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をきちんと位置づけるのであれば、もちろん整理しなければならないけれども、当時の日本人にとっては殆ど両者は区別できない、それを区別するには情報があまりにもないということです。しかし、おっしゃっていることはよく理解できます。

それと、少し余計なことを言わせてください。先ほどのご質問で、私も少し気になっていたことがありました。キュビズムの捉え方にはいろいろなレベルがあったと思うのですが、ここでひとつ、非常に細かいディテールのお話をお許しいただきたい。以前に東京国立近代美術館が古賀春江の素描の展覧会(「古賀春江—創作のプロセス」展、1991年)を開催した時に大変驚きました。おそらく美術雑誌に載ったレジェの作品だったと思いますが、当然モノクロームの複製図版です。古賀春江が一生懸命その複製を墨と筆で写して描いているのです。そういうキュビズムの作品に対して細かい配慮というか、熱意というか、スタイルの単なる移入とかでは片付けられない、作家としてはどうにか自分のものにしたいという衝動の問題があることを考えなくてはいけないのではないかという気がします。私の発表の中で、少し触れましたが、伊原宇三郎はピカソの、それこそキュビズムの作品を模写しているわけです。模写というアプローチそのものは、きわめてクラシックです。つまりモダニズムの究極のような、あるいはモダニズムの原基のようなキュビズムの作品に対して、きわめてクラシックなコピーという方法で近づくというのは、見ていて変な感じがするのですが、しかし、そういう訳の分からない衝動を作家たちは持っていたのだ、ということをやはり確認しておく必要があるのだという気がします。

司会(辻):どうもありがとうございました。アメリカの美術についての日本側の理解という、これからの問題提起も含めて、この辺でこのセッションを終わりたいと思います。

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## 全体のまとめ

林道郎:もう時間も押していますので、早速ですが、昨日、今日のセッションを振り返ってみたいと思います。最初の基調報告を建畠哲さんがされました。そこでは、ベンヤミンの翻訳論に言及された上で、日常的に我々がイメージするのではない「翻訳」という概念が、今回の展覧会を考える際に有効ではないかという提案がなされました。そのポイントは、単純なアナロジーではない照応関係ということを考えなくてはいけないのではないかと、ということでした。例えば、翻訳の暴力というものを通過した「死後の生」というような言葉が出てきていましたが、つまり単にオリジナルとコピーのような関係でなくて、キュビズムがキュビズム“のようなもの”として再生されていく、その“のようなもの”の複数性、暴力性が実は大切ではないかという理論的なフレームを設定されたわけです。それに対して、辻成史さんが、レトリカルにはそういう単純化も可能だろうが、現実にはそうではなくて、向こう側も、つまりヨーロッパ側も既にして“のようなもの”の集合ではなかったのかというようなお話がありました。そうだとすると、複数の“のようなもの”から複数の“のようなもの”への翻訳という複雑なプロセスが起こっていたのだらうと、そういう前提で各セッションが始まったわけです。

セッション1は「メトロポリス/トランス・ナショナリズム」というタイトルでしたが、ここでは五十殿利治さん、シェン・クイ(潘揆一)さん、ジョン・クラークさんの3人の方々に発表をしていただきました。五十殿さんは1930年代の日本におけるキュビズムの評価ということに絞って、非常に詳細なリサーチに基づいた発表をしていただきました。アルフレッド・バーが組織した「キュビズムと抽象美術」という、ニューヨーク近代美術館(MoMA)で開かれた展覧会が、雑誌メディアを通して1930年代に日本に紹介され、それがどのようにして、キュビズムをめぐるディスコースの形成に変化を及ぼしたかという発表でした。全体として今回のシンポジウムでは、どのようにしてキュビズムが伝えられたのかという問題についての議論は多くはなかったのですが、先ほどの会場からのご質問にも一部答えることになるとと思いますが、雑誌メディアの役割がやはり非常に重要だったことが確認されたの

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は、この五十殿さんの発表のひとつの成果だったと思います。それ以外にも、人の移動、外国人教師の問題などいろいろな切り口がありますが、それらについては展覧会カタログにコラムとして論じていますので、もしよければ参照してください。

さて、シェン・クイさんには、中国のキュビズムのお話をさせていただきました。上海を中心にした中国の近代美術運動におけるキュビズムというテーマで浮き上がってきた問題はいろいろありますが、ひとつは、上海、東京、パリというメトロポリスのネットワークです。これは我々がこれまで見逃してきた、あるいは丁寧に見てこなかった問題です。つまり、留学研究というのは、日本美術史の中でもひとつのパターンとして確立しているわけですが、それは大抵の場合、東京とパリ、あるいは日本と西洋という枠組みの中で考えられてきました。東京の1930年代に中国や韓国から多くの画家が来ていて、その中で様々なキュビズム(を含めた西洋の近代美術)の受容が起こっている。あるいは、パリに留学したアジアの画家たちが同時期に同じ先生に習っていたりする。そういう複数の交流の実態が、まだまだきちんと考察されていないという感じがします。その意味で、そのような多極的な人の交流ということが、メトロポリスという問題に目を据えることによって見えてくるだろうという気がします。

それから、ジョン・クラークさんは、メタの言説の問題を非常に詳しく論じられました。独自のカテゴリーを提示されて、「アジア」とか「キュビズム」などの基本的な用語について、それを無反省に我々が使ってしまうことの危うさということを指摘され、それからさらにコロニアルな状況についても、一枚岩ではなくて様々なタイプがあるということを提示していただきました。さらにまた、「endogenous(内発的)」という言葉が使われましたが、アジアのキュビズム的な作品を解釈するのに、西洋のキュビズムをどう変容させたかということだけではなく、もっとローカルなコンテキストに基づいて丁寧に考える必要があると指摘されました。「内発的」なプロセスを見逃してはならないと、方法論的な意味での注意を喚起されたと思います。我々のような美術史をやっている者は、どうしてもモノからスタートしたいという欲望がありますので、それも大事ですが、もう一方にあるディスコース(言説)の問題を、やはり忘れてはならないというご指摘でした。

セッション2では「脱-植民地化状況」というテーマで、ジム・スパンカットさん、パトリック・D.フローレスさん、アフマド・マシャディさんの3人に発表を



していただきました。スパンカットさんの発表はクラークさんが提起された問題と繋がるのですが、言説の問題についてのものでした。ただ、クラークさんが非常に包括的な主張を展開されたのに対して、スパンカットさんは、インドネシア固有のコンテキストにおける、「カグナン」という概念についてお話をしていただきました。インドネシアの美術史の中では、キュビズムの受容は主にバンドウン・スクールの人たちによって進められるわけですが、それは、ポストコロニアルな言説の中では、西洋的イデオロギーへの追従だというふうに批判されることが多い。しかし、それはちょっと違うのではないかというのがスパンカットさんの論点だったのではないかと思います。つまり、「アート」という西洋的な美術概念をそのまま使って評価してしまうことの危険性がそこにはあって、むしろ「カグナン」というコンセプトを媒介にして理解すれば、新しい見方、単なる西洋追従ではない見方が可能になるのではないか、というお話だったと思います。

パトリック・D. フローレスさんの発表は、フィリピンの戦前から戦後にかけてのキュビズムの非常に広範かつ多様な需要についてお話をされました。ここで興味深い問題がいくつも出てきて、ディスカッションも大いに盛り上がりました。1940年代から50年代にかけて、農民や労働者、さらには浮浪者やスラムの住民を表象するためにキュビズム的なスタイルが使われるわけですが、その後、特にマルコス体制以降は全く違った使われ方をされるようになる。マナンサラという画家はその過程をひとりで体現したような人ですが、やがてマナンサラは国民画家として、「透明キュビズム」という様式を駆使して体制側のイデオロギーを伝達する壁画、そういうものを作るようになっていきます。こういう使用法の変遷を受けて問題になったのは、政治的イデオロギーとキュビズムの関係、壁画というメディア、キッチュ化というようなことでした。また、フィリピンだけが非常に特殊にキュビズム的なものが長生きをして、しかも影響力を持つという例外的な状況になっていて、それについても議論がありました。

マシヤディさんの発表は、シンガポールにおける南洋派のことを取り上げられました。その運動は中国系移民の画家たちが中心になって起こしていくのですが、新しいモダニズムの言語に中国の伝統に対するレファレンスをミックスさせながら、ハイブリッドな絵画を作り出す実験をした。その後の議論では、あまり掘り下げることができなかったのが残念ですが、ディアスポラ状況が引き起こす様式の混交という問題が呈示されました。つま



り、移民であるからこそ、先端的なものを身につける一方、あとにしてきた文化的アイデンティティにこだわるというような分裂状況があり、そのことを改めて確認しておくべきではないかと思いました。やがて南洋派の人たちのスタイルは、1950年代にシンガポールの独立運動とともに社会主義的リアリズムが力を得てくると、そのコンテキストの中で批判をされるわけです。その時に、リン・ハクタイ(林学大)という画家が出てきて、キュビズム的スタイルを左翼主義的な主題に用いることで、両者の橋渡しをする新たな道を指し示したことを指摘されていました。

そして2日目の今日、セッション3は、「身体/ジェンダー/色彩/装飾」というテーマのセッションでした。ここではモデレーターを務められた松本透さんが最初に、「neutrality(中立性)」ということの問題として呈示されました。つまりキュビズムというのはどこにも属さないようなニュートラルなものであるから、逆にいくらでも転用可能性を持っているのではないか、ということも最初に示唆されたわけです。

金英那(キム・ヨンナ)さんの最初の発表では、母子像が取り上げられました。大変印象的だったのは、朝鮮戦争が、韓国の家族のあり方の変遷において、非常に大きな社会的なインパクトを持ったというお話です。朝鮮戦争では、夫の不在、家族の離散といった事例が一挙に増え、家族像そのものに大きな変容が起こる。その中で、母子像が大量に作られて、そういう流れの中にキュビズムの受容も巻き込まれているということを指摘されました。さらに女性画家たちのことにも触れられました。フィリピンのネナ・サギールとか、アニタ・マグサイサイ=ホーあるいは韓国の朴峽賢(パク・レヒョン)とか、女性画家たちはヌードの女性ではなくて、むしろ労働に勤しむ女性たちを主題にして描いている。ここには、やはり注目すべき差異があるのではないかというお話であったと思います。これも、再度確認しておくべきことかと思えます。

田中正之さんの発表では、フロイトのフェティシズムに関する理論を用いて、F.N. スーザとか、チョン・ソーピン(鐘泗賓)など、マジカルなと言ってよい女性像、つまりアイコンックでかつ見ているこちらを正面から見据えるような女性像を読み解かれたわけですが、単に、欲望の対象でありながら同時に去勢不安を引き起こすような両義的イメージとして読み解くというだけでなく、植民地化状況の中で、模倣者の側がいかんして主体性を確保するかという制作の現場における主体化をめぐる闘争にも関連づけて解釈



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されました。これは非常に野心的な仮説として拝聴しました。あとの議論では異論も出ましたが、田中さんの発表ではフロイト理論が、必ずしもアジアのキュビズムにおける女性像すべてに当てはまる一般論として提示されたわけではなく、いくつかの特定の作品についての議論だったことは、改めて確認しておく必要があると思います。

3人目の発表はパート・ウィンザー＝タマキさんでしたが、このウィンザー＝タマキさんの発表も田中さんの発表と非常に通じるところが多く、ヨーロッパ発のキュビズムが、アジアの画家たちに両義的に受け取られたことについて議論を展開されました。つまり、一方でアカデミックな西洋のスタイルに対して、そうではない、それを破壊するようなスタイルとして、解放感として受け止められたということがあるのではないか。しかし同時に、それはやはり西洋起源であるので、不安の源泉にもなったのではないか。そういう両義性を考察するのに、「possession(獲得)」という印象的な言葉が使われていました。私のスタイルなのか、他者のスタイルなのか、そういう所有の闘争の現場になっているということがポイントだったと思います。

セッション3のあとの議論では、フローレスさんが、「translatability(翻訳の可能性)」ということを言われていました。フロイト理論の使用に関する議論だったのですが、そのどの部分が「翻訳可能」なのか、無批判に使うのではなくてフロイトそのものを読み返すような姿勢で使うということが重要ではないかという指摘でした。その背景には、フロイト理論が19世紀的なブルジョアの家族構造をモデルにして出てきた議論だということがあります。それをアジアの家族構造の中にある女性に手続きなしで当てはめてよいのか、そんな問題も含めて、キュビズムというスタイルだけではなくて、理論の翻訳の可能性ということを視野に入れて考えなければいけないのではないかというお話でした。

それからセッション4ですが、これは「ナラディヴ／神話／宗教」という非常に大きなタイトルのセッションでした。辻さんが最初に時間性の問題に触れられながら、キュビズムが内包していた物語性の潜在的な可能性を指摘されました。同時にキュビズムは、早い時期から、ことにサロン・キュビズムの周辺では社会改革思想と密接に関わっていたということも指摘されて、我々の通常のキュビズム理解から抜け落ちている問題がそこにあるのではないか、そしてそれは物語性と深く関わるのではないかというフレームワークを提示されたわけです。

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それに基づいて、後小路雅弘さん、それからカレン・コルデロさん、建畠哲さんの3人の発表がありました。後小路さんの発表は、キュビズムがなぜ国民国家の形成期によく使われて、しかも物語性のある絵画に使われることが多かったのかという問題設定から始まりました。そして、キュビズムの持つ多視点構造、断片化、それを再構成するような方法が物語を表現することに有効だったのではないかという仮説を提出されました。しかしもう一方で、絵巻の伝統など、東洋の伝統との異種交配というアジア独特の物語表現との関係も視野に入れて考えなければいけない、という問題提起をされました。同時にオーディエンスの問題にも触れられました。インドネシアのスジョヨノを例に出されて、西洋の観光客から、新しい国民に向けて描くのだという自意識が発生したことの重要性を指摘されたのは印象的でした。

カレン・コルデロさんの話は、後小路さんのお話ともうまく繋がる部分がありました。つまり、キュビズムの言語、文法というものが多視点、多時間を圧縮して象徴的な物語を作り出すことができる、「compress(圧縮)」という言葉が使われていたと思いますが、それを指摘されました。それが、実は壁画のようなメディアには重要だったのではないか。その圧縮の手法は、メキシコ革命の中で重要な役割を果たした壁画の中に、モダンとプレ・モダンという近代と近代以前の伝統を統合するような文化的象徴を描き出すことを可能にしたというお話でした。

それを受けて建畠さんが、実はキュビズムは物語を誘発するような可能性を潜在させた装置だったのではないかということも指摘されました。しかも一歩踏み込んで、アジアにおける透明キュビズムのような様式は、ヨーロッパのキュビズムにおけるファセットではなく、むしろ多重のレイヤーとして読むべきではないかと。それがマルチプルな瞬間をひとつの絵画の中に表象することを可能にしている装置になっているのではないかという仮説を提示されました。そういう視点から見直せば、多くのアジアのキュビストたちが、オルフィズムとかサロン・キュビズム経由でキュビズムに最初に接触したということは、重要なファクターとして浮かび上がってくるのではないかということを示唆されました。

セッション4のディスカッションについては、記憶も新しいことですし改めて振り返りませんが、4つのセッションは大体そのような形で推移したのではないかと思います。



最後にまとめとは別に、私自身キュレーターとしてこのプロジェクトに関わった感想を、少し付け加えさせていただきたいと思います。まず、基本的なことの再確認という意味で、この「アジアのキュビズム」という展覧会が東京、ソウル、シンガポールの国立3館の共同プロジェクトとして実現されたということは、やはり非常に意味のあることだと思いますので、今一度ここで指摘しておきたいと思います。このシンポジウムもそうですが、展覧会が単に3館を巡回するというだけではなくて、調査も企画もすべて共同でやりました。キュレーター・チームが大所帯になり、結果として大変な部分もありましたが、すべてのステップにメンバーが主体的にコミットし、討議を重ねることができました。そのことは、目に見えない部分も含めて大きな財産になったように思います。また、このシンポジウムにも、アメリカ、オーストラリア、そしてアジア各国からこんなにも多くの研究者が参加してくださって、一瞬かもしれませんが、トランス・ナショナルな対話の空間を作り上げることができました。最初に提起した問題に戻りますが、これからの美術史を考えていく上で、ナショナルな枠組みを自然の前提として進んでいってよいのかということを考え直す良い機会になったと思います。

こういう努力を続けていくことによって、もう少し違う歴史の空間というか、歴史を想像するための空間というのが立ち上がってくると思います。だからこそ、こういう場を持続していくことができるかどうか、それがやはり重要だと思います。ただ、気をつけなくてはいけないのは、このようなマルチカルチュラリズムを目指す活動というのは、美術にしても、音楽にしても、演劇にしても、文化的な事業については比較的やりやすい。それは重要なのですが、それが、なんと言うか、表面的に言い訳としてやられるのでは意味がない。文化面での活動が、他の面でそのような活動の欠落の穴埋めとして使われないようにしなければならない。たしか、テッサ・モーリス＝鈴木さんが、「コスメティック・マルチカルチュラリズム(取り繕いの多文化主義)」に陥ることを注意しなければならないということをおっしゃっていました。形ばかりの文化交流ではなくて、ここで議論した問題を、我々の日常生活の中に持って帰らなければいけないという感じがします。

それでは、駆け足でしたが、これを最後のまとめとして、今回のシンポジウムの幕引きとさせていただきます。

(了)





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Keynote Speech

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“Why Cubism?”

Tatehata Akira

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CUBISM  
TATEHATA AKIRA



## Why Cubism?

Tatehata Akira

[Director, The National Museum of Art, Osaka]

The introduction and transformation of Western modernism in Asia is a theme that has been discussed in a wide range of contexts, including art. The "Asian Modernism" exhibition organized by the Japan Foundation in 1995 was groundbreaking in that it was able to survey the history of modern art in three Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand) across the borders. This symposium, which coincides with the "Cubism in Asia" exhibition now on show at The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo was planned to expand on the previous discussions, and to move from a general survey to an empirical examination on specific issues.

Why Cubism? Fauvism or Surrealism might be suggested as the best place to start. In a sense, this view is correct; in the context of Asia, a consideration of these other styles might be expected to be the most fruitful approach. It is undeniable that Cubism had a more limited influence than the other styles. Fauvism and Surrealism eventually put down deep roots in Asia. From a certain point of view, it might be said that the characteristics of these styles resonated to some extent with the art traditions of various Asian regions. Cubism was a culminating point of Western modernism, defined by an extreme analytic rationality stripped of all lyrical feeling, so it was difficult to accept straightforwardly in the Asian milieu. This is the general opinion, and it is not likely that it will be changed much, even after our discussion at this symposium.

Paradoxically, the fact that Cubist influence was so limited was one of the motivations for taking this as our theme. Cubism, however, belonged exclusively to another culture, so it went through many twists and turns and misunderstandings in entering Asia. As a result, it did not become well established. Its transitory nature, however, does not make it a minor issue in the study of Asian modernism. Because there were no Asian traditions that corresponded conceptually or stylistically to Cubism, it can be instructive in forming a clearer understanding of how modernist art was received and transformed in Asia. This symposium shall be an opportunity where we highlight the intrinsic qualities of Asian modernism through a particular case study on Cubism. As I will mention later, this could eventually influence the way in which we understand meaning of Cubism in Paris, France.

A basic premise for this exhibition is the existence, however elusive,



Tatehata Akira



of Cubist paintings in Asia. Although it was a limited trend, as I have mentioned, it reached all the major cities of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia at different times, showing an unexpectedly broad geographic expansion. It was not taken up only by minor artists but formed an important episode in the history of modern art in each country. For some reason, however, there has been relatively little interest in investigating this trend from a comprehensive point of view.

We might expect an objection to the theme of Asian Cubism from the position of postcolonialism. It is hard to avoid suspecting that colonialist concepts can be found within the word itself. The thought of Cubism in Asia is something like that of "a Christian found in the depths of Africa." If cultural productivity is conditioned on the effective transformation of influences from another culture without misunderstanding or distorted understanding, Cubism would not seem to be a productive influence because it suggests faith in the universality of a completely alien culture. Another objection that might be raised is that an important element of Cubism is derived from Picasso's primitivism (taking inspiration from the tribal art of parts of Africa that were French colonies), so the Cubism developed in Paris is a form of shameless exploitation of colonial people.

Answering these objections should be the exciting aspect of this symposium. Of course, these suspicious attitudes are not groundless, so they cannot be easily dismissed. The organizers set out to plan the exhibition from a basically postcolonialist point of view, and in the process we gained a new awareness of our own "inner colonialism," something that is impossible to eradicate entirely. An attempt to take a positive view of an imperfect form of Cubism inevitably leads to an ambiguous view of any hierarchical relationship between the West and Asia. We attempted to prevent this by giving more weight to difference than resemblance. Such a position makes it necessary to continually measure the distance of the periphery from the center.

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If Cubism is the Other in Asia, it is necessary to address the questions of when and how it was brought to Asia and what was absorbed in Asia in the name of Cubism.

It is relatively easy to answer "when" and "how." If Cubism is considered as a style of painting, we can pinpoint the times when it first appeared in Asia. A detailed explanation of the circumstances in separate countries is given elsewhere in the catalogue. Roughly speaking, however, we can say that it came to Japan in the teens of the 20th century, to China in the 1920s, to Korea, India, and Sri Lanka in the 1930s, and to Southeast Asia between the 1940s and 1950s, that is, around the time that these



countries became independent from colonial powers.

The earliest example is Japan. The influence of Cubism can be seen in the angular divided color areas in Yorozu Tetsugoro's expressionistic *Self-Portrait with Red Eyes* (1912-13, fig.1) Then in 1917, he produced *Leaning Woman* (fig.2), a typical example of Japanese Cubism. At about the same time, Togo Seiji was creating paintings that combined elements of Cubism and Futurism. Although these artists only saw reproductions of Cubist paintings in print media, they accepted this style as a synchronous avant-garde art form of expression. A similar statement can be made about the avant-garde activities of the "The Storm Society" founded in 1931 by Pang Xunqin, who studied in Paris a little later, in the late 1920s, and the work of Fang Ganmin, also Paris-trained, in the 1930s. A Cubist style can be seen alongside the influence of German Expressionism in the New Woodcut Movement of Lu Xun, which was intended to protest colonialism and advocate revolution. This movement demonstrated the active presence in Shanghai at that time of an avant-garde spirit that equated political and artistic revolution.

Of course, it is impossible to put this early adoption of Cubism into the same category as the Cubist influence that appeared for the first time in some Asian regions in the 1950s, a generation later. The Cubist styles of Srihadi Soedarsono and Ahmad Sadali, who studied at The Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) in Indonesia, were influenced by their training under the formalist Dutch teacher, Ries Mulder. Their Cubism was not an avant-garde experiment but an adaptation of an established, standard style of Western modernism. Even in Thailand, which did not experience colonialism, when Cubism was adopted in the 1940s and 1950s it was as a formal artistic language.

However, the belated adoption of Cubism in Southeast Asia was not necessarily opposed to ethnic nationalism or traditionalism or lacking in a spirit of social and political criticism. In the period just after independence had been achieved in Indonesia, Cubism represented a rejection of the orientalist view of Asia, which had contributed to the colonialist oppression of Indonesians, and contributed to the formation of a new national identity. This newly imported artistic language, even if it did not retain an avant-garde purpose, was employed to destroy exotic clichéd images of Indonesia and was effective in providing a new vision of local customs and cultural traditions.

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The question of what was received in the name of Cubism cannot be answered simply. It was brought in at different times and in different ways in different regions. Also, the character of Cubist influence was not clearly defined in each case. Simply stated, Asian Cubism was "something



fig.1: Yorozu Tetsugoro, *Self-Portrait with Red Eyes*, 1912-13, oil on canvas



fig.2: Yorozu Tetsugoro, *Leaning Woman*, 1917, oil on canvas [color plate 1]



like” but not the same as the original. In fact, the organizers of this exhibition had difficulty in establishing a clear standard to determine which works to include, and there were many times when we unable to agree. Ultimately, it was necessary to make intuitive judgments on the basis of the artist’s background and the overall “look” of a painting. This is not an objection to the theme of Asian Cubism. Rather, it might be said that this difficulty made our work more challenging and meaningful.

The fact that Asian Cubism did not go beyond being “something like” its model indicates the limitations of cultural transfer. As will be discussed later, this characteristic may also point to problems inherent in the original concept. From a certain point of view, the Cubism originating in Paris, which Asian artists attempted to digest, was not itself clearly defined in art history. The vagueness of the margins of the category of Cubism reflects an ambiguity that also exists at the center.

If we look at the largest common denominator, it is possible to describe the Asian Cubism generally as a way of structuring a painting with the use of divided color areas like the facets in cut glass, but there are exceptions even to this. Some of the other major characteristics of Picasso and Braque’s experiments, such as the multiple viewpoints in early Cubism and the fading of color in Analytical Cubism, are seldom seen in Asia. The facets in Asian paintings are often employed to create rich, composite structures of color, and in some examples, such as *Reflection* (fig.3) by George Keyt of Sri Lanka, the facets are divided by arabesque curves rather than straight lines.



fig.3: George Keyt, *Reflection*, 1947, oil on board

The reason for these differences is that even in the earliest phases, the Cubist influences that reached Asia reflected Salon Cubism and the Orphism of Robert Delauney more than the early Cubism of Picasso and Braque. Some Asian painters were first exposed to a form of Cubism that was combined with Futurism or Expressionism. Some of those who were trained in Paris studied under André Lhote and Fernand Léger. In cases of late arrival, Cubism was combined with semi-figurative depiction and constructivist tendencies. More generally speaking, it was inevitable that Asian Cubism would be only “something like” European Cubism because it was easier for painters to adopt the style somewhat superficially without understanding the dialectical process that originally went into producing its monochrome facets.

The word Cubism functions effectively as a sign of the West. Even if it is only “something like Cubism,” it has a clearly alien quality as a sign that does not correspond to any of the traditional formal languages of Asia. The fact that intuition was employed in selecting the works in this exhibition might be justified by saying that it was necessary to identify subtle “signs of difference.”

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However, this Western sign had to be applied to motifs from the cultural environment where the artists lived. They used it to paint Asian women, cities and villages, still lifes, and narratives. In the process, the style of Cubism, while retaining its Otherness, became transformed.

This diverse development is covered in detail by other writers, but here I would like to suggest several of the most outstanding features shared by different regions that did not interact directly with each other. One stylistic feature unique to Asian Cubism is a vertically divided pictorial structure. Vicente Manansala of the Philippines made still life paintings collaged from pieces of wooden board that had been cut into extremely thin strips and reassembled, such as *Collage* (fig.4). A vertical structure was frequently employed in paintings with varied subject matter, for example, *Tanaman* by Popo Iskandar of Indonesia, the figure groups in the *Brothel, Series II* of Rabin Mondal of India, *Plantscape* by Tay Hooi Keat of Malaysia, and *Boat* by Mochtar Apin of Indonesia.

The fact that this particular adaptation of the analytic method appeared in many different regions does not seem accidental. One might speculate that direct vertical divisions were required to release local genre scenes and ethnic motifs from clichéd expression. It is also possible that it was incorporated as a method of producing “something like facets” using a method of simple fragmentation without the original motivation that produced Cubist facets reflecting multiple viewpoints.

Fundamentally, however, we should see these variations as the appearance of “alien” elements, which are inevitable in the translation of cultures as described by Walter Benjamin. The metaphors of fruit and skin that appear in Benjamin’s discussion of translation are highly suggestive in this case. According to Benjamin,

While content and language form a certain unity in the original, like a fruit and its skin, the language of the translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds. For it signifies a more exalted language than its own and thus remains unsuited to its content, overpowering and alien. [Walter Benjamin, *The Task of the Translator*, Section 6, translated by Harry Zohn].

The Vertical Fragmentation seen in Asian Cubism might be likened to “folds” in the skin of the fruit. At times, these variations on Cubist facets are quite different from the original model (there may be some objection to using the word Cubism for the physical cutting and reconstruction in Manansala’s work mentioned above), but this “overpowering and alien” language should be seen as something essential that is unavoidably revealed through the task of translation rather than a lack of ability in

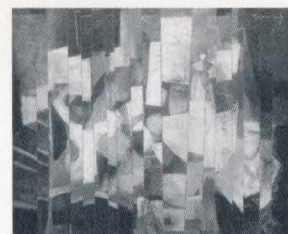


fig.4: Vicente Manansala, *Collage*, 1969, oil on canvas strips attached on plywood [color plate 3]



translating another culture.

If Picasso's primitivism is seen as a violent translation of original primitive art, the same violence occurs when translating Cubist facets as vertical folds. This may be a somewhat simplified way of stating the case, but I believe the analogy basically holds.

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In speaking of primitive art, it is necessary to touch on its mutual relationship with Cubism. Since European Cubism was inspired, among other things, by African tribal art, one might say, speaking ironically, that Asian Cubism took Cubism once more away from the center and back to the periphery, in a sense bringing it full circle.

The influence of primitivism is only visible in Picasso's early Cubism. It is difficult to see it directly in Analytical Cubism or Salon Cubism. But when these tendencies flowed away from the center to the periphery once again, it became possible to tell a story of residual factors being simulated by the peripheral environment, paradoxically restoring primitivism to Cubism. The fact that animistic elements can sometimes be found in Asian Cubism would support this scenario.

Of course, the periphery I am referring to is Asia, and Asian cities, so it is impossible to say that Cubism circled back to its place of origin. Such a view is undeniably risks being tinged with colonialism. After treating the reception and transformation of Cubism in the framework of cultural translation, it is necessary to engage with the complex issues related to primitivism.

The translation of culture is a task of freeing the culture of others from the dogmas surrounding them and at the same time a process of relativizing things that are thought to be one's own tradition. A painter involved in such a process stands at a passage between two cultures, what Homi K. Bhabha described in one of his writings as the "the stairwell as liminal space," where

the hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities.

[Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York, London: Routledge, 1994)]

From this point of view, "primitive" elements in art neither guarantee a definite identity nor necessarily indicate unilateral exploitation. Mutual interaction and transformation are possible, just as with the model of Cubism.

Of course, this assertion does not deny the violence of the task of



translation pointed out by Benjamin. Certainly, the “original life” of primitive elements, or of the Cubist style, is damaged by translation. However,

No translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife — which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living — the original undergoes a change. (Benjamin, *ibid.*, Section 5.)

If translation succeeds, as Benjamin emphasizes, it is not due to *Ähnlichkeit* (resemblance).

The kinship (*Verwandtschaft*) of languages is brought out by a translation far more profoundly and clearly than in the superficial and indefinable similarity of two works of literature. (Benjamin, *ibid.*)

This sort of translation, which in a sense is mistranslation, is not just productive in and of itself. By subverting the concept of the original through transformation, it destabilizes its previous position in art history.

“Asian primitivism” may be a paradoxical phrase, but a reverse flow of art styles from the West, although it might be regarded as a double mistranslation, can be productive. Such an idea need not be rejected if it means avoiding the myth of identity on both ends of the “stairwell as liminal space.”

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Naturally, what Benjamin calls kinship is not clearly revealed in all translations. To go back to the previous discussion, we must admit that a large part of Asian Cubism is “something like Cubism” and stops at a superficial “resemblance.” This is demonstrated by the fact that most of Asian Cubism didn’t become well established or attain real maturity (*Nachreife*). In general, it was short-lived. However, if a translation of Cubism on the periphery could take on the meaning of advancement toward an afterlife, separate from its original life, it was a Cubism that attained productive transformation rather than a “superficial and indefinable similarity.” Its value must not be judged by whether it contributed or did not contribute something basic to the central definition.

Whether the timing of the translation is early or late does not make it better or worst. There is an “original” truth of translation in every age.

From a different perspective, the meaning of central Cubism was always fluid, and therefore, the past is placed in front of us in an incomplete condition. Asian painters have received the influence of Cubism, sometimes as a contemporary avant-garde expression, sometimes as a formal artistic language, and sometimes as a method of breaking out of a suffocating local situation. None of these versions is more correct than any other. If the painters' confrontation with Cubism is honest, their translation/adaptation can be regarded as a productive mistranslation.

Even if we fully recognize the fact that Cubism did not take root in Asia, we can say that it functioned effectively by serving as a productive mistranslation at the time it appeared and then disappearing without repeating itself. Even though it was a transitory phenomenon, the significance of Asian Cubism should not be underrated. We should remember that Picasso and Braque's experiments with Analytical Cubism only lasted a short time. At a certain moment, Picasso suddenly abandoned Cubism and never went back to it in the same way, but this does not detract at all from the significance of the achievement of Cubism. We might say the same of the best of Asian Cubism.

(Translated by Stanley N. Anderson)







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## Session 1

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### “Metropolis / Transnationalism”

What were the routes by which Cubism arrived in Asian countries and how did it spread? In order to explain the mechanism by which Cubism was disseminated across national boundaries, the discussion in this session will focus on the role played by international hub cities like Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Santiniketan. Cities are sites of education and encounter. They are points of transit and places where many kinds of power intersect, and they provide nourishment for new art movements. Subjects of discussion will be proposed from various points of view, based on concrete case studies, in order to explore a vision of an art history that involves movement and interaction, transcending the conventional art history based on national histories.

Moderator: Mizusawa Tsutomu

- Presentation 1    The Reputation of Cubism in 1930s Japan:  
                                  Modernism, Academism, and America  
                                  Omuka Toshiharu
- Presentation 2    Cubism in the Paris of the East  
                                  Shen Kuiyi
- Presentation 3    The Discursive Space of “Asian Cubism”  
                                  John Clark

Discussion (Q & A)

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## The Reputation of Cubism in 1930s Japan: Modernism, Academism, and America

Omuka Toshiharu

[Professor, Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba]

Just after the “Cubism and Abstract Art” show was presented at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Sanami Hajime wrote a series of articles entitled “Two Directions in Avant-Garde Painting” in the Japanese art magazine *Bijutsu* from July to September of 1936. At the beginning of the first article, subtitled “From Cubism to Abstraction,” he called attention to the parallel phenomena of increasing interest in new avant-garde painting and “renewed awareness of classical painting (so-called Japanist painting).” Around 1935, the reorganization of the Imperial Art Exhibition, which upset the basic hierarchy of the art world, formed the ground upon which the figures of a return to classical art and the emergence of the avant-garde became the most obvious trends in the Japanese art world.

Was there some relation between the emergence of the avant-garde, in the form of groups promoting abstraction and Surrealism, and the movement to restore classical art? Some light might be shed on this question by investigating how Cubism entered Japan in the 1930s.

The “Cubism and Abstract Art” exhibition was held in March and April of 1936, and the exhibition catalogue was introduced in Japan soon thereafter (fig.1). It was described as a “vital study reference” in the July issue of the monthly magazine *Gakuto*, which was published by Maruzen, a major importer of Western books, and the article was illustrated with a reproduction of Naum Gabo’s *Project for a Monument for an Airport*:

It is a comprehensive study of Cubism and other non-representational forms of art, an illustrated historical study that shows the path of progress from the pioneers of the nineteenth century up to today. It does not stop with painting and sculpture but extends to a number of fields, including photography, architecture, constructions, industrial art, theater, films, posters, and typography. By chronicling the entire range of activities influenced by modern artistic thought, it provides, at the very least, a vital study reference for people interested in abstract art.

It is not easy to determine exactly when this catalogue appeared in stores, but it is probably safe to say that it was on the shelves of Maruzen



Omuka Toshiharu

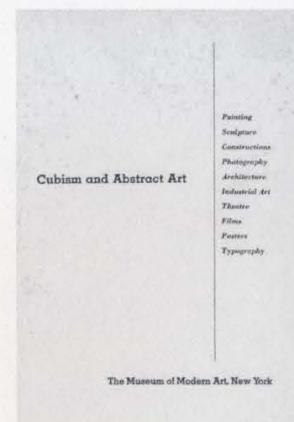


fig.1: “Cubism and Abstract Art” exhibition catalogue, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, March-April, 1936



in July. Just the same, some time was needed before this exhibition catalogue, edited by Alfred Barr, began to exert an influence in Japan. More than anything, there was a need for artists and critics who were able to appreciate its content. Sanami's article, for example, did not deal with the content of "Cubism and Abstract Art." His discussion was taken mainly from *La Peinture Moderne* by Ozenfant and Jeanneret (Paris, 1924), and the illustrations were also taken from this previous book.

It was not until the following year that "Cubism and Abstract Art" began to have a real impact in Japan. To illustrate this, I would like to examine three major artists who were seriously involved with the most controversial art movements of this period — Surrealism, Abstraction, and neo-Classicism — and offered interpretations of "Cubism and Abstract Art" from their own points of view. The three are Fukuzawa Ichiro, Hasegawa Saburo, and Ihara Usaburo. In one way or another, they used this catalogue as a source to supplement their own ideas. Their approaches show that they regarded Cubism as a historical phenomenon and an academic concept that functioned as a sort of normative model. Their individual arguments about the latest art movements may have confused readers, but it should be remembered that their theories resonated with the search for order and ordering that characterized the return to classical art taking place at the same time.

Fukuzawa admitted that he owed a great deal to "Cubism and Abstract Art" at the end of an article, "Abstract Art," which he wrote for the March 1937 issue of *Mizue*. And as a matter of fact, the content of the article tends to paraphrase the original. Fukuzawa wrote, "A great deal of Surrealist art is Non-Geometric Abstract Art." His argument deals with abstract artistic expression from the point of view of Surrealism. The basic structure of his ideas was provided by Barr's famous flow-chart of art history, which might be described as an ultimate formulation of modernism.

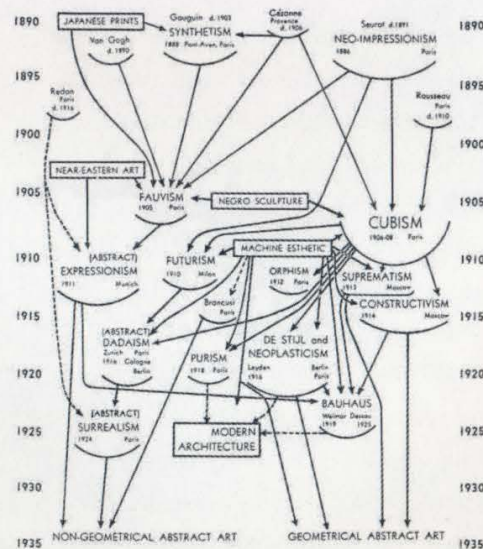


fig.2: Flow chart of art history by Fukuzawa Ichiro in "Chusho Geijutu (Abstract Art)," *Mizue*, March 1937



In this diagram, new trends of art emerging around 1935 are divided into two main groups, Geometrical and Non-Geometrical Abstract Art (fig.2). Three arrows indicate that Non-Geometrical Abstraction is derived from (Abstract) Munich Expressionism, (Abstract) Surrealism, and Brancusi. In this chart, Surrealism, even though it is modified by the word “abstract,” flows into the category of “Non-Geometrical Abstract Art.” Thus, this diagram produced by the Museum of Modern Art, New York had the effect of restricting the topography of art in the early 20th century.

Hasegawa Saburo was a theorist of Abstract Art who was representative of his time. His views on Abstract Art were largely taken from Herbert Read’s *Art and Industry: The Principles of Industrial Design* (1934). In the notes to an article, “Abstract Art,” which focused on design and was written for the April 1936 issue of *Mizue*, he proclaimed, “Eventually, I would like to make a new translation of Read’s book.” In October of the following year, he published a book that was also entitled *Abstract Art*. In the preface, he referred to Barr’s writings and affirmed their importance.

The overall structure of Hasegawa’s *Abstract Art*, however, is quite different from that of “Cubism and Abstract Art,” and this was clearly intentional. In the preface, he declares, “This book presents my views as an artist. Although I intend to provide an overview of theories from foreign countries, I do not necessarily subscribe to them.” Naturally, Hasegawa’s viewpoint differed greatly from that of Fukuzawa. This may have been because Fukuzawa presented his ideas in a general cultural context while Hasegawa wrote from the vantage point of an artist. Hasegawa published a book that stated his “views as an artist” because he was personally involved in the production of Abstract art and took pride in his role as an artist. Because Fukuzawa was engaged with Surrealism in his work and thought, he relied greatly on objective, accurate translations of foreign writings.

*Cubism* (July 1937) by Ihara Usaburo (fig.3) was also a declaration of the position of a practicing artist. A fourth of the book outlines the history of art from Courbet to the period just prior to Cubism. Ihara’s discussion of Cubism is based on writings published around 1912 and 1913. His own style of painting at the time was close to Picasso’s neo-Classicism, and he had little experience of the Cubist style outside of some reproductions of Picasso’s work he had seen in Europe. Just the same, as suggested by Egawa Yoshihide, Ihara believed that “Picasso’s neo-Classical painting was based on rational and mathematical thinking and legitimately connected to classical painting and Synthetic Cubism” (“Ihara Usaburo” exhibition catalogue, 1994). Ihara reproduced Barr’s diagram, just as it originally appeared in his catalogue, at the end of his book. He stated that Cubism would continue to have an “organic relationship” to the present even if it receded from the art scene, and in introducing the chart, he said, “For each of the isms mentioned below, I



fig.3: Cover of Ihara Usaburo's *Cubism in Kindai Bijutsu Shicho Koza* (Current Thought), volume 3, Atelier Co., Ltd., July 1937.





fig.4: Cover of *Atelier*, June 1937.

would like to call special attention to the clear necessity of their emergence and definite reasons for existence of good art.”

In addition to these interpretations by practicing artists, an abridged translation of the “Cubism and Abstract Art” catalogue appeared in a special section on “The Study and Criticism of Avant-Garde Painting” in the magazine *Atelier* in June 1937 (fig.4). It was prepared by the painter Terada Takeo, who had created a mural for the San Francisco Public Library while in the United States and returned to Japan in 1935. The flow-chart of modern art history appeared in its original form, untranslated. None of the sections were omitted, and the overall structure, from preface to comments on new artists, was the same as the original. The chronologies at the head of each section were faithfully translated into Japanese. This translated version of the “Cubism and Abstract Art” catalogue undoubtedly helped many general readers to get a good idea of the information it contained.

A somewhat different viewpoint was provided by Takiguchi Shuzo, a reputable art critic and advocate of Surrealism. The first section of his book, *Modern Art*, published in September 1938, was devoted to Cubism. It was divided into the categories of Analytic Cubism and Synthetic Cubism, the major divisions suggested by Barr, but Takiguchi’s concept of Cubism remained closer to the viewpoint of Apollinaire. He described the age of Synthetic Cubism after World War I in negative terms as the “fugue of Cubism.” In the chapter on the “Theory of Abstract Art,” he introduced Barr’s concept of the two major trends of Abstract Art but emphasized separate developments in different countries rather than following a similar timeline and focusing on historical correlations. In other words, Takiguchi kept his distance from Barr’s flowchart.

Still, even though his own position differed from that expressed in “Cubism and Abstract Art,” he did mention the catalogue, eloquently demonstrating its position as a model of modern art history during this period.

Another phenomenon that should not be overlooked in this context was the change in Japanese views of American art. There were more than a few Japanese artists living and working in America, but a certain number followed an unspoken plan of using America as a stepping stone on their way to Paris. This lack of interest in American art was overcome in the 1930s when Japanese artists who had achieved a certain reputation in the American art world returned to Japan.

The temporary homecoming of Kuniyoshi Yasuo (1931) and Noda Hideo (1934) was very influential. Fujita Tsuguharu had experienced America when he held his first solo exhibition in New York in 1930. On this occasion, he met Kuniyoshi, and afterward he wrote about him to Arishima Ikuma in a letter which was “not a perfunctory introduction.” Noda took up his pen to explain the current situation of American art

and introduced the “Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism” exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

There is no doubt that the understanding of Cubism in Japan was greatly enhanced by the catalogue to “Cubism and Abstract Art” in the 1930s. Seen in a larger context, however, this catalogue also enlarged Japanese knowledge of modernism, academic concepts of art, and the American art world.

(Translated by Stanley N. Anderson)

\*This text includes parts of my article, “1930 nendai nihon ni okeru kyubizumu ron – Nyu Yoku Kindai Bijutsukan shusai ‘kyubizumu to chusho bijutsu’ ten no yoha” (Theories of Cubism in 1930s Japan – Aftereffects of the “Cubism and Abstract Art” Exhibition Held by the Museum of Modern Art, New York), Hidaka Shoji and Omuka Toshiharu, eds., *Kaigai shinko bijutsu ron sosho shinbun, zasshi hen* (Library of Writings on New Overseas Art, Magazines and Newspapers), vol. 10, 2005.



## Cubism in the Paris of the East

Shen Kuiyi

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The destiny of Cubism, like that of all modernist art in China, was tied in very direct ways to the social, political, and cultural events that both link and differentiate its history from those of other Asian countries.

The metropolis of Shanghai may have been unique in the late 1920s and '30s. Both physically and conceptually, it was located at intersection of China's indigenous modernization and treaty port culture. The end of the prolonged civil war, which had lasted from 1912 to 1927, produced optimism that a period of peaceful development lay ahead, as though there was still time for Shanghai to catch up with the excitement of the roaring twenties. Meanwhile, the world-wide economic and political situation led to extraordinarily rapid growth in Shanghai's economy, which was thus capable of supporting the cultural and artistic boom that appeared. In that period, it was said that anything fashionable in Paris would appear in Shanghai two months later. The most rapid transmission of styles and trends occurred in commercial art, graphic design, and fashion, which did not noticeably lag behind those of New York, Paris, or Tokyo. This cosmopolitan material culture, in turn, yielded an assumption that the fine arts should be similarly up-to-date. That modernist movements briefly flourished in the years before the war is not surprising.

Western style painting began to enter the mainstream of Chinese art in the 1910s, but the styles that prevailed were Academic Realism, Impressionism, and post-Impressionism. Examples include two influential Japan-trained artists Li Shutong (李叔同, 1880-1942), whose graduation portrait from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1910 was in the Pointillist style, and Jiang Xin (江新, 1894-1939), whose 1917 graduation self-portrait was in a post-Impressionist manner. During his brief but effective teaching career, the charismatic Li Shutong inspired many young artists, while Jiang Xin became dean of the Shanghai Art College (上海美術專科學校) after his return to China. Post-Impressionism thus dominated the Shanghai Art College.

Cubism seems first to have been introduced to China in July, 1917, in an article by Lü Qingzhong (呂琴仲) in *Dongfang zazhi* (東方雜誌) entitled "Xinhupai lüeshuo (新画派略說: Concise Introduction to New Art Schools). The author states as the purpose of his article that in Japan the modern art styles and theories of post-Impressionism, Pointillism, Futurism, and Cubism have been current for a decade, but, because in



Shen Kuiyi



China no one knows about them, he will provide a brief introduction.<sup>1</sup> In 1921, Lü Cheng (呂徵, 1896-1989), in his lecture notes “Western Art History,” also introduced modernist schools of painting, including French post-Impressionism, Cubism, Neo-Romanticism, Symbolism, and Expressionism, Italian Futurism, and German Expressionism.<sup>2</sup> In the same year, Yu Jifan (俞寄凡, 1891-1968), who had studied in Japan, began to publish a series of articles in *Dongfang zazhi* introducing schools of modernist art. Even Chen Shizeng (陳師曾, 1876-1923), in his article “The Value of Literati Painting (文人畫之價值),” compares the abstract and subjective qualities of Chinese scholar painting to current Western schools of art, particularly Futurism and Cubism. Chen, perhaps the most effective defender of the tradition of Chinese ink painting during the 1920s, had also studied at Tokyo Higher Normal School.

Although the Chinese art world started to know about Cubism in the late 1910s, the practice of Cubist painting did not appear in China until the 1920s, when a group of artists returned from studying abroad. The group of artists who taught at the National Hangzhou Art Academy (國立杭州藝術專科學校) were particularly important for introducing Cubism to China. They were obviously led in this respect by the school’s founding director, Lin Fengmian (林風眠, 1900-1991). Lin Fengmian went first to Europe as part of a Chinese work-study program following First World War that sent many young people to France in 1919. In February of the following year he entered the Dijon Art College to study oil painting. In September 1920, he went to Paris where he enrolled at the École des Beaux-Arts in the studio of Ferdinand Cormand. In 1923, he completed his studies at the École des Beaux Arts and went to Germany for further study. He returned to France in 1924, where he organized the Chinese Art Students Exhibition that opened on May 21. In 1925, he was summoned by Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868-1940), on behalf of the Ministry of Education, to return to China to serve as director of the Beijing National Art School. Lin Fengmian worked in Beijing for slightly less than two years before resigning in frustration in the face of the conservative art world in Beijing. He was recruited by Minister of Education, Cai Yuanpei, to move to the new Nationalist capital in Nanjing, where he assumed a position on the newly established Ministry of Education (大学院: Daxueyuan) Art Education Committee. He was the most influential advocate of modern French styles of art in the 1920s.

The following year, based upon the proposal of Cai Yuanpei, the National West Lake Art Academy (西湖美術院; later named 國立杭州藝術專科學校: The National Hangzhou Art Academy) was established, with Lin Fengmian appointed as director. Lin Fengmian’s personal commitment to modernist art affected the Hangzhou Academy for the subsequent two decades, in contrast to the French academic orientation of the painting program directed by Xu Beihong (徐悲鴻, 1895-1953) at National





fig.1: Lin Fengmian, *Composition*, 1934, oil on canvas [color plate 6]

Central University (国立中央大学) in Nanjing, or the Impressionist and post-Impressionist tendencies of the Shanghai Art College. Some of his own paintings of the period, such as *Composition* of 1934 (fig.1), give us a sense of his early personal style. An undated nude from the 1930s is similar in its hybrid modernist aspirations.

Some of his faculty members, such as Wu Dayu (吳大羽) and Fang Ganmin(方幹民), worked in quasi-Cubist styles. Wu Dayu (1903-1988) began his study of painting with Zhang Yuguang (張律光, 1885-1968), then director of the Shanghai Art College, when he was about fourteen.<sup>3</sup> Wu Dayu was hired as art editor for the newspaper *Shenbao* (申報新聞) in 1920. In 1922, he went to Paris, and in the fall entered the École des Beaux Arts. In spring of 1924, he and Lin Fengmian, along with Lin Wenzheng (林文錚, 1903-?) and Li Jinfa (李金發, 1976), established the Overseas Art Movement Society (海外藝術運動社). He returned to China in 1927 and taught at Shanghai's Xinhua Art School (新華藝術專科學校), where his former teacher, Zhang Yuguang, had become the vice director. In 1928, he and Lin Wenzheng assisted Lin Fengmian in establishing the National West Lake Art Academy. He was then appointed chair of the Western Painting Department. His early work survives only in reproduction, but shows that his painting style of the time was, as was that of Lin Fengmian, strongly affected by Cubism and Constructivism.

Fang Ganmin (1906-1984) went to Paris in 1925 and studied with Jean-Paul Laurens at the École des Beaux Arts. He returned to China in 1929 and subsequently taught at the Xinhua Art School, the National Hangzhou Art School, and the Shanghai Art College. His painting of the early 1930s was strongly influenced by post-Impressionist and Cubist art. The forms were simple and powerful, with strong contrasts of light, but subtle in color. *White Doves* (1931) and *Singing in Autumn* (1933, fig.2) may be the best examples of his style of this period.

Cai Weilian (蔡威廉, 1907-1940), the daughter of Cai Yuanpei, also studied in Dijon, Lyon, and Paris in the 1920s. She later returned to Hangzhou and taught at the newly established the National West Lake Art Academy. Her 1930s painting *Little Girl* exemplifies a hybrid modernism with strong Cubist influence.

Another approach to Cubism appeared in Shanghai and was encouraged to some degree by the Shanghai Art College, which employed a number of foreign graduates as instructors. Possibly the most notable of these was the Parisian-trained Pang Xunqin (龐薰栻, 1906-1985), who was a co-founder of the modernist Storm Society. Born in Changshu, Jiangsu, as a young man Pang Xunqin studied medicine at the French-language Aurora (震旦: Zhendan) University in Shanghai. In 1924, he decided to quit medical school and study art. The following year, he went to Paris and enrolled in the Académie Julian, which provided plaster models and studio space. This school was very loosely structured, as the teachers only



fig.2: Fang Ganmin, *Sound of Autumn*, 1933, oil on canvas [color plate 7]



came about once a week, and the students worked primarily on their own. During that period, Pang Xunqin got to know a future member of the Storm Society, Zhang Xuan (張炫1901-1936) and also Chang Yu (or Sanyu; 常玉, 1901-1966). In 1927, he left the Académie Julian and moved with Chang Yu to another studio, the Grande Chaumière at Montparnasse, where Paris school and academy artists alike gathered at cafés. In Paris, Pang Xunqin did not attend any formal art school, but spent his time in studios, art exhibitions, galleries, and museums. This gave him a chance to gain wide knowledge of the different schools of modernism then practiced in Paris, including Cubism, Constructivism, and Art Deco (fig.3).

In early 1930 he returned from France to his hometown to work as an elementary school art teacher. In September of that year, he moved to Shanghai, and with the introduction of Shanghai Art College director Liu Haisu (劉海粟, 1896-1994), came to know Wang Jiyuan (王濟遠, 1893-1975), an oil painting professor and vice-director of the college. This relationship would later be very important to Pang. At that time, Pang joined a left-wing art society called the Taimeng huahui (苔蒙画会), but in December this society was shut down and several members arrested. Pang Xunqin left Shanghai briefly as a result, but in 1931, he was hired as an oil painting instructor at the Shanghai Art College and returned to the city. He taught at the same time at the Changming Art School (昌明芸術専科學校), and opened a private studio with Wang Jiyuan. He began designing advertisements and book covers during this period, and produced works influenced by Parisian trends of Cubism, Art Deco, and Constructivism. Examples include *Such is Paris* and *Such is Shanghai*.

In 1932 his colleague at Shanghai Art College, Ni Yide (倪貽德), began to discuss organizing a modernist painting society to try to promote in China the up-to-date art movements practiced in Paris. The core members of this society, the Storm Society (決瀾社), were faculty and students of Shanghai Art College.<sup>4</sup> The strong language of the Society's manifesto shows the eagerness of its organizers to change what they considered to be the uninspired and derivative nature of painting in China. The text, which was published in the journal *Yishu xunkan* (藝術旬刊) in the fall of that year, challenges the art world in these terms:

Look around and you see that true art has all but disappeared from our art scene. On all sides are nothing but the plain and vulgar creations from the hands of those artistically impotent and superficial...

Exactly where have our masters of old gone? What has become of our golden age of Chinese art? Almost our entire generation of artists has fallen with the country into decline and disease...



fig3: Pang Xunqin, *Three Girls*, 1934, oil on canvas



But we will never compromise with this situation...  
And we will never turn our backs and let Chinese art suffer like this.

So let us rise above the situation! With our passion tempered by reason, let us create our own world of color, line, and form!

Our art is certainly not the mere imitation of nature, nor the stale repetition of one form after another. So we must work with all our might to reveal the spirit and temper of art!

Painting is certainly not the slave of religion, nor the mere illustration of literature. We seek to freely and wholly create an entire world of pure form.

We detest all repetitive established, old-fashioned forms and colors as well as any art which depends on plain technique. We seek to use new techniques to represent the spirit of our new age.

In twentieth-century Europe, the art scene witnessed the emergence of artistic innovations, including the passionate voice of Fauvists, the distorted forms of Cubists, the shock of Dadaists, and the dreamscapes of Surrealists.

In twentieth-century China, the art scene should likewise give birth to new art movements.

Again, let us rise above the situation! With our passion tempered with reason, let us create our own world of color, line, and form!<sup>5</sup>

The artists of the Storm Society obviously sought, in this period, to devote more attention to "art for art's sake". Their concern was color, line, form, the beauty of rhythm, not the meaning or social contents of the subject. The Storm Society was one of only two modernist oil painting societies established in China during that period, and the only organized group to openly promote Cubist art. Although not the only style practiced by its members, Cubism, or in some cases a hybrid style incorporating Cubist elements was evident in their exhibitions.

Although most of the Cubist artists in China were returned students from France, some of them, such as Ni Yide and Guan Liang (関良), acquired their interest in Japan. Ni Yide (1901-1970), a native of Hangzhou, studied at the Shanghai Art College from 1919 to 1922. After graduation he remained at the school as an oil painting professor. In 1927 he went to Japan, where he studied at the Kawabata Art School (川端画学校) with Fujishima Takeji (藤島武二). During his time in Japan he organized the Chinese Students in Japan Art Society. In 1928, he returned to China, where he first taught at the Guangzhou Art School and later at



the Wuchang Art School (武昌藝術專科學校). In 1931, he returned to Shanghai Art College as a professor and participated in organizing the Storm Society and the Muse Society (摩社). He was also the editor for the Muse Society's journal, *Yishu xunkan*.<sup>6</sup> His 1932 painting *Summer* is typical of his Cubist-influenced painting of the time. Along with Pang Xunqin, he became one of the most important advocates of modernist art.

Another artist who went to Japan to study, although in 1917, a decade earlier, was Guan Liang (1900-1986). He first enrolled at the Kawabata Art School and then transferred to the Pacific Art School (太平洋画会研究所) to study oil painting with Nakamura Fusetsu (中村不折), graduating in 1922.<sup>7</sup> After returning to China, he successively taught at Shanghai Art College, Guangzhou Art School (廣州市立美術學校), Shanghai University of Arts (上海藝術大學), and Zhonghua Institute of Arts (中華藝術專科學校). His early work, from the 1920s and '30s, shows some Cubist influence, which he most likely encountered during his studies in Japan. A still-life from the 1920s is clearly influenced by the works of Cubists such as Braque or Picasso.

Another wave of Chinese artists went to Japan to study modernist art in the early 1930s. Following their Japanese teachers and colleagues, their art was most involved with Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, Constructivism, and Surrealism. As students in Tokyo they organized several exhibitions. In 1934, one particularly active group established the Chinese Independent Art Association (中華美術獨立協會) which was directly inspired by the Independent Art Association (獨立美術協會) that had been founded in Tokyo four years earlier by their teachers and classmates.<sup>8</sup> The works of one of the founders of the Chinese society, Zhao Shou (or Zhao Weixiong; 趙猷, b. 1912), which may be the only ones that survive from this group, exemplify the interests of the young artists. Zhao Shou studied at Guangzhou Art School under Ni Yide and then moved to Shanghai College of Arts (上海藝術專科學校), where he met members of the Storm Society. From there, he went to Tokyo in 1933, where he studied at the Kawabata Painting School and Nihon University (日本大學). In 1934, the group held its inaugural exhibition at Tokyodo in Kanda. In 1935, most of the artists returned to China, and reorganized the group in Guangzhou. They held two exhibitions in that year, one in Guangzhou and one in Shanghai.<sup>9</sup>

During that period, we also find many examples of design, including advertising and book design that are influenced by Cubism.

Usually when we talk about Cubist art we think first of oil painting, but in China, as you have seen, the number of artists who worked in a Cubist style were comparatively few. Moreover, virtually all of the modernist works produced in the 1920s and '30s have been destroyed and survives only in publications of the period. However, we have found some very interesting examples of Cubist work in another medium — the



woodblock print.

Among the Chinese printmakers who emerged in the 1930s, Li Hua (李樺, 1907-1994) provides the best example of modernist experimentation, including a very direct involvement with Cubism. One surviving anthology of his polychromatic prints, *Li Hua seshua muke shizhen* (李樺色刷木刻十幀), is entirely Cubist in style. Picasso or Braque-like compositions are easily recognizable among them. Li Hua graduated from Guangzhou Art School in 1927, where he studied with Ni Yide. He worked at a radio station for several years to save money to go to Japan, and in 1930 he and his classmate (and fiancée) Liang Yijian (梁益堅) had saved enough money to apply to the Guangdong Provincial Education Department for permission to go to Japan as self-supported students. When they arrived in Tokyo, Li Hua went to Kawabata Art School and Liang Yijian enrolled at Tokyo Women's Art School.<sup>10</sup> In October 1931, they returned to China. Li Hua first returned to work at the radio station, but in 1933, quit to join the faculty of Guangzhou Art School, his alma mater, as a drawing instructor in the Western painting department. In 1934, he began making woodblock prints, and soon after organized his students to make prints as well. In June of 1934, he held his first print exhibition in Guangzhou and established the Modern Creative Woodcut Association with his students as fellow members. During this time he edited *Woodcut Weekly* (木刻旬刊) for the *Shimin ribao* (市民日報: Citizen's Daily) in Guangzhou and also published the first issue of the series *Xiandai banhua* (現代版画) for the woodcut society.<sup>11</sup> His early woodcuts seem strongly influenced by Western modernist art, especially Cubism (fig.4). At the time, some of his students also created woodblock prints under the influence of Cubism. However, the experimentation with modernist styles in woodblock prints soon ended with the increasing awareness of Soviet printmaking and a switch away from purely self-expressive or formal concerns to themes of social or political commentary. Writing many years later, Li Hua was explicit in his abandonment of formalism and adoption of the "revolutionary path," i.e. Realism. His early history as a modernist/Cubist, which he himself had rejected, was rediscovered rather accidentally, through the comprehensive publication of prints in the Lu Xun (魯迅) collection in 1991.<sup>12</sup>



fig.4: Li Hua, *Li Hua's 10 Sheets of Color Woodcut Prints*, 1934, woodcut print [color plate 8]

Cubism in China is quite different from the situation in Japan or Korea. It started very late in China, brought back by young artists who had studied in Europe or Japan. By this time, its most influential period had already passed in Europe. Moreover, Cubism, practiced by a small group of artists, lasted in China for only a few years. Its possible future development, like that of other modernist art forms, was interrupted by the Second World War. Most art schools stopped their regular teaching and suffered in an unsettled, refugee status for many years. The dream of a cosmopolitan modernist art world was shattered and most artists turned