northern lands, Sealed in ice for a thousand <i>li</i> , Blown by snow for ten thousand <i>li</i> . I gaze within and beyond the Great Wall, Seeing only vast tundra. Up and down the Yellow River, The billowing water has quickly frozen. Mountains dance like silver snakes. Plateaus stretch like white, waxy elephants. They try to compete with Heaven in height. We must wait for a sunny day When a red robe will cover its white lining Becoming exceptionally enchanting.	北國風光， 千里冰封， 萬里雪飄。 望長城內外， 惟餘莽莽； 大河上下， 頓失滔滔。 山舞銀蛇， 原馳蠟象， 欲與天公試比高。 須晴日， 看紅裝素裹， 分外妖嬈。
This land so rich in beauty. Causing countless heroes to rush to bow in homage. Alas, Qin Shihuang and Han Wudi Possessed little literary flair. The first emperors of the Tang and Song	江山如此多嬌， 引無數英雄競折腰。 惜秦皇漢武， 略輸文采； 唐宗宋祖，

³²⁰ See Xinhua News Agency 新華社, “Jieshao wo guo shinian lai de weida chengjiu. Xiongdi guojia guangfan qingzhu wo guo guoqing” 介紹我國十年來的偉大成就 兄弟國家廣泛慶祝我國國慶 (Introduction of the great achievements of our country in the past ten years. Fraternal countries celebrate our national day), *People's Daily*, September 29, 1959, 3.

³²¹ See Xinhua News Agency 新華社, “Hu Zhiming zhuxi zai Xi'an canguan” 胡志明主席在西安參觀 (Chairman Ho Chi Minh visiting Xi'an), *People's Daily*, August 9, 1959, 3.

Lacked poetic charm. As for the one most favored by Heaven, Genghis Khan, Knew only how to shoot giant eagles. All of them are gone. For truly outstanding men, Better look to the present. ³²²	稍遜風騷。 一代天驕， 成吉思汗， 只識彎弓射大雕。 俱往矣， 數風流人物， 還看今朝。
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“Snow” describes a series of landscapes and political metaphors within a two-stanza structure. The first stanza depicts a wintry landscape in northern China, focusing on a broad expanse of territory sealed in ice and snow. It also describes the vast tundra and the frozen Yellow River located within and beyond the Great Wall. Then, it employs imagery of dancing silver snakes and bright, galloping wax elephants as a metaphor to describe the undulating profile of the mountains and the imposing scale of the plateaus. This stanza ends by encouraging its reader to wait for a sunny day when the radiance of the sun illuminates this frozen landscape, making it exceptionally enchanting.

While the first stanza focuses exclusively on the depiction of a snowy landscape, the second stanza exclaims of its irresistible beauty, describing how the exceptional beauty of the landscape has prompted countless heroes to rush to bow in homage. Then, it lauds the military competence of a list of historically renowned emperors—including Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Taizu of the Northern Song dynasty, and Genghis Khan of the Yuan dynasty—all of whom, however, lack the literary talents necessary to be considered a well-rounded hero. This stanza ends by saying these stories are all outdated. One must look forward to the truly outstanding man or men of the present age. As Ban

³²² My gratitude to Richard Strassberg for his assistance in refining my translation, which was originally developed upon several sources, including Willis Barnstone, *The Poems of Mao Zedong* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Pres, 2008), 71, 73; and Ingalls, *Dragon in Ambush*, 360.

Wang argues, the rhetorical use of landscapes lends the poem a “sublime quality.”³²³ Such an aesthetic has characterized the revolutionary spirit of the CCP in wartime China.

This poem became a malleable site for artistic creation in the late 1950s. Due to its increasing political significance, many artists were commissioned to adopt the poem as a theme in their own art. Each of these artistic attempts have adopted different approaches. Fu Baoshi, for example, was invited by the People’s Art Publishing House to create a series of paintings based on Mao’s poems in December 1958 (fig. 4.4).³²⁴ In this earlier creation, Fu depicted a scene in which a sturdy middle-aged man stands atop a mountain in the lower right corner of the painting. This man, attended by a military assistant, gazes upon an expansive snowscape. The iconography of this man reveals him to be Mao: the Soviet-style military winter uniforms worn by the Red Army of the CCP during wartime, an attendant holding a big flagpole behind him, and the flags that define the periphery of the military stronghold of the Red Army. This painting shows Fu Baoshi’s interest in picturing the historical moment when Mao beheld the northern China snowscape. By positioning Mao and his attendant in the lower right corner of the painting, Fu allows viewers to imagine the moment of Mao’s captivation and also to gaze upon the snowy landscape itself, dominating the majority of the painting.

When collaborating with his assigned partner, Guan Shanyue, during the summer of 1959, Fu’s manner of visually translating “Snow” reveals a methodological shift (fig. 4.1). *This*

³²³ As Ban Wang argues, this landscape bespeaks the aesthetics of “the sublime” because several lines in this poem promptly evokes “canonically sublime images” frequently described in western literature, such as the imageries of “vastness, immensity, a white and blank expanse and stillness, clashing inhuman forces.” Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 189.

³²⁴ These paintings were intended to be published as an illustrated book of Mao’s poem for an international book exhibition held in Leipzig, German Democratic Republic, in August 1959. Fu painted at least thirteen paintings in the format of album leaves, all currently collected at Nanjing Museum, among which one of the painting leaf is discussed above. See Chung, *Chinese Art in An Age of Revolution*, 219.

Land So Rich in Beauty demonstrates a strong interest in visualizing primarily the landscape portion of the first stanza of “Snow.” The vast snowy mountains depicted in the upper left corner of the painting show a broad expanse of icy northern territory as it is described in the first three lines of the poem. The craggy mountains capped with the Great Wall in the lower left corner echoes the imagery of the vast tundra within and beyond the Great Wall as it is described in the fourth and fifth lines of the poem. The river plain in the middle-ground of the painting corresponds to the imagery of the frozen Yellow River, described in the sixth and the seventh lines. The powerful curvilinear forms throughout the foreground and middle-ground of the painting echo the metaphors of dancing silver snakes portrayed in the eighth line. Lastly, the red sun rising from the sea in the upper right corner of the painting alludes to the aspiration for a sunny day expressed in the last three lines of the first stanza.

As “Snow” was translated from its literary form into a visual form, the literary landscapes that it describes in linear fashion were crystallized into a single image. Now juxtaposed with one another, the relative positions of these landscapes articulate a new spatial order that is not mentioned in the poem. This reorientation of the landscape resulted from the nature of its production. In its monumental commission, the two artists were requested to visualize specifically the first line of the second stanza of the poem, “This land so rich in beauty” (“*jiangshan ru ci duo jiao*”) 江山如此多嬌, which was later adopted as the title of the painting.³²⁵

This line has become a popular subject in many cultural productions, and particularly in those made in the year of 1959. Even though the scope of visualization was narrowed down to

³²⁵ Scholars have translated this line in various ways. I adopt this translation, “this land so rich in beauty,” from the original English translation made by the Foreign Language Press, Beijing, in the 1970s for international distribution. This translation was later adopted by both Julia Andrews and Ban Wang, in Julia Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 230-231; and Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History*, 188-189.

this particular line, it still welcomed artists to translate it in different manners. For instance, under the hand of Pan Tianshou 潘天壽 (1897-1971), the line “this land so rich in beauty” was visualized as a scene with a broad expanse of river separating two river banks (fig. 4.5). This composition demonstrates the continuation of the classical landscape formula of “the widely separated riverbanks,” first invented by a fourteenth-century landscape master Ni Zan 倪瓈 (1301-1374), later continuously reinvented by painters in the following centuries.³²⁶ Instead of depicting a desolate landscape, Pan revised this formula by depicting a row of tall plum blossom trees with pink flower blossoms at the top in the foreground and a single massive blue-and-green mountain in the background. As a result, Pan constructed a picture of simultaneous feminine and masculine beauty within the painting as a way to visualize the message entailed in the poem’s line. This vertically rendered composition offers a sharp contrast to the circular dynamic rhythm created in the panoramic landscape by Fu and Guan.

Apart from serving as the painting’s title and theme, this line was also thematized in a wide range of cultural products. For instance, it was also adopted as the title of a travelling solo exhibition of Li Keran in 1959, which showcased Chinese landscape ink paintings that he created during and after his sketching trips around the country since 1954. Likewise, it had also driven the August First Film Studio to produce a film that bore a similar title, *This Land Rich in Beauty* (*Jiangshan duo jiao* 江山多嬌, fig. 4.6). As the increasing production of related works demonstrates, the line “This land so rich in beauty” inspired widespread euphoria, once again, as the tenth anniversary of the PRC approached. Not only did this line function as the highlight of the national monument for international consumption as stated earlier, it also became a

³²⁶ Cahill, “The Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368),” 172-3.

commonly depicted subject, a malleable site, an aesthetic license, for artistic creation in the heavily censored cultural environment of the late 1950s.

The Party Leaders' Imaginations

Without a doubt, the active participation of the three top party leaders in the painting's conception was the strongest reason for the shifted approach of translating the poem and that particular line into visual art. As pointed out by many scholars, the comments given by the leaders were also political imperatives that the two painters were obligated to follow.³²⁷ However, if we consider the interpretation of the poem to be a part of the process of this painting's creation, the role of each leader takes on a different significance: instead of considering them the top-down authorities that the artists must oblige, I venture to consider them as additional co-creators of the painting. I regard their approaches to conceiving an idealized landscape a collective activity of imagining a national emblem for the nation-state on its tenth anniversary.

The Poet-General: A Heroically Beautiful Landscape

Among the party leaders, Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Chen Yi played a vital role in reshaping the power dynamics between the landscape and its viewers. According to Julia Andrews, he emphasized "heroic beauty" as the key effect to pursue in the landscape painting. Chen envisioned that the ultimate landscape must demonstrate tender, loveable and seductive qualities. This is because he considers the last word of the first line of the second

³²⁷ See Andrews, *Art and Politics*, 229 and 231; and Ho, "The People Eat for Free", 367.

stanza, “*jiao*” 嬌, to be the main idea of the poem.³²⁸ As an adjective, “*jiao*” has strong feminine connotations in both the visual and literary culture of modern China. Such an attribution is maintained in the poem as it can be contextualized with the last term, “*yaorao*” 妖嬈 (luscious), in the final sentence of the first stanza to describe an alluring quality of the snowy landscape when it is illuminated by the sun.³²⁹

Chen’s comment radically reshaped the artists’ interpretation of the landscapes described in “Snow.” Instead of focusing on the snowy mountainscape described at the beginning of the poem, the two artists were redirected to the alluring quality described in its middle section.³³⁰ Accordingly, the landscape was re-characterized as an overwhelmingly beautiful image rather than a barren, icy land. This re-characterization suggests a male gaze that imagined the landscape as a gendered body capable of captivating the gaze and the mind of its viewers through its beauty. Furthermore, this comment altered the power relationship between the painting and its viewer. Instead of treating the landscape as an object to be viewed, Chen considered the landscape to be a subject that could trigger the viewer’s sense of affection for it. In other words, the landscape, properly conceived, had its own agency and could exert its power upon viewers.

Beyond its duty to be beautiful, Chen emphasized that a landscape must demonstrate a sense of heroism. His interpretation of heroism conceived of the idealized landscape in terms of its spatial and temporal scope; therefore, he advised that this heroic effect be achieved by

³²⁸ Andrews, *Art and Politics*, 231.

³²⁹ “*Yaorao*” was used by the writer Mao Dun in his prose written in the 1930s to describe the posture of a mermaid who was sitting and singing on the pebbles on the beach, with her luscious body seducing the gaze and imagination of the protagonist. See Mao Dun 茅盾, “Footprints on the beach” 沙灘上的腳迹 (Footprints on the beach).

³³⁰ As the two artists recalled, they were originally interested in visualizing the snowy landscape described in the first stanza of the poem. See Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, “Beijing zuo hua ji” 北京作畫記 (The experience of painting in Beijing), *Nanjing ribao* 南京日報 (Nanjing Daily), October 10, 1959; reprinted in *Fu Baoshi meishu wenji* 傅抱石美術文集, ed. Ye Zonggao 葉宗鎬 (Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1986), 631.

depicting the four corners and four seasons of the motherland. This included the lands on both sides of the Great Wall, a significant length of the Yellow River, and the snowy mountains in northwestern China. All of these images are described in the first stanza of the poem.³³¹ Furthermore, Chen also asserted that the artists should depict the economically and culturally affluent area located to the south of the Yangtze River known as Jiangnan, even though it was not mentioned in the poem. Chen's approach of interpreting "Snow" manifests his preoccupation with a heroic landscape and its boundless territories. It also demonstrates his interest in constructing a spectacular landscape that showcases the imagined beauty of the motherland.³³² This narrative is reminiscent of a passage co-authored by Fu on his experience of executing this political production:

... Many leader comrades, including Vice Premier Chen Yi, Guo Moruo, and Wu Han, deeply cared about our creation. [They] offered us many valuable comments, which were of great inspiration to us. Although the theme of this poem of Chairman Mao is praising snow, it is not confined to the depiction of snow. Through extolling snow, it seeks to portray the boundless size and the seductive beauty of the territory of [our] motherland...³³³

Chen's imagining of a heroically boundless landscape reminds us of his dual social roles as a poet and a general. As a young adult, Chen developed a strong interest in literary study and aspired to become a writer in the field. Even though he was later drawn to a military career, he continued to compose poetry—mostly in classical *shi* and *ci* poetic forms, some of which demonstrated a strong interest in depicting vast territories.³³⁴ His role as a military commander

³³¹ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 231.

³³² Ibid., 231.

³³³ Original Chinese text: “.....陳毅副總理、郭沫若、吳晗等許多領導同志非常關懷我們作畫，提了許多寶貴意見，使我們受到很大啟發。毛主席的這首詞，雖然題的是‘咏雪’，但它並不僅限於雪的描寫，而是通過咏雪來描寫祖國江山的遼闊廣大，美姿多嬌.....” Fu Baoshi, “Beijing zuo hua ji,” 631.

³³⁴ See *Chen Yi shi ci xuanji* 陳毅詩詞選集 (Selected works of Chen Yi 's poems; Beijing: Renmi wenxue chubanshe, 1977), 173-4, 175, 179, 180, 181-2, 203-4, 242.

provided him with further knowledge of China's landscapes, by bringing him experience in leading military expeditions and engaging in battles all around the country. For instance, during the Long March, Chen was responsible for leading the last group of the Red Army soldiers in the soviet military base in Jiangxi province to break through the final line of military encirclement imposed by the local Nationalist government in spring 1935. During the following three years, he engaged in ferocious guerrilla warfare in the region. During the civil war between the CCP and the KMT from 1947 to 1949, Chen was responsible for deploying strategic plans and directing military operations to cross the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, with the goal of crushing the Nationalist defense lines in militarily strategic strongholds.³³⁵ After the founding of the People's Republic, he was promoted to the Vice Premier of the State Council in 1954 and to Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1958. This further strengthened his mobility as he represented the PRC in both domestic and diplomatic meetings within and outside of the country.³³⁶ His geographical mobility within and beyond the PRC provides a biographical reference with which to interpret his interest in constructing a heroically beautiful landscape in this commission.

The idea of pursuing heroic beauty had become an aesthetic one by this time in the late 1950s. As pointed out by Meng Yue, during this period, literary discourse was dominated by the aesthetics of strong and beautiful female characters who were often "superior to surrounding male characters." This aesthetic concern displaced the "strong man/weak woman" model that had prevailed in pre-communist China.³³⁷ The idea of a powerful woman is exemplified in the

³³⁵ See Lanxin Xiang, *Mao's Generals*, 25-28; 135-158.

³³⁶ A key trip that he had made includes leading the delegation of the Central People's Government to Tibet to celebrate the establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet in 1956. See Zha Junfeng 查俊峰, Su Min 蘇敏, and He Yinglong 何應龍, *Wannian Chen Yi 晚年陳毅* (Later years of Chen Yi; Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 2000), 81, 96-103, and 114.

³³⁷ Meng Yue, "Female Images and National Myth," in *Gender Politics in Modern China: Writing and Feminism*, ed. Tani E. Barlow (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 132.

character design in the film, *This Land Rich in Beauty*, in which the main female character is depicted as a communist heroine who aspired to mobilize her village men to transform a barren mountain into arable lands during the Great Leap Forward (fig. 4.6). According to Shuqin Cui, since 1949, Chinese socialist discourse had revised the gender dynamics of the society by promising “women the legitimate right to enter the public realm and has represented them to the outside world as ‘the upholders of half the sky.’ Women were masculinized by the political discourse that they could “perform all tasks as well as men.”³³⁸ This new order of gender dynamics turned strong, heroic beauty into an attractive attribute, or even an aesthetic preoccupation, in the visual culture of the PRC. From this analysis, we can see that Chen Yi’s stipulation of depicting a heroically beautiful landscape was not an arbitrary decision. Rather, it was predicated upon the visual conventions of its time so that this monumental painting under official commission could communicate the aesthetics of the socialist era.

The Poet: A Rising Red Sun

While Chen Yi’s interpretation strengthened the geographical coverage and visual effect of the landscape, Guo Moruo’s advice contributed to the compression of time within the painting. According to Julia Andrews, Guo Moruo emphasized that the inclusion of this image would symbolize the rising of the PRC, as if a rising sun, over the past ten years.³³⁹ This narrative is matched by Fu Baoshi’s writing in 1959, in which he described the guidance that he and his collaborator Guan Shanyue received on visualizing the message conveyed in the last

³³⁸ Shuqin Cui, *Women through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003), 55.

³³⁹ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 231.

three lines of the first stanza, that “...We must wait for a sunny day. When a red robe will cover its white lining. Becoming exceptionally enchanting”:

When Chairman [Mao] wrote this *ci* [poem], the entire nation was not yet liberated. The *ci* poem says, ‘We must wait for a sunny day / When a red robe will cover its white lining / Becoming exceptionally enchanting.’ However, nowadays, the condition has changed. The ‘sun’ has already risen up in the sky. The east shines red. Its radiances are illuminating the vast territory of the motherland. [Thus] A red sun must be drawn in the painting.³⁴⁰

Guo’s instruction reshaped the sense of time in the painting. While these three lines suggest a futuristic presence of sunny days, Guo’s conception emphasizes the coexistence of a red sun with the landscape. In doing so, he compressed the sense of time of the poem from the future ascendance of a red sun to its immediate presence in the painting.

Guo’s interest in depicting a red sun within the landscape stems from his personal interest in using this image in his own literary creations. As a romanticist leader in the New Poetry Movement in 1919, the young Guo frequently employed the sun as a theme or trope when composing poetry in the 1920s.³⁴¹ Most distinctively, his poems, “Ode to the Sun” 太陽禮讚 (1921), “Seeing Sunrise from a Boat” 海舟中望日出 (1921), and “Above Sea” 海上 (1920s), strongly rely on the motif of the sun to construct a romantic sentiment within his literary work.³⁴² As he became a senior cultural leader of the PRC after 1949, his poems continued to demonstrate an interest in this motif. In these works, however, he politicizes the motif into a “red sun” as a

³⁴⁰ Original Chinese text: “主席寫這首詞的時候，全國還沒有解放，詞裡有‘須晴日，看紅裝素裹，分外妖嬈’。可是今天情況不同了，‘太陽’已經出來了，‘東方紅’了，它的光芒已經普照着大地，畫面上一定要畫出一輪紅日。” Fu Baoshi, “Beijing zuo hua ji.”

³⁴¹ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 177-200.

³⁴² See Zang Kejia 臧克家, ed., *Guo Moruo ming shi jianshang cidian* 郭沫若名詩鑒賞辭典 (A guided appreciation of Guo Moruo's renowned poems; Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1993), 107, 112, and 191.

symbol of the ubiquitous presence of the two communist leaders, Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong.³⁴³ The sun was later used exclusively to symbolize the omnipresence of Mao.³⁴⁴ In this regard, Guo's assertion that a red sun be included in the production of landscape illustrates his role as co-author of the painting, and should be understood as an extension of the romanticist impulses he felt towards this motif as a poet.

The Premier: Architectural Reframing

In addition to its content and form, the party leaders also considered the spatial reception of the painting on the site. During an inspection of the painting in the middle of September of 1959, Premier Zhou Enlai, together with other party leaders, had an opportunity to examine one of the final versions of the painting. They were unsatisfied with the size of the painting and the red sun in comparison to its surrounding architectural space. Moreover, they pointed out that the upper left corner of the painting, which appeared to be overly grey, had to be repainted in order to produce a beautiful effect.³⁴⁵ Accordingly, the two artists promptly created a new version, enlarging the painting from its original size of 4 x 7.5 meters to a bigger size of 5.5 x 9 meters, despite the fact that the National Day was approaching in two weeks. The artists also repainted the snowy mountains in its upper left and the red sun in its upper right to fulfill the requirements of the party leaders.³⁴⁶

³⁴³ Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Wenxue chubu duwu. Mao Zedong de qizhi yinfeng piaoyang* 文學初步讀物. 毛澤東的旗幟迎風飄揚 (Literary reading for beginners. Mao Zedong's banner fluttering in the wind; Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1953), 11 and 15.

³⁴⁴ See Zang Kejia, *Guo Moruo ming shi jianshang cidian*, 300.

³⁴⁵ Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 231; and Fu Baoshi, "Beijing zuo hua ji," 632.

³⁴⁶ Fu Baoshi, "Beijing zuo hua ji," 632.

The enlargement of the painting critically strengthened its visual impact on-site. Not only does it cover a larger area of the wall, but it also dramatizes the visual and spatial dynamics between the painting and the viewer by demanding the latter to gaze ever higher up into the painting as they behold it. The enlarged sun also reinforces the visual impact it is intended to produce when viewed at a distance. As a viewer ascends the grand staircase, she can experience the simulated effect of the red sun rising above the stairs and illuminating the landscape depicted underneath. This effect prompts associative thinking of the vivid imagery described in a song titled “The East Is Red,” which became the national song in the PRC in the late 1950s.

Zhou’s attention to the architectural framing of the painting echoes his political role in the PRC. As Premier of the State Council, Zhou was a high-ranking government leader who supervised all kinds of state affairs. These included the construction of the Ten Great Buildings, as well as the national celebration of the tenth anniversary of the PRC in Beijing in 1959. Additionally, as the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC from 1949 through 1958, Zhou has represented the state at many diplomatic events, including the renowned Bandung Conference held in Indonesia in 1955.³⁴⁷ The Great Hall of the People was constructed as an architectural monument to celebrate the triumph and technological advances of the Chinese socialist state on its tenth anniversary. *This Land So Rich in Beauty*, prominently displayed within this venue, was subject to political scrutiny of its scale to impact the viewers.

³⁴⁷ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室周恩來研究組, ed., *Zhou Enlai hua zhuan, 1898-1976* 周恩來畫傳 (A pictorial biography of Zhou Enlai 1898-1976) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2006), 229-233.

The Artists' Imaginations

Appointed as collaborative painters, painters Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue shared the critical roles of translating the poem from its literary form into visual form. Without a doubt, the two artists could exercise only limited artistic freedom in this particular commission because everything was carefully conceived of by the leaders in order to produce their vision of a perfect landscape. As the agents who executed the production, the two painters were able to utilize their strengths and skills to participate in imagining the idealized landscape in a way that the party leaders could not.

Two extant sketches by Fu offer us a glimpse into the role he played in the process of composing the landscape.³⁴⁸ One of these sketches belongs to the Nanjing Museum (fig. 4.7); the other one is owned by the Fu family (fig. 4.8). These two sketches show the experimentations explored by Fu at the stage of designing the landscape. The Nanjing Museum sketch distinctively features a dynamic composition formed by a diagonal that runs from the lower right corner through the upper left corner of the painting (fig 4.7). Three kinds of landscape are progressively arranged along this diagonal: the southern lush landscape, the northern craggy landscape, and the western snowy mountainscape. With this organizing scheme, these three individual landscapes create a spatially unified picture in which each landscape, though distinct in geological conditions and forms, transitions smoothly into the next. The sense of spatial unity in this sketch

³⁴⁸ Illustrating the hand of Fu, these two sketches served as the preparatory sketches or illustrative proposals submitted by the artists to the party leaders for the approval. This idea echoes a memoir written by Zhang Guitong 張貴桐, one of the craftsmen who produced the giant paper for the painting, that Fu and Guan had created different sketches for seeking comments from the party leader, before their realization of them on big paper. Zhang Guitong, “Renming da huitang ‘Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao’ ju hua de zhuangbiao jingguo” 人民大會堂‘江山如此多嬌’巨畫的裝裱經過 (The progress of mounting the monumental painting, *This Land So Rich in Beauty*, for the Great Hall of the People), *Zongheng* 縱橫 (1997): 58.

contrasts sharply with the sense of spatial disjunction presented in the final version of the painting.

Alternatively, the other sketch—the one belonging to the Fu family—shows how Fu further revised the composition of the landscape (fig. 4.8). First, this sketch bears a new aspect ratio; its height is lengthened in relationship to its length. Within this new frame, the positions of the northern mountain and the Yellow River are swapped. As a result, the northern mountains are pushed downward from their central position to the lower edge of the painting, leaving the Yellow River to occupy the center position of the painting. Furthermore, in this sketch, a red sun is depicted to the upper right of the painting. These two aspects of the recomposition suggest that this particular sketch was created towards the very end of this commission in the middle of September.

For viewers familiar with the visual culture of East Asia, the composition of the first sketch may bring to mind certain regional practices of landscape depiction—for example, the celebrated series of landscape paintings made by the modern Japanese artist Yokoyama Taikan 橫山大觀 (1868-1958), from the 1920s through 1940s. *The Great Shining Japanese Nation of Eight Islands* (1941, fig. 4.9) is one of his most renowned artworks, presented to the emperor of Japan as a national painting just before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.³⁴⁹ In terms of the composition, this painting resembles Fu's sketch by depicting a panoramic landscape in which the foreground is dominated by a sea of clouds, and the background is filled with an endless seascape. Further echoing Fu's sketch are the two mountain tops emerging from the clouds in the lower left corner of the painting and the sun rising above the sea in the upper right.

³⁴⁹ Wen Fong, *Between Two Cultures: Late-Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Chinese Paintings from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York City, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 118.

The spatial continuity and the relative positions of the scenic elements closely echo those adopted by Fu in his sketch. As questioned by Wen Fong, it remains unclear whether Fu would have seen this specific painting by the Japanese master.

Without a doubt, Fu Baoshi was familiar with the art of Yokoyama Taikan. Between 1934 and 1935, Fu received his art education at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Tokyo.³⁵⁰ His early paintings demonstrated his awareness of the themes and techniques of Taikan's painting. Fu also discussed his views on Taikan's art, especially in his writing published during wartime in the 1930s and the 1940s.³⁵¹ Culturally, Taikan was a widely known modern Japanese artist, promoted in China as early as the 1920s.³⁵² As a method of negotiating powers and deploying cultural diplomacy with countries in East Asia, the PRC continuously promoted Taikan as a key modern Japanese artist, even after the founding of the PRC in the 1950s.³⁵³ In this context, the Fu family sketch shows an artistic attempt to translate existing visualizations of East Asia into this commission. As his sketch shares the visual language of his Japanese peers, it takes advantage of the visual power associated with this particular mode of organizing visually disparate landscapes within one image.

³⁵⁰ Fong, *Between Two Cultures*, 107; Chung, *Chinese Art in the Age of Revolution*, 214.

³⁵¹ Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, "Minguo yilai guohua zhi shi de guancha" 民國以來國畫之史的觀察 (An observation of the history of national painting since the founding of Republic China), *Wenshi ban yuekan* 文史半月刊, no. 34 (July 1937); reprinted in Ye Zonggao (1986), 173-178; and Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, "Cong Zhongguo meishu de jingshen shang lai kan kangzhan bi sheng" 從中國美術的精神上來看抗戰必勝 (We will certainly win the war of resistance against Japanese judging from the spirit of Chinese art), *Shishi xin bao* 時事新報 (current affairs), April 10, 1940; reprinted in Ye Zonggao, *Fu Baoshi meishu wenji*, 225-227.

³⁵² See "Huajia xie hua dong du canyu zhanlan hui" 畫家携畫東渡參與展覽會 (Painters carry paintings eastward to participate in the exhibition), *Shen Bao* 申報, May 6, 1922, 15; Liu Haisu 劉海粟, "Ou you tongxun (bashi er)" 歐游通訊(八十二) (Correspondence on travelling in Europe), *Shen Bao* 申報, October 31, 1930, 13; and "Xiandai Riben huazhan shiwu ri zhi nian ri zai Daxin gongsi hua ting juxing" 現代日本畫展十五日至廿日在大新公司畫廳舉行 (Modern Japanese painting exhibition taking place at the art gallery of Daxin Company from 15th to 20th), *Shen Bao* 申報, June 14, 1943, 4.

³⁵³ Ye Qianyu 葉淺予, "Ping Riben xiandai huazhan bing zhi riben huajia" 評日本現代畫展並致日本畫家 (A review on Japanese modern art exhibition and a message to Japanese painters), *People's Daily*, June 30, 1960, 8.

Apart from composition, these two sketches also show Fu's experimentation with his depiction of the southern Jiangnan territory in the lower right corner of the painting. A series of photos show that Fu was in charge of depicting this southern landscape in the final painting (fig. 4.10-4.11). As shown in the two sketches, he has experimented with the form of the mountain: from only a single mountain in one sketch (fig. 4.7) to a configuration that consists of three components in another sketch (fig. 4.8). In terms of the ecology of this landscape, Fu has explored the depiction of a nourishing natural habitat bearing numerous types of vegetation in one sketch (fig. 4.7). In another, he explores the approach of rendering only a cluster of craggy mountains that is covered solely by pine trees (fig. 4.8). Ultimately, all of these experiments were consolidated into a cluster of large boulders with a distinctive curvy form in the final painting (fig. 4.1). These boulders add weight to the foreground of the painting. In terms of color, the final mountainscape presents a majestic quality due to the use of vibrant blue and green tones. As for the motifs, the pine trees were further magnified, strengthening the green and eternal quality of the landscape. A running stream was added to the lower right corner to bring life and momentum to the painting. This final configuration should be seen as an artistic negotiation of the leaders' interest in creating a southern Chinese landscape that testifies to strength and beauty.

The other collaborating painter, Guan Shanyue, exercises equal artistic agency in the painting. In particular, the two pine trees standing in the middle of the foreground of the painting clearly show the hand of Guan. The strong trunks and twisted branches of these trees resemble those depicted in Guan's *Pine* (fig. 4.12), a painting likewise produced for the decoration of the Great Hall of the People in September 1959. A photo captures a moment when Guan is drawing one of the pines trees further reconfirms that Guan is the painter of these images (fig. 4.11).

Apart from the trees, the northern mountainscape in the lower left corner of the painting also testify to Guan's involvement. This is because Guan excelled at structuring a mountain with curvy ridges and undulating profiles, as shown in his depiction of a northern mountainscape in his sketch on *Mao Zedong's Verse in 16 Syllables* (fig. 4.13) in 1958. By fully utilizing his personal style to render these scenic elements, Guan is able to participate in the envisioning of this panoramic landscape. From these analyses, we can see that even though the two artists were responsible for follow the instructions given by their leaders, they were able to experiment with different ways of utilizing their artistic knowledge and techniques. It is through this characteristic way of inscribing their own artistic presence in the painting that they, too, participated in the imagining of an ideal landscape.

The Viewer's Imaginations Through Different Sign Systems

Upon completion in late September in 1959, *This Land So Rich in Beauty* brought together the imaginative contributions made at different stages by the party leaders and the artists. It was not only exhibited on-site, but reproductions of the image circulated widely in official newspapers, journals, and pictorial magazines.³⁵⁴ Certainly, such circulation served as

³⁵⁴ *This Land So Rich in Beauty* was published in official newspapers such as the *People's Daily*, *Xinhua Daily* 新華日報, which were circulated to the public nationwide. It was also published in evening newspapers, *Beijing Evening Newspaper* 北京晚報, which aimed to report latest local news of the day. Apart from newspapers, the painting was also published in both the Chinese and foreign language versions of *China Pictorial* in October 1959. Moreover, it was featured in *New Observations* 新觀察, a comprehensive journal aiming at Chinese intellectuals; *China Agricultural News* 中國農報, a journal targeting at agricultural practitioners; and *New Industry and Commerce* 新工商, a journal aiming at practitioners from the field of industrial and economic production. Furthermore, Fu and Guan also wrote about their experience of undertaking this political commission in articles published in different press media. See Fu Baoshi, "Beijing zuo hua ji," 630-633; Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 and Guan Shanyue 關山月, "Guohua 'Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao' de chuangzuo" 國畫‘江山如此多嬌’的創作 (The creation of national painting, *This Land So Rich in Beauty*), *Wenhui Bao* 文匯報 (October 14, 1959); and Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 and Guan Shanyue 關山月, "Wan fang gewu sheng zhong tan tan women chuangzuo 'Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao' de diandi tuhui" 萬方歌舞聲中談談我們創作‘江山如此多嬌’的點滴體會 (A casual sharing of our experience of creating *This Land So Rich in*

propaganda, managing the public reception of this painting. A number of these published texts offer perspective on how the landscape painting was received and imagined by viewers in its own time. Primarily, the ways in which this landscape affected its viewers can be analyzed from three angles.

The Visual

This monumental landscape offered viewers a carefully constructed visual system through which to envision the promising present and future of the New China. Published along with the painting in the official pictorial magazine, *China Pictorial* (fig. 4.14), the following text, written by the senior journalist Xie Sichun 謝泗春 in Chinese, later translated into English for publication overseas, offers us a glimpse into how the images in the landscape compel viewers to embark on this imaginative journey:

China is known for her vast territory, magnificent rivers and mountains and rich resources. Since liberation, the Chinese people have enjoyed a life of peaceful happiness and prosperity. Construction projects are going ahead all over the country with the same creative force as the sun rises in the east, water gushes from the spring and flowers reach their full bloom. These are the realities of today which have moved the artists and inspired them to paint this picture. As this year's National Day marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Republic, the painters have completed the work within two months for the occasion. The magnificent Great Wall, broad rivers, snowcapped mountains and bright morning sun in this painting seem to many to suggest the greatness of the Chinese Communist Party, the industriousness of the Chinese people and the fast tempo at which the socialist construction is advancing. Others, in looking at the painting, compare the new China of peace and plenty with the old China which was rent and ruined by imperialist aggression from abroad and reactionary rule at home, and whose people lived in poverty. In all this, the artists have succeeded in imparting their own emotions and in inspiring others with the will to contribute more towards the great and beautiful motherland.³⁵⁵

Beauty in a state of euphoria), Meishu, no. 10 (1959): 14-15. Even though these articles seem to come from the same source, they offered the public a glimpse into the details and processes of executing this painting.

³⁵⁵ Xie Sichun 謝泗春 (Hsieh Sze-chun), "Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao" 江山如此多嬌 (Such Great Beauty Like This in All Our Landscape), *China Pictorial*, no. 19 (October 5, 1959): 20-21.

This passage shows that this painting offered a variety of sign systems to inspire imaginative thinking among its audiences. One reason is that every single element of the painting functions as a sign that stands for a politically positive meaning. The spatial disjunction between some of these elements, or these signs, further facilitates a variety of creative interpretations. As a result, the entire painting has become a fantasyland for viewers to engage in imaginative interpretation. For instance, this painting celebrates the geographical and climatic diversity of the landscapes. Xie interprets this configuration as a sign of the vastness, affluence, and stability of the PRC, which he has described as such: “China is known for her vast territory, magnificent rivers and mountains and rich resources. Since liberation, the Chinese people have enjoyed a life of peaceful happiness and prosperity.” Secondly, Xie interprets the motifs of cosmological or hydrological forces – the red sun and the stream – as metaphors for the productivity and vigor of the planned economy in the PRC: “Construction projects are going ahead all over the country with the same creative force as the sun rises in the east, water gushes from the spring and flowers reach their full bloom.” Thirdly, Xie considers some of the scenic elements as a sign of the tremendous political or economic success of the PRC. This notion is revealed in his writing that “the magnificent Great Wall, broad rivers, snowcapped mountains and bright morning sun in this painting seem to many to suggest the greatness of the Chinese Communist Party, the industriousness of the Chinese people and the fast tempo at which the socialist construction is advancing.”

Apart from individual scenic elements, the painting as a whole provokes a sentimental response in the viewers. First, according to Xie, the landscape was received as a peaceful and prosperous image to activate viewers’ memory of the past. As he writes, “others, in looking at the painting, compare the new China of peace and plenty with the old China which was rent and

ruined by imperialist aggression from abroad and reactionary rule at home, and whose people lived in poverty.” Secondly, the landscape testifies to the artists’ emotional engagement with the reality, alluded to in Xie’s observation that “these are the realities of today which have moved the artists and inspired them to paint this picture.” Finally, the painting could also function as an agent to mobilize viewers’ emotions, as he writes “...the artists have succeeded in imparting their own emotions and in inspiring others with the will to contribute more towards the great and beautiful motherland.”

From this analysis, we can see that *This Land So Rich in Beauty* functioned as a powerful site for the imagination of the Chinese socialist state for many reasons. First, the painting itself was constructed through a range of sign systems, some of which were reinvented from the symbolism of traditional Chinese art. For instance, the image of a gushing waterfall has long been taken as a symbol of longevity, prosperity, and sacred space. However, *This Land So Rich in Beauty* recasts the significance of the cascading waters to now allude to the creative forces and vigor driving industrial construction. Other instances of symbolism are purely modern inventions. For example, the Great Wall stands for “the greatness of the Chinese Communist Party, the industriousness of the Chinese people and the fast tempo at which the socialist construction is advancing.” Although this iconography can be interpreted simply as representation, it can also be understood collectively as a network of visual signs, metaphors, and agents.

All of these operations became conceivable in the late 1950s, when the PRC enthusiastically re-embraced traditional Chinese aesthetics in which symbolism had long played a major role in composing and creating meaning in a work of art. In their efforts to make art serve political functions, the era’s cultural bureaucrats, artists and writers collaborated to invent

new symbols and reinvent traditional ones. The notion that an artwork was the result of the emotional engagement of the artist was by no means a simple political discourse. It was appropriated to satisfy the new ideological interest of turning art into a political tool in Maoist China. All of these cultural practices turned this landscape painting into a rich sign system and an affective medium for national imagining.

The Textual

Apart from its visual systems, this landscape painting also presents a textual system that works with the images to modify the audience's viewing experience. This textual system draws from different sources. One is the Chinese title of the painting. Clearly inscribed in the upper left corner of the painting, the title “*Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao*” 江山如此多嬌 is immediately visible to viewers. The first two characters in the Chinese title, “*jiangshan*” 江山, as mentioned in prior chapters, literally means *rivers* and *mountains*. Metaphorically, these two characters evoke the politicized concept of vast territories, symbolizing the territorial power of the state. This metaphorical meaning was originally developed in pre-modern Chinese literature and art, and there are instances of its use dating to as early as the third-century.³⁵⁶ Such political implications were continuously adopted in the political culture of twentieth-century China. In particular, during the civil war between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang Party in the late 1940s, the term *jiangshan* was frequently used by the communist press to provoke readers'

³⁵⁶ One of its early application appears in a third-century Chinese historical text called, *The Records of the Three Kingdoms* 三國志. It was also adopted in the title of *A Thousand Li of River and Mountains* 千里江山圖 (1113), produced by a Northern-Song court painter Wang Ximeng 王希孟 (1096-1119), presumably for the viewing of Emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125). See Barnhart, (1997), 129. Featuring a continuous depiction of blue-and-green mountains and rivers, this panoramic landscape metaphorically presents the continuity of state power. This painting serves as a fine example in premodern Chinese art history of how the imageries of mountain and river and the painting title were used to symbolize the political power of a state.

patriotic desire to safeguard their territories against the KMT.³⁵⁷ In the late 1950s, this term was, once again, used widely as a political metaphor by the communist press, this time to arouse readers' nationalist desire to reclaim the "lost" territories in Taiwan from the KMT.³⁵⁸ As a result, by the late 1950s, *jiangshan* had become a term commonly used to stoke people's emotional connection to their country. The clear inscription of this term on the upper left corner of the painting immediately politicizes the depicted landscape as a symbol of the state's political powers.

Likewise, the rest of the title also critically defines the viewer's reception of this painting. As discussed earlier, the Chinese character "jiao" 嬌, appearing at the end of the title, has the connotations of beautiful, tender, or seductive charm, a set of traits normally used to describe people. In the late 1950s, this character was applied more broadly, addressing contexts well beyond its intended meaning. Oftentimes, it was used in agricultural contexts to characterize the healthy growth of crops.³⁵⁹ It was also used to call attention to the enchanting quality of a landscape or a season.³⁶⁰ The modification of this word by the preceding character "duo" 多 (which literally means *many* or *rich*) forms a pair, attributing beauty of overwhelming measure to the portrayed landscape.

³⁵⁷ See Yang Ke 楊柯, "Nongmin zuo jiangshan canjun sha Jiang zei, Li cheng canjun chao'e shu bei" 農民坐江山參軍殺蔣賊, 黎城參軍超額數倍, *People's Daily*, November 20, 1947, 2.

³⁵⁸ For instance, this term was used during the months when the PRC was preparing to retreat it People's Volunteer Army from North Korea in 1958. See "Weida gongxun yu jinxiu jiangshan bingcun, Wen zai Zhu daiban de jianghua (zhaiyao)" 偉大功勳與錦繡江山並存, 文在洙代辦的講話(摘要), *People's Daily*, March 17, 1958, 2; and "Yang Yong shangjiang zai Pingrang huansong zhiyuanjun dahui shang jianghua. Chaoxian jinxiu jiangshan bi jiang tongyi. Tai Peng Jin Ma yiding chong gui zuguo" 楊勇上將在平壤歡送志願軍大會上講話 朝鮮錦繡江山必將統一台灣一定重歸祖國, *People's Daily*, October 25, 1958, 6.

³⁵⁹ Su Fang 蘇方, "Weixing tian pan qing fengshou" 衛星田畔慶豐收, *People's Daily*, September 3, 1958, 8.

³⁶⁰ Guo Xiaochuan 郭小川, "Chun nuan hua kai" 春暖花開, *People's Daily*, January 31, 1959, 8.

The title compels an emotional reception of the landscape, due to the two characters, “*ru ci*” 如此, that appear in the middle of its Chinese title. Depending on how readers interpret the syntax, these words can play two different functions. On the one hand, they can serve as a predicate to connote the meaning of “like so.” According to this reading, the title is translated as “the vast territory, like so, is rich in beauty.” On the other hand, it can function as an intensifying adverb to mean “so.” Accordingly, the title would be translated as “this vast territory is so rich in beauty.” In any case, through these two characters, the title of the painting mobilizes an emotional engagement with the visual effects of the landscape. The affective power of this title is best described by writer Fang Ji 方紀 (1919-1998) in his preface written for a painting catalogue of painter Li Keran, published in January 1959:

‘This Land So Rich in Beauty’ … this famous line has been a great revelation and charm to painters, poets, and all people. It helps people foster a profound feeling of love and pride for the rivers, the mountains, the vegetation, and even the air and the sunlight in their surrounding life. Thereby, they pay more attention to them and appreciate them. By doing so, they foster a lofty sentiment of loving their motherland, the philosophical notion of beauty itself, as well as the nature. In my view, this is the power of this famous line, as well of landscape paintings or poems that convey this same idea.³⁶¹

The Semiotic

Finally, this landscape also communicates with its viewers through a specific image: the red circle depicted in the upper right corner of the painting. This red circle plays various functions. First, it represents the cosmic power of the sun within the depicted landscape.

³⁶¹ Original Chinese text: “‘江山如此多嬌’……這一名句對於畫家，詩人，對於所有的人，都給予了極為鮮明的啟示，產生了極大的魅力。使人們對於自己生活周圍的江山草木，乃至空氣陽光，都不免要帶上一種深深的愛戀之情與自豪之感，去頻頻加以注視，加以讚賞，而油然生發出一種愛祖國、愛美、愛自然的崇高情緒。我想，這就是這一名句和反映了同一思想內容的山水畫，風景詩，以及諸如此類藝術作品的力量之所在吧。” Fang Ji 方紀, “Xu”序 (Preface), in *Li Keran shuimo shanshui xiesheng huaji* 李可染水墨山水寫生畫集 (A collection of Li Keran's landscape ink paintings; Peking: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1959), 1.

Secondly, by positioning it in a rosy sky above the sea, the painters charge it with a widely known renowned revolutionary song titled, “The East Is Red” (*Dongfang hong* 東方紅). The lyrics of this song were supposedly composed by a peasant named Li Youyuan 李有源 (b.1903), based on the tune of a regional folk song sung in the soviet military stronghold of northern China in the early 1940s.³⁶²

The east is red. The sun rises.
China raises a person called Mao Zedong.
He strives for the people's well-being.
Hurrah! He is the great saviour of the
people!

東方紅，太陽升。
中國出了個毛澤東。
他為人民謀幸福，
呼爾嗨哟，他是人民大救
星!³⁶³

“The East Is Red” glorifies Mao Zedong as a great salvific hero. The first line begins with a simple description of the picture of the east shining in red, followed by the imagery of a rising sun. The second line glorifies the rise of Mao Zedong in China as a parallel to the red sun rising in the east. The rest of the song continues to extol Mao as the great savior of the people as he strives for their well-being, leading the communist party to improve proletarian life. This song conveys a powerful sense of hope and pride, coinciding with the political discourse of heroism celebrated in communist China from the 1940s onward. The colloquial quality and simple lyrics of the song ensured its comprehensibility to people of all educational backgrounds. Therefore, as

³⁶² “The East Is Red” was composed by a peasant called Li Youyuan 李有源 (b.1903) upon a regional folk song, entitled *Sesame Oil, Cabbage* 芝麻油、白菜心. It was later spread to the public by his nephew called Li Zengzheng 李增正 in the winter of 1943. See Wang Dingnan 王鼎南, “Weisheme bu xie chu ‘Dongfang hong’ ci zuozhe de xingming” 為什麼不寫出“東方紅”詞作者的姓名, *People's Music*, no.2 (1956): 47; Jiang Qihua 簡其華 and Shao Xinhua 肖興華, “Renmin geshou Li Youyuan he Dongfang hong de dansheng” 人民歌手李有源和《東方紅》的誕生, *People's Music*, no. 01 (1978): 34-35; and Yiren 易人, “Dongfang hong de zuichu chuanbo zhe—Li Zengzheng tongzhi” 《東方紅》的最初傳播者——李增正同志, *Journal of Nanjing Art Institute (Music & Performance)* 南京藝術學院學報 (音樂與表演版) no. 12 (1979): 108.

³⁶³ Cited from Li Zhuang 李莊, “Qinghe Zhonghua renmin gongheguo de dansheng” 慶賀中華人民共和國的誕生, *People's Daily*, October 1, 1949, 4.

soon as it was composed, the song was widely promoted and sung among the proletariat of the Chinese communist world.

Charging the landscape painting with this revolutionary song expands the possible ways of reading it. Fundamentally, this song establishes a comparison between Mao Zedong and the red sun through the strategic juxtaposition of the image of a rising red sun in the first line and the rise of Mao Zedong in the second line. This comparison is manifested in a wide range of cultural productions in the PRC: for instance, a regional folk song titled “Chairman Mao is like a Red Sun” 毛主席好比是紅太陽.³⁶⁴ Oil painter Li Zongjin 李宗津 (1916-1977) created a painting titled *The East Is Red* 東方紅 in 1954 (fig. 4.15), in which a giant and imposing Mao stands in an open field of industrial landscape, gazing at a rising sun in the east. In the political culture of the PRC, a red sun was radically politicized to symbolize the presence and power of this communist leader. This political symbolism surely had an impact on the reading of the red sun in *This Land So Rich in Beauty* as a metaphorical presence of Mao, illuminating his lasting power upon the vast Chinese landscape.

Apart from this personified implication, the notion of “the east is red” also embodies the deeply political aspiration for the rising geopolitical powers of the PRC and the east in the postwar period. The geographical implication of the term “the east” can be fluid depending on the context in which it is used. Within the East-West ideological framework of the Cold War in the late 1950s, “the east” was generally used to refer to the Communist East, whereas “the west” was used to refer to the Capitalist West. This usage is revealed in a speech delivered by Mao Zedong in 1957, in which he declared, “This is a war between two worlds. The West Wind

³⁶⁴ Wang Senlin 王森林, “Mao Zhuxi haobi shi hong taiyang” 毛主席好比是紅太陽 (Chairman Mao is like a red sun), *People’s Music* 4 (1951): 36.

cannot prevail over the East Wind; the East Wind is bound to prevail over the West Wind.”³⁶⁵ In the discursive environment of the late 1950s, “the east is red” conveys an aspiration for the ascendance of the east within the global political order. Furthermore, “the east” also makes symbolic reference to an indefinite geographic area of Asia, as shown in literary works translated into Chinese from South Asia.³⁶⁶ The comprehensive geographical reference of the concept of “the east” made it an even more powerful sign in the 1950s.

The political message conveyed by the phrase “the east is red” does not stop there. As this line was used continuously in cultural production in the PRC in the 1950s, it was further loaded with a variety of new meanings beyond those originally intended. For instance, in 1954, “the east is red” was employed as a metaphor to symbolize the utopian ideal of world peace. This notion is revealed in the aforementioned painting by Fu Baoshi, titled *The East Is Red* 東方紅 (fig. 3.12), commissioned by the Chinese People’s World Peace Conference where Guo Moruo was the chairman, on the year’s theme, “Peace.”³⁶⁷ This painting features a close-up of a pine tree in the foreground. Beyond the tree, it portrays a romanticized landscape of a red sun rising in the rosy sky, illuminating the mountain landscape below. In this context, “the east is red” was utilized as communist rhetoric during the Cold War to assert the notion of world peace, allegedly against the bygone practices of imperialism and deploying atomic weapons of the west. This example shows how the notion of “the east is red” had become a sign, resonant on multiple levels. The utopian aspirations of “the east is red” continued to multiply during the Great Leap

³⁶⁵ See Michael Y. M. Kau, and John K. Leung, eds., *The Writings of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976. vol. 2, January 1956-December 1957* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 773.

³⁶⁶ See this poem, “Dongfang xing lai le” 東方醒來了 (The east is awakened), composed by a Pakistani poet, and translated into Chinese, published in *Shi kan*, no. 9 (1958): 59-60.

³⁶⁷ This painting was later collected by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries 中國人民對外友好協會 established in the same year.

Forward (1958-60). During this period, the phrase was widely adopted to name the people's communes and agricultural cooperatives.³⁶⁸ With such a comprehensive application, the red sun transformed into a politically powerful sign whose referent was reinvented for different contexts.

In the years before 1959, "the east is red" had been developed as a powerful sign, loaded with a wide range of meanings. Literally, this phrase suggests that the east shines in red due to a rising red sun. Metaphorically, it celebrates the euphoria of the ascending position of the east due to its metaphorical gesture to Mao. The red sun has become polysemic, filled with flexible meanings. By deploying such polysemy, the producers charge the painting with symbolic meaning beyond the image itself. The red sun prompts its viewers to conclude that the landscape, a symbol of the political power of the Chinese socialist state, is illuminated by the aura of Mao. It also evokes the imagination of the rising political powers of the PRC and the east in the global political arena. In this context, *This Land So Rich in Beauty* becomes a highly utopian site, reconfiguring public understanding of the conditions and prospects of Chinese communist power amidst the broader global geopolitical landscape.

Political Significance: Envisioning the Chinese Communist Utopia

The production of a semantically powerful landscape like *This Land So Rich in Beauty* on the tenth anniversary of the PRC was a political statement by the Chinese communist party. On this occasion, thousands of top national leaders and honorary guests both inside and outside of China traveled to the Great Hall of the People for celebrations, where the painting was displayed

³⁶⁸ For instance, a people's commune was named as "The East Is Red Commune" 東方紅公社 (located on the border between northern Hebei province and Inner Mongolia). An agricultural cooperative was named as "the East Is Red Agricultural Cooperatives of the Daren County" 大仁縣東方紅農業社. A collective farm was called, "The East Is Red Farm" 東方紅農場.

prominently before the building's grand staircase, guaranteeing its visibility.³⁶⁹ Viewers informed of the politics underpinning the painting's title, imagery, and symbolism might detect the ways in which this heroically beautiful landscape conceptualized the boundless territory of the PRC throughout a year's four seasons, and its suggestion that the Republic's greatness owes itself to Mao Zedong, who shines like a red bright sun above the motherland. Viewers less privy to the landscape's encoded content would still witness the monumental landscape's imposing scale, and likely access the universal connotation of the sunrise as a sign of hope for future. All of these interpretations show how an intertextual landscape like this one can serve as a productive site for the imagination of the Chinese communist utopia.

In 1959, it was a strong political statement on the part of the PRC to exhibit this landscape to an elite international audience, many of whom came from the communist world. Even though the PRC and the Soviet Union appeared to be politically aligned, in reality, their relationship had been compromised by a series of political disputes in the second half of the 1950s.³⁷⁰ After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, the new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) led the Soviet Union to embark on a new phase political era, often known as the

³⁶⁹ These include top leaders from the Central Committee of the CCP: Chairman Mao Zedong, President Liu Shaoqi 劉少奇, Vice President Song Qingling 宋慶齡, Vice President 董必武, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) Zhu De 朱德, Premiere of the State Council Zhou Enlai, General Secretary of the Secretariat of the CCP 鄧小平, etc. Top leaders from the Soviet Union and fraternal parties in other socialist countries included Nikita S. Khrushchev (First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), Ho Chi Minh (President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam), Antonin J. Novotny (President and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia), Kim Il Sung (Prime Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal (Prime Minister of Mongolia), A. Zawadski (President of Poland), I. Dobi (Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic of Hungary), Mehmet Shehu (Premier of Albania), Emil Bodnaros (Romania), D. Ganev, and H. Matern. There were also members of the NPC, members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and model workers. Outside the geographical boundaries of mainland China, there were representatives from other Chinese political entities such as Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. There were also delegations from eighty-seven countries from the Communist World and the Third World, as well as members from international organizations such as the World Peace. See *China Pictorial*, no. 21 (November 5, 1959): 1.

³⁷⁰ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 81-82.

“de-Stalinization.” Mao Zedong and his comrades became increasingly committed to raising the political status of the Beijing government in the international Communist movement. Tensions between Beijing and Moscow began to increase starting in 1956. The Sino-Soviet relationship entered a major crisis in 1958 when Mao embarked on the Great Leap Forward as a tactic to strengthen China’s sovereignty and status in relation to the Soviet Union.³⁷¹ In this context, a landscape painting that envisions the rising geopolitical power of the PRC can be interpreted to convey aspirations among Chinese communists to achieve heightened status in the international Communist landscape: a controversial image to contemplate in the context of Sino-Soviet political turbulence.

Given its network of sign systems transposed into the visual order of this monumental landscape, it is not surprising to see that the intertextual landscape *This Land So Rich in Beauty* gained further visibility after the Sino-Soviet break in 1960. For instance, this landscape became the subject matter of embroidery masters in Suzhou.³⁷² In 1964, on the fifteenth anniversary of the PRC, this painting was published on the inner cover of a photography catalogue that also adopted the same title, *This Land So Rich in Beauty*, a volume that brought together a large number of photos taken in different parts of the PRC.³⁷³ When the thirty-seventh President of the United States, Richard Nixon (1913-1994), visited China for the Sino-American rapprochement in 1972, this painting occupied the background of the historically momentous group photo taken on the occasion (fig. 4.16), replacing the former practice of using the Chinese national flag as the

³⁷¹ Ibid., 63-75.

³⁷² Xinhua News Agency 新華社, “Suxiu xinzuo: *Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao*” 蘇繡新作: ‘江山如此多嬌’, *People’s Daily*, July 5, 1961, 2.

³⁷³ See *Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao* 江山如此多嬌 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1964).

backdrop of group photography (fig. 4.17). The 1972 photo thus promotes *This Land So Rich in Beauty*, once again, as a national symbol to be distributed both domestically and internationally.

This Land So Rich in Beauty has continued to exert its power as a national landscape in the post-socialist era. After having been displayed on the site for more than thirty years, in the early 1990s, the physical conditions of this painting deteriorated due to continuous exposure to lighting and humidity. Instead of commissioning a new work of art, officials in charge hired a professional painter to make a copy of the old painting.³⁷⁴ The surrogate painting, which has been remounted for a continual display up to the present-day, shows the irreplaceable position of this painting in the visual political culture of the People's Republic. More recently, on the sixtieth anniversary of the PRC on October 1, 2009, the painting was selected as one of the illustrations to be displayed on-site in the Tiananmen Square at the center of Beijing during the Grand National Day Military Parade (fig. 4.18). This landscape, albeit in its reproduced form, has been continuously displayed up to the present-day, occupying a seemingly unshakable depiction of the national, utopian landscape of Communist China.

³⁷⁴ Mi Jingyang 米景揚, “Jiemí ‘Jiāngshān rú cǐ duō jiāo’ chuangzuo neimú” 揭秘《江山如此多嬌》創作內幕, *Shiji 世紀* (2014): 4-10.

Epilogue

The political practice of using landscape representation to imagine idealized forms for the new Chinese state continued to flourish after the Seventeen Years. Most notably, when constructing the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall on the southern side of Tiananmen Square in Beijing to commemorate the death of Mao Zedong from 1976 to 1977, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party commissioned a series of landscape artworks on the theme of the historic sites of the Chinese Communist revolution to decorate its interior architectural spaces. For the main memorial hall, a panoramic landscape embroidery entitled *The Great Land of the Motherland* 祖國大地 was selected for permanent display on the wall behind a life-sized white-marble statue of Mao (fig. 5.1).³⁷⁵ For recent contemporary practices in the 2000s and after, among the many official ceremonies and summits taking place in the Great Hall of the People, key events were often carefully staged and photographed in front of a monumental landscape painting that depicted a culturally or nationally significant location, such as the Great Wall in China (fig. 5.2). Characterizing a heroic sense of space, these paintings powerfully invite beholders to imagine the strength and eternality of the Chinese state. In this context, landscape depictions continue to function as a state apparatus compelling their beholders to mentally imagine the glory of the People's Republic.

Without a doubt, landscape representation itself was not a stable concept in the post-Mao era. Similar to its predecessors, its associated subject matter and form continued to shift and transform over time. With the rapid urban development in many Chinese cities throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the Chinese state expanded its interest in imagining a bright future for the

³⁷⁵ “Meishu dashiji” 美術大事記 (Chronology of big art events), *Meishu*, no. 3 (1978): 47.

nation by using artistic representations of distinctive views of major Chinese cities. For example, in the Shanghai Hall at the Great Hall of the People, there is a monumental painting covering the giant wall flanked by the two entrances to the room. This painting features a panoramic view from the other side of Huangpo River of the skyline of Lujiazui, proudly depicting the financial district that emerged in east Shanghai in the 2000s (fig. 5.3). This painting reveals the legacy of the aesthetic of the New Landscape, as it, first, features the dramatization of the use of space, typified by the monumentalization of the two iconic buildings, the Oriental Pearl Tower and Jin Mao Tower, at the center of the painting. Secondly, this painting beautifies the sense of place by portraying transient atmospheric effects, covering the cityscape in pink and reddish-orange colors. This painting has been used as the backdrop for multiple occasions, including the diplomatic meeting between the U.S. President Barack Obama, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, and Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress on November 12, 2014 (fig. 5.4). Foreign journalists, such as CNN, have captured almost the entire painting in the background in photographic format. The combined effect invites viewers to engage with the visual language of the cityscape, by which they can imagine the bright, economically powerful future of the Chinese state as their new utopia in the twenty-first century.

Behind the representation of those utopic scenes, there are accompanying voices of artistic agents who held different interpretations that chose other visual approaches and circulated their views regarding the sites selected to be presented utopically. From the late 1990s through the 2000s, a large number of artists outside the official institutional system began to broadcast their perspectives by directly intervening into urban spaces. The most distinct example is an action photography project called *Dialogue/and Demolition* 對話/和拆, executed by Zhang

Dali 張大力 (b. 1963) in Beijing and in other Chinese cities from 1995 to 2002, in which the artist executed his signature one-stroke head sign in the format of graffiti in different corners of the city as a way to construct dialogue between himself with particular urban structures.³⁷⁶ His *Dialogue 2000101A* (2000, fig. 5.5) features the photography of his hand-drawn graffiti sign on a short wall with the aforementioned Jin Mao Tower in the distance. By framing his personal graffiti sign into dialogue with the newly constructed skyscraper, it constructs an ambiguous image, inviting viewers to speculate on potential social meanings of both works. From a linguistic point of view, in the 1990s, the presentation of cityscapes constitutes a site for imagining a utopia in official visual culture. But, they also can serve as sites for dystopian visions resulting from the aftermath of the political imagining of the utopia. Depending on the context and framework of organization, the concept of landscape and imagining can surely offer scholars a comprehensive framework to investigate the ever-shifting relationship between humans and their surroundings to our contemporary moment.

³⁷⁶ Yim King Mak, “A One-Stroke Head as Method: Semiotics and the Aesthetics of Demolition in Zhang Dali’s Dialogue /and Demolition” (M.Phil. thesis, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2009).

Figures

Introduction



Fig. 0.1 “Shoudou guanzhong xi’ai ‘shanhe xin mao’ huazhan” 首都觀眾喜愛‘山河新貌’畫展
(The capital’s audience loves the exhibition, “New Looks of Mountains and Rivers”), *Xinhua Daily*, May 12, 1961, 3.



Fig. 0.2 “Hua chu zhuangli shanhe, xie chu yuejin qipo” 畫出壯麗山河 寫出躍進氣魄 (Painting the heroically beautiful mountains and rivers. Sketching out the leaping spirit), *People's Daily*, May 12, 1961, 4.

«三峡»,宋文治的《华山》,亚明的《喜雨兆丰年》等,倍受观众赞赏。观众对《西陵峡》的评论是:这幅画很有气魄。作者用笔挺拔,浑厚有力,表现了万古蒼茫、山川不朽之气势。特别是画面上虽只有一只小船和一小段高压线,作者并没有用许多笔墨来表现新社会的建设成就,但是却使人从画面上感染到时代精神。熟悉钱松岩的观众认为,从这位老画家的画中,可以看出无论在构思、构图和用色上,他都在力图创新。亚明试图用国画形式反映炼钢劳动的作品,也引

起了观众的兴趣,认为这是一种新的尝试。许多画家看了这个画展之后说:江苏的国画家们不仅走了二万里路,对祖国自然面貌、人民生活,有了新的感受,而且努力钻研了画理,把传统的国画规律应用在新的表现要求上,因此才能画出这样好的画来。观众还普遍反映:从这个画展可以看出,中国画的传统表现方法有着无限发展的潜力。

「山河新貌」画展是由中国美术家协会和中国美协江苏省分会联合主办的,5月2日开始展出,预定5月21日结束。

上海戏剧学院教师艺术团

演出阿名剧《漁人之家》

飯香时节打鱼回
(中国画)

錢松岩作

新华社上海11日电 阿尔巴尼亚现代剧作家苏里曼·皮塔尔卡的名作《漁人之家》,5月1日起在上海演出,受到观众极大的欢迎。

这是上海第一次上演阿尔巴尼亚的话剧。演出单位——上海戏剧学院的教师艺术团,在演出前由四位教师组成了导演团,演员中大多是富有舞台经验的表演系教师。舞台设计、道具、服装等,也都经过精心的研究,具有阿尔巴尼亚的民族风格。

《漁人之家》的演出受到

上海戏剧界的重视。发表在《解放日报》上的一篇评论写道:这次演出将进一步增进我们对兄弟般的阿尔巴尼亚人民英勇斗争的了解,并从中吸取巨大的鼓舞力量。

在上海的阿尔巴尼亚留学生也看了这个戏。他们说:能在上海看到祖国的名剧,感到十分兴奋和亲切。他们把两册阿尔巴尼亚民间图案画集赠送给演出者。

上海电视台并向全市电视观众转播了《漁人之家》的演出实况。

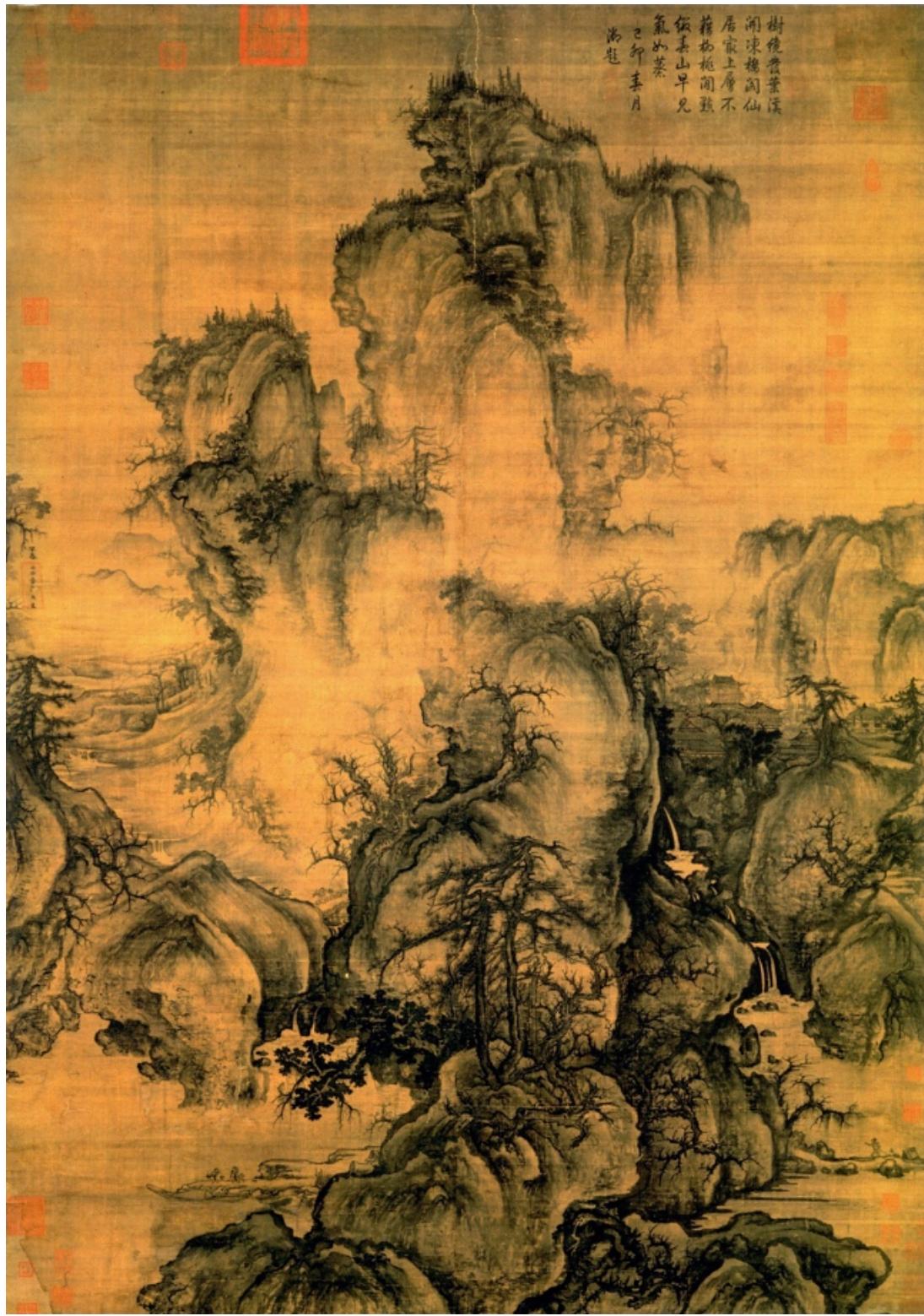


Fig. 0.3 Guo Xi 郭熙, *Early Spring* 早春圖, 1072. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 158.3 x 108.1 cm.
National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Chapter 1



a.



b

Fig. 1.1 “Our Great Motherland” 我們偉大的祖國. *People's Daily*, January 1, 1951, 1.

- a. Layout of the newspaper's cover.
 - b. Detail of the illustrative section on the cover's upper left.

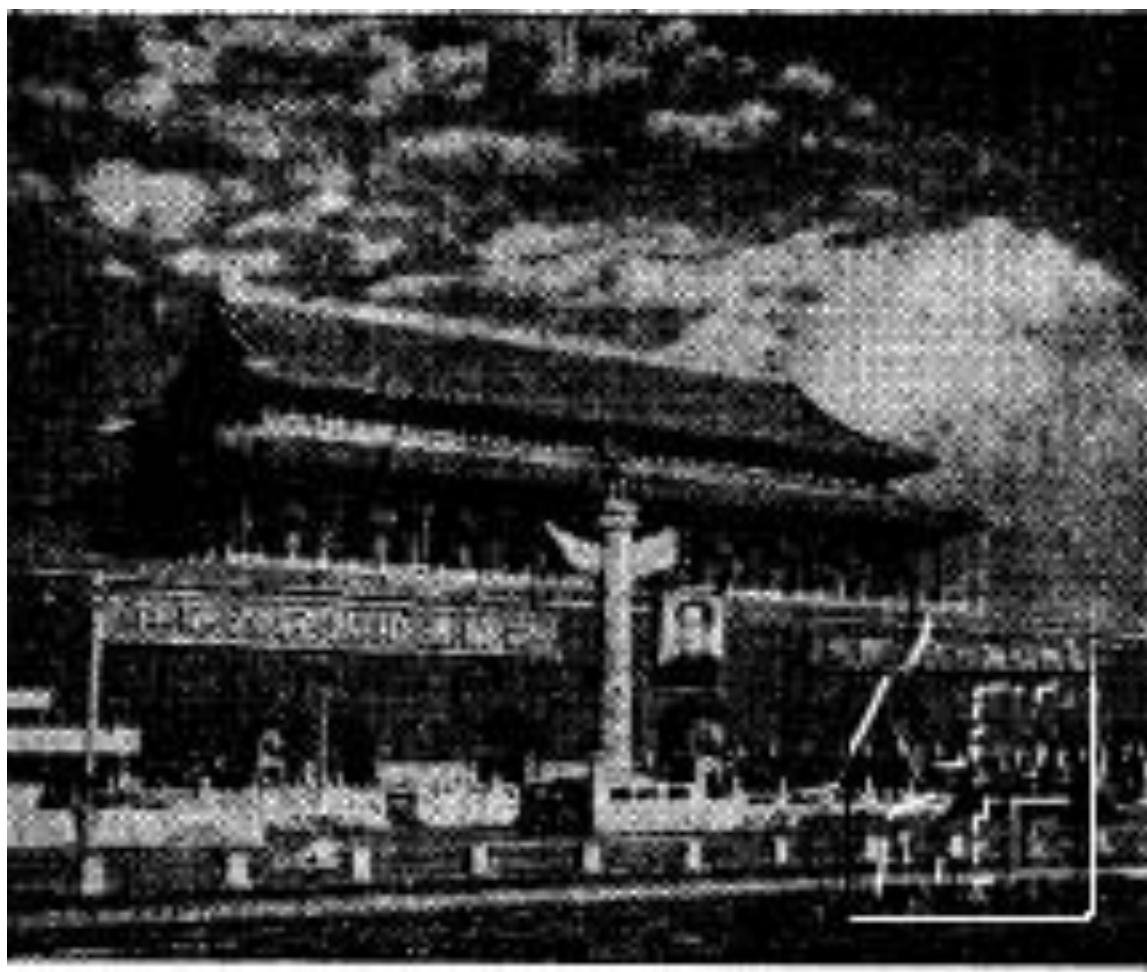


Fig. 1.2 Printed photograph of the Tiananmen Gate in Beijing.
People's Daily, January 2, 1951, 1.



Fig. 1.3 Printed photograph of the Yellow River.
People's Daily, January 6, 1951, 1.



Fig. 1.4 Printed photograph of the Himalayas.
People's Daily, January 9, 1951, 1.

瞿塘里牛峽爲之壯景。觀沿峽懸崖，此爲瞿塘壁全峽，長日極四

Chu-tang-hsia,
one of the three
Gorges in Sze-
chuan, is walled
by precipices
rising almost
perpendicularly
from the bed of
Yangtze.



Fig. 1.5 Photograph by Cai Junsan 蔡俊三。
Liangyou 良友 (The young companion), no. 98 (1934): 9.

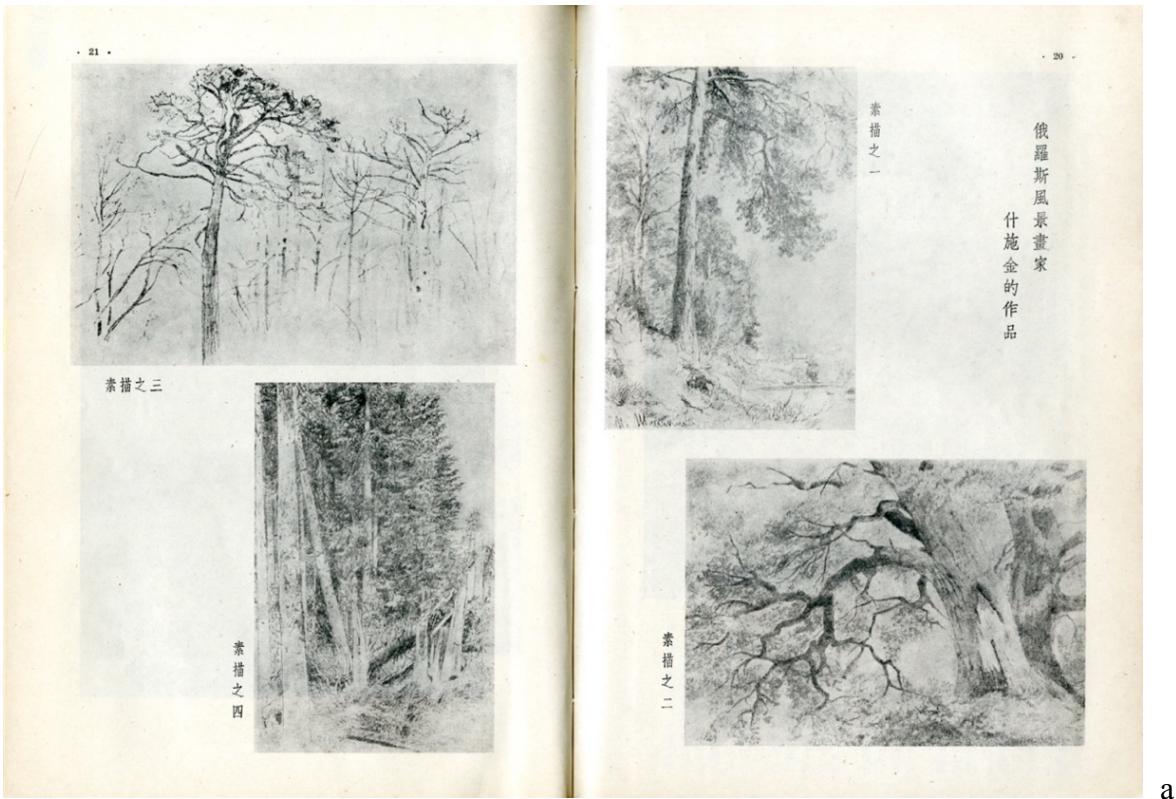
香江四景



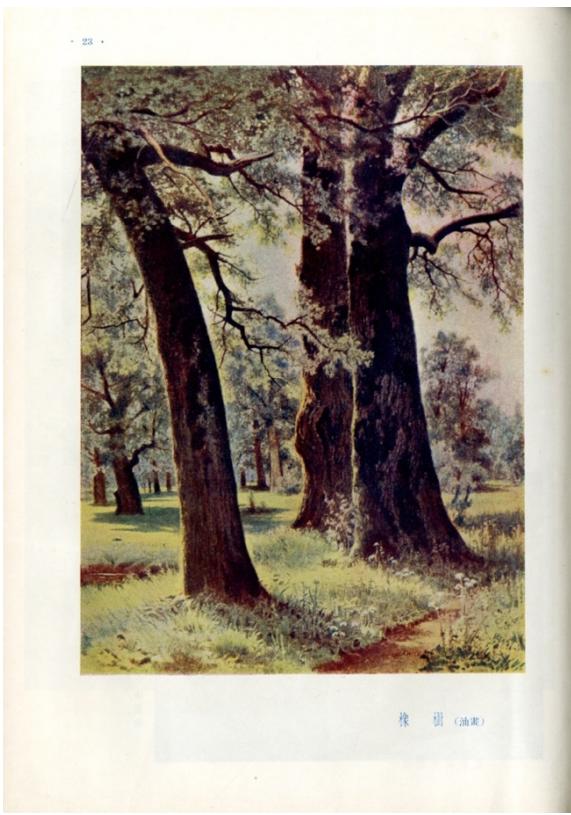
Fig. 1.6 Photographs by Ma Chaoju 馬超駒.
Liangyou, no. 9 (1926): 12.



Fig. 1.7 Li Xiongcai 黎雄才, *Searching for More Resources for the Motherland* 為祖國尋找更多的資源, 1954. Ink and color on paper, 171 x 92 cm.



a.



b.

Fig. 1.8 Plates of Ivan Shishkin's sketches and oil painting, *Oak Tree*.
Meishu, no. 4 (1954): 20-21, 23.

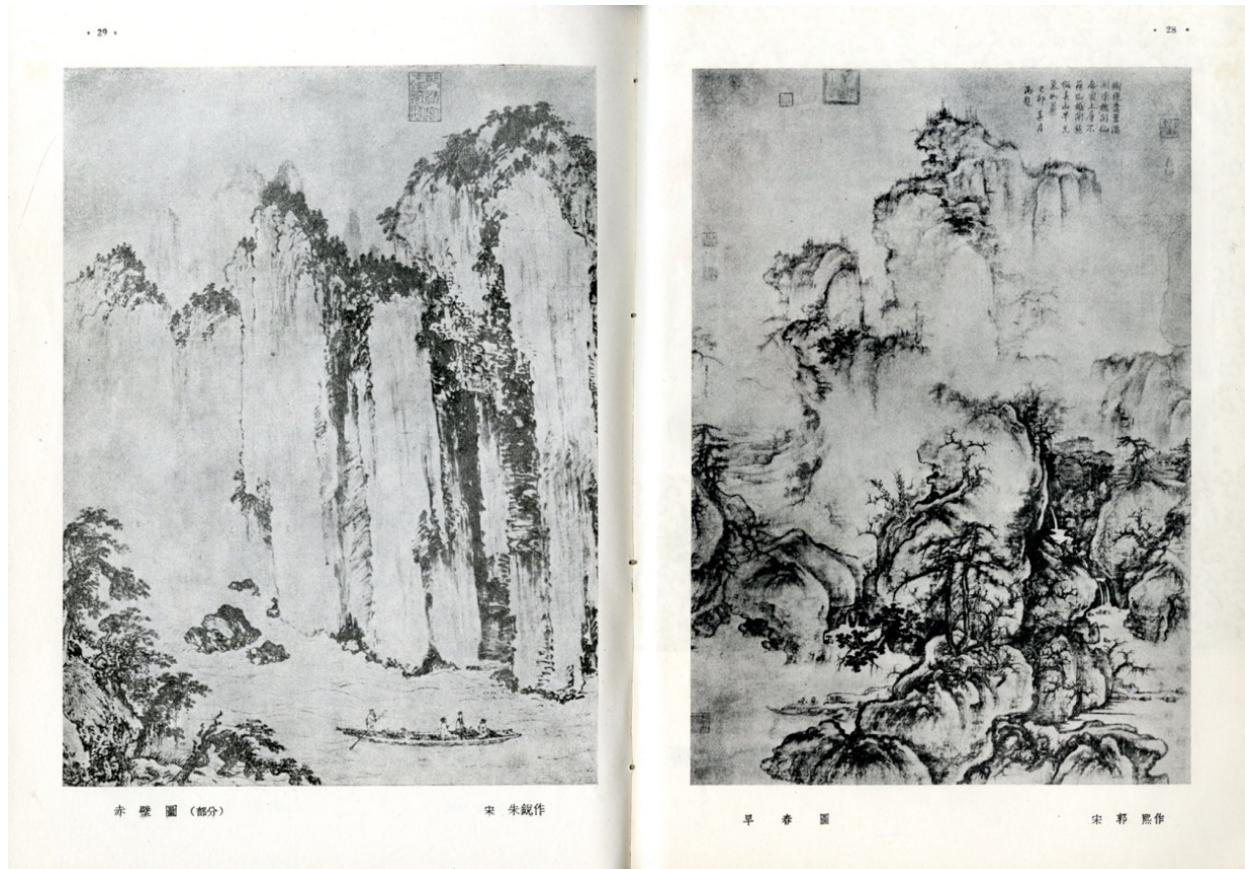


Fig. 1.9 Plates of Guo Xi's 郭熙 *Early Spring* 早春圖 and Zhu Rui's (att.) Red Cliff 赤壁圖. *Meishu*, no. 5 (1954): 28-29.

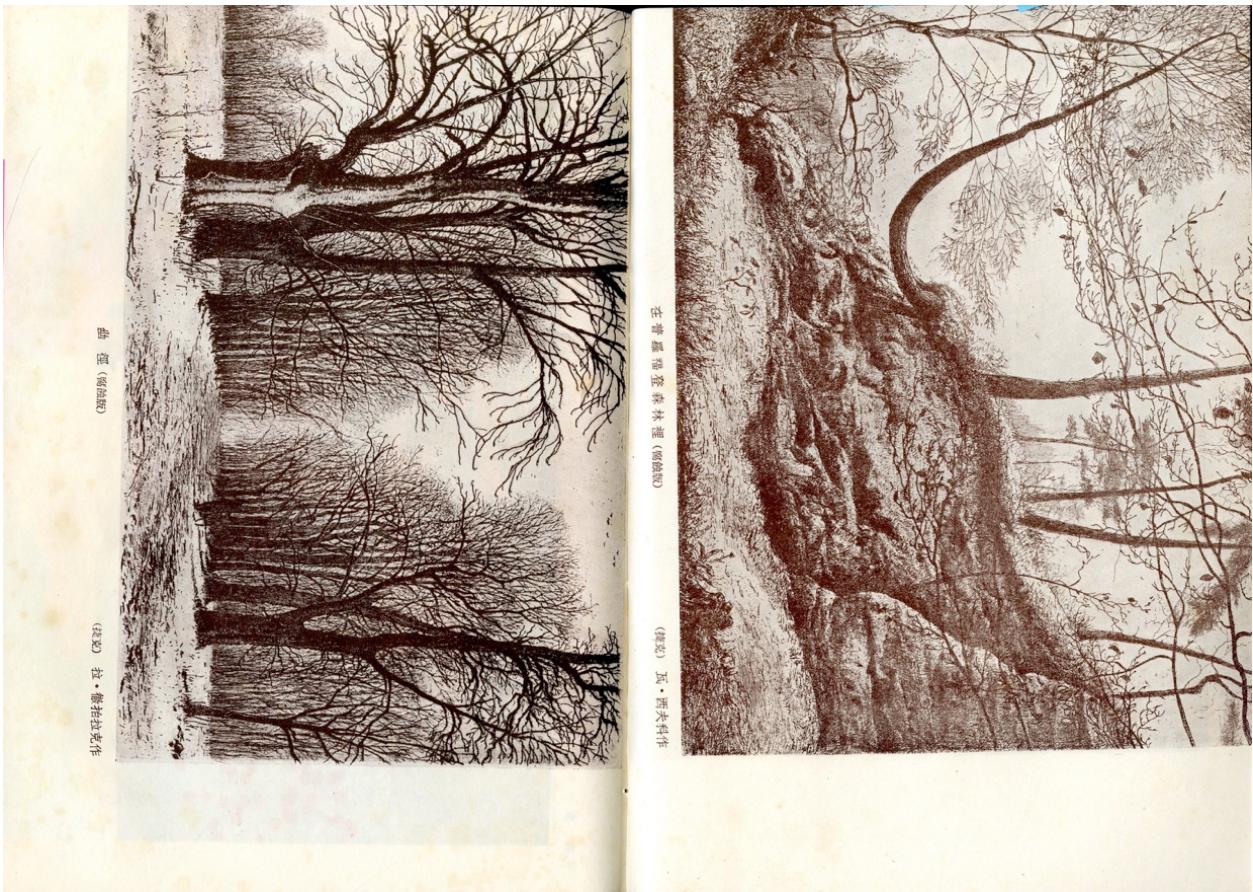


Fig. 1.10 Plates of the intaglio prints by two artists from the Czechoslovak Republic.
Meishu, no. 4 (1954): 24-25.

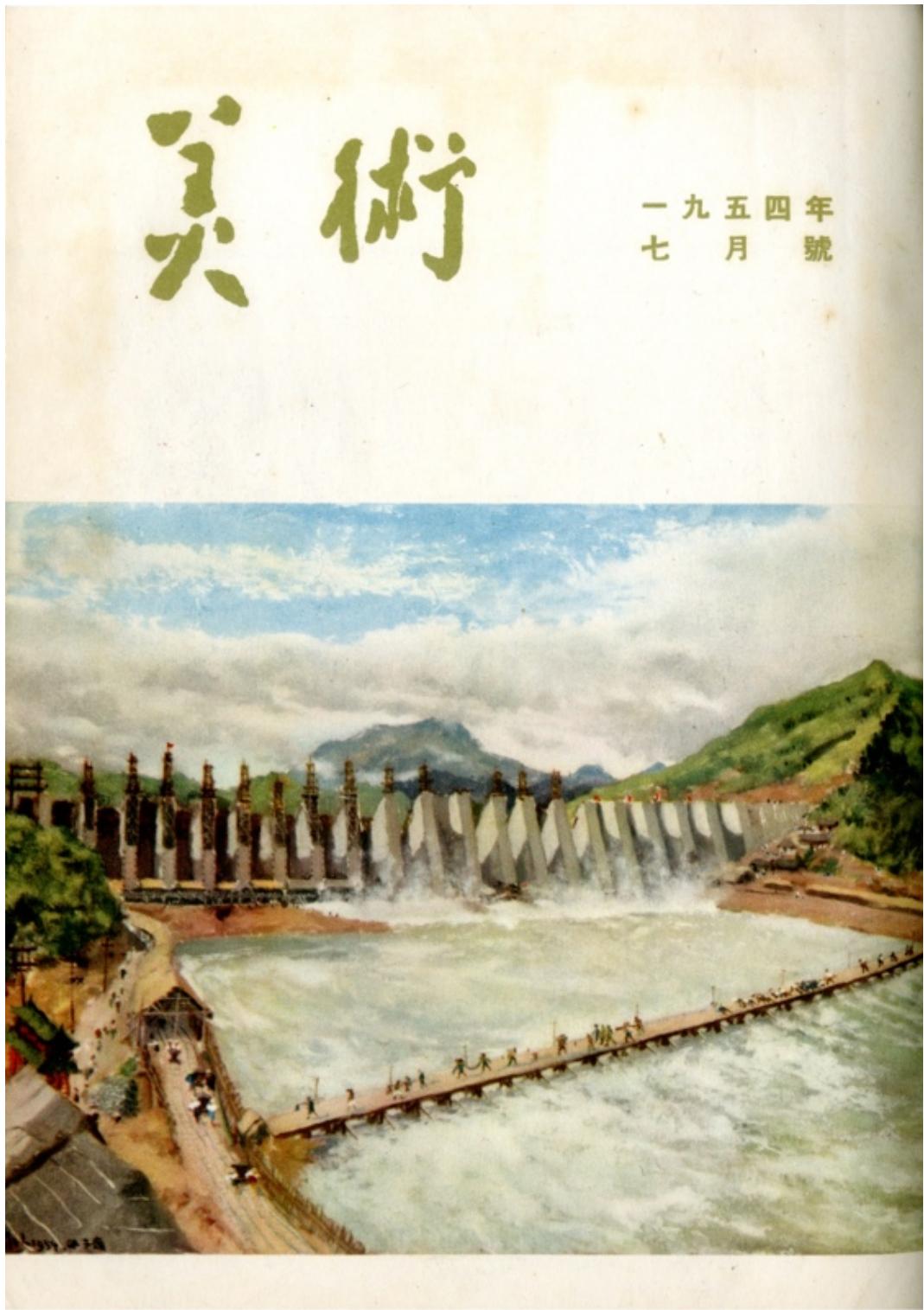


Fig. 1.11 Wu Zuoren 吳作人, *A Soon-to-be Completed Dam* 將要完工的水壩, 1954.
Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954), cover image.

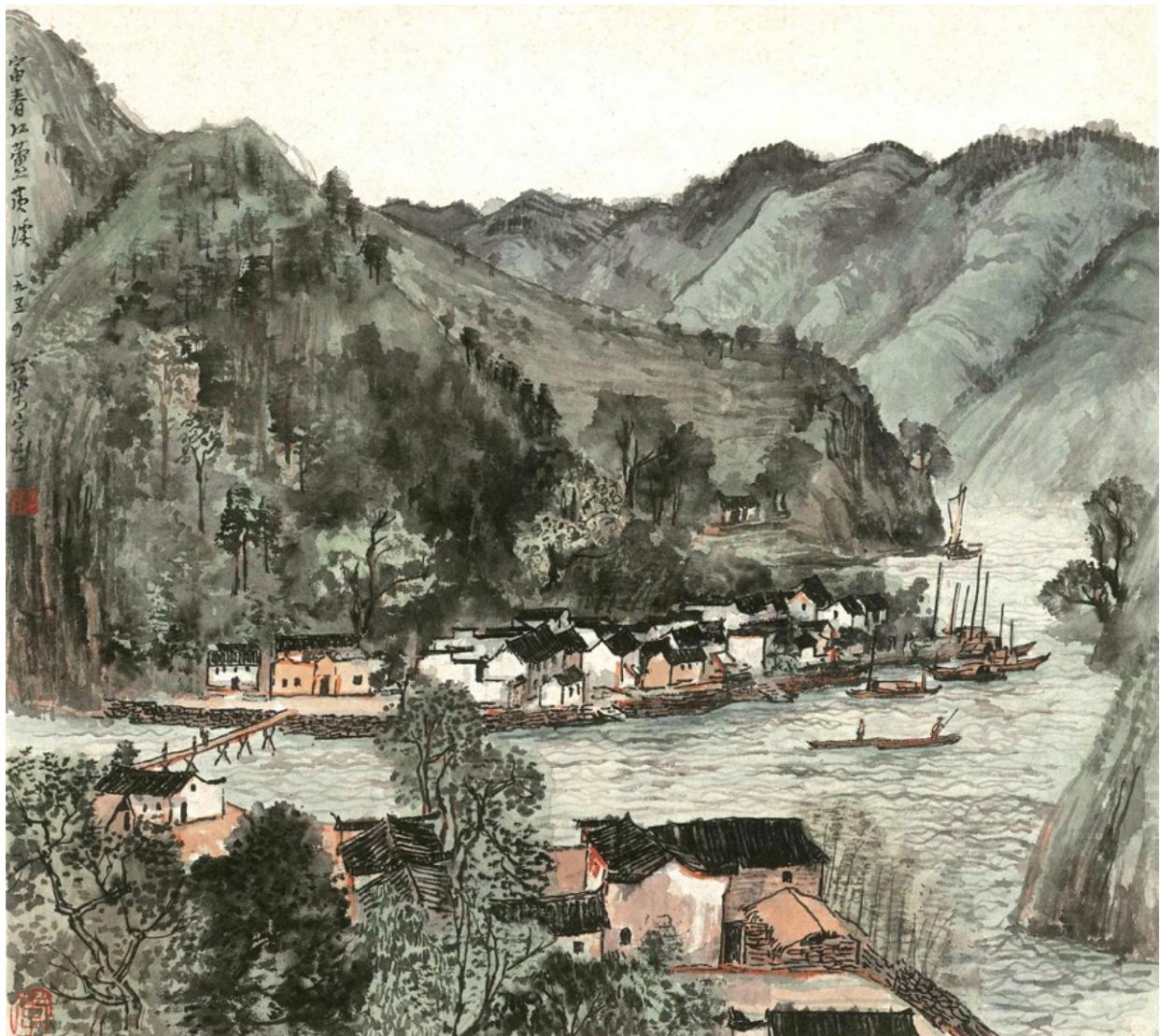


Fig. 1.12 Li Keran, “*All Families are within the Pictorial Frame*” “家家都在畫屏中”, 1954.

Ink and color on paper, 41 x 44 cm.

A black and white version was printed in *Meishu*, no. 10 (1954): 26.



Fig. 1.13 Zhang Ding 張仃, *Scenery of the West Lake* 西湖風景, 1954.

Ink and color on paper, 47.6 x 40 cm.

A black and white version printed in *Meishu*, no. 8 (1954): 33.



Fig. 1.14 Luo Ming 羅銘, *The Tonglu Pier* 桐廬渡頭, 1954. Ink and color on paper, 43 x 34 cm.
A black and white version was printed in *Meishu*, no. 9 (1954): 32.

Chapter 2



(Detail)

Fig. 2.1 The front side of the second edition of two-yuan bill.
Designed and issued by the People's Bank of China in 1953 and 1955 respectively.



Fig. 2.2 Photograph of the Chinese Communist Red Army departing Yan'an for the frontline against the Japanese military force. Reproduced from *Di er ci shijie dazhan tushi* 第二次世界大戰圖史 (Illustrative history of the World War II), ed. Beijing wuyue wenhua zixun gongsi 北京五岳文化諮詢公司 (Beijing: Hua-xia chubanshe, 2005). China Digital Library.



Fig. 2.3 Lin Gang 林崗, *Zhao Guilan at the Heroes Reception* 群英會上的趙桂蘭, 1952. New year's picture, 77 x 105 cm. The Art Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. Reproduced from *Nianhua xuanbian*, 1949-1959 年畫選編 (A selection of new year print, 1949-1959) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1961), plate 7.



Fig. 2.4 Wang Shenglie 王盛烈, *Eight Female Martyrs* 八女投江, 1959.
Ink and color on paper, 144 x 376 cm. The National Museum of China, Beijing. Published in
Meishu, no. 8 (1957): 21. Reproduced from Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 167.



Fig. 2.5 Zhan Jianjun 詹建俊, *Five Heroes of Mount Langya* 狼牙山五壯士, 1959.
Oil on canvas, 200 x 185 cm. The National Museum of China, Beijing.
Reproduced from Andrews, *Painters and Politics*, 239.



Fig. 2.6 Jin Shangyi 靳尚誼, *Mao Zedong at the December Meeting* 毛主席在十二月會議上, 1961. Oil on canvas, 158 x 134 cm. The National Museum of China, Beijing.
Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 155.



Fig. 2.7 Ha Qiongwen 哈琼文, *Learning from the Daqing's Spirit* 學大慶精神, 1965.
Poster, 77 x 50.5 cm. Printed by Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe.
Stefan R. Landsberger Collection. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.



Fig. 2.8 Fu Baoshi 傅抱石, *Undefeatable Crossing of the Dadu River* 強渡大渡河, 1951.
Ink and color on paper, 62 x 109.3 cm. Nanjing Museum. Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua* 傅抱石中國畫 (The Chinese painting of Fu Baoshi), eds. Xu Huping 徐湖平 et al. (Beijing: Rongbaozhai chubanshe, 2006), plate 45.



Fig. 2.9 Liu Zijiu 劉子久, *Searching for Resources for the Motherland* 為祖國尋找資源, 1956.

Ink and color on paper, 82.3 x 150 cm. The National Art Museum of China.

Reproduced from *Liu Zijiu zuopin xuanji* 劉子久作品選集 (A selection of painting of Liu Zijiu) (Tianjin: Tianjin meishu chubanshe, 1965), plate 12.

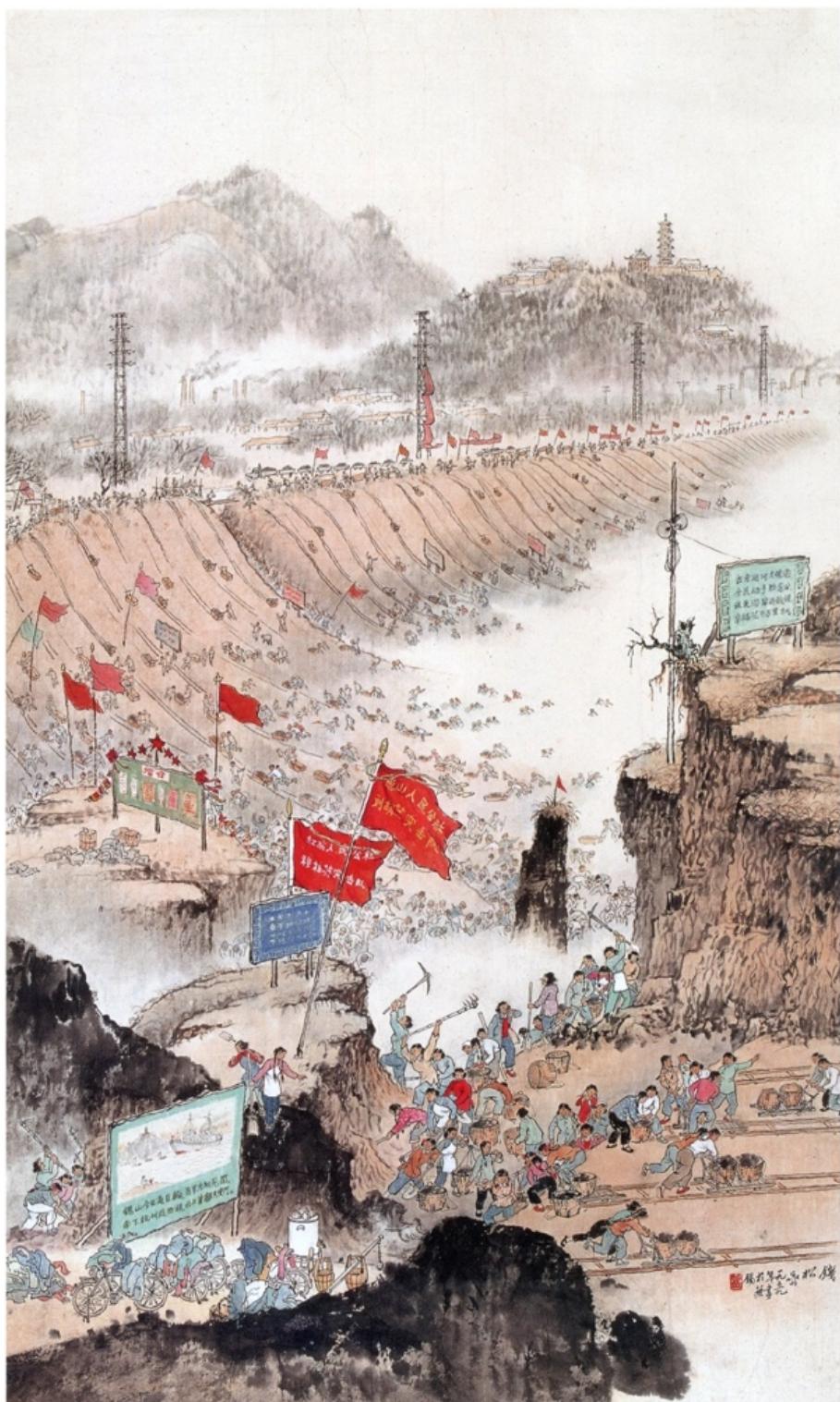


Fig. 2.10 Qian Songyan 錢松嵒, *Canal Building* 運河工程, 1959.

Ink and color on paper, 100.4 x 63cm. Wuxi Museum.

Reproduced from *Qian Songyan* 錢松嵒 (Qian Songyan)

(Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2006), 6.

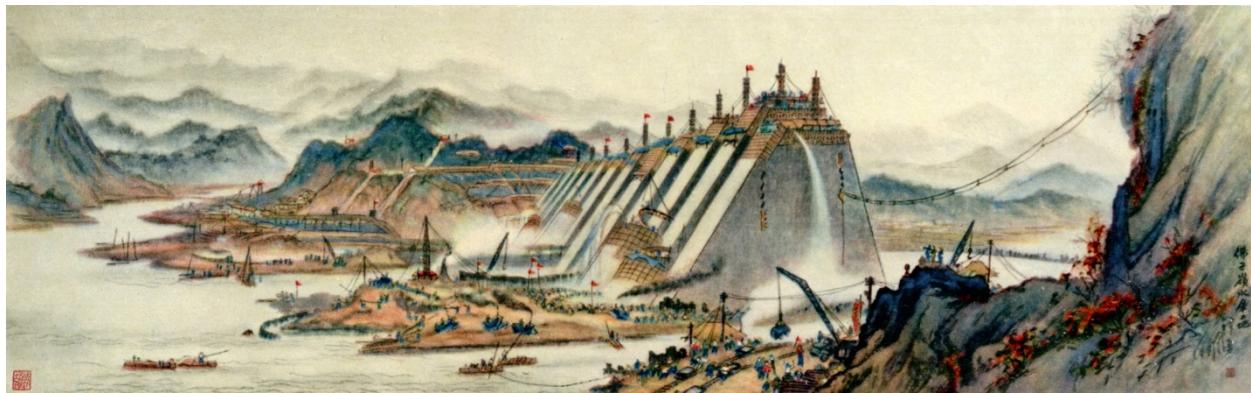


Fig. 2.11 Tan Yong 譚勇, *Foziling Reservoir* 佛子嶺水庫, 1954. Ink and color on paper, dimensions unknown. Reproduced from *Jiangsu shinian meishu xuanji* 江蘇十年美術選集 (A collection of ten years of Jiangsu art), ed. Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe 江蘇文藝出版社 (Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1959), plate 38.



Fig. 2.12 Collective production of the Beijing Painting Academy 北京畫院集體創作, *Ming Tombs Reservoir* 十三陵水庫, 1959. Ink and color on paper, 140 x 358 cm.

Beijing Painting Academy.

Reproduced from Guan Shanyue meishuguan ed., *Jianshe Xin Zhongguo*, 226-227.

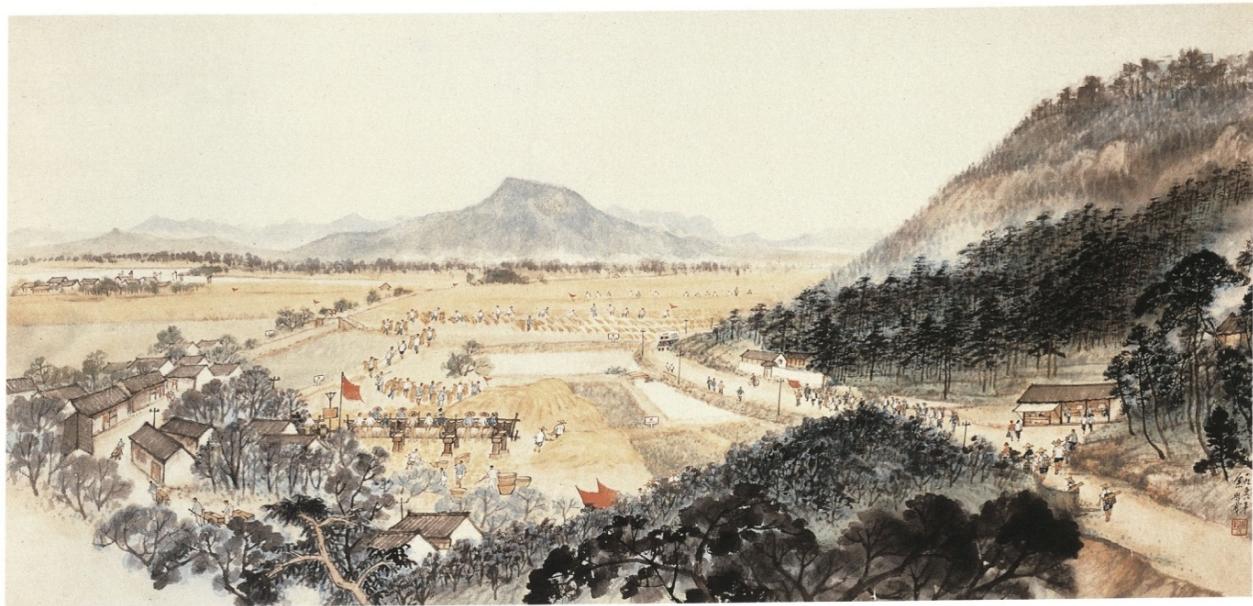


Fig. 2.13 Yu Tongfu 余彤甫, *Busy Harvesting at the Foot of Lingyan Hill* 灵岩山下麥收忙, 1958. Ink and color on paper, 53 x 112.5 cm. The Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute. Reproduced from *Jiangsu sheng guohua yuan diancang, xin Jinling huapai zuopin xuan ji* 江蘇省國畫院典藏. 新金陵畫派作品選集 (A collection of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute. A painting selection of the New Jinling School) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2010), 183.



Fig. 2.14 Zhang Wenjun 張文俊, *Meishan Reservoir* 梅山水庫, July 1958.
Ink and color on paper, 62 × 48 cm. The National Art Museum of China.
Reproduced from *Jiangsu shinian meishu xuanji*, ed. Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, plate 29.



Fig. 2.15 Guan Shanyue 關山月, *A Leap in a Mountain Village* 山村躍進圖 (“The longer scroll”), summer 1958. Ink on paper, 31.3 x 1526.5 cm. Guan Shanyue Art Museum.
Reproduced from *Guan Shanyue quanji, shanshui bian, zhongjuan* 關山月全集, 山水編, 中卷 (A complete collection of Guan Shanyue, on landscape, vol. 3), ed. Guan Shanyue meishuguan (Shenzhen: Haitian chubanshe, 2012), 140-143.



a. (Detail of fig. 2.15b)



b. (Detail of fig. 2.15c)



c. (Detail of fig. 2.15c)



d. (Detail of fig. 2.15f)



e. (Detail of fig. 2.15e)



f. (Detail of fig. 2.15c-d)



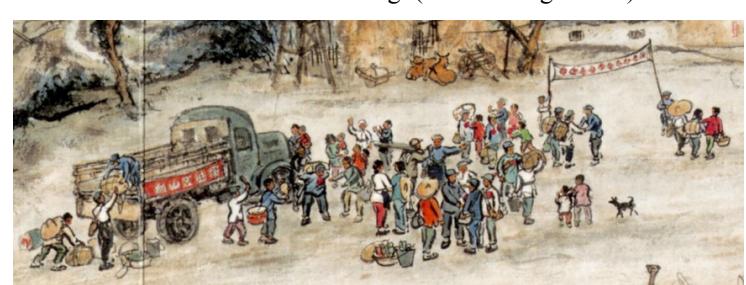
g. (Detail of fig. 2.15d)



h. (Detail of fig. 2.15h)



i. (Detail of fig. 2.15e)



j. (Detail of fig. 2.15e)

Fig. 2.16 Details from *A Leap in a Mountain Village*



a.



b.



c.

Fig. 2.17 Guan Shanyue, *A Busy Winter in the Mountain Village* 山鄉冬忙圖 (“The shorter scroll”), spring 1958. Ink and color on paper, 31.5 x 409.5 cm. Private Collection.
Reproduced from *Guan Shanyue quanji*, 138-139.



a. Short



b. Long



c. Short



d. Long



e. Short



f. Long

Fig. 2.18 Three pairs of comparison between *A Busy Winter in the Mountain Village* (“The shorter scroll”) and *A Leap in a Mountain Village* (“The longer scroll”).



Fig. 2.19 Collective production of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute 江蘇省國畫院集體創作, *Meals Are Free to All* 吃飯不要錢, 1958. Ink and color on paper, 142 x 98 cm. Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute. Reproduced from *Jinling feng gu qi ming wei xin* 金陵風骨 其命惟新, ed. Zhou Jingxin 周京新 (Nanjing: Jiangsu fenghuang meishu chubanshe, 2016), 45.



Fig. 2.19b Illustration showing the use of two-point perspective in *Meals Are Free to All*.



a.

b.

Fig. 2.20 *Meals Are Free to All*, 1958. Ink and color on paper, 146 x 96 cm.

- Image reproduced courtesy of the M K Lau Collection, Hong Kong
- Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute. Reproduced from *Jianshe Xin Zhongguo*, 168.



Fig. 2.21 Qian Songyan, *The Canteen of the People's Commune* 人民公社食堂, c. 1958. Ink and color on paper, dimensions unknown. *Yuhua* 雨花, no. 1 (1959): cover image.
Reproduced from Ho, "The People Eat for Free," 361.



Fig. 2.22 Collective production of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute 江蘇省國畫院, *Engaging in Steel Smelting as if on a Battlefield* 為鋼鐵而戰, 1958. Ink and color on paper, 23 x 237.5 cm. The Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute. Reproduced from *Jiangsu shinian meishu xuanji*, ed. Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, plate 2.



Fig. 2.23 Collective production of the Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute, *Launching the Patriotic Hygiene Campaign* 開展愛國衛生運動, 1958.

Ink and color on paper, dimensions unknown.

Reproduced from *Jiangsu shinian meishu xuanji*, ed. Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, plate 4.

內蒙古自治區的第一個國營機械農場



Fig. 2.24 *China Pictorial*, no. 8 (1953): 24.



Fig. 2.25 *China Pictorial*, no. 6 (1954): 10.



Fig. 2.26 *China Pictorial*, no. 3 (1954): 9.



Fig. 2.27 Zhang Yuqing 章育青, *The New Estate of the Commune* 公社新邨圖, 1961.
Poster, 53 x 77 cm. Printed by Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe.
The International Institute of Social History Collection, Amsterdam.



Fig. 2.28 Song Wenzhi 宋文治, *The Great Transformation of Mountains and Rivers* 山川巨變, 1960. Ink and color on paper, 27.5 x 115 cm. Song Wenzhi Art Museum.

Reproduced from *Zhongguo jin xiandai mingjia huaji. Song Wenzhi* 中國近現代名家畫集 宋文治 (Painting catalogue of Chinese modern renowned painter, Song Wenzhi) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1998), 16-7.



Fig. 2.29 Wu Zuoren 吳作人, *The Three Gate Gorge of the Yellow River* 三門峽工地, 1956.

Oil on canvas, 117 x 150 cm. The National Art Museum of China.

Printed in *China Pictorial*, no. 4 (1956): 18; and *Meishu*, no. 2 (1956): 5.

Photograph: Yim King Mak, 2014.



Fig. 2.30 Fu Baoshi, *A Clear Yellow River* 黃河清, 1960.

Ink and color on paper, 51.2 x 76 cm. The National Art Museum of China.

Reproduced from *Shanhe xinmao* 山河新貌 (The New Look of Mountains and Rivers) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1962), plate 14.

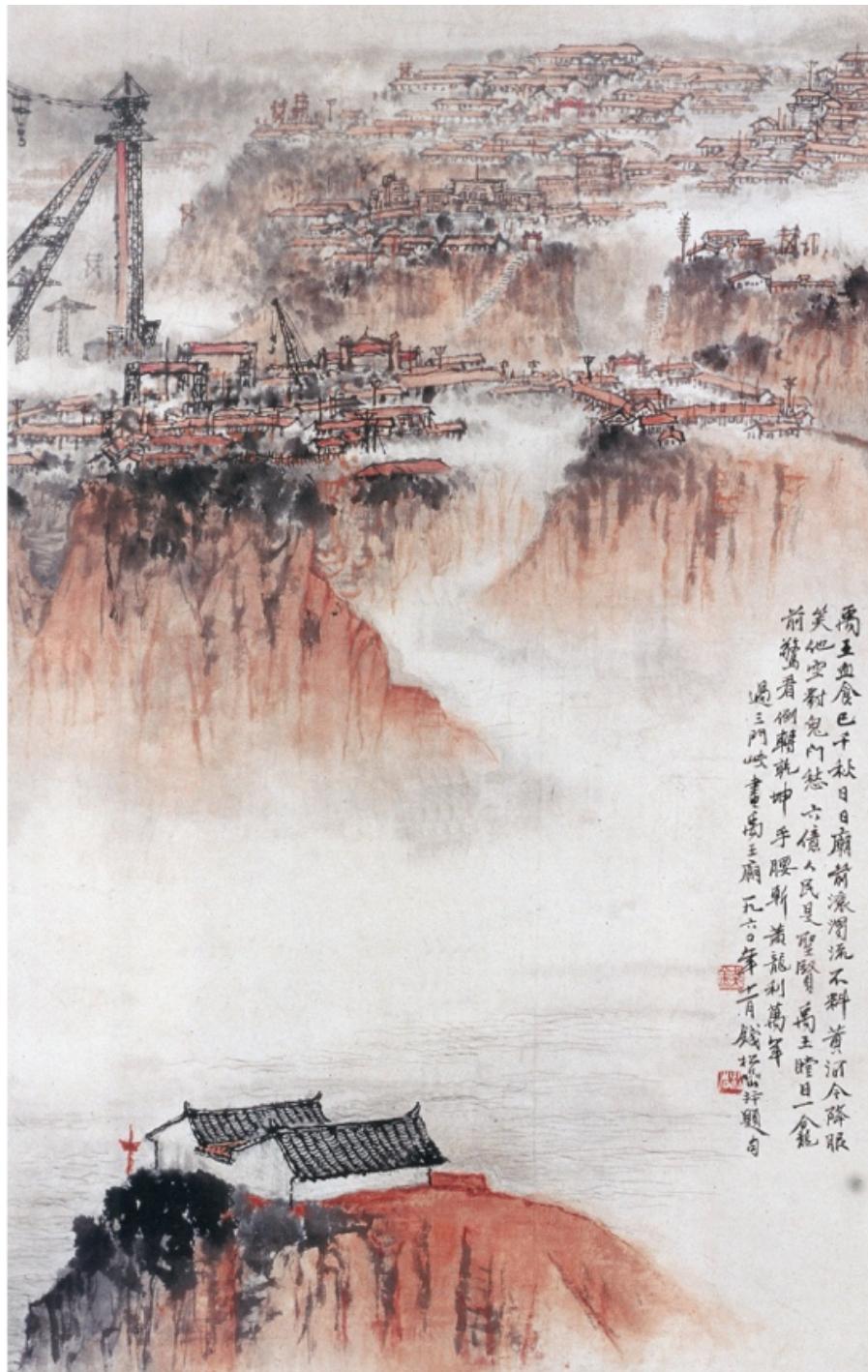


Fig. 2.31 Qian Songyan, *The Three Gate Gorge of the Yellow River* 三門峽工地, 1960.

Ink and color on paper, 80.5 x 47.6cm. The National Art Museum of China.

Reproduced from *Zhongguo jin xiandai mingjia huaji. Qian Songyan* 中國近現代名家畫集 錢
松嵒 (Painting catalogue of Chinese modern renowned painter, Qian Songyan) (Beijing: Renmin
meishu chubanshe, 2006), 70.



Fig. 2.32 Song Wenzhi, *The Great Transformation of Mountains and Rivers* 山川巨變, 1960.

Ink and color on paper, 77 x 98.5 cm. Song Wenzhi Art Museum.

Reproduced from *Song Wenzhi yishuguan cangpin ji* 宋文治藝術館藏品集 (The collection of Song Wenzhi Art Museum) (Beijing: Renmin meishu, 1999), 8.

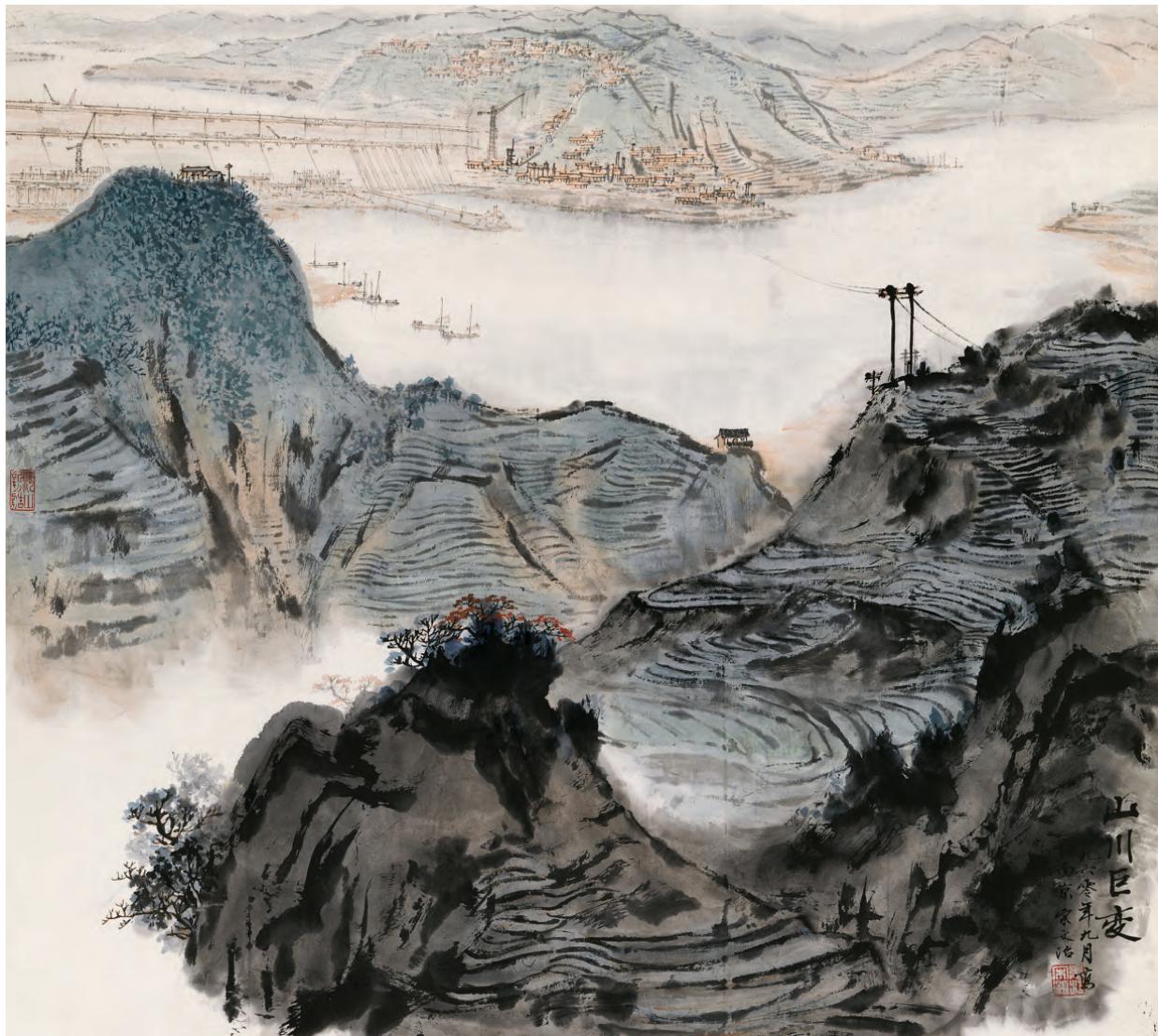


Fig. 2.33 Song Wenzhi, *The Great Transformation of Mountains and Rivers* 山川巨變, 1960.
Ink and color on paper, 70 x 78 cm.

Reproduced from *Song Wenzhi zuopin xuanji* 宋文治作品選集 (A selection of Song Wenzhi's painting) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963), plate 2.

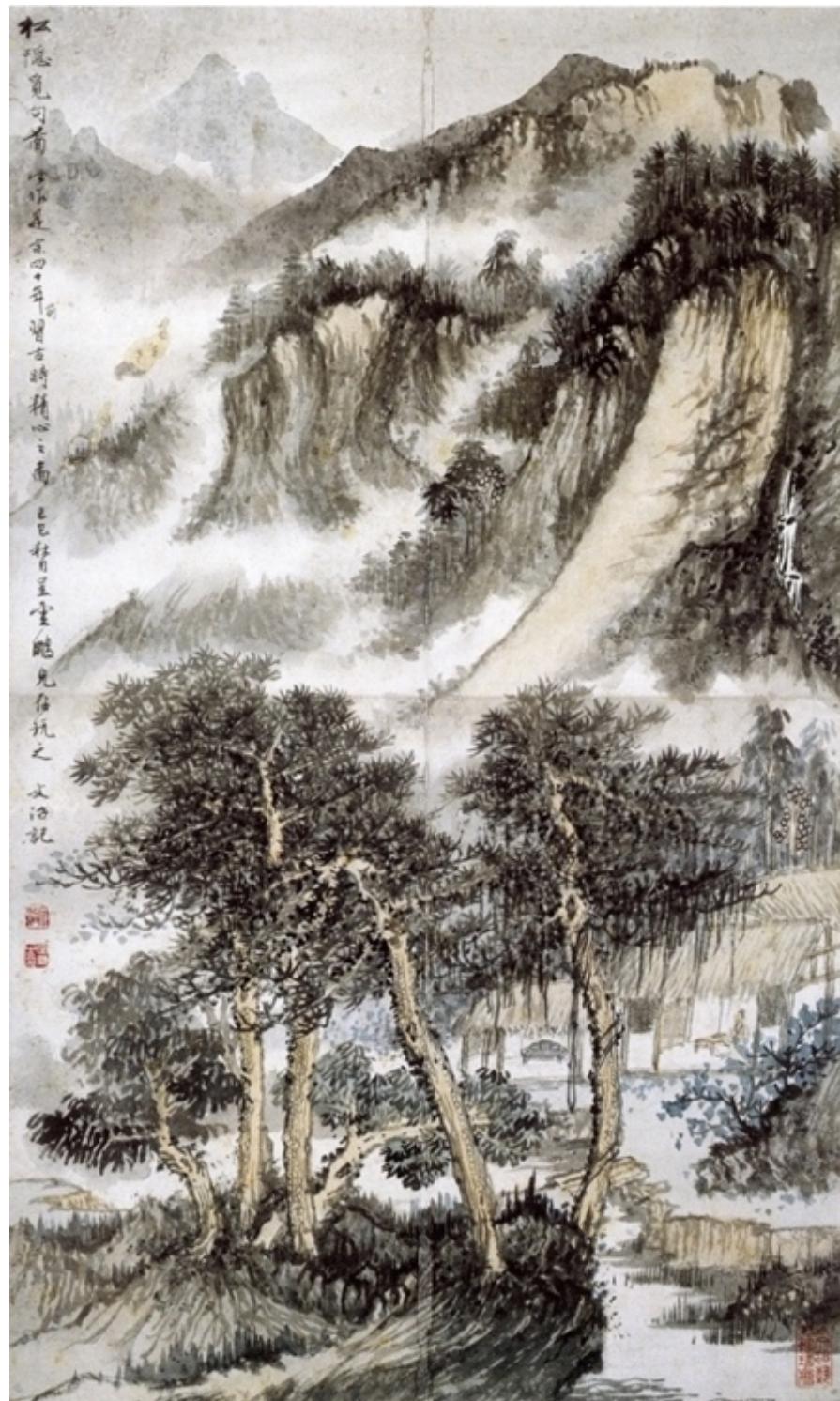


Fig. 2.34 Song Wenzhi, *Composing Verses in the Seclusion of Pine Trees* 松隱覓句圖, 1949.
Ink and color on paper, 61 x 36.5 cm. Song Wenzhi Art Museum.
Reproduced from *Song Wenzhi yishuguan cangpin ji*, 5.



Fig. 2.35 Song Wenzhi, *Timber Rafts on the Tongjiang River* 桐江放筏, 1956.
Ink and color on paper, dimensions unknown.
Reproduced from *China Pictorial*, no. 9 (1956): 21.



Fig. 2.36 Song Wenzhi, *The New Look of Canals* 運河新貌, c. 1957.

Ink and color on paper, 73.5 x 115 cm. Song Wenzhi Art Museum.

Printed in *Xin mao* 新貌 (The new look), ed. Jiangsu sheng guohua yuan choubei weiyuanhui 江蘇省國畫院籌備委員會 (Shanghai: Shanghai remin meishu chubanshe, 1959), plate 1.

Reproduced from *Zhongguo jin xiandai mingjia huaji*. Song Wenzhi, 14.



Fig. 2.37 Yang Taiyang 楊太陽, *Rafting on the Li River* 瀘江木排, 1954.

Watercolor, dimensions unknown.

Reproduced from *Meishu*, no. 7 (1954): 20. Also printed in *China Pictorial*, no. 9 (1954): 21.



Fig. 2.38 Qian Songyan, *Ode to Yan'an* 延安頌, 1962. Ink and color on paper, 110 x 69.5cm.
Reproduced from *Zhongguo jinxiandai mingjia huaji*, Qian Songyan, 83.

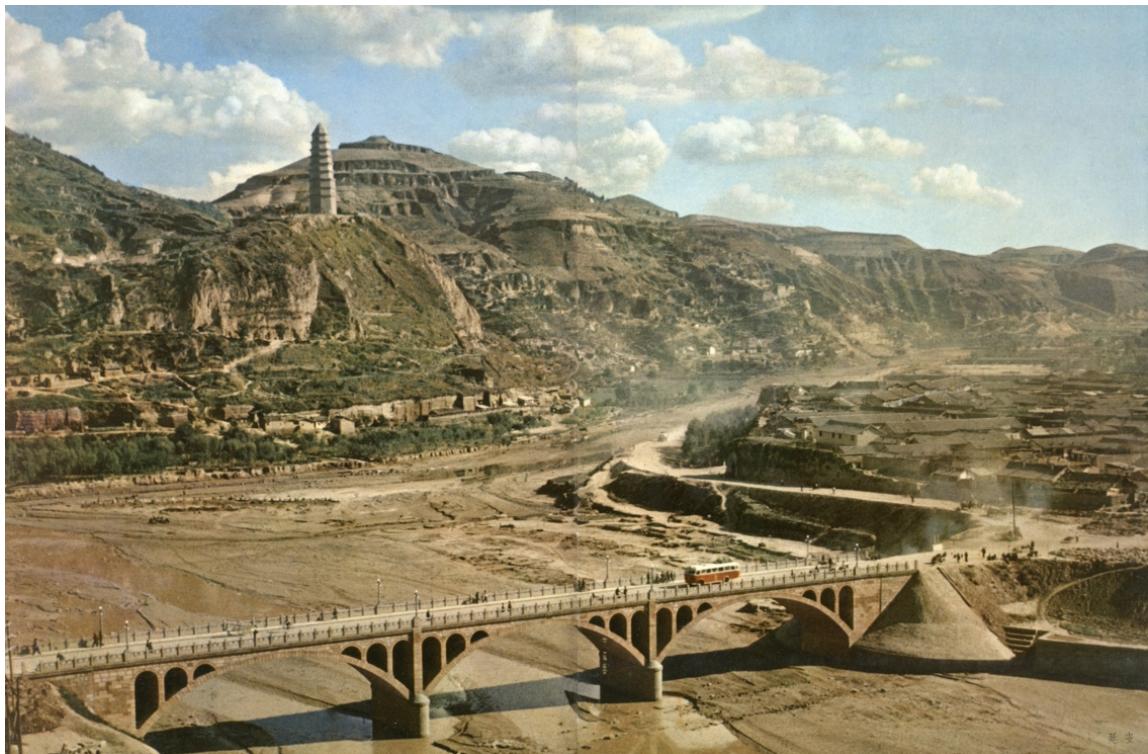


Fig. 2.39 Photograph of Yan'an. Reproduced from *Jiangshan ruci duojiao* 江山如此多嬌 (This land so rich in beauty) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1964), 186-7.



Fig. 2.40 Fu Baoshi, *Yan'an Pagoda* 延安塔勢, c. 1960.
Ink and color on paper, dimensions unknown. Nanjing Museum.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 339.

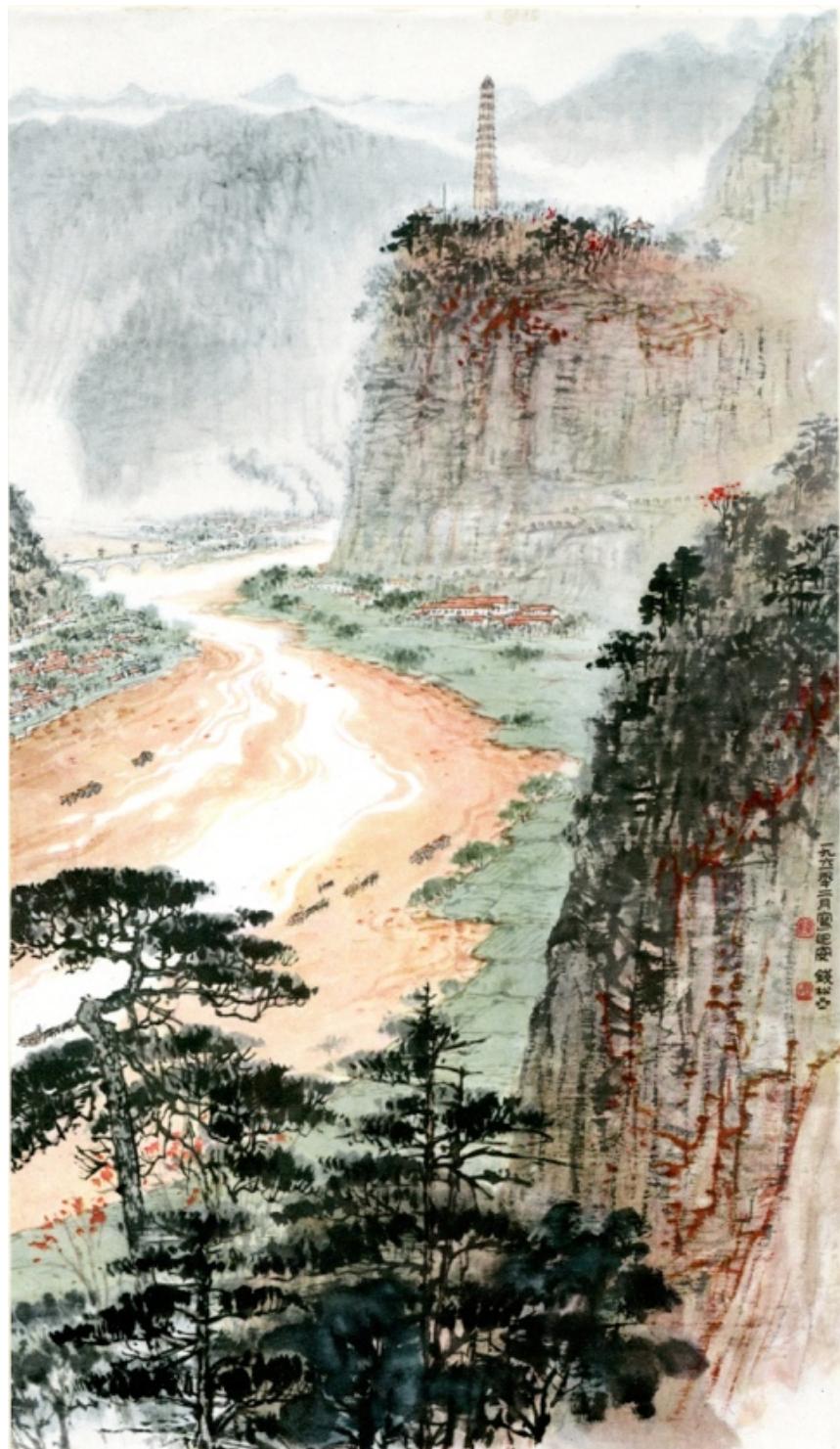


Fig. 2.41 Qian Songyan, *Yan'an* 延安, 1961. Ink and color on paper, dimensions unknown.
Reproduced from *Shanhe xinmao*, plate 8.



Fig. 2.42 Qian Songyan, *Ode to Yan'an* 延安頌, c. 1960s.
Ink and color on paper, 59.8 x 44.1 cm.

Reproduced from *Qian Songyan zuopin xuanji* 錢松嵒作品選集 (A selection of Qian Songyan's painting) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963), plate 8.



Fig. 2.43 Qian Songyan, *Ode to Yan'an* 延安頌, c. 1960. Poster.

Published by Shanghai shuhua she.

Landsberger collection, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
Also collected by Princeton University Art Museum, and the Library of Congress.



Fig. 2.44 Qian Songyan, *Red Crag* 紅岩, c. 1960s. Ink and color on paper, 104 x 81.5 cm.
Reproduced from *Qian Songyan*, 86.



Fig. 2.45 Li Keran, *Ten Thousand Mountains Bathed in Red* 萬山紅遍、層林盡染, 1963.
Ink and color on paper, 69.5 x 45.5 cm. The National Art Museum of China.
Reproduced from *Meishu*, no. 6 (1963): 64.

Chapter 3



Fig. 3.1 Li Keran, *A River City in Morning Mist* 江城朝霧, 1956.

Ink on paper, dimensions unknown.

Reproduced from *Li Keran shuimo shanshui xiesheng huaji* 李可染水墨山水寫生畫集 (A catalogue of Li Keran's Chinese landscape ink painting) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1959), plate 18.

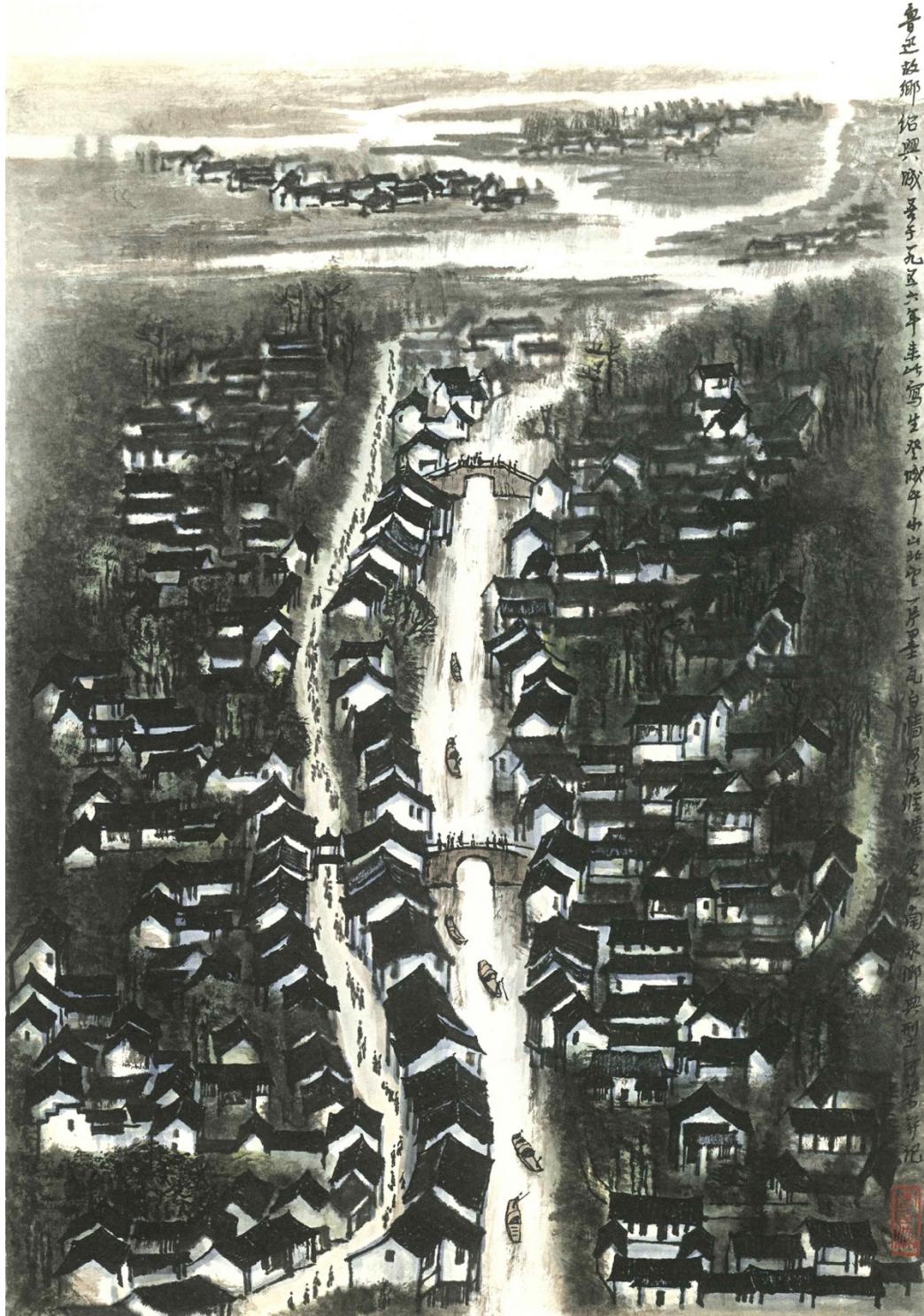


Fig. 3.2 Li Keran, *The Hometown of Lu Xun, Shaoxing* 魯迅的故鄉紹興城, c. 1962.
Ink and color on paper, dimension unknown. Reproduced from *Li Keran shuimo shanshui xiesheng huaji* 李可染水墨山水寫生畫集 (A catalogue of Li Keran's Chinese landscape ink painting) (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu chubanshe, 2012), plate 4.



(Detail)

Fig. 3.3 Fu Baoshi, *Ode to Yuhuatai* 雨花台頌, 1958. Ink and color on paper, 60 x 105.5 cm. Nanjing Museum. Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 106.



Fig. 3.4 Photograph of soldiers and residents of Nanjing visiting the Yuhuatai Monument in April 1958. Reproduced from *Yingxiang Nanjing: jinian Nanjing jiefang 60 zhounian* 影像南京：紀念南京解放 60 周年 (Nanjing's image: commemorating the sixteenth anniversary of liberating Nanjing), ed. Ye Hao 葉皓 (The images of Nanjing: commemorating the 60th anniversary of liberating Nanjing) (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 2009), 50.



a.



b. detail

Fig. 3.5 Fu Baoshi, *The Second Spring of Yuhuatai* 雨花台第二泉, 1956.
Ink and color on paper, 50.9 x 70.9 cm. Nanjing Museum.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 52.



Fig. 3.6 Fu Baoshi, *Yuhuatai in Rain* 雨中雨花台, c. 1950s.
Ink and color on paper, 51 x 71.2 cm. Nanjing Museum.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 150.



Fig. 3.7 Fu Baoshi, *The Second Spring of Yuhuatai* 雨花台第二泉, 1956.

Ink and color on paper, 51.2 x 71 cm. Nanjing Museum.

Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 53.

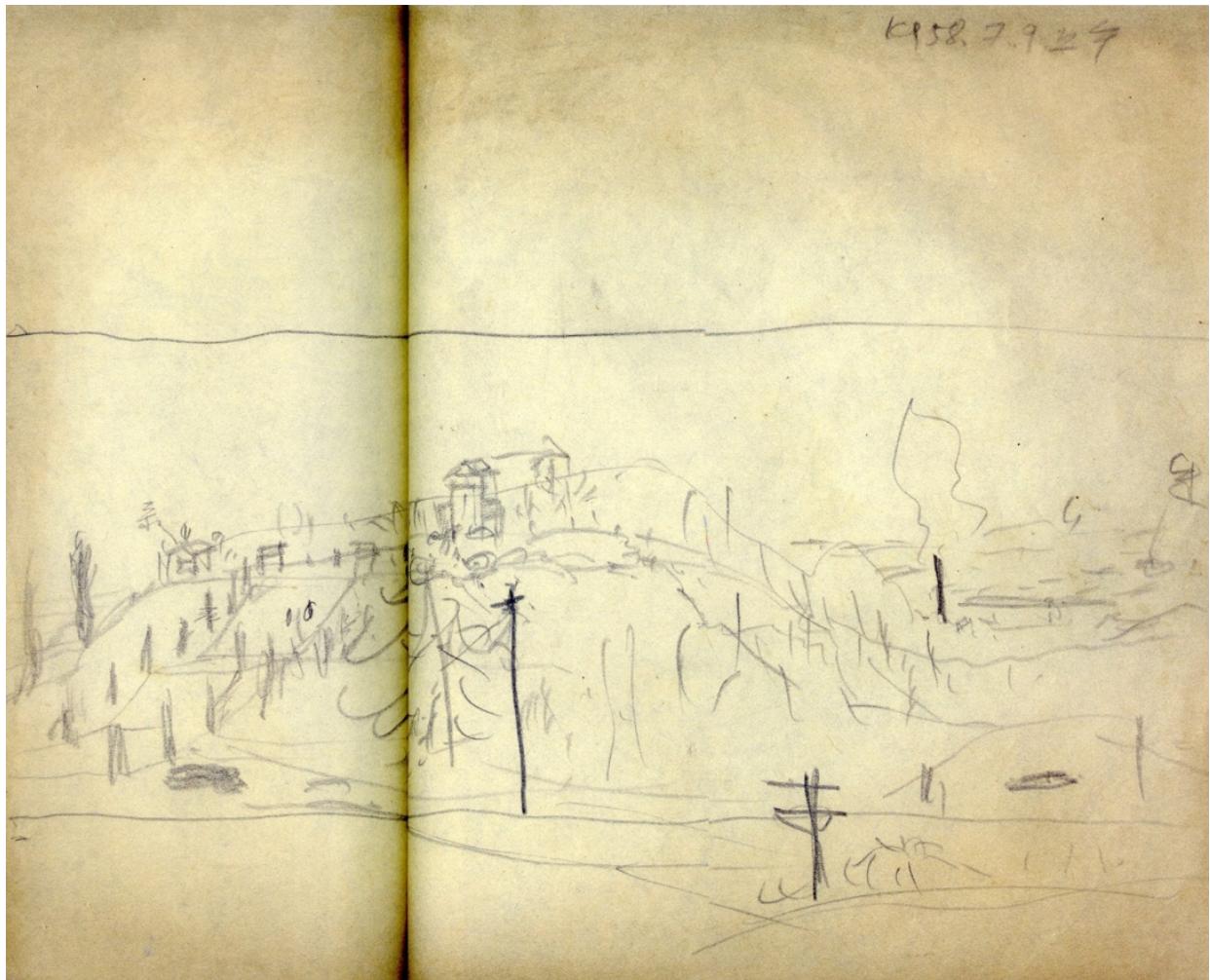


Fig. 3.8 Fu Baoshi, Yuhuatai, July 9 1958. Sketch, 21.4 x 27.8 cm.
Nanjing Museum. Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi jiashu juanzeng, Nanjing bowuyuan cang Fu Baoshi xiesheng huagao* 傅抱石家屬捐贈 · 南京博物院藏傅抱石中國畫傅抱石寫生畫稿 (Fu Baoshi's painting and sketch at Nanjing Museum), ed. Nanjing bowuyuan 南京博物院 (Beijing: Rongbaozhai chubanshe, 2007), 412-413.



Fig. 3.9 Fu Baoshi, *Ode to Yuhuatai* 雨花台頌, undated. Ink and color on paper, 70.9 x 109.6 cm. Nanjing Museum. Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 324.

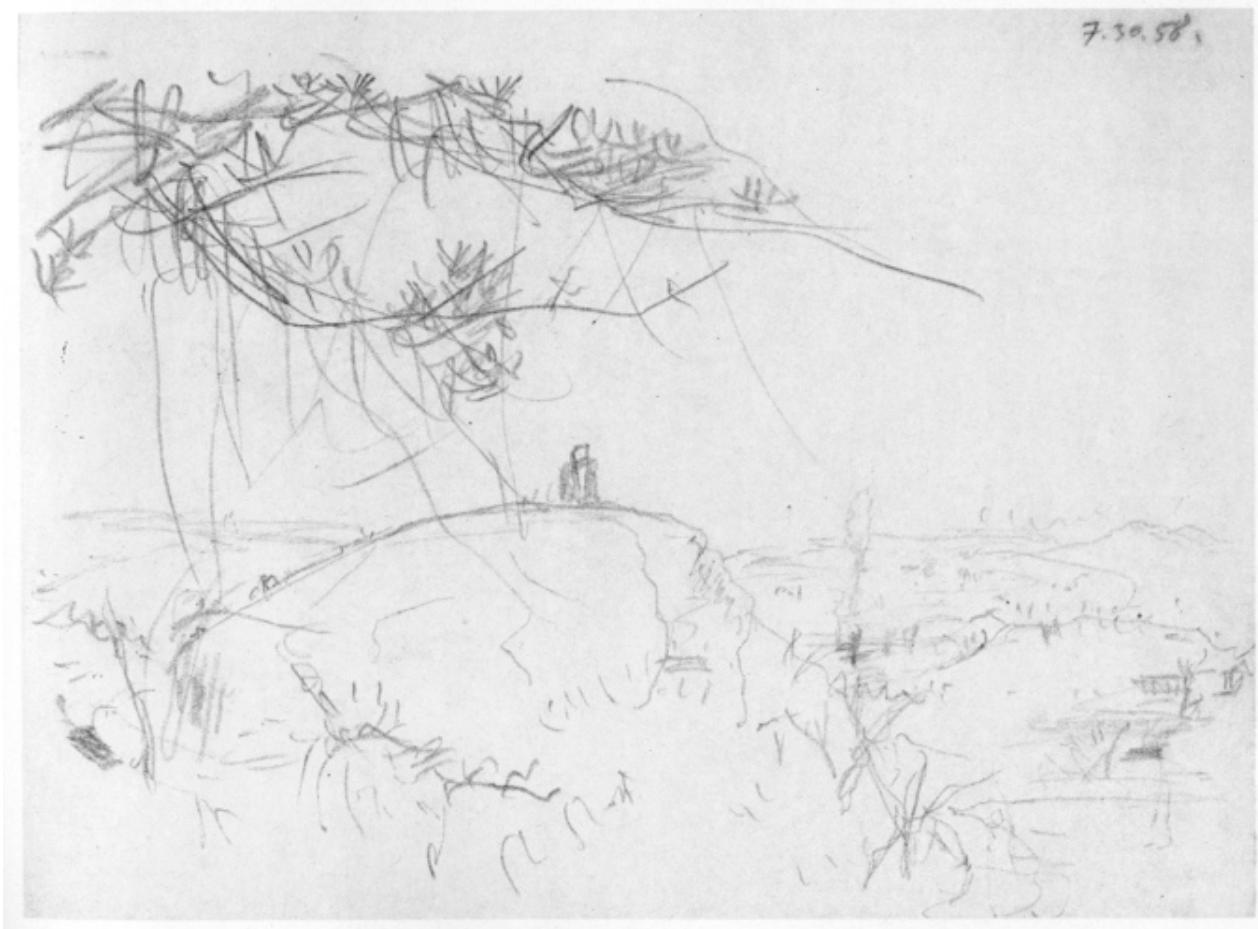


Fig. 3.10 Fu Baoshi, Yuhuatai, July 30, 1958. Sketch, dimensions unknown.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi suxie ji* 傅抱石速寫集 (A collection of Fu Baoshi's sketches)
(Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1985), plate 23.

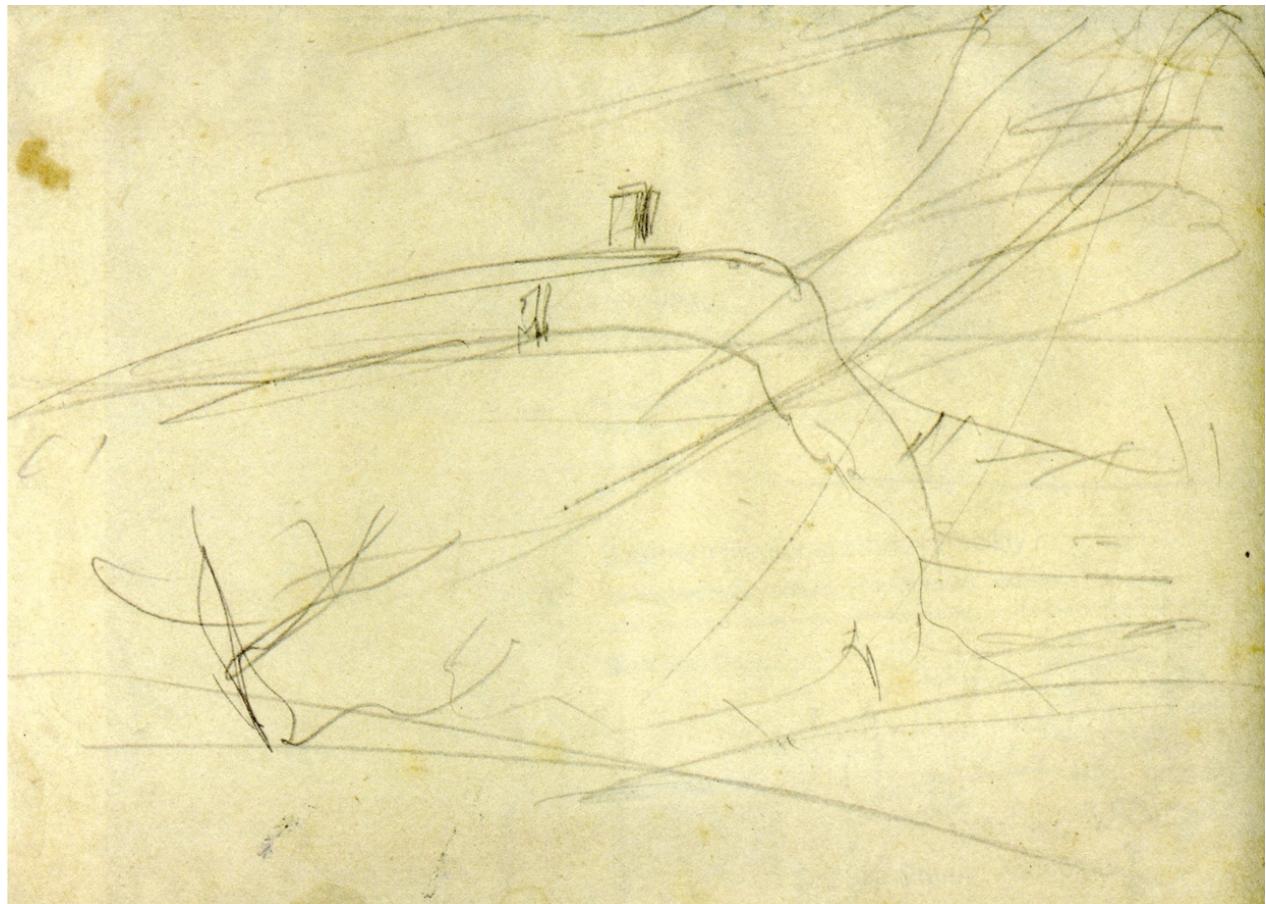


Fig. 3.11 Fu Baoshi, Yuhuatai, c. 1958. Sketch, 17.4 x 24.6 cm. Nanjing Museum.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi xiesheng huagao*, 414.

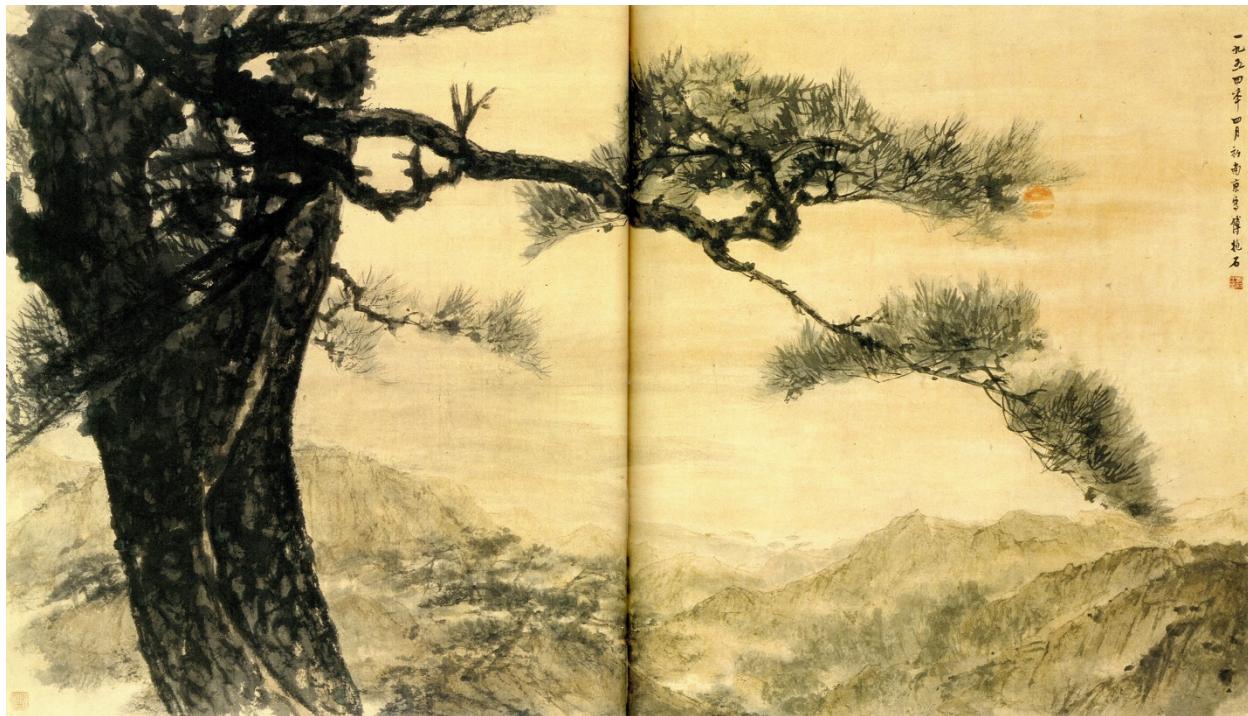


Fig. 3.12 Fu Baoshi, *The East Is Red* 東方紅, 1954. Ink and color on paper, 119.5 x 209 cm.

Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Reproduced from *Zhongguo renmin duiwai youhao xiehui zhencang mingren shuhua ji* 中國人民對外友好協會珍藏名人書畫集 (Masterpieces of calligraphy and painting collected by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin duiwai youhao xiehui, 1994), plate 14.



Fig. 3.13 Fu Baoshi, *Ode to Yuhuatai* 雨花台頌, May 1959.
Ink and color on paper, 123.3 x 205.2cm. Nanjing Museum.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 125.



Fig. 3.14 Fu Baoshi, *Ode to Yuhuatai* 雨花台頌, September 1959.
Ink and color on paper, 152 x 225 cm. Jiangsu Traditional Chinese Painting Institute.
Reproduced from *Jiangsu Sheng guohua yuan diancang. Xin Jinling huapai zuopin xuanji*, 24-
25.

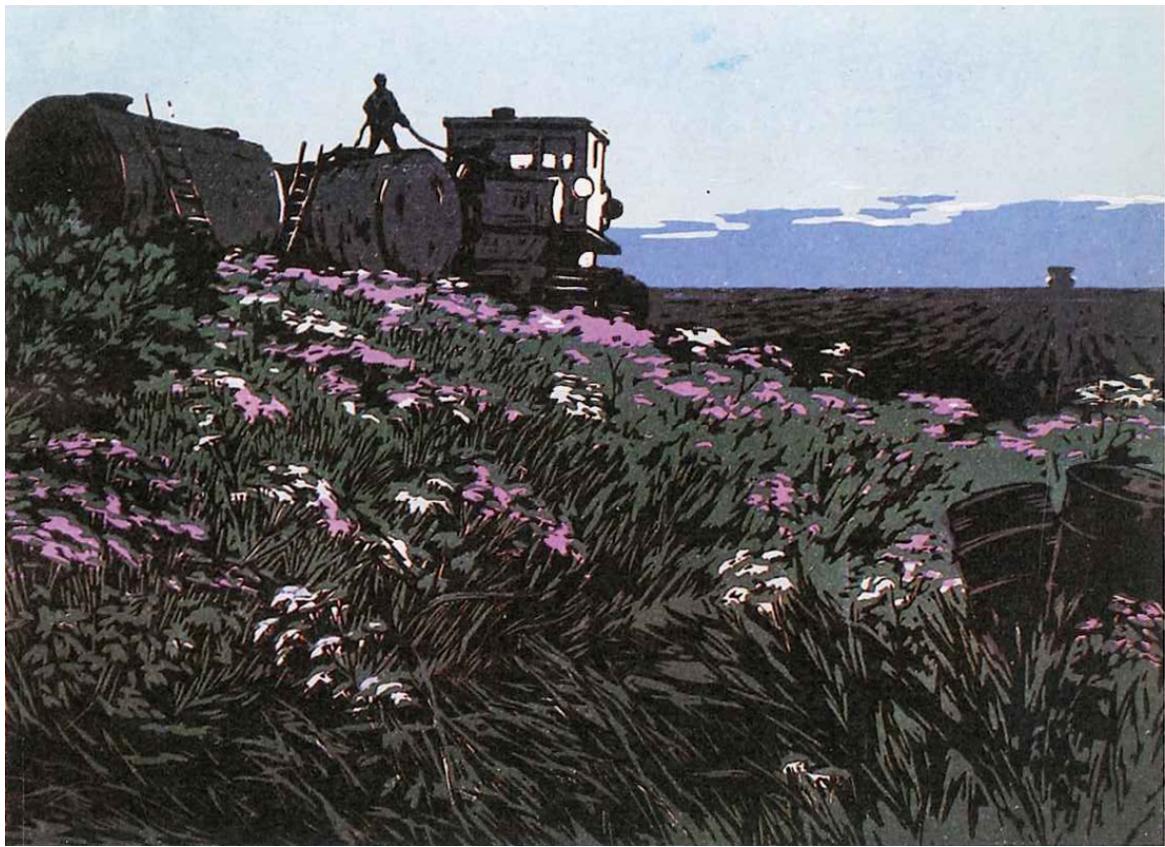


Fig. 3.15 Chao Mei 晁楣, *Black Soil Steppe* 黑土草原, 1960. Polychromatic woodblock print,
26.4 x 36.2 cm. Collection of the artist.

Reproduced from Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 181.



Fig. 3.16 Film still from *Heroes Defeating Beidahuang* 英雄戰勝北大荒, 1958.
Directed by Gu Fen 谷芬 and Yang Cai 楊采, produced by the August First Film Studio 八一電
影製片廠.



a.



b.

Fig. 3.17 Film still from *Heroes Defeating Beidahuang*.

- a. Film still
- b. Reconstructed film still



Fig. 3.18 Chao Mei, *Prelude to Wheat Harvest* 麥收序曲, 1961.

Polychromatic woodblock print, 31 x 66 cm.

Reproduced from *Chao Mei zuo pin xuan ji* 晁楣作品選集 (A selection of Chao Mei's works) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1964), plate 15.

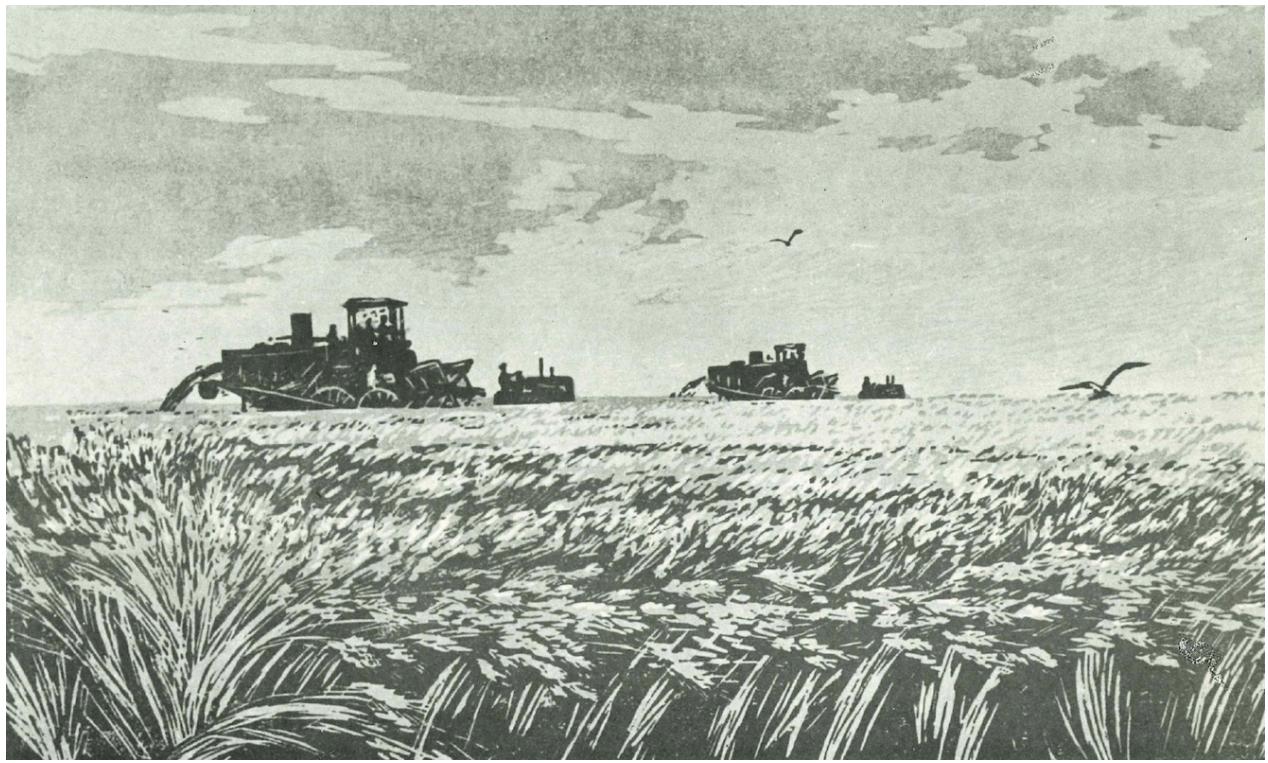


Fig. 3.19 Chao Mei, *Sea of Wheat* 麥海, 1959. Polychromatic woodblock print, 26.6 x 41 cm. Reproduced from *Chao Mei banhua* 級楣版画 (The print of Chao Mei) (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1982), plate 3.



Fig. 3.20 Chao Mei, *Northern China in September* 北方九月, 1963.
Polychromatic woodblock print, 40 x 62 cm. The National Art Museum of China.
Reproduced from 1940-2003 Zhongguo ban hua dian ji 中國版畫典集 1940-2003 (Chinese
print collection 1940-2003) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2003), 83.



Fig. 3.21 Du Hongnian 杜鴻年, *Bustle in Springtime* 春的喧鬧, 1962.
Polychromatic woodblock print, 36 x 60.5 cm.

Reproduced from *Zhongguo xinxing banhua wushinian xuanji* 中國新興版畫五十年選集 (A selection of fifty years of China's new print) vol. 2, (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981), plate 306.



Fig. 3.22 Film still reconstructed from *Third Sister Liu* 劉三姐, 1960.
Directed by Su Li 蘇里, produced by Changchun Film Studio 長春電影製片廠.



Fig. 3.23 Film still from *Third Sister Liu*.



Fig. 3.24 Film still from *Third Sister Liu*.



Fig. 3.25 Film still from *Third Sister Liu*.



Fig. 3.26 Film still reconstructed from *Third Sister Liu*.

Chapter 4



Fig. 4.1 Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue, *This Land So Rich in Beauty* 江山如此多嬌, 1959.

Ink and color on paper, 550 x 900 cm. The Great Hall of the People, Beijing.

Reproduced from *Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao*, inner cover.



a.



b.

Fig. 4.2 Film stills from *The East Is Red* 東方紅, 1964.

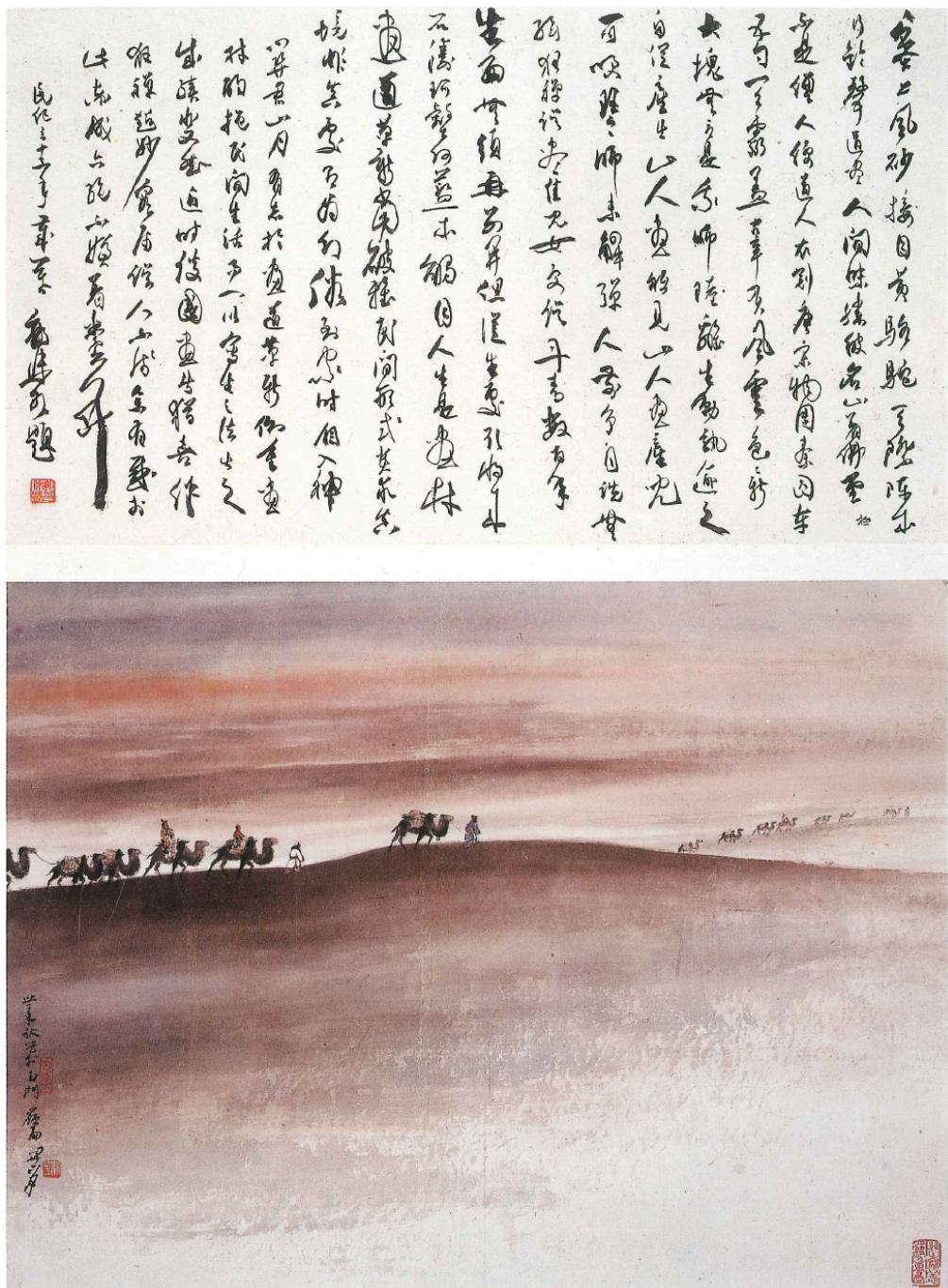


Fig. 4.3 Guan Shanyue, *Camel Bells Beyond the Great Wall* 塞外駝鈴, 1944.

Guo Moruo's inscription at the top. Ink and color on paper, 60 x 45.3 cm.

Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen.

Reproduced from *Guan shanyue bashi huigu zhan* 關山月八十回顧展 (A retrospective of the eightieth year of Guan Shanyue), ed. Taiwan shengli meishuguan bianji weiyuanhui 臺灣省立美術館編輯委員會 (Taizhong: Shengli meishuguan, 1991), 17.



Fig. 4.4 Fu Baoshi, Mao Zedong's "Snow—to the tune of 'Qin yuan chun'" 毛澤東《沁園春·雪》詞意, December 1958. Ink and color on paper, 34 x 50 cm. Nanjing Museum.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 117.



Fig. 4.5 Pan Tianshou 潘天壽, *This Land So Rich in Beauty* 江山如此多嬌, 1959.
Ink and color on paper, dimensions unknown. China Digital Library.



Fig. 4.6 Poster of *This Land Rich in Beauty* 江山多嬌, 1959. Director by Wang Ping 王蘋, produced by the August First Film Studio 八一電影製片廠. China Digital Library.



Fig. 4.7 Fu Baoshi, Mao Zedong's "Snow—set to the tune of 'Qin yuan chun'" 毛澤東《沁園春·雪》詞意, n.d. Ink and color on paper, 30.2 x 65.9 cm. Nanjing Museum.
Reproduced from *Fu Baoshi Zhongguo hua*, plate 317.



Fig. 4.8 Fu Baoshi, *Mao Zedong's "Snow—set to the tune of 'Qin yuan chun'"*, n.d.
Ink and color on paper, 36.5 x 56 cm. Collection of the Fu family.

Reproduced from Wan Xinhua 萬新華, *Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao: Fu Baoshi Mao Zedong shiyi hua chuangzuo* 江山如此多嬌: 傅抱石毛澤東詩意畫創作 (This land so rich in beauty: Fu Baoshi's painting of Mao Zedong's poetry) (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2010), 53.



Fig. 4.9 Yokoyama Taikan, *The Great Shining Japanese Nation of Eight Islands*, 1941.
A section of a long handscroll, ink and color on paper, 47 x 2903 cm.
Imperial Household Museum, Tokyo.
Reproduced from Fong, *Between Two Cultures*, 123.



Fig. 4.10 Photograph of Fu Baoshi in the process of painting *This Land So Rich in Beauty*, 1959.
Reproduced from Wan Xinhua, *Jiangshan ru ci duo jiao*, 57.

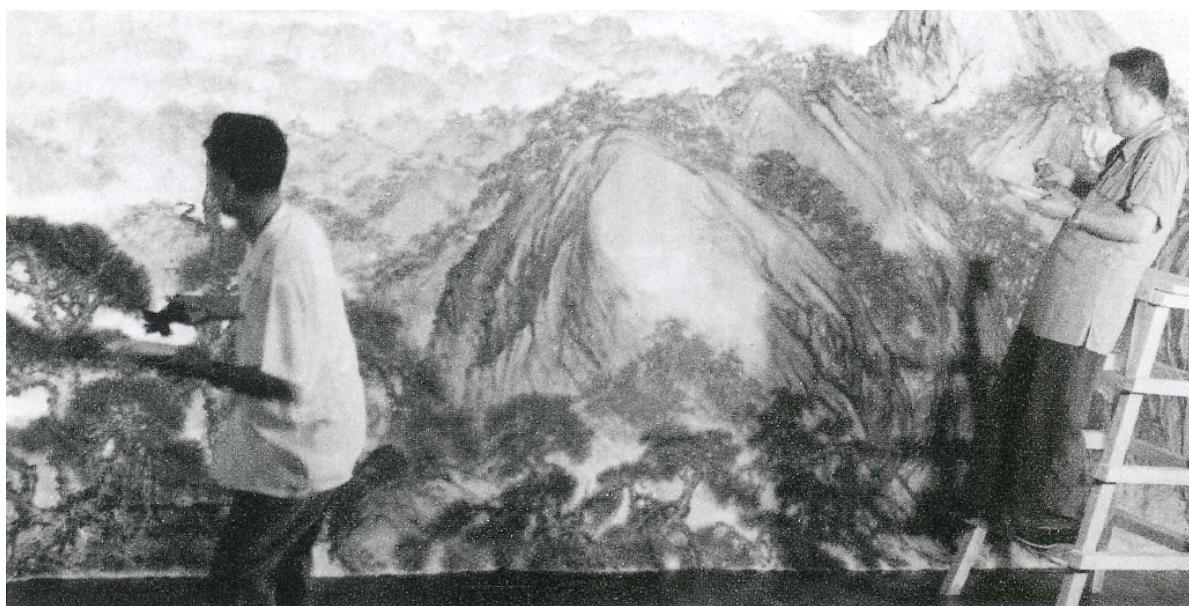


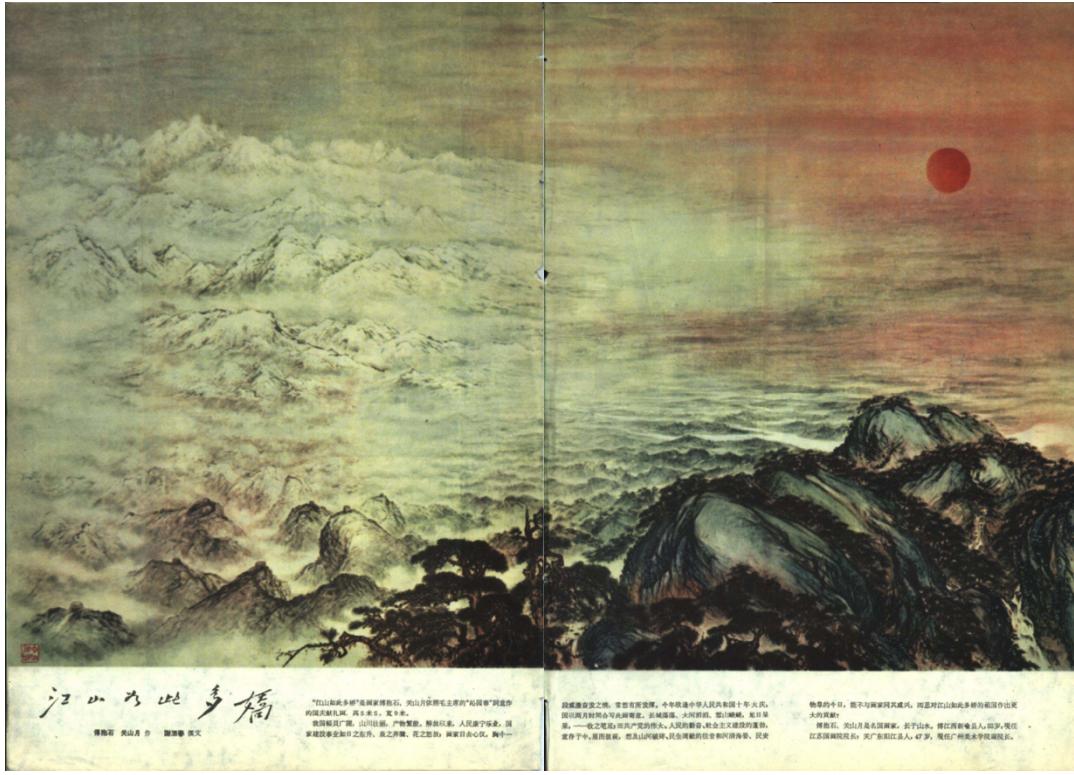
Fig. 4.11 Photograph of Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue in the process of painting *This Land So Rich in Beauty*, 1959. Reproduced from ibid., 56.



Fig. 4.12 Guan Shanyue, *Pine* 松, September 1959. Ink and color on paper, 485 x 295 cm.
The Great Hall of the People, Beijing.



Fig. 4.13 Guan Shanyue, sketch for Mao Zedong's *Verse in 16 Syllables*, 1958.
Ink on paper, 31 x 41 cm. Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen.
Reproduced from *Guan Shanyue quanji*, 288.



a.



b.

Fig. 4.14 Reproduction of *This Land So Rich in Beauty* in the Chinese and English versions of *China Pictorial*; text written by senior journalist Xie Sichun 謝泗春 (Hsieh Sze-chun)

a. *Renmin ribao*, no. 19 (October 1, 1959): 21-22.

b. *China Pictorial*, no. 19 (October 5, 1959): 20-21.



Fig. 4.15 Li Zongjin 李宗津, *The East Is Red* 東方紅, 1954.
Oil painting reproduced as a propaganda poster. China Digital Library.



Fig. 4.16 Photograph of U.S. President Richard Nixon and his delegation with top government officials from the People's Republic of China, 1972. The Great Hall of the People, Beijing.
Private Collection.



Fig. 4.17 Photograph of members of the Committee of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, October 1, 1949.

Reproduced from *Zhou Enlai hua zhuan, 1898-1976* 周恩來畫傳 1898-1976 (A pictorial biography of Zhou Enlai 1898-1976), ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiu shi. Zhou Enlai yanjiu zu 中共中央文獻研究室周恩來研究組 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2006), 157.



Fig. 4.18 Film still from the video of the Grand National Day Military Parade 2009, the People's Republic of China. Youtube (2:21:36-2:21:41)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_QaP4Wh0XNo [accessed April 20, 2016]

Epilogue



Fig. 5.1 Photograph of a monumental landscape embroidery, *The Great Land of the Motherland* 祖國大地, mounted behind the life-sized white-marble statue of Mao Zedong, at the main memorial hall of the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall, Beijing.



Fig. 5.2 Photograph of Chinese President Hu Jintao (left) holding a welcoming ceremony for U.S. President Barack Obama (right) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on November 17, 2009. Photograph: Pete Souza. Official White House Photography on Flickr.com.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/obamawhitehouse/4140427851/in/photostream/>

[accessed on April 21, 2018]



Fig. 5.3 Photograph of the interior of Shanghai Hall, the Great Hall of the People, Beijing.
Official website of the National People's Congress,
http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/GreatHall/node_3094.htm [accessed on April 21, 2018]

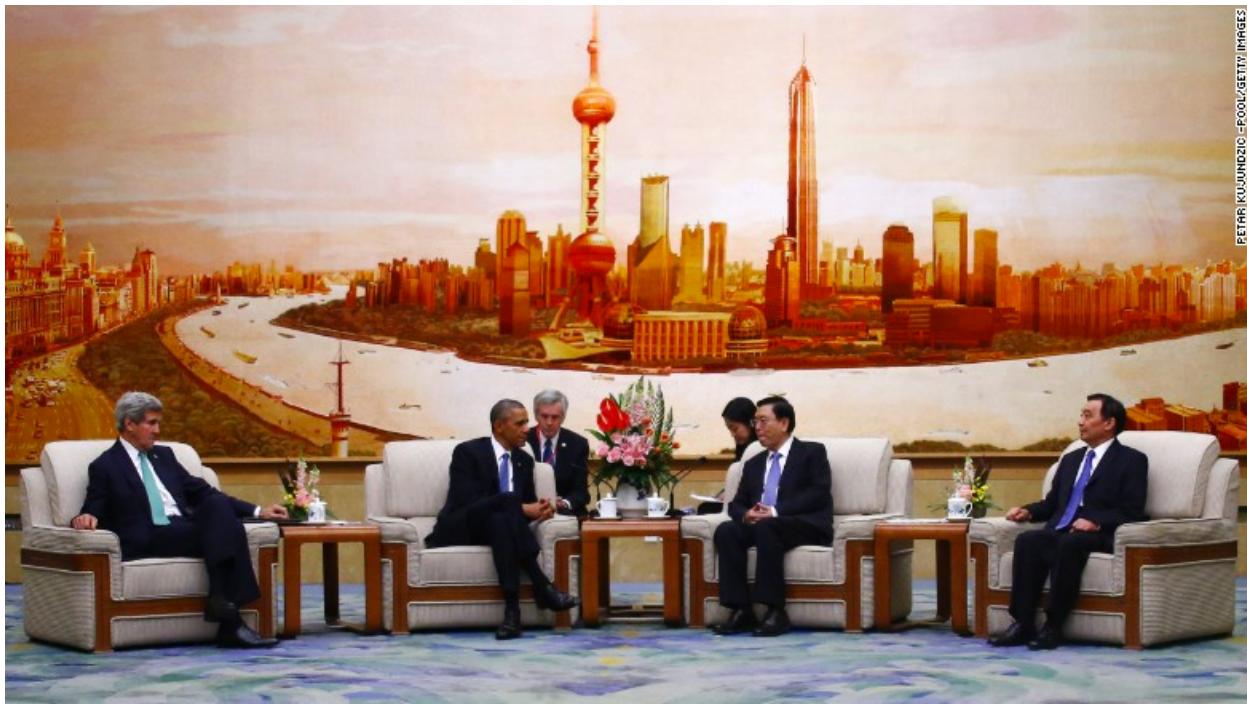


Fig. 5.4 Photograph of U.S. President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and meet with Zhang Dejiang, Chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress on November 12, 2014, at the Shanghai Hall, the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2012/12/20/us/john-kerry---fast-facts/index.html>

[accessed on April 21, 2018]



Fig. 5.5 Zhang Dali, *Dialogue* 2000101A, Jinmao Tower, Shanghai, 2000. C-print.
Courtesy of the artist.

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