

Modernity in Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*

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Introduction

This dissertation takes as its subject the images from the late Ming (1567–1620) novel *The Golden Lotus*, which were painted with Chinese ink and brush on high-quality rice paper, or drawing paper in *gongbi* style by Cao Hanmei 曹涵美 (1902–75) from the 1930s to the 1940s. These artworks were published in cartoon magazines from 1934 to 1937, and the daily newspaper *Guomin News* 國民新聞 in the early 1940s.

The prosperity of industry and commerce in Shanghai in the 1920s drove the development of the print media industry. Modern life was multifaceted and extraordinary, with numerous cinemas and dance halls; newspapers and periodicals provided entertainment news, interesting cartoon magazines, and beauty calendar posters as advertisements which could be used to decorate indoor space, and so on. I believe that such popular visual culture played a crucial role in shaping Chinese modern art.

Cao Hanmei was born into the family of an herbalist doctor in the city of Wuxi, Jiangsu province, and given the name Zhang Meiyu 張美宇. He had an older brother named Zhang Guangyu 張光宇 (1900–65) and a younger brother named Zhang Zhengyu 張正宇 (1904–76).¹ In 1912, Cao Hanmei was adopted

¹ Zhang Guangyu 張光宇 (1904–64, native of Wuxi, Jiangsu province). Painter, illustrator, designer, and cartoonist. Twin brother of Zhang Zhengyu. Studied with Zhang Yuguang in Shanghai. In 1928–29 designed lurid covers for *Shanghai manhua*. In the 1930s influenced by Miguel Covarrubias. In 1937 went to Hong Kong. Michael Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists – A Biographical Dictionary* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2006), 216.

Zhang Zhengyu 張正宇 (1904–76, native of Wuxi, Jiangsu province). Cartoonist,

by his uncle Cao Ziyu 曹子瑜, who had no children, and was given the name Cao Zhenxiang 曹臻庠. Cao Hanmei was his nom de plume, with which he signed his first work in the newspaper *Xi Bao* in the early 1920s. He is also known as the Studio-Host of Hanmei and Kefeng 涵美可風室主.

Cao Hanmei and his two brothers were not simply illustrators, journalists, cartoonists, designers, and editors; they also supported and were responsible for the publication of the most important magazines and pictorials of the era. Their artworks show a sophisticated understanding of many styles of late 19th- and early 20th-century European trends in art and design. They did not receive artistic training in an academy of fine arts, but improved their painting skills in working practice. Moreover, Cao Hanmei was a movie fan, and wrote a few film reviews. In painting *The Golden Lotus*, Cao Hanmei served as a screenwriter, film director, scene designer and actor: he rearranged the relations of characters, and wove the plot according to his own understanding of the original; he painted different scenes with traditional and modern techniques, and employed elements of film language. We can say without exaggeration that Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* was a hybrid between fine art and film.

Zhang Guangyu and Zhang Zhengyu enjoyed a great reputation in the history of Chinese art. But Cao Hanmei and his art were by contrast less well known and relatively little discussed, even though Cao Hanmei published more than 2000

decorative painter, and stage designer. Twin brother of Zhang Guangyu. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 225.

pieces in newspapers or magazines at a rough estimate, and he was very active as a cartoonist and illustrator. One of the reasons is that this novel was regarded as pornographic and officially banned for many years. Such prejudice also affected the reception of Cao Hanmei's paintings. Additionally, it was rumored that Cao worked for the Nanjing Nationalist Government. Finally, in the early 20th century, cartoons or picture-story books were considered to be of secondary importance in comparison with traditional Chinese painting, oil painting, and woodcut printing. This dissertation aims to provide new interpretations of Chinese modern art.

Cao Hanmei considered his *The Golden Lotus* as “*gongbi* painting,” or “*gongbi* figure painting,” as these works were published in cartoon magazines, and some of them were selected for The First National Cartoon Exhibition in 1936. He also regarded *The Golden Lotus* as “cartoon”. His contemporary called it “illustrations” or “picture-story books”. Although there were different versions of it, it was commonly accepted in China that it was created with brush and ink. Xue Zhiying described Cao Hanmei as “a reformer of Chinese painting without parallel in history”.² However, for non-Chinese-scholars, *The Golden Lotus* was probably recognized as woodblock print. To a certain extent, *The Golden Lotus* was approved, because Cao Hanmei really adopted woodcut skills in his works. But this is just one feature of his paintings. Cao Hanmei gave the 17th century Ming novel a modern look in the Republican era, which operates on two levels:

² Xue Zhiying, “Cong Wang Fengzhou de *Jinpingmei* shuo dao Cao Hanmei de *Jinpingmei*,” *Jinpingmei huaji* 金瓶梅畫集 (Shanghai: Shiji chuban jituan and Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), 1, unpaginated.

the representation of women and new painting languages with cross-media approaches.

Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* should occupy a space in the history of Chinese modern art. On the surface, the aesthetic taste of urban inhabitants was newly shaped in Shanghai, and the potential for bigger economic returns prompted Cao Hanmei to paint *The Golden Lotus*. Its production, circulation, and consumption were linked to popular culture. However, this did not reduce its artistic appeal. Chinese social structures and cultural environments were changing fundamentally, and the political situation was volatile. Various approaches and styles coexisted (e.g. new and old, wholesale westernization and preservation of the national essence, avant-garde and conservative). At the time, Chinese literati painters, modern artistic groups, and cartoonists were ambivalent towards Chinese traditional art and Euro-American art. They attempted to use different approaches to reform art. Various views on art reform, the idea of saving the nation, and mass media were closely related. As a result, Chinese modern art, popular culture, state politics, and literature reform were tangled. Cao Hanmei respected Chinese traditional culture. After a short attempt at using European pen and ink, he insisted on painting with a brush.³ Cao Hanmei obtained insight into market demand through his practice in commercial art. In the trend toward advocacy to revive the literature and culture of the late Ming Dynasty in the 1930s, his works based on

³ Cao Hanmei, "How I paint *Gongbi* style painting," 我怎樣畫工筆畫, *Poke 潑克* no. 1 (1936): 23.

the novel *The Golden Lotus* not only found favor with ordinary citizens, but more importantly, whether in content or in form, gave *The Golden Lotus* the meaning of modernity through his past art practice.

Cao Hanmei had already painted many works on the subject of beautiful women before he produced *The Golden Lotus*. He read the banned book *The Golden Lotus* by chance and then painted this subject with logical necessity. Perhaps Cao Hanmei initially approached this topic to satisfy his curiosity and then used the rebirth of late Ming literature and culture to make the banned book available to the public. On the one hand, this subject paired with erotic content and images attracted a male readership, and on the other, this subject matter not only satisfied Cao Hanmei's interest in nude painting and experimenting with cross-media techniques, but also lampooned Shanghai society, or even the corruption of China as a whole. While Cao Hanmei defended the novel *The Golden Lotus* for its literary value, he defended his version of *The Golden Lotus* with the rationality of erotica in art.

In the 1930s, cartoons or picture-story books were very fashionable. Scholar Paul Bevan pointed out in his dissertation, *A Modern Miscellany: Shanghai's Cartoon Artists, Shao Xunmei's Circle and the Travels of Jack Chen, 1926–1938* (2016), that the cartoonists, as well as the Storm Society 決瀾社 and the Chinese Association of Independent Artists 中華獨立美術協會, the first two avant-garde art groups of Republican China, should be considered part of Shanghai's modern art scene. The cartoonists and the members of these two modern artistic groups

had close connections, and the latter also devoted themselves to the development of Chinese cartoons.⁴ I agree with Bevan's assertion, and my dissertation will analyze how Chinese artists adopted Japanese *manga* in Chinese painting, or how they developed Chinese *manbi* style.

Nowadays the modern art market in different regions of Asia is in a period of prosperity. Yet many scholars continue to define "modernity" from a Euro-American cultural perspective. In fact, there is not only one model of modernity in the world. Some scholars have spoken of different modernities, alternative modernities, multiple modernities, and so on. For example, in his book *Modern Asian Art*, John Clark stated that modernity in all Asian art cultures has developed out of contact with the cultures of Euro-America. The visual styles of realism, the technique of oil painting, the teaching institutions and fine art salons, were all transferred to many parts of Asia between the 1850s and the 1930s. In addition, John Clark created a new term, "neotraditional art," to explain a new phenomenon in Asia. Neotraditional art refers to reinvention of the context to accept the legitimacy of past forms and techniques. Heidelberg-based scholars Monica Juneja et al. organized a lecture series entitled "Multi-centred modernisms:

⁴ Paul Bevan, *A Modern Miscellany: Shanghai Cartoon Artists, Shao Xunmei's Circle and the Travels of Jack Chen, 1926–1938* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 7.

Shao Xunmei 邵洵美 (1906–68) was born into a family of government officials in Zhejiang Province. In early 1923, he entered Cambridge University in Britain, where he studied English literature. Returning to China in 1927, Shao set up the Golden House Book Company and his first publication, *Golden House Monthly*, was modelled after *The Yellow Book* and known by the French name *La Maison d'Or: Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 253; Bevan, *A Modern Miscellany*, 54.

Reconfiguring Asian art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries” in the summer term of 2010 at Heidelberg University. They revisited the conceptual category of modernism, and posed the question of how to locate the modernist art of the global South East beyond models of centre and periphery, or dichotomies between the original and the copy, or tradition and modernity, which calls for further exploration.⁵

I explore Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*, and point out that Chinese modern art in the early 20th century combined with Republican modern life and social politics, adopted and imagined Western culture—from life to art—through the use of print media. Cao Hanmei employed a cross-media approach to achieve his imagination of modernity. Therefore, it created a singular culture which was developed in parallel with the reform process in China.

We should admit that Japan played a role in the process of Chinese modernization, which refers to two aspects: first, Chinese westernization was slower than the Japanese process. Second, Japan was a mediator for Chinese artists to learn about European modern art; successful Japanese artistic experiences in Europe had an impact on how Chinese artists thought about the ways of developing Chinese art. In the past, scholars rarely noticed this phenomenon. Now more and more scholars are studying the role of the Japanese artistic model in the development of Chinese modern art and the literature of

⁵ The papers that resulted from this lecture series on multi-centered modernisms were published in the *Journal of Transcultural Studies* in 2010.

Chinese art history. For instance, Shen Kuiyi and Julia F. Andrews co-wrote the article “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field”;⁶ Yu-chih Lai’s research mainly focuses on the visual cultural exchanges between China and Japan. Nevertheless, this is not to argue that Japanese art mattered more than Euro-American art for the development of Chinese modern art, but tries to identify the triangular relationship among them in the modernization of Chinese art.

There is no previous case study about Cao Hanmei or his art. But a few contemporaries wrote articles introducing his works, which were included as prefaces and postscripts in Cao Hanmei’s *The Golden Lotus* from 1942 to 1943. There are very few monographs exploring comics, cartoons, or illustrations during the period of the Republic of China. Among them are *History of Chinese Picture-Stories* 中國連環畫史話 by A Ying 阿英 (1957), *The History of Chinese Cartoons* 中國漫畫史 by Bi Keguan 畢克官 (1986), and *Illustrated Development of Chinese Picture-Stories* 中國連環畫發展圖史 by Bai Chunxi 白純熙 (1993). These works present a panorama of the history of cartoons and picture-stories. Nevertheless, we should note that there were a few errors and omissions which relate to the dates of important events in the books mentioned above. Based on an investigation of many documents, art historian Huang Dade 黃大德, in his *Collection of Essays of Huang Dade* 黃大德集 (2014), revised

⁶ Julia F. Andrews and Shen Kuiyi, “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field,” *Twentieth Century China* vol. 32, no. 1 (November 2006): 4–35.

some of the errors made by books' authors. For the past few years, Tang Wei 唐薇 and Huang Dagang 黃大剛 have conducted a case study of Zhang Guangyu. They compiled materials about him into books, such as *Collected Essays of Zhang Guangyu* 張光宇文集 (2011) and *A Chronicle of Zhang Guangyu* 張光宇年譜 (2015). They also wrote two monographs about him, titled *Looking at Zhang Guangyu: Reminiscences and Research* 瞻望張光宇:回忆与研究 (2012) and *Tracing Zhang Guangyu* 追尋張光宇 (2015). These works contribute to further investigations. Moreover, interviews and memoirs of several cartoonists have been published since the 1990s, which are quite descriptive and help us to understand the context in which these artists worked. However, we should note that there could be some errors regarding the dates of some artistic activities and exhibitions as memory could be fallible. Therefore, my dissertation is mainly based on reports in newspapers.

Besides analyzing the stylistic development of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*, I pay attention to the development of print culture in Shanghai and Wuxi. Furthermore, I adopt the research field of gender studies, discussing how Cao Hanmei represented women, or the female body. I also consider the research on the literature and culture of the late Ming Period, as cartoonists had close relationships with literary historians such as Liu Dajie 劉大傑 (1904–77), Shao Xunmei 邵洵美 (1906–68), Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895–1976), Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896–1945), etc.

This dissertation consists of four chapters. Chapter one introduces the artistic environment before Cao Hanmei painted *The Golden Lotus*. Considering the factors promoting the development of art, this chapter analyzes print culture and the emerging entertainment.

Chapter two focuses on Cao Hanmei's circle and the direct reason for the creation of *The Golden Lotus*. Here I address the contents and the artistic trends of the pictorials in which Cao Hanmei was involved, and the strategies and publication project of the editorial team; explore the circle of cartoonists, artists, writers, etc., involved with the Modern Publications Company; and examine the role of the late Ming literary revival on Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*.

Chapter three discusses the stylistic formation of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* and his representation of women. The early version of *The Golden Lotus* was painted with traditional techniques and a bird's-eye perspective. The perspective and the painting language of the version he created in the 1940s distinguish it from the earlier one. Thus, the evolution of styles will be given close attention. Judging from reports in newspapers and periodicals, and the inscriptions on his paintings, Cao Hanmei took refuge in the cities of Hong Kong and Kunming during the Sino-Japanese War. Later, he edited many magazines which belonged to a subdivision of the Wang Jingwei regime. Therefore, Cao Hanmei's circle, the works he published, and the activities he participated in during his stay in the above-mentioned cities from 1937 to 1941 will be given close attention.

Chapter four analyzes Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* with help from his contemporaries' evaluations, the public response, and Cao Hanmei's articles. Taking a cross-media approach, I classify his artworks into three categories: the appropriation of composition from rubbings of Han period stone reliefs and Utagawa Hiroshige; using woodcut and photography techniques to indicate night scenes; and adopting filmmaking language.

Chapter I

Shanghai Print Media Culture and Republican Modern Life

In the late eighteenth century, with the progression of printing technology and the rapid development of newspapering, the reproduction of books and artworks had huge market potential. This made what Rudolf G. Wagner described as “Joining the Global Imaginaire” possible.⁷ Every field showed great zeal for modernization, including a yearning for modern life. There is no doubt that this printing revolution had profound significance for the progress and development of human society. Here I will not give further details, except to say the relationship of the art circle in Shanghai and the publishing world, the phenomenon of the quantity of artists involved in commercial art, and the analysis of the role of print culture in the development of Chinese modern art operate on two levels: the reproduction of artworks, books, and images, mainly consist of the reproduction of Chinese painting, the circulation of Japanese painting manuals, the reprinting of Japanese *manga*, and modern art of Europe and America, etc. These new types of images provided inspiration for Chinese artists; artists had improved themselves in the process of being involved in publishing newspapers and magazines, creating cartoons, beauty calendar posters, cigarette cards, and so on.

⁷ Rudolf G. Wagner, “Joining the Global Imaginaire: The Shanghai Illustrated Newspaper *Dianshizhai huabao*,” in: *Joining the Global Public: Word, Image, and City in the Early Chinese Newspaper 1870–1910* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), 105-173.

The above mentioned points played a crucial role in how Chinese artists thought about how to promote Chinese art. Chinese artists of the early twentieth century, radicals or conservatives, had the same goal: that is, to make reforms in Chinese painting. The question was how to reach this goal. Cao Hanmei was one the reformers of Chinese painting.

1. Reproduction of Books and Painting Manuals

Lithography and photolithography were introduced in China in the nineteenth century, and later grew in popularity. The Shanghai publishing industry began booming. The market was flooded with printed images and books with lithographic technology, which included the translations of scientific and technical literature, textbooks of different fields, fictional texts, Chinese art books, Japanese painting manuals, etc.⁸

As foreigners and merchant fleets streamed into Shanghai, they brought books, and built personal libraries. For example, the British East India Company established a personal library in Macau in 1806; Shanghai built The Shanghai Library in 1849. After the failure of the Second Opium War, the Westernization Movement advocated “Learning Merits from the Foreign to Conquer the Foreign”. The Qing government recruited foreign missionaries and sinologists to translate a lot of Western literature about science and technology.⁹ After the abolition of the

⁸ Jonathan Hay, “Painters and Publishing in Late Nineteenth-century Shanghai,” Ju-hsi Chou, ed., *Art at the Close of China's Empire* (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1998), 134–188.

⁹ Huang Haitao: “Kelly & Walsh Bookstores in Shanghai in the late Qing and early Republican period,” Beijing: *Wenshi zhishi* no. 12 (2011): 33–41.

Imperial Examinations in 1905, the modern education system was gradually established, and textbooks in all fields of learning were urgently needed.¹⁰

In the late Qing Dynasty, Liang Qichao 梁啟超 called for a Fiction Revolution 小說界革命.¹¹ Novels were to be regarded as a weapon to enlighten the masses. In this regard, they promoted prosperity and the development of the production and publishing of novels.¹² Novel publishing could generate good economic returns. Ping Jinya mentioned an unusual phenomenon in the Shanghai publishing world: Mr. Wen made a living selling newspapers. Later, he asked someone to transcribe novels and printed them in thread-bound books. He peddled these printed books while he sold newspapers. Because the books were very cheap, his business boomed.¹³ The logic was that if publishing houses illustrated novels, they would automatically be more popular. According to Bao Tianxiao, magazines at the time contained drawn illustrations. Apart from portraits, there were also landscapes, paintings, fashion model photos, and so on.¹⁴ We can say that

¹⁰ Julia F. Andrews and Shen Kuiyi, "The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field," *Twentieth Century China* vol. 32, no. 1 (November 2006): 4–35.

¹¹ In 1902 in his essay "On the Relationship between Fiction and the Government of the People" 論小說與群治之關係, Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929) advocated a "Fiction Revolution" 小說界革命, a renewal of the fiction of the nation, in order to renew the people of a nation. *Xin xiaoshuo* vol. 1, no. 1 (1902).

¹² Pan Jianguo, "Qianshi yinshuashu yu Ming Qing tongshu xiaoshuo de jindai chuanbo," 鉛石印刷術與明清通俗小說的近代傳播: 以上海 (1874–1911) 為考察中心, *Wenxue yichan* (June 2006): 96–107.

¹³ Ping Jinya, "Liushi nian qian Shanghai chubanjie guai xianxiang," 六十年前上海出版界怪現象, *Zhongguo Chuban shiliao* 中國出版史料-近代部分 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), 3: 267.

¹⁴ Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyi lu*, 357.

illustrations, found in films and television programs, provided entertainment to readers.

Ernest Major, one of the founders of *Shen Bao* (also known as Shanghai News), introduced lithography to produce cheap high-quality image reproductions in 1878, which played an important role in the development of pictorials in China. Major explored different kinds of print images to appeal to his readership. Firstly, he reproduced painting, calligraphy, or other kinds of artwork to attract refined readers. Secondly, he published ancient Chinese books. Most of the collected books in the Jiangnan area had been damaged during the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement, including the painting collection. Therefore, there was a huge demand for lithograph products, as the lithography technique offered high-quality art reproduction as well as reprinting of ancient books.¹⁵

Dianshizhai huabao 點石齋畫報 (Dianshizhai Pictorial) published the latest images of current events, reprinted images from British and American pictorials, or adopted Japanese painting manuals. All of these revealed the global imaginaire to Chinese readers. To a large extent, owing to the boom in the foreign book trade in Shanghai, the painter could keep up with the current events of other countries, such as the Kelly & Walsh Bookstores in Shanghai, the exclusive dealing of Japanese books in this city, etc.

It is worth mentioning the Japanese book trade in Shanghai. At the time, people could import books from Japan at a very low price, which could return a

¹⁵ Wagner, "Joining the Global Imaginaire," 107–121.

huge profit in Shanghai. Yu-chih Lai is one of a few scholars who has noticed that this book trade had an impact on Chinese art circles. In her article “The Rise of Lithography and the Circulation of Japanese Painting Manuals in Late Qing Shanghai: A Study Focusing on *Dianshizhai conghua*,” she reconstructed the Japanese book trade market based in Shanghai, analyzed how the images from Japanese painting manuals were reedited and adopted in the process of reproduction in *Dianshizhai chonghua*, and how they were accepted by Chinese readers. According to statistics, around nine bookstores frequently advertised Japanese books for sale in *Shen Bao* during 1880s and 1890s.¹⁶ Interestingly, the literati painting played an important role in the artistic exchange between China and Japan in the late Qing and early Republican period. However, it was Japanese popular visual culture, such as *Ukiyo-e* woodblock print, that had a significant impact on the Chinese art world.¹⁷

2. The Appeal of Newspapers, Periodicals, and Commercial Art

Although the first modern newspaper was not published in Shanghai, the latecomers eventually surpassed the originals, and Shanghai soon developed into a center of journalism. One of the reasons for this was that flourishing industry and commerce urgently required the development of newspapers and periodicals. In

¹⁶ Yu-chih Lai, “The Rise of Lithography and the Circulation of Japanese Painting Manuals in Late Qing Shanghai: A Study Focusing on *Dianshizhai conghua*,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History*, Academia Sinica no. 85 (2014): 57–127.

¹⁷ Yu-chih Lai, “Surreptitious Appropriation: Ren Bonian (1840–1895) and Japanese Culture in Shanghai,” *Journal of Art History* 美術史研究集刊 no. 14 (2003): 159–242.

addition, Shanghai provided communications and transport convenience. For example, advanced means of communication via telegram was introduced to Shanghai in 1868, which enabled the people of Shanghai to acquire information from all over the world very quickly. It took only one day for a telegram from Europe to be delivered to Shanghai.¹⁸ Finally, the metropolitan environment of Shanghai created many business opportunities which absorbed many people, including Chinese immigrants from other provinces as well as foreigners. In this way, a so-called society of immigrants came into being. These oriental and occidental immigrants not only brought their own cultural heritage to Shanghai but also shaped a novel and multi-level culture there, which promoted the development of journalism.

Shen Bao was founded in 1872, and was a success among the early Chinese newspapers. Bao Tianxiao 包天笑 (1876–1973), a journalist at the newspaper *Hong Bao* along with Cao Hanmei, mentioned in his memoirs that he had been deeply interested in newspapers and periodicals since his childhood.

I knew about newspapers from the age of eight or nine years and took a great interest in them. My family subscribed to the *Shen Bao*. However, there was no *Shen Bao* agency in my hometown of Suzhou at the time. Steamship or train was still not available, only a kind of leg-rowboat

¹⁸ *Mifeng huabao* 蜜蜂華報 (Bee Pictorial, in Portuguese) was the first newspaper produced in Macao in 1822, 28 years earlier than the first newspaper in Shanghai. *Guangzhou jilu bao* 廣州記錄報 (in English) was the first newspaper published in Guangzhou in 1827. *Zhongguo zhi you yu Xianggang gongbao* 中國之友與香港公報 (in English) was the first newspaper published in Hong Kong in 1842. *The North China Herald* 北華捷報 was the first newspaper published in Shanghai in 1850. Qin Shaode, *Shanghai jindai baokan shilun* 上海近代報刊史論 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1993), 1–17.

which needed more than ten hours. Therefore, we only got this newspaper between three and four p.m. the next day.¹⁹

Bao Tianxiao's enthusiasm for newspapers and periodicals made him a celebrated journalist later on. He remained in contact with Cao Hanmei for many years. Bao Tianxiao wrote a preface in volume one of Cao Hanmei's catalogs *The Golden Lotus*, and called Cao Hanmei "my old friend".

Ernest Major ran a successful business, and *Shen Bao* was a great hit with the reading public. The popularity of beautiful women in print products was significant for advertising strategies at the time. In the late 19th century, the Qing dynasty was forced to look abroad for trade opportunities, and there was a sudden influx of goods into the Chinese market. Foreign companies sprang up in all the big cities. Western merchants wanted to secure customers through advertising, so they duly promoted the development of the advertising industry. The earliest advertisements that appeared in Chinese newspapers were composed of text only, and it took almost fifty years for modern newspaper advertisements to include drawn pictures. The first illustrated newspaper advertisement appeared in *Shen*

¹⁹ Bao Tianxiao, *Chuanyinglou huiyi lu* 釧影樓回憶錄 (Hong Kong: Dahua chubanshe, 1971), 105–106.

Bao Tianxiao 包天笑 (1876–1973). He was a proctor for Suzhou High School before moving to Shanghai. There he met Di Pingzi and Cheng Jinghan, who asked him to help edit *Casual Entertainment*, a supplement of the daily *Times*. He was also a commentator for the paper. He set up *Vernacular Suzhou Daily*, edited *Short Story Times* and *The Woman Times*, and later was responsible for publishing several other magazines, such as *A Short Story Pictorial*, *Broad View of Short Stories*, and *Sunday*. Thus he became one of the leading writers of his time and was admitted to the Saturday Group of Writers. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers* (Beijing: New World Press, 1994), 26.

Bao on 2 May 1873 and promoted Western medicine.²⁰ At the very beginning, images of Western-style clothes, patterns, and landscapes in advertising did not attract Chinese customers. Later, Western merchants made advertisements with Chinese history stories, myths and legends, fashion models, etc. After that, the goods were sold more readily. The most popular form of advertising was calendar posters of beauties, which could be used to decorate indoor spaces and were sent free of charge. Beauty calendar posters were extremely popular all over cities in China, and even in the countryside. Ernest Major was good at using advertisements to attract customers from both financial circles and the insurance industry. As a businessman, he found he could seize more opportunities if he had rapid access to domestic and international marketing information. These advertisements took up half of the newspaper's layout from its initial publication. Later, in addition to sales advertising, there were advertisements for operas, auctions, publications, etc.

Newspapers and periodicals were new things, signs of progress, and art. The print media could reproduce high art as well as popular visual culture. Artworks and events from distant places could be shared by readers from all over the world. Many images of urban life circulated through mass media, which enriched the city's life, especially the beauty calendar posters. Therefore, newspapers and

²⁰ Pang Laiwan, "Advertising and the Visual Display of Women," *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 108.

periodicals were not only popular among the growing urban population, but also among many art lovers and potential journalists.

Cao Hanmei was born in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, a city around 130 kilometers west of Shanghai. After the foundation of the Shanghai-Nanjing railway in 1908, it took less than six hours to travel from Wuxi to Shanghai. When the express train Langang went into service in 1930, the travel time was cut by nearly half.²¹ After its opening as a treaty port in 1843, Shanghai quickly developed into the largest commercial center in China. A city with enormous opportunities, it drew many people from surrounding cities, who came to learn business through practice between the 1860s and the 1880s. Visitors from Wuxi were the largest in number, far outnumbering those from Suzhou, Changzhou, Nanjing, etc.²² This group returned to Wuxi to set up their businesses after finishing their studies in Shanghai, thus becoming the first generation of business people in Wuxi. The people of Wuxi were good at seizing business opportunities and made excellent use of their convenient geographic position. Wuxi became a city known for its industry and commerce second only to Shanghai, and so came to be called “little Shanghai”.

²¹ “Train time-table from Nanjing to Shanghai,” *Shen Bao* (May 8, 1908); Song Yu, *Nanjingcheng shi* 南京城事 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui chubanshe, 2013), 162.

²² Zhuang Ruojiang, *Gongshang maidong yu chengshi wenhua: yi Wuxi wei li* 工商脈動與城市文化: 以無錫為例 (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2016), 186.

Cao Hanmei's adoptive father came from a rich family of rice merchants, who also owned a textile factory. Cao Yuru 曹鈺如, Cao Hanmei's grandfather, was also involved in the early development of industry in Wuxi. Because of his experience, Cao Yuru wanted his grandsons to learn business after him.

At the time, given the close connection between Shanghai and Wuxi, foreign goods that were already available in Shanghai would often come to circulate in Wuxi as well. Therefore, Cao Hanmei and his brothers were able to gain access to various foreign goods. Many years later, Cao Hanmei wrote an article with illustrations about the most unforgettable experience of their childhood: looking through a peep box at Temple Chong'an during the Spring Festival (**fig. 1**), where they viewed pictures through a small hole. The boys even made a peep box themselves (**fig. 2**). Their favorite activity was drawing, which Cao Hanmei mentioned more than once in his articles. For example, he wrote in "How I paint *gongbi* style painting" (a careful realist technique in Chinese painting):

I cannot clearly remember when I began to draw. From my earliest memories of childhood, my brothers and I drew on the walls, the ground, account books, even my father's prescription pads, and so on. Later, I did not have enough money to go to a fine art school. The following learning materials were available for me: old road stands for painting, catalogs of famous masters from ancient to modern times, private collections of painting and calligraphy, traditional woodcuts, Chinese New Year paintings and papercuts, as well as shops of mounted Chinese art with hanging scrolls, handscrolls and fans.²³

Zhang Guangyu stated that his father encouraged him and his two brothers to paint too:

²³ Cao, "How I paint *Gongbi* style painting."

My father was an herbalist doctor, a very gentle person. We had a variety of books at home. He preferred them to rubbings from stone inscriptions and paintings. This happenstance sparked our interest in painting.²⁴

Zhang Guangyu goes on to say that his father also collected illustrations of novels, such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Water Margin*, etc.²⁵ In 1913, Zhang Guangyu's grandfather managed to secure an apprenticeship in a bank for him. However, Zhang Guangyu refused it and asked to continue to study at primary school. The following year, Zhang Guangyu went to the Affiliated Primary School of Shanghai No. 2 Normal School. Cao Hanmei also attended this school. In the school's library, they had access to illustrated newspapers and magazines, such as Wu Youru's drawings from *Fleeting Shadow Pavilion Pictorial* 飛影閣畫報 and *Dianshizhai huabao* (fig. 3). They were fascinated by the idea that works in the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* could be used to depict stories from daily life.²⁶ Cao Hanmei also mentioned that he and his brother had been excited when their father bought Wu Youru's catalog. Traditional Chinese painting, especially from literati painters, did not show what the painter saw; its outstanding feature was self-expression rather than depiction of reality. In this sense, a

²⁴ Tang Wei and Huang Dagang, eds., *A Chronicle of Zhang Guangyu* 張光宇年譜 (Beijing: Sannian shudian, 2015), 6.

²⁵ Tang Wei and Huang Dagang, *Tracing Zhang Guangyu* 追尋張光宇 (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2015), 4.

²⁶ Tang and Huang, *Tracing Zhang Guangyu*, 17.

Wu Youru 吳友如 (1850–93). Graphic artist working in Shanghai. Edited and illustrated the popular periodical *Dianshizhai Pictorial* from 1884. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 179.

painting style that reflected real life was a reform of Chinese painting.²⁷ Cao Hanmei and his brothers had already shown their preference for art reform as children. Cao Hanmei stated that his work, *Gathering of One Hundred Beauties* 百美雅集, which depicted one hundred beauties with different facial forms and postures, sought to imitate Wu Youru's style (**fig. 4**).²⁸ According to a report in *Ren Bao*, Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895–1953) admired *Gathering of One Hundred Beauties*. As this painting was sold in Book Store Xinxin, Xu Beihong saw it and said, “This painting is great! How beautiful and fine it is! Who painted it?” And then, Xu bought it.²⁹

From this, it can be seen that Cao Hanmei and his brothers learned traditional Chinese painting by imitating private collections, works in Chinese art shops, and catalogs of famous masters from ancient to modern times, as well as accessible craft arts including papercuts, Chinese New Year paintings, illustrations, woodcuts, etc. We cannot afford to neglect the impact of these traditional Chinese folk arts in Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*. We can see that the manner of studying painting

²⁷ Li Baoquan, “Talk from Chinese painting to New Chinese painting,” 由國畫談到新國畫, *Zhongguo gonglun* vol. 6, no. 2 (1941): 95–103.

²⁸ Cao, “How I paint Gongbi style painting.”

²⁹ *Ren Bao* (April 26, 1937).

Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (b. Yixingxian, Jiangsu province). Painter in both *guohua* and Western style. Appointed by Cai Yuanpei as tutor in Painting Methods Research Society of Beijing University. In 1919, encouraged and supported by Cai Yuanpei, went to Paris, studied at the *École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts*. In 1926–27 studied and traveled in Europe. In 1927 returned to China; head of Art Department of Nanguo Art Institute. In 1933–34 organized modern Chinese painting exhibitions in France, Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists – A Biographical Dictionary*, 185.

at that time was similar to that of earlier generations: imitating masterpieces and then developing one's own style in accordance with it. However, the medium of the study materials changed: Previous generations had studied painting with original pieces, but Cao Hanmei and his brothers also studied printed images. This could be one reason why they devoted themselves to the publication of pictorial magazines and newspapers.

Xu Beihong learned European painting techniques from cigarette cards and perspective and chiaroscuro from calendar posters.³⁰ He painted several drawings of beautiful women early in his artistic career, such as *Enjoy the Cool, Condensed Fragrance*, etc. (fig. 5-6). To judge from Ye Qianyu's memoirs, the British American Tobacco Company distributed calendar posters featuring beautiful women as gifts to customers. Ye Qianyu's father owned a grocery store that also sold tobacco. His father often came home with the advertising posters of beautiful women, which Ye Qianyu was very interested in because of their lively three-dimensional effects, soft colors, and photorealistic quality (fig. 7).³¹ Cai Tao mentioned in his article that the students in Liang Xihong's 梁錫鴻 (1912–82)

³⁰ Huang Dade, *Collection of Essays of Huang Dade* 黄大德集 (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe, 2014), 184.

³¹ Ye Qianyu, *Autobiography of Ye Qianyu: A Detailed Narration of Vicissitudes through Fleeting Time* 細敘滄桑記流年 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006), 53.

Ye Qianyu 葉淺予 (1907–95), native of Tongluxian, Zhejiang province. Cartoonist and painter. Studied for a while in San Francisco in the 1920s. In 1927 published his popular comic series, *Mr. Wang*. In 1937 in charge of All-China Association of Cartoonists for National Salvation. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 201.

primary school largely depended on imitating postcards with bible stories as drawing exercises.³² Ni Yide 倪貽德 (1901–70) also said that he often showed postcards of famous French modern art to his students.³³

After advancing from primary school, Zhang Guangyu went to Shanghai to work in a grocery store when he was fifteen years old. Across the street from this store was the famous New Stage Theater 新舞臺.³⁴ Zhang Guangyu was interested in theatrical set design. Fortunately, he had the opportunity to watch Zhang Yuguang 張聿光 paint theatrical backdrops.³⁵ With the help of the opera actor Zhang Delu 張德祿, Zhang Guangyu became a disciple of Zhang Yuguang. We should note that Zhang Yuguang was also the headmaster of the Shanghai School of Fine Arts 上海美術專科學校 at the time.³⁶ Zhang Guangyu wanted

³² Cai Tao, “Liang Xihong: bei zhebi de fengjing,” *Sikhung Leung—Lost Landscape* 梁錫鴻: 遺失的路程 (Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu chubanshe, 2006), 12.

Liang Xihong 梁錫鴻 (1912–1982) native of Zhongshan, Guangdong province. Oil painter. Active in 1930. Studied in Japan, 1933–35. Eclectic modernist “fauve.” In 1934 joined the Chinese Association of Independent Artists in Tōkyō, which held its first exhibition in 1935 in Guangzhou. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 91.

³³ Ni Yide, “Record of several art youths,” 幾個美術青年, *Qingnian jie* 青年界 vol. 9, no. 5 (1936).

Ni Yide 倪貽德 (b. Hangzhou). Oil painter and writer on art theory and criticism. In 1923 member of the Creation Society. In 1927 studied in Japan at Kawabata Art Academy. In 1928 returned to China. In 1931 founding member of *Storm Society* with Pang Xunqin and Wang Daoyuan. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 119.

³⁴ The New Stage Theater 新舞臺 was the first modern theater in China, co-founded in 1908 by actors Pan Yuejiao 潘月樵 (1869–1928), Xia Yueshan 夏月珊 (1868–1924), and his brother Xia Yuerun 夏月潤 (1878–1931), among others.

³⁵ Zhang Yuguang 張聿光 (1884–1968), native of Shaoxing, Zhejiang province. Painter (guohua and Western style) and cartoonist. In 1912 cofounder of Shanghai Meizhuan with Liu Haisu and others. In 1921 studied in France. In 1924 in Japan. In 1926 head of Xinhua AFA, Shanghai. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artist*, 224.

³⁶ The Shanghai School of Fine Arts was established in 1930. It was initially the school of Tuhua Meishuyuan 圖畫美術院 founded in 1913. Liu Haisu, Wang Yachen

to pursue artistic training in an academy of fine arts, but Zhang Yuguang suggested that he stay with the New Stage Theater for a while longer. Zhang Yuguang had recently had a violent disagreement with Liu Haisu 劉海粟, the vice-president of the Shanghai School of Fine Arts.³⁷ Moreover, Zhang Yuguang planned to establish a new school of fine arts, a dream that he unfortunately never realized.³⁸

According to Mei Lanfang, Zhang Yuguang learned from a Japanese set designer. Mei Lanfang wrote:

With the help of *kabuki*-actor Ichikawa Sadanji 市川左團次, Xia Yuerun 夏月潤, one of the founders of the New Stage Theater invited Japanese set designers to Shanghai to paint the set before the Xinhai Revolution. Zhang Yuguang learned from them. Soon after, Zhang Yuguang's style of theatrical backdrops became the main trend which made an important contribution to the film industry.³⁹

汪亞塵, Yang Liuqiao 楊柳橋, and Xia Jiankang 夏健康 were teachers in this school. Wu Shiguang 烏始光 was the president. In 1915, the school was renamed Shanghai Tushu Meishuyuan 上海圖書美術院.

³⁷ Liu Haisu 劉海粟, native of Jiangsu province. *Guohua* and oil painter. He was encouraged by Cai Yuanpei, who saw his works in the style of Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh. A 1919 visit to Japan strengthened his love of modern Western art. With Jiang Xiaojian, Ding Song, and others, he founded Heavenly Horse Society (Tianma hui) to promote French salon-style exhibitions. In 1920, when his students exhibited drawings of nude models, he was attacked as an “art traitor,” but his academy was the largest and most successful in Shanghai. Visited Europe 1929–31, where he organized an exhibition of contemporary Chinese art in Paris, repeated in 1933–35. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 99.

³⁸ Zhang Yuguang stated in *Shen Bao* on 24 May 1919 that he had taken up the post of headmaster of the Shanghai School of Fine Arts, in August of 1914, and he would resign this position in the coming semester.

³⁹ Mei Lanfang, *Mei Lanfang wenji* 梅蘭芳文集 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1962), 184.

Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894–1961), a famous Peking opera artist.

Zhang Yuguang's theatrical backdrops were also inspired by the settings for photo studios and two-point perspective.⁴⁰ Zhang Yuguang had studied painting at the Tushan Bay Art Gallery. In 1904, he painted advertisements and backdrops for Huamei Drugstore. Around 1907, he started to teach painting at the Shanghai Youth Association 中國青年學堂, where Chen Baoyi was one of his students. Zhang Yuguang's art technique made a profound impression on Chen Baoyi.⁴¹ As one of the first generation of Western-style painters, Zhang Yuguang was mainly engaged in commercial art, which was very common at the time. Commercial art was one of the foremost channels to obtain information about Western art, which influenced many artists.

The development of modern Chinese commercial art design was unique, since the development of industry and commerce created a great demand for graphic design, with the biggest obstacle being the lack of talented designers. At this time, the apprenticeship system was more prominent than the academic system in the training of designers. On the one hand, Liangjiang Normal School offered graphic design in 1906, the first design course in the history of modern China, after which the same courses emerged in other academies, such as the Shanghai School of Fine Arts, Guangzhou Municipal School of Fine Arts and

⁴⁰ Zhou Xiquan, "Zhuang Yuguang yu Jingju wutai bujing," 張聿光與京劇舞臺布景, *Shanghai xiju* no. 3, (1982): 36–37.

⁴¹ Chen Baoyi, "Yanghua yundong guocheng lueji," 洋畫運動過程略記, *Shanghai yishu yuekan* no. 5–12 (1942).

Chen Baoyi 陳抱一 (1893–1945) was a painter. Born in Shanghai. Studied in Japan at Kawabata Painting School. His notable work was Hongyi Fashixiang 弘一法師像, which is on display at the Jade Buddha Temple in Shanghai 上海玉佛寺.

Hangzhou National Art College, among others. On the other hand, the Commercial Press, Zhonghua Publishing House, and the British American Tobacco Company had an advertising department, which offered apprenticeships for those who had an interest in design. In this way, Zhang Guangyu, Ye Qianyu, Wan Laiming 萬籟鳴 (1900–97) and Hang Zhiying 杭穉英 (1899–1947), etc., improved their painting skills through practice.⁴²

To sum up, in that period, the Chinese art circle often had difficulties accessing information about European modern art. It was impossible to see the original works of French modern art in China. Therefore, the dividing line between commercial art and the fine arts was not always marked and clear. Chinese artists could acquire information about Western art through commercial art. They were eager to learn the realist style of European art because they believed that it was a way to develop Chinese art.

3. Establishing Newspapers and Pictorials, Production of Beauty Calendar Posters and Cartoons

In the 1910s, almost all artists and even the teaching staff of many academies of fine arts were involved in commercial art, and establishing newspapers and magazines. For example, Gao Jianfu 高劍父 (1879–1951) and Pan Dawei 潘達

⁴² Qiao Zhiqiang, *20 shiji Zhongguo meishu shixueshi yanjiu* 20 世紀中國美術史學史研究 (Guangdong: Guangodng renmin chubanshe, 2016), 285–286.

Wan Laiming 萬籟鳴 (1900–97) was born in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. He and Wan Guchan were twin brothers, known as the Wan brothers. They pioneered the Chinese animation industry, and are regarded as China's first animators.

Hang Zhiying 杭穉英 (1899–1947) was born in Haining, Zhejiang province. He was one of the second generation of commercial painters in China.

徽 (1881–1929) et al. founded *Journal of Current Pictorial* 時事畫報 in Guangzhou in 1905; Li Shutong 李叔同 (1880–1942) was an editor of the *Pacific Times* 太平洋報 in Shanghai in 1912. It must be stressed that I have no intention to trace the history of those artists involved in the publication of pictorial magazines. Here I analyze the experiences of a small number of individuals in the press, such as Chen Shizeng 陳師曾 (1876–1923), Li Shutong, Zhang Guangyu, Cao Hanmei, etc.: on the one hand, Chen Shizeng and Li Shutong studied in Japan. Their works published in the *Pacific Times* combined elements of Japanese *Manga* and Chinese *manbi* 漫筆 (in the casual and abbreviated manner); and yet, they appropriated *manga* skills in Chinese literati painting.

Li Shutong studied oil painting under Kuroda Seiki 黑田清輝 (1866–1924) in Japan. After returning to China, he was an editor in the *Pacific Times*. And he invited Chen Shizeng to contribute to this newspaper. Chen published sixty monochromic illustrations in it between April and June 1912, which Feng Zikai considered as the origin of Chinese *manhua*.⁴³ What deserves special mention is that Bi Keguan based his work on Feng Zikai's article, "Cartoon Creation for Twenty Years" 漫畫創作二十年, and pointed out in his book in 1986 that "the term *manhua* was first used in China in the book *Zikai Cartoon* 子愷漫畫 in

⁴³ Feng Zikai 豐子愷 (1898–1975), born in Shimenwan, Zhejiang province. *Guohua* painter, graphic artist, cartoonist, and essayist. In 1915 studied art and music in Shanghai under Li Shutong, who influenced his conversion to Buddhism. In 1921 went to Japan to study oil painting, returned same year, taught, and drew cartoons, notably of the life of children. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 36.

1925.”⁴⁴ This point of view received widespread acceptance for more than ten years. Nevertheless, Huang Dade, in his article, “The Origin of the Term *Manhua* in China” 中國“漫畫”名稱緣起考, revised Bi Keguan’s opinion. He found that a column “cartoon of current events” 時事漫畫 had already appeared in the newspaper *Alarm Bell Daily News* 警鐘日報 on 17 March 1904. What is more, the cartoon *Political Map of 19th-Century China* 時局全圖 was published in *Russian Alarming News* 俄事警聞, which was the predecessor of *Alarm Bell Daily News*, founded in 1898.

One of the features of Chinese early presses was imitating European, American, and Japanese newspapers and magazines. For instance, Cheng Shizeng’s illustration of the novel *The Lonely Swan* adopted Hokusai’s 葛飾北齋 *Kameido tenjin* 龜戸天神社 (fig. 8-9);⁴⁵ Chen Shizeng’s *Untitled* and Feng Zikai’s *The Spring River Flows East* were inspired by Takehisa Yumeji’s 竹久夢儿 (1884-1934) work (fig. 10-12). According to Yu-chih Lai’s research, Chinese artists already had their inspiration from Japanese painting manuals in the late Qing period.⁴⁶ I think that this trend held on at least until the early 1940s, because

⁴⁴ Bi Keguan and Huang Yuanlin, *The History of Chinese Cartoon* 中國漫畫史 (Beijing: Wenhua Yishu chubanshe, 1986), 72.

⁴⁵ The PhD student Wang Zi from The University of Edinburgh demonstrates this example in the “International Doctoral Student Forum of Art Studies Peking University” in 2019.

⁴⁶ Yu-chih Lai, “Surreptitious Appropriation: Ren Bonian (1840–1895) and Japanese Culture in Shanghai,” *Journal of Art History* 美術史研究集刊 no. 14 (2003): 159–242; “The Rise of Lithography and the Circulation of Japanese Painting Manuals in Late Qing Shanghai: A Study Focusing on *Dianshizhai conghua*,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica* no. 85 (2014): 57–127.

we can find Japanese elements in Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*. Nevertheless, Cao's case was different from that of previous artists: Chen Shizeng and Li Shutong, among others, were educated in Chinese classics, and literati painting; they also had experience studying in Japan. In his article "The Value of Literati Painting 文人畫的價值", Chen Shizeng countered the wholesale Westernization and the attack on Chinese tradition. He advocated literati painting instead of the functional skill of realism because literati painting did not seek formal likeness was progressive for painting. By comparison, Cao Hanmei did not receive artistic training, but improved his painting skills in newspapering practice. From another point of view, this made Cao Hanmei easier than artists of the older generation to get rid of the shackles of the tradition. While Chen Shizeng emphasized literati painting, Cao Hanmei preferred the *gongbi* style painting.

In 1918, Zhang Yuguang secured a job for Zhang Guangyu at the *World Pictorial* 世界畫報, since Zhang Yuguang had not founded a new school of fine arts. There Zhang Guangyu began to paint advertisements and beauty calendar posters. In the following years, Zhang Guangyu published works in *Huajie huabao* 滑稽畫報, *Yingxi zazhi* 影戲雜誌, *Xiao Shen Bao* 小申報, etc. He was very active in publishing pictorials. In 1922 he brought his brother Zhang Zhengyu to Shanghai to work in the printing house.

Zhang Guangyu was able to persuade his grandfather not to apprentice him to a bank. However, Cao Hanmei could not do that, as he was supposed to take

over the Cao family business. After primary school, Cao Hanmei studied business in middle school. After he left school altogether, he was apprenticed at Shenyu Bank in 1917, and then worked as an accountant in Yongyuan Rice Store in 1918. Later, Cao Hanmei worked as an accountant in the Qingfeng Textile Company, where the factory managers were his grandfather's partners from the Wuxi Jiufeng Flourmill. Although Cao Hanmei put a lot of time and energy into his family business, his older brother's experience in periodicals was also a likely inspiration for him to take an active part in publication.

Cao Hanmei began to contribute to newspapers and magazines from the early 1920s. If we were to make a list of the publications with which Cao Hanmei was involved, it would be a long list: Cao Hanmei and his friends Cao Junmu and Cao Ci'an co-founded the *Periodical Shiyin Hanmei* 石印涵美圖畫, the first periodical in Wuxi, in August of 1923.⁴⁷ At the time, Cao Hanmei was also a reporter at the newspaper *Hong Bao* 轟報, which was founded by Wu Guanli 吳觀蠡 in August 1923. A month later, Cao Hanmei published his first illustrated header in the supplement of the newspaper *Xi Bao* on 19 September 1923 in Wuxi (**fig. 13**). On 2 August 1925, *Three Days Pictorial* 三日畫報 was first issued. Zhang Guangyu was the general editor, while Cao Hanmei, Zhang Zhengyu, Cao Junmu, Cao Xuexia, Bao Tianxiao, Zhou Xinbo, Huang Wennong 黃文農 (?–1934), and others were illustrators or journalists. In April 1926, Cao Hanmei,

⁴⁷ *Shi Bao* (September 21, 1923).

Zhou Xinbo, and Zhou Laodiao co-founded the magazine *Xiao Shanghai* 小上海 in Wuxi.⁴⁸

On the surface, the emerging press seemed to have very promising prospects. But these pictorial magazines were usually short-lived journals or unsaleable in the early years. In 1924, Cao Hanmei published four illustrated headers in the supplement of *Xi Bao*. Each of these headers was repeated over a long period of time. Obviously, at this time, Cao Hanmei's works seemed to make little impression. It is true that Cao Hanmei's early works, in comparison with his later works, are immature. The situation of the supplement in *Xi Bao* changed after May 1925. From May 25 to June 3 of that year, Cao Hanmei's satirical drawings, entitled *Scourge of War* 兵災畫謠, were serialized in this supplement (**fig. 14**). These small satirical drawings (ca. 4x4 cm), which mocked the Second Zhili-Fengtian War in 1924, were well received by the public. Cao Hanmei's *Scourge of War* was met with warm acceptance, which made an impact on the developing direction of *Xi Bao*. As Wu Guanli mentioned in his article:

The newspaper in Wuxi only focused on social events but ignored political sources, and activities from industry and commerce. After 1924, the newspapers paid more attention to military activities.⁴⁹

It can be said that Cao Hanmei played a crucial role in promoting the successful re-organization of *Xi Bao*. Later, more and more layouts were assigned to Cao Hanmei. Meanwhile, the volatile political situation in China upset the people.

⁴⁸ *Three Days Pictorial* no. 78 (April 24, 1926).

⁴⁹ Wu Guanli, "The Development of Journalism in Wuxi," 無錫新聞事業發展史, *Jiangsu Monthly Bulletin* vol. 1, no. 3 (January 1934).

After the May Thirtieth Movement in May 1925, the Chinese people carried out a magnificent and victorious anti-imperialist patriotic movement across the nation. Then followed the outbreak of the Northern Expedition. The civil wars continued for years. In the midst of this situation, many cartoonists depicted many caricatures against the civil wars and invasion by imperialist powers. Cao Hanmei published many cartoons, such as *Request Zhong Kui, Republic of China: Civil War, Diplomacy, and Student Strike, Military Sovereignty*, and so on (fig. 15–17).

Cao Hanmei struck up acquaintances with many cartoonists and journalists, which prepared the ground for his later publishing practices. Take Ye Qianyu for example, whose first work was published in *Three Days Pictorial*. Through this enterprise, Ye Qianyu made the acquaintance of Cao Hanmei, Zhang Guangyu, etc.⁵⁰ We also notice that *Periodical Shiyin Hanmei* and *Hong Bao* were founded in the same month. At this time, *Xi Bao* was being reorganized. Its general editor, Wu Guanli, wrote in an article titled “The Development of Journalism in Wuxi”:

More and more newspapers have been founded in Wuxi since 1923. In response, *Xin Bao* and *Sumin Bao* have chosen competent staff and used the right personnel. *Xi Bao* has also restructured the editorial team.⁵¹

We can see that the reorganization of *Xi Bao* took place after the cooperation between Cao Hanmei, Wu Guanli, and Bao Tianxiao in *Hong Bao*. Bao Tianxiao had suggested initiating a supplement while working as an editor at *Shi Bao*, and

⁵⁰ *Shidai manhua: Bei shiguang chenfeng de 1930 niandai Zhongguo chuangaoli* 時代漫畫：被時光封塵的 1930 年代中國創造力 (Guangxi: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015), 103.

⁵¹ Wu Guanli, “The Development of Journalism in Wuxi,” *Jiangsu Monthly Bulletin* vol. 1, no. 3 (January 1934).

this turned out to be a great success. It also appears that the strategy of starting a supplement was inspired by Bao Tianxiao's successful experience working on newspaper supplements.⁵² Bao Tianxiao was famous for publishing tabloids and was one of the representatives of the Saturday Group of Writers. He thus knew the readership's taste very well and was good at using gossip, theater, and movie news to meet consumer demand. In this regard, the strategy of the pictorials in the early stage was similar to that of the tabloids.

As mentioned above, Zhang Guangyu, Cao Hanmei, etc., were involved in the publication of several pictorials during this period. *Pictorial Tides* 畫報潮 surged in Shanghai at the time.⁵³ This surge was driven by the supplement *Jing Newspaper* 晶報 of *The National Herald* 神州日報 in 1919.⁵⁴ By some estimates, by 1919 there were 1118 illustrated periodicals published in China, many of which targeted female readers. Some popular female magazines of the time include *Women's News*, *After-Hours Entertainment*, *Words of Women*, *The Female World*, *Women's Magazine*, *Female Magazine*, *Women's Ten-Day Colloquial Periodical*, and *Chung Hwa Ladies' Magazine*.⁵⁵

⁵² Bao, *Chuanyinglou huiyi lu*, 345.

⁵³ "Review of Pictorial Magazines Tides," 畫報潮之回顧, *Zhongguo sheying xuehui Pictorial* no. 50 (1926).

⁵⁴ Ying Chuan, "Tabloid Newspapers in Shanghai," 上海之小報, *The Pei-Yang Pictorial News* no. 270 (January 17, 1929).

⁵⁵ Pang Laiwan, "Advertising and the Visual Display of Women," *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 108.

On 9 August 1924, *Shen Bao* reported that Cao Hanmei had participated in an exhibition hosted by the Painting and Calligraphy Studio of Xishan in Wuxi City, Jiangsu Province 無錫錫山書畫社:

The Painting and Calligraphy Studio of Xishan held this exhibition from July 28 to August 8. There were over five hundred exhibits, including calligraphy, Chinese painting, and Western-style painting. Cao Hanmei's paintings are among the Western-style paintings.⁵⁶

This report stated that Cao Hanmei's work was completed in the Western style. However, we do not know what this work looks like exactly. Cao Hanmei mentioned that he attempted to use European pen and ink painting illustrations from *Biographies of Strange Persons from Liangxi* (fig. 18) in 1925. Since the printing technology was not very developed, drawing with European pen and ink was very suitable for pictorial magazines. Although this series of works was very popular and gained more readers at the time, Cao Hanmei admitted that he preferred to use Chinese brush and ink because they could show changes in brushwork. He cared about his brush movement and ink flow. After that, he always used a brush to paint. This shows that Cao Hanmei was faithful to Chinese painting. Most of Cao Hanmei's artworks painted in this period were beauty painting: for example, *New Version of Jinling Twelve Beauties in The Dream of the Red Chamber* 新紅樓十二金釵 in *Three Days Pictorial*, a series of *Varieties of Beauty* 美人百態, a series of *Beautiful Women* 仕女畫 and so on (fig. 19–21). What is interesting is that Cao Hanmei's wife Kefeng (可風, originally named

⁵⁶ “Wuxi – Xishan shuhuashe kaizhan zhanlanhui jilue,” 無錫: 錫山書畫社開展展覽會記略, *Shen Bao* (August 9, 1924).

Yuan Yuzhen 袁毓珍), also painted a series of *Hundred Beautiful Women*, which were published in *Three Days Pictorial* (fig. 22).

The subject of beautiful women was very popular at the time. Take the case of Shenmei Bookstore 審美書館, founded by Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889–1933). This enterprise published works by Gao Qifeng, Gao Jianfu, and Chen Shuren 陳樹人 (1883–1948),⁵⁷ as well as both ancient and modern masterpieces, Chinese and foreign, the most fashionable beauties, poster calendars of beauties, and postcards. Of all of these, prints of ancient and modern Chinese masterpieces and foreign works suffered the poorest sales. By comparison, the prints of beauties, which included more than 1400 categories, were fast sellers.⁵⁸ They also used beauties painting as a front cover of their publication to attract readers (fig. 23).

Nevertheless, the growing beauty poster calendars led to controversial questions. In 1918, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942) published an article in *New Youth*, titled “On Art Revolution – A Reply to Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896–1989).”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889–1933), native of Panyu, Guangdong province. *Guohua* painter, key figure in Lingnan school. Younger brother of Gao Jianfu. In 1907 studied in Japan. In 1912 returned to Shanghai. Co-editor of *The True Record* 真相畫報; Gao Jianfu 高劍父 (1879–1951), native of Panyu, Guangdong province. *Guohua* painter, founder of Lingnan school. In 1906 went to Tōkyō for further study. There he joined Hakuba Kai (White Horse Society) and Taiheiyō Gakai (Pacific Painting Society), artists interested in European art. In 1912 he published *The True Record*. In 1923 he served as founder of Chunshui Academy. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 41.

Chen Shuren 陳樹人 (1883–1948), born in Panyu, Guangdong province. *Guohua* painter. Studied under Ju Lian in Guangzhou and at Kyoto Municipal College of Art. In 1913 in Japan, graduated with degree in literature from Rikkyō University, Tōkyō. One of the “Three Masters of the Lingnan School.” Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 18.

⁵⁸ Huang, *Collection of Essays of Huang Dade*, 190–191.

⁵⁹ Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942), born in Huaining, Anhui Province. He went to Japan twice after 1901 for study and published the novels *Tragic Society* and *Dark*

In it, Chen Duxiu advocated the reform of Chinese painting. He criticized traditional Chinese painting and asserted that to bring about reform, Chinese painting needed to adopt the Western realistic spirit.⁶⁰ As mentioned above, this understanding influenced many artists in the early 1920s, such as Xu Beihong, Liu Haisu, Zhang Guangyu, etc.⁶¹ Yet, Lü Cheng set forth a different argument. Some schools of Western art were understood as superficial and one-sided. Commercial art was seen as garish and fleshy in its direct appeal to male consumers. To make things worse, it misled arts education, magazines, etc.⁶² Looking back at history, we see that Chen Duxiu's opinion had a stronger impact than Lü Cheng's. Lü Cheng was young, compared to Chen Duxiu.

In November 1923 *Shen Bao* reported the following information about celebrated artists:

Nowadays the trend has changed. Nude has become a fashion. Its high technical level could not be easy to reach, including photography of plaster figures, or even naked models. Nude paintings were rare. The modern Chinese painters who practiced Western-style painting, such as Ding Song 丁悚 (1891–1972), Zhi Guang, Zhang Guangyu, Zhang

Heavenly Kingdom in newspapers at home, both of which expose the Manchu autocracy and foster bourgeois concepts of democracy and equality. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 39.

⁶⁰ Chen Duxiu, *New Youth* vol. 6, no. 1 (January 1918).

⁶¹ Lin Mu, *A Study of the 20th Century Chinese Painting* 二十世紀中國畫研究 (Guangxi: Guangxi meishu chubanshe, 2000), 4.

Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940) went to Germany to study at the University of Leipzig in 1907. He returned home in 1911 and was appointed Minister of Education in Sun Yat-sen's government. In 1916 he was appointed Chancellor of Peking University. Under his guidance the university became an exciting and controversial institution of higher education. *Dictionary of Chinese History*, 212.

⁶² *New Youth* vol. 6, no.1 (January 1919): 84.

Yuguang, and Zheng Mantuo 鄭曼陀 (1884–1961), were the great masters. Almost all of them were involved in poster calendars of beauties.⁶³

From this one can tell that beauty poster calendars had the strongest influence until the situation changed in 1925. Before this time, the prosperity of commercial art drove the development of fine art, although the limitations of commercial art restricted the artists' world.

In terms of nude painting in China, people (especially those who know about the history of Chinese modern art) may be reminded of the nude model that was introduced in art classes by Liu Haisu. However, the situation was more complicated than previously known. The nude female as a subject matter in commercial art became prominent before Liu Haisu taught these classes. To judge from *Shen Bao*, Zheng Mantuo published the first Chinese nude beauty painting in November 1913. However, there was no depiction of nude figures in traditional Chinese painting, the only exception being pornographic paintings or “pictures of spring” 春宮圖. Therefore, these kinds of paintings were considered pornographic paintings before the 1920s.

To make nude painting legal in commercial art, many publishers publicized widely through captions in the advertisement. For example, the caption beside the

⁶³ Ma Juanhun, “Meishu xiaohua,” *Shen Bao* (November 16, 1923).

Ding Song 丁悚 (1891–1972). Cartoonist. Father of Ding Cong. Later taught, edited journals, and drew cartoons in Shanghai. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 30.

Zheng Mantuo 鄭曼陀 (1884–1961), born in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Commercial illustrator, famous for the erotic element in his calendar design in Shanghai.

advertising of *The Beauty* 美人圖 says: "Painting is hard. To paint beauty is more difficult. To paint nude painting is the hardest thing. That is why nude painting is the highest level."⁶⁴

Another step towards the legalization of nude painting was the introduction of nude models in art class. The precise time when Liu Haisu introduced nude models in art class in China is controversial. Liu Haisu himself stated that it was in 1918. However, according to *The Account of Shanghai meizhuan* 上海美專賬冊, female models first appeared in April 1919. We do not know whether these were nude models or not. There was no record of nude models from 1920 to 1921. In 1922, a nude male model was used in class. Starting in August of the same year, female nude models were also featured in the class.⁶⁵

Such an environment inspired Cao Hanmei to paint *The Golden Lotus*. Cao surely knew Liu Haisu's nude painting and his view of art, because there was a comment written by Wu Guanli beside Cao Hanmei's first illustrated header: "In my opinion, Cao Hanmei's painting is much better than Liu Haisu's nude painting in 1919."⁶⁶

Cao Hanmei painted quite a few pieces that contained this kind of motif. For instance, he depicts a scene in which an artist is painting a live female model (**fig. 24**); his cartoon *Exhibition* depicts visitors looking curiously at works of female

⁶⁴ *Shen Bao* (September 26, 1917).

⁶⁵ Wu Zhengfang, "Luo de liyou: 20 shiji chuqi Zhongguo renti xiasheng wenti de taolun," 裸的理由: 20世紀初期中國人體寫生問題的討論, *Xin shixue* vol. 15, no. 2 (June 2004).

⁶⁶ Wu Guanli, *Xi Bao* (September 19, 1923).

nudes at an art exhibition (**fig. 25**); his cartoon *Most Fashionable Necessities of Life in the Future* depicts the latest fashion in the domain of clothes, food, and houses (**fig. 26**).

As time went by, beauty poster calendars gradually lost their luster and came to be considered low-style art, when artists further understood Western art. In this connection, Ding Song published a short story in *Shen Bao*. The story features a frustrated artist whose girlfriend comforts him, and says “Don’t lose hope! What you painted is art; other people, who paint beauty poster calendars, could not reach that extent. Don’t worry! Someday people all over the world, who are interested in art, will be mad about your artworks.”⁶⁷ It may have been around early 1926 when artists first began to distinguish commercial art from fine arts. Ye Qianyu was one of the first to do so, and he recalled that when he started drawing, his friends thought he wanted to be a painter of beauty poster calendars. He wished to become a cartoonist who could publish works in newspapers or magazines.⁶⁸ This shows that the job of painting cartoons was more important than that of painting beauty poster calendars in Ye Qianyu’s mind. Besides, successful cases of Western cartoonists, who became famous artists, motivated Chinese artists to dream of becoming cartoonists. For example, Wang Dunqing mentioned in his article that Phil May (1864–1903) did not train himself in an

⁶⁷ Ding Song, “Yishujia lianren zhi yuandan,” *Shen Bao* (January 1, 1926).

⁶⁸ Ye, *Autobiography of Ye Qianyu*, 53.

academy of fine arts, but through self-study. Phil May worked variously as a scene painter at a theatre, a designer with a theatrical costumer, and finally, a cartoonist for comic magazines; he was on a par with the great caricaturists, such as John Tenniel (1820–1914), Honoré Daumier (1808–79), Charles Samuel Keene (1823–91), and so on.⁶⁹

Here we can see that as the domestic political situation became more tense, leading many artists to publish caricatures satirizing wars among warlords or Western imperialist powers, artists also came to understand more fully the relationship between commercial art and the fine arts. Under these circumstances, The Cartoon Society 漫畫會 was founded in December 1926. Its members included Huang Wennong, Ding Song, Zhuang Guangyu, Zhuang Zhengyu, Wang Dunqing 王敦慶, Lu Shaofei 魯少飛, Ye Qianyu, Cao Hanmei, and others.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Wang Dunqing, “Ziji jiaoyu er chengong de manhuajia Meifei’er,” *Shidai manhua* no. 32 (November 1936).

Phil May (1864–1903). English draughtsman who became famous with humorous pen-and-ink drawings, mainly caricatures and scenes of Cockney life, for *The Stephen’s Review*, *The Daily Graphic*, *Punch*, etc. *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, 360.

John Tenniel (1820–1914). English illustrator. He is remembered chiefly for his brilliant illustrations for Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1872). He worked for *Punch* from 1850 to 1901, succeeding Leech as chief cartoonist in 1864. *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, 553.

Honoré Daumier (1808–79). French caricaturist, painter, and sculptor. In his lifetime he was known chiefly as a political and social satirist, but since his death recognition of his qualities as a painter has grown. *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, 150.

Charles Samuel Keene (1823–91). English caricaturist. From 1861 until his death one of a group of artists associated with *Punch*. His caricature is delicate and reserved, raising a smile rather than a laugh. *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, 294.

⁷⁰ Huang Wennong 黃文農 (?–1934). Cartoonist working in Shanghai in the 1920s and early ’30s. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 62.

Lu Shaofei 魯少飛 (1903–95, b. Shanghai). Illustrator and cartoonist. Did covers for *Shanghai Manhua*, 1928–30. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 110.

The reason for the formation of this society was that cartoons and comics were a way for them to speak out against anti-foreign imperialism and government corruption. Later, members of this society became the main editorial staff of important cartoon magazines of the time, such as *Shanghai Manhua* and *Shidai huabao*.

4. Dance Halls and Cinemas

Artists often went to dance halls in the 1930s. Dance halls and dancers increasingly became the most popular subject matter. In his article, Cao Hanmei described his first experience in a dance hall:

I cannot remember whether I heard someone who came to Shanghai boasting in the most fantastic terms, or I read it in newspapers; before I came to the city my impression was that people were mad about dance in Shanghai. Modern people enjoy themselves in dance halls. Once you come to Shanghai and observe this in person, you will have a more vivid impression...

Cao Hanmei continues, writing that when he first went to a dance hall, he was shy, and only sat and watched the dancers twirling. Finally, he stepped onto the dance floor. He was too nervous to look his first dancing partner in the eye, and thus did not realize that she was a movie star until the end of the dance.⁷¹

Cao Hanmei painted quite a few drawings about dancers. He observed dancers in the dance halls to understand their inner thinking. These observations led to *The Background of a Pair of Dancers* 一對舞侶的背影, *Female*

⁷¹ Cao Hanmei, "Wuwei," *Shiritan* no. 3 (1933).

Occupations: Dancers 女子三百六十行之跳舞女, *Female Occupations: Dancing Girls* 女子三百六十行之歌舞明星, etc. (fig. 27–29).

Ye Qianyu published his drawing *Impression of a Paris Dance Hall* 巴黎舞場之印象 (in Shanghai) in issue 39 of *Shanghai manhua* (fig. 30). There is a caption beside the drawing: “On New Year’s Eve, we decided to go to the Paris Dance Hall after work. Lu Shaofei, Zhang Zhenyu, and I had a crazy night there until four o’clock in the morning. The most impressive part was the beautiful clothing.” Ye Qianyu invited dancing girls to model for him. When he worked part-time for Yunshang Fashion Company 雲裳時尚公司, a British textile company asked him to organize a fashion show. Ye Qianyu designed the dresses and employed dancing girls as his models. That was the first fashion show in Shanghai.⁷² Since there were many fans of fashion, *Shanghai manhua* followed the lead of the *Illustrated London News*, and nearly every issue published fashion designs by Ye Qianyu, Cao Hanmei, Zhuang Guangyu, etc. (fig. 31–33).

Cao Hanmei, Zhang Guangyu, Shao Xunmei, and others were also cinemagoers. Movies and theaters became extremely popular, even for common people. Zhang Dingjiu wrote in his book *Shanghai menjing* 上海門徑:

Since the introduction of the film industry in China, the cinema was not only for entertainment but also for art as social education. Firstly, the cinema was popular among intellectuals... Now, “see a movie” is a modern slogan.⁷³

⁷² Ye, *Autobiography of Ye Qianyu*, 66.

⁷³ Zhang Dingjiu, *Shanghai menjing* 上海門徑 (Shanghai: Zhongyang shudian, 1932), 14.

Cao Hanmei was in the audience on the Metropol Cinema's 大上海 opening night. He wrote:

In metropolitan Shanghai, all business languishes. But cinemas are growing rapidly. It seems that the flourishing filmland pretends peace and prosperity prevail. The Metropol Cinema stood high above the city in competition with other cinemas...⁷⁴

Cao Hanmei et al. had built up close and good relationships with film stars, film critics, and photographers in the processes of establishing and editing newspapers and pictorials.

To attract readers, Cao Hanmei launched a special column named *Little Mystery* 小神秘, which involved a guessing game (**fig. 34**). Cao Hanmei depicted movie stars' hairdos and facial shapes on three consecutive days and asked readers to guess the identities of those who were depicted. The answer was revealed on day four. Additionally, Cao Hanmei's *Varieties of Movie Stars* was serialized from July to September 1926 in *Xi Bao*, including Yang Naimei 楊耐梅, Zhang Zhiyun 張織雲, Xu Lai 徐來 (**fig. 35**), Ling Qing 菱清, Mao Jianpei 毛劍佩, Liu Hanjun 劉漢鈞, Wang Hanlun 王漢倫, Hu Die 胡蝶, Xu Su'e 徐素娥, Han Yunzhen 韓雲珍, Zhao Jingxia 趙靜霞, Lu Jianfen 陸劍芬, Nong Huaying 濃化影, Li Dandan 李旦旦, Wen Zhu 文珠, Wei Xiubao 魏秀寶, Yan Yuexian 嚴月閑, Min Liying 閔麗鶯, Ni Hongyan 倪紅雁, and others.

Cao Hanmei wrote a few film reviews, which were published in *Shiritan*. The Modern Publications Company also founded a film magazine, *Shidai*

⁷⁴ Cao Hanmei, "Dashanghai dianyingyuan kaimu," 大上海電影院開幕, *Shiritan* no. 14 (1933).

dianying 時代電影, in June 1935. How Cao Hanmei used filmmaking techniques in *The Golden Lotus* will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

Chapter II

Cao Hanmei's Circle and the Immediate Cause for Creating *The Golden Lotus*

Cao Hanmei was involved in the publication of pictorials for no less than twenty years, which I divide into four stages: from the early 1920s to 1927 (see chapter one); from 1928 to 1933, including *Shanghai manhua*, *Shidai huabao*, *Shidai*, etc.; from 1934 to 1937, including *Shidai manhua*, *Duli manhua*, *Manhuaqie*, etc.; and from 1939 to 1943, when Cao Hanmei took part in the publications of the Wang puppet government. Cao Hanmei's experience in different pictorials played different roles in *The Golden Lotus*. The creation of *The Golden Lotus* was a task assigned to Cao by the cartoon magazine *Shidai manhua* and was related to the second and third stages of his involvement in the publishing world, that is from 1928 to 1937. The following chapters examine the reasons for creating *The Golden Lotus*, from the content and artistic trends of the pictorials, the publication project of the editorial team, and Cao Hanmei's circle. As for the fourth stage, I will discuss that in chapter three.

The turning point in China for understanding modern Euro-American arts began between the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. As Chinese artists had more and more channels from which to learn about Euro-American modern art, they gradually realized that they were taking a narrow view, since they were only focusing on realism. They noticed that European modern art movements such as Cubism, Expressionism, Art Nouveau, and Surrealism attracted the most attention. All of these movements appeared in their edited pictorials. They reprinted sources of European art from Western artistic magazines and newspapers, and later studied theories of arts and crafts, and cartoons.

Cao Hanmei, Zhang Guangyu, Zhang Zhengyu, Ye Qianyu, and Shao Xunmei founded the Shanghai Modern Publications Company 上海時代圖書公司 in 1933. One of the cartoon magazines, *Shidai manhua*, which was published by this company, became extremely popular and influential and raised the development of Chinese cartoons to a new height. We can say that *Shanghai manhua* and *Shidai huabao* were predecessors of *Shidai manhua*. Many artists active in cartoons and commercial and modern art, modern writers, and even the Chinese ink painters gathered in this company and were directly or indirectly involved in the magazines and book series that it published. Modern consciousness penetrated various cultural aspects and shaped a comprehensive circle of modern literature and art. The editorial team gradually became stable and formed a working mode of group discussion, which had an impact on Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* to a certain degree.

1. The Editorial Team of *Shanghai Manhua*

Although earlier publications by Cao Hanmei, Zhang Guangyu, etc., were not progressing smoothly, their passion for publishing pictorial magazines remained. *Shanghai manhua* was a weekly pictorial magazine, established on April 21, 1928. An explanation in the opening issue read: “We are at the initial stage. Contribution and print problems are a little bit difficult for us to bear. The support and sympathy of the reading public would help us a lot.”⁷⁵ This explanation reflects the poorly-defined goal of these cartoonists; they lacked funds and contributors, but they were filled with enthusiasm.

The 43rd issue of *Shanghai manhua* published photos introducing its contributors and their wives: Ding Song and his wife Jin Sujuan 金素娟, Cao Hanmei and his wife Yuan Yuzhen 袁毓珍, Huang Wennong and his wife Ni Yingming 倪英明, Zhang Guangyu and his wife Tang Suzhen 湯素貞, Ye Lingfeng 葉靈鳳 (1905–75) and his wife Guo Linfeng 郭林鳳, Qi Foqing 祁佛青 and his wife Jiang Wenbo 江文波, Lu Shaofei and his girlfriend Zhou Xiuyi 周修一, and the bachelors Zhang Zhengyu and Ye Qianyu (**fig. 36–37**). Other frequent contributors included Wan Laiming, Chen Qiucao 陳秋草 (1906–88), Lu Zhixiang 陸志庠 (1910–92), Lang Jingshan, Hu Boxiang, etc.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ *Shanghai manhua* no. 1 (1928).

⁷⁶ Ye Lingfeng 葉靈鳳 (1905–75). Born in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Together with Mu Shiyong, Ye Lingfeng edited *Literature and Art Pictorial* in 1934. A writer of fiction as well as an accomplished painter, Ye served concurrently as art editor of many periodicals. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 340–341.

Chen Qiucao 陳秋草 (1906–88) was born in Ningbo, Zhejiang province. His art names were Lishuang 黎霜 and Feng zhi louzhu 風之樓主.

Shanghai manhua turned out to be a best-seller as soon as it hit the market. For its success, there were the following reasons: first of all, the cartoonists cooperated with the photographers, namely Hu Boxiang 胡伯翔 (1896–1989), Lang Jingshan 郎靜山 (1892–1995), and Zhang Zhenhou 張珍侯 (date unknown). They discussed their previous experience in publishing pictorials and analyzing reader preferences, and concluded that color lithograph would attract more readers, and photography was very popular. Zhang Guangyu had already attempted to publish a pictorial magazine for pure art in cooperation with Hu Boxiang in 1923, though this plan came to nothing. Nevertheless, Hu Boxiang published many photographs in *Three Days Pictorial*, in addition to painting calendar posters. Lang Jingshan drew advertising art for Tiger Balm; Zhang Zhenhou worked in Foreign Hong and traded in pigment. These three photographers were happy to cooperate with cartoonists.

In its search for a photographic subject with strong market potential, the editorial team eventually settled on the nude body as a good choice. Therefore, *Shanghai manhua* offered a special column entitled *A Comparison of the Bodies of Peoples Worldwide* 世界人體之比較, starting with the 11th issue (**fig. 38**). This column compared nude female bodies from around the world. According to a report in *Shen Bao*, they copied images from a German book,⁷⁷ but the report did not reveal the title of this source. In addition, cartoonists also engaged in

Lu Zhixiang 陸志庠 (1910–92) was born in Shanghai. A modern painter.

⁷⁷ *Shen Bao* (November 16, 1928).

photography; for example, Zhuang Guangyu, Cao Hanmei, and other artists published their photographic works of autumnal sceneries in the suburbs (**fig. 39**). In doing so, they adapted landscape painting to photographs, and conversely, they used photography techniques in their painting and even produced photomontage with a cut-and-paste approach in Zhang Guangyu's *Paiyongchang* 派用場 (**fig. 40**) and Lang Jingshan's *Grass on the Bank of the Stream* (**fig. 41**). *Paiyongchang* shows the Park Hotel (also known as the International Hotel in Shanghai). In this photograph, Zhang Guangyu depicts two figures in conversation in the local Shanghai dialect. The one on the right, who is wearing a hat and a *changshan* 長衫 or *dagua* 大褂, a traditional Chinese robe that symbolizes relatively high social status, is pointing to the Park Hotel, and asking: "What is this high building used for?" The one on the left is wearing a tunic or shirt and replies: "I don't know. Maybe it is preparing for the flooding of the Huangpu River." At the time, high buildings were new things for the Chinese, whether rich or not. Most of them knew very little about modern things. *Grass on the Bank of the Stream* is an example of the interaction between landscape painting and photography. This photographic work shows Lang Jingshan's aesthetics of Chinese painting on an orchid.

Secondly, this group of cartoonists founded the China Fine Arts Publishing Company 中國美術刊行社, which was responsible for the publication of *Shanghai manhua*. This publishing company occupied a small room with simple equipment, which covered the area of editing, publishing, and selling magazines;

some of cartoonists even lived in there. Zhang Guangyu and Zhang Zhengyu already had experience in print. The cartoonists painted drawings, wrote articles, photographed, printed, published, and sold. They did all of this by themselves to reduce costs. We can say that the China Fine Arts Publishing Company was the forerunner of the Shanghai Modern Publications Company.

In comparison with *Three Days Pictorial* and *Gongshang huabao*, which had two pages each, *Shanghai manhua* consisted of eight pages: four pages in black-and-white for comprehensive art news, and another four pages, including the front and back covers, in color. The format and layout of *Shanghai manhua* were of the latest design, which was very attractive to readers. The editorial team translated the word “manhua” as “sketch” instead of “cartoon”. They did not give a clear definition of “manhua”. When we look through the *Shanghai manhua*, we have a sense that this magazine shows a diversity of sketching and drawing styles, strongly emphasizing sketches, cartoons, artworks, designs, and photographs.

Besides the above-mentioned points, the success of *Shanghai manhua* laid even more in the increasing accessibility of occidental pictorials in Shanghai from the late 1920s onward, and the editorial team made better use of these sources. Some Chinese artists, who studied European modern art in Paris or Tōkyō, introduced the latest artistic information to China after they returned to their homeland; some foreigners brought pictorial magazines when they came to Shanghai. These pictorial magazines came into the second-hand book market, where local artists might find them; some bookstores sold the most important

Western magazines.⁷⁸ For example, there was a French bookshop called Librairie d'Extrême-Orient in Nanjing Road in Shanghai; in his memoirs, Ye Qianyu mentioned a bookshop called Kelly and Walsh on Nanjing Road, in which the major Western magazines were available, such as the American *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*, the British *Punch*, and so on.⁷⁹ Moreover, *The North-China Daily News* featured a list of French magazines that were available in Shanghai.⁸⁰ As artistic information diversified, *Shanghai manhua* provided wide-ranging content, presented in various styles. Pages two, three, six, and seven usually featured reprinted images from the *Illustrated London News*, a daily newspaper from San Francisco, the Japanese *Asahi Newspaper*, and others.

The editorial team of *Shanghai manhua* understood local market demand. It adapted its content to match Shanghai readers' interests. Meanwhile, *The China Press*, an English-language newspaper in Shanghai, republished the American comic strip *Bringing up Father* (**fig. 42**). It was very popular and attracted the editorial team's notice. They decided to create an indigenous Chinese strip by imitating *Bringing up Father*; that is, the stories and situations were made more appropriate and relevant to a Chinese audience. They placed Ye Qianyu in charge of this comic strip, because he was young, worked hard, and did not have a regular job, so he could focus on the project. Ye Qianyu showed himself worthy

⁷⁸ *Shidai manhua: Bei shiguang chenfang de 1930 niandai Zhongguo chuangaoli*, 142.

⁷⁹ Ye, *Autobiography of Ye Qianyu*, 64.

⁸⁰ *The North-China Daily News* (June 25, 1935).

of their trust. This comic strip was serialized beginning with the opening issue and was successful. It was originally titled *Shanghaihinese*, but in Wang Dunqing's opinion, this title was too narrow in scope, so it was renamed *Mr. Wang*, as Wang is the most common surname in China. *Mr. Wang* reflected the tribulations of the urban petty bourgeoisie. Wang Dunqing also advised Ye Qianyu in shaping the image of the main characters: Mr. Wang would be tall and thin, with a beard and a sharp nose; his wife would be short and stout; their daughter would be a social climber. Mr. Wang's friend Mr. Chen would be a rich man with a fierce-looking wife (**fig. 43**).⁸¹

The editors generally showed each other their drawings and exchanged advice. For example, in the *Three Days Pictorial*, Zhang Guangyu designed a portrait of Song Meiling 宋美齡, using the shell of a duck egg to shape her face, and a chicken feather to create her bangs. Other cartoonists suggested that he include the caption *Qingliange* 青蓮閣 (a teahouse for prostitutes) in the background of this drawing.⁸² This collaborative working mode later appeared in Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*, which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Paintings in the style of Symbolism and Art Nouveau appeared in *Shanghai manhua* frequently. Many of these works—reprinted from other sources or works

⁸¹ Ye, *Autobiography of Ye Qianyu*, 64.

⁸² *Shidai manhua: Bei shiguang chenfeng de 1930 niandai Zhongguo chuangaoli*, 103.

Song Meiling 宋美齡 (1898–2003), born in Shanghai, was the wife of President Chiang Kai-shek.

of *Shanghai manhua* artists—are full of sensuality and pleasure. These artistic trends were present in the magazines they produced, especially in *Shidai manhua*, and to some degree, played a role in the selection of *The Golden Lotus* as a column. However, the more direct and important reason was related to a publication project of the editorial team, which will be explained in more detail later. Here we return to the themes of *Shanghai manhua*; for example, the 14th and 15th issues introduced the works of the German artist Franz Stuck (**fig. 44–45**).⁸³ These images were quite certainly drawn from the German art magazine *Die Kunst für Alle* in 1904, which featured special coverage of Franz Stuck. All of the 13 reprinted works of Franz Stuck can be found in *Die Kunst für Alle*. It is worth noting that they reprinted *Die Sinnlichkeit* (sensuality), which depicted a nude woman entwined with a snake (**fig. 46**). There were another two works with similar subjects in *Die Kunst für Alle*, *Die Sünde* (sin) and *Medusa* (**fig. 47–48**). We have reason to believe that the front cover image of the 4th issue, *Snake and Woman* by Ye Qianyu, was inspired by Franz Stuck's works (**fig. 49**).

⁸³ Franz von Stuck (1863–1928) was one of the leading members of Sezession in Munich. Sezessionstil, that is Art Nouveau, a decorative style flourishing in most of western Europe and the USA from about 1890 to the First World War whose most characteristic theme was the use of sinuous asymmetrical lines based on plant forms. The roots of the style can be traced to England, where the Arts and Crafts movement had established a tradition of vitality in the applied arts, and it spread to the Continent chiefly from London. In Germany the style was called Jugendstil. In Austria it was called Sezessionstil. The style was truly international. *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, 31 and 517.

It is particularly worth noting that Zhang Guangyu started a new column on the subjects of arts and crafts and fine art research 時代工藝美術之研究 in *Shanghai manhua* on 12 October 1929, because this column shows that the *Shanghai manhua* editorial team was no longer content to simply reprint images from Western magazines and newspapers, but preferred to devote its efforts to introducing and translating art theory. He wrote:

One studies the spirit of arts and crafts, but one should learn our age first. Meanwhile, we must take strict precautions against unreconstructed things. In other words, we should introduce new thinking. We Chinese people must arouse our enthusiasm. If we are full of ambition, we could surpass the advanced levels of European, American, and Japanese arts and crafts. Let the world know, the world-shaking effects were more than those porcelains from Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties, bronze vessels from the Shang dynasty, and rubbings of Han period stone reliefs. Around the First World War, Expressionism became a dominant trend in Germany, in terms of both poem and opera, particularly in arts and crafts.⁸⁴

We can see that Zhang Guangyu and other cartoonists were ambitious to develop Chinese arts and crafts. They hoped that they could catch up with or even surpass the levels in Europe, America, or Japan. This issue introduced four works by Wan Laiming, namely a pattern in the style of a papercut, a vase, a lamp design, and a decoration for a table (**fig. 50**). We notice that all of them employed female forms, an indication that sensuality was in high fashion in *Shanghai manhua* again.

In a later issue, this column introduced Japanese arts and crafts, including works by Sasaki Shōdō 佐々木象堂 (1882–1961), Ishino Ryuuzan 石野龍山 (1862–1936), Neya Churoku 根箭忠緑 (1897–1987), etc.:

⁸⁴ Zhang Guangyu, “Gongyi meishu zhi yanjiu: yanjiuzhe de yizhi,” 工藝美術之研究: 研究者的意志, *Shanghai manhua* no. 77 (October 12, 1929).

The Late Meiji government had high international status because of its well-established education system and successful diplomacy. Japan showed many exhibits in the 1900 Paris Exposition. The Japanese concluded from this world's fair that decorative curved lines, which were all the fashion in the late 19th century in Europe, ceased to prevail, but straight-line patterns gradually became popular. After Fukuchi Fukuichi 福地復一 (1862–1909) and Ide Umatarô 井手馬太郎 (1870–1910), who were specialists of European pattern design, returned to Japan, they introduced many European arts and crafts to inland artists. It was a great success.⁸⁵

It was true that Japan's pavilions at the Great London Exposition in 1862, the International Exposition of 1867 in Paris, and the 1873 Vienna World's Fair received great acclaim from the European public. The Japanese pavilion in Vienna in 1873 was a very large occasion. A colored lantern hung on the roof. There one could see a model of Nagoya Castle in the exhibition room. On the outside of it, the Japanese government built a Shinto shrine and a classical Japanese garden, including a waterfall, natural rocks, a mound, pond, arched bridge, and model of Ise Castle, to give people the impression that they were in the Far East for an excursion.⁸⁶ Subsequently, decorative patterns and Ukiyo-e's flat planes of color and strong contour lines especially had an impact on Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Art Nouveau. The works of Édouard Manet, Vincent van Gogh, and Gustav Klimt all show the inspiration of Ukiyo-e woodblock prints.

⁸⁵ Zhang Guangyu, "Gongyi meishu zhi yanjiu: Sanshi nian Riben gongyi meishu zhi gaikuang," 工藝美術之研究: 三十年日本工藝美術之概況, *Shanghai manhua* no. 80 (October 12, 1929).

⁸⁶ Peter Pantzer und Johannes Wieninger, *Verborgene Impressionen: Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Wien, 4.4.–4.6. 1990* (Wien: Seitenberg, 1990): 11.

Thus, successful Japanese artistic experiences in Europe, in particular in the arts and crafts, played a crucial role in affecting how Chinese artists thought about ways of developing Chinese art. A straight-line drawing style was regarded as a result of strong modernity. Cao Hanmei's cartoon *The Comparison of the Case with Kuramoto Hideaki and Ye Muhua* 藏本事件與葉木華案之對比 and *Arraignment* 起解 and Zhang Guangyu's cartoon *Xixia tu* 膝下圖 show a straight-line drawing style (fig. 51–53). This interpretation of modernity played a crucial role in Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*.

Cao Hanmei did not go to Europe and did not have access to the original European arts. To some extent, this distance made his imaginary modernity more open and vital. He could feel free to develop indigenous art elements in combination with Western art forms.

2. Shao Xunmei and his Circle

Shao Xunmei was a poet, writer, translator, editor, stamp collector, and publisher. In his daughter's eyes, "During his lifetime, his interests, his works, his friends, his achievements, his adventure stories, and the publishing into which he put great effort were closely related to cartoonists."⁸⁷ Shao Xunmei studied English literature at Cambridge University in Britain. After returning to China in 1926, Shao married Sheng Peiyu 盛佩玉 (1905–89), granddaughter of the modern comprador capitalist Sheng Xuanhuai 盛宣懷 (1844–1916). The picture

⁸⁷ Shao Xiaohong: "Shao Xunmei and Cartoonists" 邵洵美和漫画家们的渊源, *Shenghuo yuekan* no. 10 (2013).

of Shao Xunmei and Sheng Peiyu's wedding was published in *Shanghai huabao*.⁸⁸ During the preparations for their wedding, Shao Xunmei made many new friends from the literary and art world, including Xu Zhimo 徐誌摩 (1897–1931), Lu Xiaoman 陸小曼 (1903–65), Ge Gongzhen 戈公振 (1890–1935), Yu Dafu, Ni Yide, Qiao Wenshou 喬文壽, Jiang Xiaojian 江小鶻 (1894–1939), Wang Yachen 汪亞塵 (1894–1983), Chang Yu 常玉 (1901–66), Liu Haisu, Wang Jiyuan 王濟遠 (1895–1974), Qian Shoutie 錢瘦鐵 (1896–1967), Teng Gu 滕固 (1901–41), Ding Song, Zhang Guangyu, Zhang Zhengyu, and Cao Hanmei, among others.⁸⁹ We do not know whether Cao Hanmei and other

⁸⁸ *Shanghai huabao* no.195 (January 1927).

⁸⁹ Wang Jingfang, *Shao Xunmei nianbiao* 邵洵美年表, *Xin wenxue shiliao* no. 1 (2006): 28.

Xu Zhimo 徐誌摩 (1897–1931) was born in Haining, Zhejiang province. Studied in New York. One of the founders of the Crescent Society, and toured Europe in 1924 with Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941). He wrote many excellent poems, essays, and stories after his return. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers* (Beijing: New world press), 325–326.

Lu Xiaoman 陸小曼 (1903–65). Born in Wujin, Jiangsu province. She was a painter and writer. She was Xu Zhimo's second wife.

Ge Gongzhen 戈公振 (1890–1935) was born in Dongtai, Jiangsu province.

Jiang Xiaojian 江小鶻 (1894–1939), native of Wuxian, Jiangsu province. Sculptor. Before the 1930s spent two years in France. Member of Heavenly Horse Society (Tianma hui). Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 70.

Wang Yachen 汪亞塵 (1894–1983, native of Hangxian, Zhejiang province). *Guohua* painter. Studied Western Painting in Tōkyō, 1915–20. Stayed in Europe, 1928–31. In 1931 director of Xinhua Academy of Fine Art, Shanghai. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 165.

Chang Yu 常玉 (1901–66). Born in Nanchong, Sichuan province. Oil painter. Studied painting at home and briefly in Japan. 1921 went to Paris, where he worked chiefly in Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 10.

Wang Jiyuan 王濟遠 (1895–1974). *Guohua* and *xihua* painter. 1926–31 in France and Japan. 1931–34 member of Storm Society. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 157.

Qian Shoutie 錢瘦鐵 (1896–1967), born in Wuxi, Jiangsu province. *Guohua* painter. Worked in Japan, 1935–42. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 128.

cartoonists took this opportunity to be acquainted with the above-mentioned writers, modern artists, and art historian, or whether the cartoonists were already associated with them before Shao Xunmei's wedding. Certainly, Ye Lingfeng, Liu Na'ou 劉訥鷗 (1905–40), and Mu Shiyong 穆時英 (1912–40) often visited the editorial department of *Shanghai manhua* after this magazine was founded.⁹⁰ Ye Lingfeng contributed his works and translations to *Shanghai manhua*, and also designed the front cover entitled *Evolution*.

The cartoonists who produced art for *Shanghai manhua* were active in the world of avant-garde art. They attempted subjects in modern art. Their artworks were even more experimental than the works of the Storm Society and the Chinese Association of Independent Artists. On the front cover of the first issue of *Shanghai manhua*, entitled *The Cubist Life of the Metropolis*, Zhang Guangyu depicted a family including a seated husband, a standing wife holding a baby in her arms, and their young child (**fig. 54**). We can see that the faces of this couple are depicted from a multitude of viewpoints. Cao Hanmei himself also tried to paint in the Cubist style, for example in his drawing *Hua Mulan* (**fig. 55**).

The Storm Society and the Chinese Association of Independent Artists published different styles of their works in cartoon magazines. Such styles also

Teng Gu 滕固 (1901–41). Born in Baoshan (now Shanghai). Studied in Japan and Berlin. Art historian and theorist.

⁹⁰ Liu Na'ou 劉訥鷗 (1905–40). Born in southern Taiwan raised in Japan. He was a screenwriter and filmmaker.

Mu Shiyong 穆時英 (1912–40). Born in Cixi, Zhejiang province. He was famous for his modernist short stories, one of the representatives of New Sensationists.

appeared later in their exhibitions. For example, Pang Xunqin's work *Such is Paris* 如此巴黎 was published in the third issue, the second volume of *Shidai*, and later displayed in the Third Exhibition of the Storm Society.⁹¹ The eighth volume of the 10th issue of *Shidai* in 1935 and the 111th issue of *The Young Companion* 良友 introduced some selected works from the Second Exhibition of the Chinese Association of Independent Artists.

A month before the founding of *Shanghai manhua*, Shao Xunmei established the Golden House Bookshop 金屋書店, which was inspired by Zeng Mengpu's Bookshop of Truth, Goodness and Beauty 真善美書店. It was called Golden House in reference to the front cover of *The Yellow Book*. According to Shao Xiaohong, there were a lot of issues of *The Yellow Book* on his father's bookcase at home. His father's preference for this magazine was not only because of the literary works, but also Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations. Shao Xunmei published an associated journal titled *Golden House Monthly* 金屋月刊, in which translations of Walter Pater, Paul Morand, and Oscar Wilde, as well as George Moore's *Memoirs of My Dead Life* appeared. In addition, this journal also introduced Chinese writers, such as Xu Zhimo, Ni Yide, Tian Han, and Zeng

⁹¹ Pang Xunqin 龐薰棻 (1906–85). Oil and *guohua* painter and designer. In 1925 studied oil painting in Shanghai under a Russian teacher. Studied in France in 1925–30. In 1931 founding member, with Ni Yide, of Storm Society dedicated to promoting a Parisian-style art world in Shanghai. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 122.

Xubai. In June 1929, Golden House Bookshop published the *Poem and Painting Collection of Beardsley* (**fig. 56**).

When we look through *Shanghai manhua*, we have a sense that *Shanghai manhua* artists took inspiration from the art of Aubrey Beardsley (1872–98).⁹² For example, Huang Miaozi's 黄苗子 cartoon *Devil* was inspired by Beardsley's work;⁹³ Cao Hanmei painted the front cover of *Spring* in the Art Nouveau style (**fig. 57**). The popularity of Beardsley's illustration among Chinese intellectuals had much to do with Beardsley's wonderful contrast of black-and-white, and the oriental stylistic feature, namely his emphasis on line (he outlined the forms with contours). These correspond well with Chinese aesthetic sentiment. The artists would be excited when they possessed Beardsley's catalog: take Huang Bore, for example, who took great pleasure showing it to Huang Miaozi as he bought a Beardsley's catalog from Kelly & Walsh Bookstores in Hong Kong.⁹⁴ The first introduction to Beardsley's illustrations in China was probably the translation of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* by Tian Han 田漢 (1898–1968) in 1921.⁹⁵ At the time, scholars Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896–1945) and Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978)

⁹² Aubrey Beardsley (1872–98). English illustrator, a leading figure in the *fin-de-siècle* aestheticism. His highly distinctive style was based on sources including Burne-Jones (who encouraged him) and Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints. Ian Chilvers. *The Oxford Dictionary of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 51.

⁹³ *Shanghai manhua* no.67 (August 1929).

⁹⁴ Huang Miaozi: "Huang Bore and his works," 黄般若其人其畫, *Meishu* (May 1997): 34-37.

⁹⁵ Tian Han 田漢 (1898–1968). Born in Changsha, Hunan province. He was a Chinese playwright, poet, drama activist, and translator.

were already greatly inspired by the English Decadents, especially Oscar Wilde.⁹⁶

Lu Xun edited and published *Selected Beardsley's Illustrations* 比亞茲萊畫選 two months earlier than Shao Xunmei published *Poem and Painting Collection of Beardsley*.

Beardsley's illustrations in black-and-white played a crucial role in Cao Hanmei's later version of *The Golden Lotus*, which will be further discussed in chapter three (fig. 58). Shao Xunmei claimed, "Illustration has its own value, and it can be independent of a book."⁹⁷ This opinion may have bolstered Cao Hanmei's confidence in the creation of his illustrations. In addition, Cao Hanmei stated that his passion for drawing had much to do with his biological father. His biological father was interested in folk art and collected illustrations of *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, *Water Margin*, etc.⁹⁸ Indeed, Cao Hanmei painted many illustrations of Chinese classical and modern novels, such as *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, *Song of Everlasting Regret*, *Unofficial History of the Scholars*, *Li Shishi*, *Chen Yuanyuan*, *The Tragic Story of Yuniang*, *New Scarlet Letter "A"*, and so on. Thus, shared tastes between Shao

⁹⁶ Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896–1945). Born in Fuyang, Zhejiang Province. He studied economics at the Imperial University in 1919. Having tried writing fiction soon after his stay in Tōkyō, he joined Guo Moruo, Cheng Fangwu, and Zhang Ziping in setting up the Creation Society for the advocacy of Chinese vernacular literature in 1921. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 349–350.

Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978). Born in Leshan, Sichuan province. He was a Chinese historian, writer, poet, archaeologist, and politician.

⁹⁷ Shao Xunmei, "The Preface," in Cao Hanmei, *The Golden Lotus* vol. 1 (1936).

⁹⁸ Tang and Huang, *Tracing Zhang Guangyu*, 4.

Xunmei and the group of cartoonists may have provided a possibility for future cooperation between them.

After more than one year of the establishment of *Shanghai manhua*, the editorial team founded a new pictorial magazine, *Shidai huabao*. *Shidai huabao* and *Shanghai manhua* shared the same editorial staff. But after some time, the editorial team was short of hands and lacked funds and contributions. They urgently needed a cooperative partner. The Zhang brothers believed that Shao Xunmei was the best candidate. Shao Xunmei agreed. He was very interested in publication. One of the reasons for founding Golden House Bookshop was that Shao Xunmei had met with difficulties when he tried to publish his poetry, written during his study in Europe. In addition, as Shao Xunmei pointed out in his article “The Status of Pictorials in the Cultural World” 畫報在文化界的地位, “Images could reach places that texts had never been and could not go”.⁹⁹ Further, Shao Xunmei admired the success of newspapers by Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, 1st Lord Northcliffe, and followed Northcliffe’s example in devoting himself to the publishing world. As a result, Shao Xunmei and the cartoonist group started their partnership. From then on, Shao Xunmei shifted his focus to pictorial magazines.

⁹⁹ Shao Xunmei, “The Status of Pictorials in the Cultural World,” *Shidai* vol. 6, no. 12 (October 1934): 33.

After publishing issue 110 in June 1930, the editorial team decided to shut down *Shanghai manhua*. *Shanghai manhua* was merged with *Shidai huabao*, which was renamed *Shidai* 時代. In the beginning, *Shidai* did not stand out among the pictorial magazines. This situation took a turn after half a year. On 1 November 1930, an announcement appeared in issue 11 of *Shidai*: The publication of Golden House Bookshop's books and magazines would be taken over by the China Fine Arts Publishing Company.¹⁰⁰ To meet the higher standards of print technique, Shao Xunmei accepted the Zhang brothers' proposal and purchased a photogravure machine from Germany, which was the latest print technique in China at the time. The editorial team posted a notice at the beginning of *Shidai* that their magazine would take three innovative measures:

- 1) Improvement of print technique and picture plates: From the first issue of the second volume, we will use photogravure, plus two-color plates, three-color plates, seven-color plates, etc. And we will import special printing paper for the purpose.
- 2) Editorial rectification: Focus on cartoons and supplement current news with photographs.
- 3) Source of contributions: Inviting contributions from experts on politics, society, literature, and art; interviews with celebrities.¹⁰¹

We can see that Shao Xunmei provided the technique and financial support, which greatly improved *Shidai*'s print quality. More importantly, he was well connected in literature circles, which guaranteed a stable flow of contributions. His excellent English language skills helped cartoonists to access rich information

¹⁰⁰ *Shidai* vol. 1, no. 11 (October 1930).

¹⁰¹ *Shidai* vol. 1, no. 12 (October 1930).

about European and American modern art. He also introduced these cartoonists to many friends from literary and art circles.

People who had some knowledge of the development of Chinese cartoons in the Republican period may know that Miguel Covarrubias's works were highly thought of by the cartoonists. Shao Xunmei played an important role in promoting the acquaintance and exchange between Covarrubias and the cartoonists. Ye Qianyu and Zhang Guangyu stated that they had already come to know the work of Covarrubias in the late 1920s when they used to visit the bookshop Kelly and Walsh on Nanjing Road. Miguel Covarrubias visited Shanghai twice. The first time was in June 1930, when he and his wife enjoyed a brief stay in Shanghai during their honeymoon. According to the *North China Daily News*, Mrs. Chester Fritz held a garden party. The party was given in honor of Mr. M. Covarrubias, Miss Rose Rolande, Miss Claudette Colbert, Mr. Norman Foster, and Madame Youra Guller, all of whom were famous artists visiting Shanghai.¹⁰² During this visit, Covarrubias did not have any contact with Chinese artists, but owing to Shao Xunmei's efforts, he did have productive discussions with Chinese cartoonists during his second visit to Shanghai. Shao Xunmei mentioned this event in his article, although he already knew Covarrubias would arrive in Shanghai in 1930 thanks to information supplied in *Vanity Fair*. Shao Xunmei

¹⁰² *North China Daily News* (June 21, 1930).

asked around, but no one knew the exact date that Covarrubias would arrive.¹⁰³

This suggests that Shao Xunmei did not notice the report in *North China Daily News*; otherwise, he could have already met Covarrubias in 1930.

Three years later, Shao Xunmei heard from Mrs. Chester Fritz that Covarrubias would come to Shanghai again at the end of September 1933. On 1 October, Shao Xunmei brought some artworks by Zhang Guangyu and other cartoonists to Mrs. Chester Fritz's house to show to Covarrubias. The next day, Covarrubias told Shao Xunmei:

“There was a journalist who came to see me yesterday. I told him that Chinese modern art had already made enormous progress. Just as the pieces of Zhang Guangyu that you showed me yesterday, Zhang knows the strong points of Western art very well, and meanwhile he develops the outstanding features of Oriental art as much as he can. However, this journalist did not seem to agree with me. Maybe he would like to publish my points. You had better figure out a way to convey my opinions to the Chinese art world.” Just then, the evening news arrived. Covarrubias was happy that part of what he said in the interview was published. He added, “This journalist has not understood me in full yet.”¹⁰⁴

As can be seen, Covarrubias admired Zhang Guangyu's works, because Zhang adapted Western art, but also retained the spirit of Oriental art. Perhaps after brief contact with the Chinese art world, Covarrubias felt that Chinese artists were overly concerned with the techniques of Western art and undervalued their own art. Covarrubias wanted to remind Chinese artists to value and take full advantage of their own art.

¹⁰³ Shao Xunmei, “Kefoluopisi,” 柯佛羅皮斯 [Covarrubias], *Shiritan* no. 8 (1933).

¹⁰⁴ Shao, “Kefoluopisi.”

The acquaintance and productive discussions between Covarrubias and the cartoonists in Shanghai likely made an impact on the latter, both in aesthetic terms and in terms of their working methods. Covarrubias painted a few portraits after their dinner party. One of them and Covarrubias's self-portrait were published in *Shiritan*.¹⁰⁵ Covarrubias also published works in *Lunyu* and *Duli manhua* (fig. 59–62). The editorial team of the Modern Publications Company was very pleased, as they were rarely able to publish contributions from foreign artists. After he had made Covarrubias's acquaintance in Shanghai, Ye Qianyu stated that Covarrubias always carried a small book to sketch what he saw during his travels, and from that time on Ye also began to carry a sketchbook on his trips.¹⁰⁶ Cao Hanmei praised Ye Qianyu's piece *Youyongchi* 游泳池 [swimming pool], which was selected for The First National Cartoon Exhibition, and regarded as one of Ye's representative works. Cao Hanmei added that the "decorative line is absolute magic. This is owed to Ye's constant practice of sketching which adopted Covarrubias's working method of carrying a sketchbook."¹⁰⁷

There is no doubt about the inspiration of Covarrubias's artwork on these Chinese artists. Most importantly of all, Covarrubias's view of art bolstered Chinese cartoonists' belief in the inherent value of Chinese folk art. Covarrubias, who was admired by Chinese cartoonists, praised Zhang Guangyu's work for its

¹⁰⁵ Shao, "Kefoluopisi."

¹⁰⁶ Ye Qianyu, "Author's preface," *Lüxing manhua* 旅行漫畫 [Travel Cartoons] no. 1 (1936): 2.

¹⁰⁷ Cao Hanmei, "Beijie Quanguo manhua zhanlanhui chupin wo jian."

use of elements from folk art, so Chinese cartoonists came to have deep admiration for it. In addition, Covarrubias advocated craft art, not only in theory but also in practice. He had a strong affinity for jade and collected quite a few pieces of Mexican jade. He claimed that he did not care about whether the collected jades were false or not, since what he had in mind was the form and the carving technique of jade.¹⁰⁸

John Clark discussed the above situation by creating a new term: “neotraditional art”. This denotes an approximate compromise between accepting the legitimacy of past forms and techniques and attempting to reinvent the context from which that legitimacy is drawn. The definition of neotraditional art involves a reinterpretation of the formal value systems that govern art, which are usually denoted either by a set of style markers or by technique or content.¹⁰⁹

On 1 January 1933, the Zhang brothers, cartoonist Ye Qianyu, and Shao Xunmei founded the Shanghai Modern Publications Company. It was after this that the Modern Publications Company reached its golden age. On 20 January 1934, the Shanghai Modern Publications Company published the first issue of *Shidai manhua*, its first cartoon magazine. Compared with their previous cartoon magazines, *Shidai manhua* was concerned with the translation and introduction of cartoon theory. For example, Lan Weibang 藍蔚邦 and Ge Baoquan 戈寶權

¹⁰⁸ Shao, “Kefoluopisi.”

¹⁰⁹ John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 73–74.

translated articles by Okamoto Ippei 岡本一平 (1886–1948), Ōten Shimokawa 下川凹天 (1892–1973), Kuriyagawa Hakuson 廚川白村 (1880–1923), etc.¹¹⁰ Ōten Shimokawa's book *Manga Drawing Method* 漫画人物描法 (1925), which shows how to draw *manga* step by step (fig. 63-64), is notable. Shimokawa had an direct influence on Chinese cartoonists' style. His linear drawing style seems mirrored in the works of Chinese cartoonists, which can be seen in *Self Portraits of Cartoonists* (fig. 65). The introduction of Japanese artworks and theory helped Chinese cartoonists better understand the nature of cartoons. Later, as the inclusion of *The Golden Lotus* in the First National Cartoon Exhibition was questioned, Cao Hanmei concluded that cartoons should not be defined by techniques and forms. This will be further discussed in chapter four.

In addition to *Shidai manhua*, the Shanghai Modern Publications Company also published *Lunyu*, *Shiritan*, *Shidai wenxue*, etc. Therefore, this company pooled a number of noted writers, such as Lin Yutang, Liu Dajie, A Ying, Yu Dafu, Tao Kangde, Zhang Kebiao, and so on. They cooperated with cartoonists; for example, Cao Hanmei was responsible for the artistic layout design of *Lunyu*.¹¹¹ He published his works in the magazine starting with issue 38. From issue 75 to

¹¹⁰ Okamoto Ippei 岡本一平 (1886–1948) was a *Manga* artist. Studied at the Tōkyō School of Art. Produced theatrical designs for Teikoku Theatre, and joined the Tōkyō Asahi Shimbun in 1912. *Writers of Comics in Japan – A Biographical Dictionary* 漫画家人名事典 (Tōkyō: Nichigai ssoshiētzu, 2003): 83.

Ōten Shimokawa 下川凹天 (1892–1973) was an artist and one of the pioneers of anime. *Writers of Comics in Japan*, 192.

Kuriyagawa Hakuson 廚川白村 (1880–1923) was a literary critic.

¹¹¹ Lin Dazu, “Yishu sheji Cao Hanmei,” *Hu shang mingkan Lunyu tanwang* 滬上名刊《論語》談往 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2008), 117.

issue 98, he serialized 42 illustrations of *Unofficial History of the Scholars* 儒林外史. One of the publishing projects of the Shanghai Modern Publications Company is noteworthy, namely editing and publishing a series of late Ming essays, which will be discussed in more detail in the following text.

3. The Literary Trend of Nostalgia for the Late Ming and its Influence

The second issue of *Shidai manhua* started to serialize *The Golden Lotus* (fig.

66). Cao Hanmei wrote an article in which he explained why he painted *The Golden Lotus*. The following passage from it offers a few clues in helping us to understand his works:

At the time, nude models created a sensation in many places. I was inspired by this. I wanted to study nude painting. However, in my opinion, if I only painted nude models, it would be too dull. In this case, it reminded me of *Chun tu* 春圖 [erotic painting], which was an option. But *Chun tu* does not have a storyline, continuity, and lack of rise and fall; it could not convey a feeling of joy. I happened on the novel *The Golden Lotus*. As the novel was so absorbing, I read on without a break. I was so excited, I jumped out of bed. This was a subject which was the best alternative. That was my first attempt on this subject. I painted several works of *The Golden Lotus*, but I was dissatisfied with what I had painted. I only sent them to one of my friends as a gift and they were not published. I felt embarrassed that his friend regarded my works as a precious gift...Someone supposed that I painted *The Golden Lotus*, which must have erotic scenes. At that time, I was desperately short of related references. I had not seen any works from the Wu school of painting, even the poor-quality artworks from Sima street. But my brother Zhang Guangyu introduced the similarly styled catalog *Palace scenes with figures* 燕寢怡情 to me and sent me a dozen photos (fig. 154-155). After viewing these references, I saw how my works could be *gongbi* style painting. The pieces of Gai Qi 改琦 (1773–1828), Fei Xiaolou 費曉樓 (1802–50), Wang Xiaomou 王小某 (1794–1877), and Wu Youru 吳友如 (1850–93) were much better than my works. Therefore, I had no incentive

to paint further in this style. Before the launch of *Shidai manhua*, Zhang Guangyu advised me to paint *The Golden Lotus* with the help of *Palace scenes with figures*. I was hesitant; the editorial team decided on it so I must try my best. After many experiments with reference to Qiu Ying 仇英 (ca. 1496–1551) and Chen Hongshou's 陳洪綬 (1599–1652) works (fig. 67-68), I developed my early style of *The Golden Lotus*.¹¹²

From this passage, we can see that nude models or nude painting inspired Cao Hanmei. In his view, if nude paintings were combined with a storyline, it would better serve to express a character's personality and show his or her inner world than just depicting a nude model. *The Golden Lotus* hence closely matched his artistic vision. This fascinated him, so he decided to illustrate the novel. After his older brother learned of his decision, he gave him some related photos and the catalog *Palace scenes with figures* for reference. Compared with other works collected by his friends, Cao Hanmei felt that his works were not satisfactory. Therefore, he did not have the same passion for painting *The Golden Lotus* as before. Then, shortly before the publication of the cartoon magazine *Shidai manhua*, Zhang Guangyu asked him to repaint *The Golden Lotus* as a column.

¹¹² Cao, "How I paint Gongbi style painting."

Gai Qi 改琦 (1773–1828). Born in Huating (now Songjiang), Jiangsu province.

Fei Xiaolou 費曉樓 (1802–50). Born in Wucheng, Zhejiang province.

Wang Xiaomou 王小某 (1794–1877). Born in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province.

Qiu Ying 仇英, Chinese painter of the Ming period who was active between 1522 and 1560. Born in Taicang, Jiangsu province. He was well known for his charming genre scenes, which were much admired by later critics. Hugo Munsterberg, *Dictionary of Chinese and Japanese art* (New York: Hacker, 1981), 42.

Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1599–1652). Born in Zhuji, Zhejiang province. He was a Chinese figure painter of the late Ming period. He followed a very individual style which emphasized the linear aspect of painting. Munsterberg, *Dictionary of Chinese and Japanese art*, 32–33.

More accurately, in my opinion, the column of *The Golden Lotus* was related to a project of the Shanghai Modern Publications Company, which advocated the revival of the literature and culture of the late Ming period. Zhang Guangyu's column of *Folk Love Songs* 民間情歌 was also a response to this trend of late Ming revival (**fig. 69**). Although the researcher Tang Wei carried out a textual investigation of *Folk Love Songs* and pointed out that this work had nothing to do with Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646), it was related to Zhang Guangyu's interest and the New Culture Movement in China.¹¹³ Tang Wei emphasized that Zhang Guangyu had already collected Ming folk love songs before the age of 20, more than ten years before the Shanghai Modern Publications Company devised this project.¹¹⁴ My judgment is based on the following: although Zhang Guangyu collected these songs in his youth, his decision to paint *Folk Love Songs* was only made when the company began advocating for the late Ming revival. Cao Hanmei, too, had already attempted to paint *The Golden Lotus* at the end of 1920, but only used the opportunity of the late Ming revival to be able to publish his *The Golden Lotus* fairly and legally.

From the magazines *Lunyu*, *Wanxiang*, *Shidai manhua*, etc., published by the Shanghai Modern Publications Company, we can see that the company was

¹¹³ Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646) was the personification of popular Chinese literature in its numerous forms. His success was largely based on his appreciation of the value of the unrecognized low-brow literature of the masses, and his tireless devotion to collecting, editing, and publishing these materials and enriching them with his own creations. William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 380.

¹¹⁴ Tang and Huang, *Tracing Zhang Guangyu*, 156–177.

dedicated to introducing the literature and culture of the late Ming period. From 1934, the Shanghai Modern Publications Company organized and published a series of late Ming essays, such as *Vase Studio Collection* 瓶花齋集 by Yuan Zhonglang (1568–1610), *The Late Ming Essay from 18 Scholars* 晚明十八家小品, edited by A Ying and Liu Dajie, *Collected Works of Yuan Zhonglang* 袁中郎全集, and so on.¹¹⁵ The editing teams promoted those publications by means of advertisements (**fig. 70–78**). They inserted such advertisements beginning with issue 41 of *Lunyu* in 1934, and the front cover of issue 47 used Yuan Zhongliang's inscription (**fig. 79**). The second issue of *Wanxiang* ran an advertisement for the *Collected Works of Yuan Zhonglang*. Additionally, this issue introduced A Ying's article "Jokes from the Ming period" 明朝的笑話, with illustrations from the Chongzhen version of *The Golden Lotus* (dated to 1628–44). A Ying pointed out that his article was selected from *Collected Novels of the Ming Era* 明人百家小說. As we can see, these advertisements were carefully designed, with good layouts.

¹¹⁵ Liu Dajie 劉大傑 (1904–77). Born in Yueyang, Hunan Province. Due to the encouragement of Yu Dafu, he began to take great interest in the Chinese vernacular literary works that had been flourishing since the May Fourth Movement of 1919. From 1926 to 1930, Liu studied European literature in Japan and on his return he became an editor with the Datong Book Company in Shanghai. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 183.

A Ying 阿英 (1900–77). A native of Wuhu, Anhui Province. He helped set up the Sun Society and was assigned to edit both *Sun Monthly* and *Sea Wind Weekly*. After he joined the China League of Left-Wing Writers in 1930, he was elected a permanent council member to both the League and the Union of China Left-Wing Culture. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 12.

Shao Xunmei wrote in his article that scholar Liu Dajie wanted to search for essays from the late Ming Dynasty. Shao Xunmei owned a rich literary collection, so Liu Dajie visited Shao Xunmei at his house to borrow some late Ming essays.¹¹⁶ In addition, Shao Xunmei wrote a colophon on a fan to record this event (**fig. 80**).

Lin Yutang and Liu Dajie purchased late Ming essays, which they selected and edited later, and published them with the Modern Publications Company, which had the necessary editorial staff, publicity, printing house, and distribution channels. In other words, they owned a cultural output chain for their literary and artistic ideals.

Yuan Zhonglang, who was widely popularized by the Modern Publications Company, spoke highly of the novel *The Golden Lotus* and the folk songs of the Ming period.¹¹⁷ Yuan Zhonglang wrote to Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636) that he had asked for sick leave. Unfortunately, he could not meet with Dong during his time off. He had already read the first half of the manuscript of *The Golden Lotus*, which he had borrowed from Dong, and believed this novel was

¹¹⁶ Shao Xunmei, “Shaishu de ganxiang,” 曬書的感想, *Shidai* vol. 8, no. 6 (1935).

¹¹⁷ Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 or 袁中郎 (1568–1610) was a poet and critic who campaigned for the antiquarian, imitationist tendency of the late Ming period. They formed a literary club known as the Grape Society in Peking, which they used as a forum for literary reform. Yuan Hongdao was educated in the Confucian tradition. His work was greatly appreciated by Li Zhi 李贄, Dong Qichang and Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖. Nienhauser, ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, 955.

better than the Western Han writer Mei Sheng's 枚乘 *Qifa* 七發.¹¹⁸ Yuan Zhonglang was writing to ask Dong for the latter half of *The Golden Lotus*.¹¹⁹

Yuan Zhonglang's work *Bie Shikui* 別石簣 shows inspiration from the Ming folk songs. Besides Yuan Zhonglang, other scholars of the Ming period, such as Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602), Li Mengyang 李夢陽 (1475–1529), and Feng Menglong, all admired the Ming folk songs.¹²⁰ Therefore, we have reason to believe that the Modern Publications Company elaborately planned the columns of *The Golden Lotus* by Cao Hanmei and *Folk Love Songs* by Zhang Guangyu. These two columns, as expected, were a great success.

This publishing project of the Shanghai Modern Publications Company linked the literary and artistic trends of the late Ming period to the 1930s, and encouraged a cultural nostalgia for the late Ming Dynasty. There was a backlash against trends originating in the May Fourth Movement, which would negate the

¹¹⁸ Qi 七 (sevens) is a designation for a genre initiated by Mei Cheng's 枚乘 *Qifa* 七發 (Seven Stimuli). All the *qi* pieces of later generations without exception are modeled on Mei's work. A persona of Mei Cheng himself who was a native of the Wu area, the guest appears to have a deep understanding of medicine and volunteers to diagnose the prince. William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, vol. 2 (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc, 1999), 9.

¹¹⁹ Zhu Yixuan, *Jinpingmei ziliao huibian* 金瓶梅資料匯編 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2012), 157.

¹²⁰ Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602) was born in Jinjiang near Quanzhou. He is famous for his benevolent and uncorrupted government. Li Zhi is one of the most outstanding antitraditional thinkers and Confucian heretics in Chinese intellectual history. Nienhauser, ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, 533.

Li Mengyang 李夢陽 (1475–1529) was an important poet and literary theorist, leader of a group of *fugu* 復古 (recovery of antiquity) reformists, or archaists, usually referred to as the Ming *qizi* 明七子 (Seven Ming Masters). Nienhauser, ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, 543.

liberating impetus that had originally held a powerful message for them. At the time, there were different foreign versions of *The Golden Lotus* which were published in Europe, America, and Japan around the 1920s, and the translations were very popular. Several editions of *The Golden Lotus* were published in Japan, such as the Nihon Dou Bookstore in Shanghai's abridged version of *The Golden Lotus*, which was translated by Inoue Kōbai 井上紅梅 in 1923; in 1931, Xiao Yan reported the Germany scholar Franz Kuhn's translation, which was entitled *Kin Ping Meh oder die abenteuerliche Geschichte von His Men and Seinen Sechs Frauen*; Li Chendong introduced the French sinologist George Soulié de Morant's translation *Lotus-d'or* in 1932.¹²¹ Surely Chinese scholars, who were extremely concerned with the literary trends in Europe and America, noticed these translations and their reception. In this sense, the reception of this novel in Euro-American, and Japan as well, drew Chinese scholar's attention to traditional Chinese literature, to reinterpret it.

Under these circumstances, the ban on the novel *The Golden Lotus* was lifted. Until this point, only the upper class and scholars had had access to this novel. We do not know exactly when *The Golden Lotus* was finished. No author was named. The novel circulated in manuscript form as early as 1596 and may have undergone revision up to its first printed version in 1617. As print technology (lithography)

¹²¹ Xia Yongmei: "Build a Babita of Researches on *The Golden Lotus*" 营建'金学'巴比塔, *Wenyi yanjiu* no. 7 (2008): 67-76; Li Chendong: "The French Translation of *The Golden Lotus*" 金瓶梅法文译本, *Ta Kung Pao*, Tianjin edition (April 1932); Xiao Yan: "The *Golden Lotus* in Germany" '金瓶梅'在德国, *Wenyi xinwen* no. 12 (1931).

improved, the Chongzhen edition *Review on The Golden Lotus with Newly Carved Illustrations* 新刻繡像批評金瓶梅, with 200 illustrations, was published. It was the first illustrated version of *The Golden Lotus*. The most widely read version, edited and published with commentaries by Zhang Zhupo, appeared in 1695. Additionally, Emperor Kangxi favored Han Chinese culture. On his order, *The Golden Lotus* was translated into the Manchu language in 1708. In the same period, the Kangxi version (dated 1654–1722) of the illustrations of this novel was painted and circulated in the Qing court.

During the New Culture Movement, *The Golden Lotus* was not widely circulated. *Shen Bao* reported that two bookshops were punished for selling pornographic books in 1922:

Bookshops Laiqingge 來青閣 and Cuihua 粹華 in Fuzhou road sold *The Golden Lotus*, *Yesou baoyan*, etc., which was an offense against morality. The court determined that these two bookshops were each to be fined 50 Yuan, and those books must be destroyed.¹²²

Additionally, Lu Xun did not know of the existence of *Jinpingmei cihua* 金瓶梅詞話 [The Golden Lotus] when he wrote his book, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* 中國小說史略. *Jinpingmei cihua* was the Wanli edition, the oldest edition, dated 1573–1620.

Many reports of forbidden circulation of *The Golden Lotus* appeared in print media at the time. For instance, the *Shen Bao* reported on the penalty for selling banned books:

¹²² *Shen Bao* (June 2, 1922).

He Songyu and Ma Ronggen sold the banned books *Jinpingmei* and *Xinghua tian* 杏花天 [The Apricot Blossom Season] in the Shanghai French Concession. It was detrimental to public morality and against the law. All these banned books were confiscated the day before yesterday. The two accused were taken to court yesterday. They were fined 50 yuan, and all copies of the banned books were destroyed.¹²³

Three Days Pictorial reported that *The Golden Lotus* was banned in Japan:

The Golden Lotus, *Yesou baoyan*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber* have been forbidden in China. In contrast, the above-mentioned books were translated, and available in many bookstores in Japan...but now they are also forbidden throughout Japan. Therefore, it will no longer be possible for the Chinese to go to Japan to purchase those books.¹²⁴

Cao Hanmei mentioned in his article that he knew and borrowed *The Golden Lotus* from one of his friends, and was then inspired to illustrate it.¹²⁵ At the time, Cao Hanmei worked as a reporter for *Three Days Pictorial*. The copy of *The Golden Lotus* that he borrowed from his friend was most likely purchased from Japan. Cao Hanmei may have been one of the very few people who had access to *The Golden Lotus* at that time.

The situation began to change when a Wanli edition of *Jinpingmei cihua* was found in Shanxi in 1931. The Beiping Library only printed 100 copies of *Jinpingmei cihua*, which had a restricted circulation.¹²⁶ It cost 100 Yuan, though later people could buy it for 50 Yuan. Lu Xun also found it and bought it for only

¹²³ Shen Bao (May 23, 1926).

¹²⁴ Cuixiu, "Jinpinmei bu rongyu Riben," 金瓶梅不容於日本, *Three Days Pictorial* no. 44 (December 1925).

¹²⁵ Cao, "How I paint Gongbi style painting."

¹²⁶ Beiping Library: its predecessor was the Capital Library created by the Ministry of Education of the Qing period. Beiping Library was renamed National Beiping Library after 1949, and Peking Library in June 1951.

30 Yuan, as he wrote in his diary. However, ordinary people could not afford it. At the time, 30 Yuan could buy around 20 kilograms of rice. After making inquiries about *Jinpingmei cihua*, Ping Jinya obtained it. He reprinted 100 volumes in private, which looked the same as the Beiping edition. He did not offer them for sale, but he was reported and taken to court.¹²⁷ Although the Beiping edition was not offered to the public, it presented the first intensive study of *The Golden Lotus*. Pan Jinlian even established a new presentation of *Pingju* 評劇 [Ping opera] in 1935. Famous stars Bai Yushuang, Ai Lianjun, and Yu Lingzhi performed this opera, which created a sensation at that time.¹²⁸ And later, Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* contributed to the study and circulation of this novel from the 1930s to the 1940s.

The trend of nostalgia for the late Ming period influenced not only how the Shanghai Modern Publications Company selected the content for their magazines but also promoted the investigation of artifacts of the late Ming period. In his book *One Man's Conversation* 一個人的談話, Shao Xunmei emphasized the importance of investigating history when a scholar writes a historical novel.¹²⁹ Zhang Guangyu described how his experiences in stage setting and the historical

¹²⁷ Jin Ye, *Ping Jinya zhuan* 平襟亞傳 (Shanghai: Dongya chuban zhongxin, 2017), 105–106.

¹²⁸ *Zhongguo wenhuashi nianbiao* 中國文化史年表 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1991), 940.

¹²⁹ Shao Xunmei, *One Man's Conversation* (Shanghai: Diyi chubanshe, 1935), 40–41.

film made him realize the importance and necessity of researching ancient costumes.¹³⁰ Cao Hanmei mentioned in a letter to his younger brother Zhang Zhengyu that he needed many references before he painted his work (**fig. 81–82**). This shows that scholars and artists understood the importance of investigating history and antiquity when they worked on historical pieces. I believe the reason why Zhang Guangyu suggested Cao Hanmei use *Palace scenes with figures* as a reference was that this catalog represents delicate depictions of the figure, costume, furniture, architecture, garden structure, and others (**fig. 154-155**).

Scholar Liu Dajie, who was an expert on the novel *The Golden Lotus*, was one of the editors of the Shanghai Modern Publications Company. He and Cao Hanmei were on good terms. Cao Hanmei indicated that he did not read the illustrations when he read the novel, as these illustrations were not easy to access at that time. Cao Hanmei had been making inquiries about them and was finally able to access the illustrations with Liu Dajie's help.¹³¹ Scholar Zhuoren 卓人 mentioned that Cao Hanmei and Liu Dajie discussed *The Golden Lotus* quite often.¹³² Another expert on *The Golden Lotus* was Yao Lingxi 姚靈犀, who often corresponded with Cao Hanmei.¹³³ One of his letters to Cao Hanmei was

¹³⁰ Zhang Guangyu, "Guzhuang dianying tan," Part 1 古裝電影談 I, *Three Days Pictorial* no. 78 (April 1926).

¹³¹ Cao Hanmei, *The Golden Lotus*, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai Modern Publishing Company, 1936).

¹³² Zhuoren, "Tiexianmiao guren, miaosi shi qishu: Cao Hanmei yu Jing Ping Mei tu ji," 鐵線描古人, 妙思識奇書: 曹涵美與<金瓶梅圖集>, *Wuxi Daily* (November 22, 1992).

¹³³ Yao Lingxi 姚靈犀 (1899–1963). Born in Dantu, Jiangsu Province. He studied the history of foot binding and published a column, "Cai fei lu" 采菲錄 (The Record of

published in the third volume of *The Golden Lotus* in 1942 (**fig. 83**). The 9th volume, 14th issue of *Fengyue Pictorial* 風月畫報 in 1936 reported that Yao Lingxi wrote inscriptions by using Song Poetry for Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*, which was published in the 7th issue of *Manhuajie* 漫畫界. We can see that Cao Hanmei and the two above-mentioned experts had close connections with each other, which would be helpful for Cao Hanmei's creation, in terms of both understanding the story and investigating scenes. Additionally, Cao Hanmei collected artifacts of the late Ming period. Judging from his eldest daughter Cao Danyun's 曹淡雲 memory: "[...] on the bookcase, I saw different kinds of wine vessels, braziers, hair ornaments, shoes for bound feet, etc., when I cleaned up my father's studio. These collections were gathered by my father from everywhere. They were [used] as a reference for painting."¹³⁴ The magazine *Manhuajie* introduced shoes for bound feet, which may well be from Cao Hanmei's collections (**fig. 84**).

His contemporaries wrote positive reviews of Cao Hanmei's investigation of the artifacts of the late Ming period. For instance, Gao Yi wrote:

Cao Hanmei was unsparing in his demands for perfection when he painted *The Golden Lotus*. There is not one faulty stroke in his painting. He

Gathering Fragrance) in the tabloid of Tianjin *Tianfeng Bao* 天風報 in the 1930s. Later, articles from this column were compiled under the title *Cai fei lu*. Zhang Yuanqing and Gu Zhen, ed., *Pinbao xuecong* 品報學叢, vol. 1 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2014), 188.

¹³⁴ *Shidai manhua: Bei shiguang chenfang de 1930 niandai Zhongguo chuangzaoli*, 62.

accounted for every detail. If there was something unclear, he would investigate it for days.¹³⁵

It is true that Cao Hanmei elaborately conceived character sculptures, furniture, vessels, and architecture, among other things. We could say that he broke new ground in painting lotus shoes. He not only focused on their form but used it to hint at some erotic plot. Additionally, Cao Hanmei treated hairstyles, ornaments, and clothes very carefully. As a result, we can quickly identify each character and the place where they live. Vases and wine vessels are multivariable, and braziers come in every shape, as can be seen in pictures 142, 152, 160, 165, and 166. Picture 32 shows Pan Jinlian dressing, shortly after she has married Wu Da (**fig. 130**). We can see that the style of the mirror is simple. Cao Hanmei depicted not only the form of the mirror but also the images in the mirror, that is, Pan Jinlian's face and the roof. Picture 152 shows a mirror in Li Ping'er's 李瓶兒 room (**fig. 206**). Although the mirror was only shown from behind, we can recognize that its design is fine. All these vivid depictions benefit from Cao Hanmei's investigation of the novel and previous numerous pieces of sketch life.

¹³⁵ Gao Yi, in *Jinpingmei huaji* vol. 1.

Chapter III

Singular Innovation without Boundaries

This chapter will analyze what inspired Cao Hanmei to blend techniques from various media in *The Golden Lotus*, and why he developed a radical flatness in this work.

We can begin by seeing that Cao Hanmei's artworks present a variety of styles during the 1930s. He mastered traditional and modern painting skills at the same time. Nevertheless, he painted traditional motifs with traditional painting language, as well as modern motifs with new painting skills. In theory, he already had the painting skills to paint his later version of *The Golden Lotus* in the 1930s; why did he not paint it until 1941? Because cross-media thinking was not easy. It required not only painting skills but also the transition of conceptions. In Chinese painting, there were standardized figural portrayals, namely the Eighteen Categories of Figural Portrayal. This brush style presents human forms in various types of clothing, which, on the one hand, show Chinese painting with rich styles of brushwork, yet on the other hand, restrict the artist's imagination. Cao Hanmei needed a turning point. So, what inspired Cao Hanmei to break with the idea of traditional Chinese art, and to blend techniques from various media in his painting?

To answer this question, it is important to understand where Cao Hanmei was, and what activities he participated in during the period from 1937 to 1941. However, owing to prejudice on this subject matter and his so-called experience in

the Nanjing Nationalist Government, art historians have historically largely neglected *The Golden Lotus*. Thus, the existing resources about the events Cao Hanmei participated in during these five years are unclear. The only certainty is that he took refuge in Hong Kong after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Therefore, this chapter will trace Cao Hanmei's activities in the above-mentioned period through newspapers and magazines. Additionally, the artworks that were created before the repainting of *The Golden Lotus* will be studied closely, as these works will help us understand the formation of his later style.

1. Cao Hanmei's Artistic Activities during his Stay in Hong Kong and Kunming

After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, all magazines from the Shanghai Modern Publications Company ceased publication. The cartoonists organized the National Salvation Cartoon Propaganda Corps 救亡漫畫宣傳隊 in Shanghai in order to create propaganda around the Anti-Japanese War, in which the Shanghai Modern Publications Company played an important role. The cartoon magazines published by this company enjoyed a high reputation and great appeal among cartoonists nationwide. In addition, its editorial team had contacts with numerous cartoonists, so it was able to get cartoonists together effectively. These were also the reasons why its editorial team could organize the First National Cartoon Exhibition in 1936.

The National Salvation Cartoon Propaganda Corps sought to spread patriotic information and anti-Japanese sentiment to a broad Chinese public. When Chinese troops withdrew from Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, etc., many Chinese fled to Hong Kong, which became a comfortable refuge for the people from mainland China, at least before the outbreak of the Pacific War.

Zhang Guangyu arrived in Hong Kong in November 1937.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, there is no clear information about when Cao Hanmei arrived in Hong Kong. To judge from the book *A Literary Walk in Hong Kong* 香港文學散步 by Xiaosi, many scholars sought protection in Hong Kong between 1938 and 1940, including painters, poets, writers, journalists, and editors. They gathered in Academic Terrace (Hok Sz Terrace 學士臺). Xiaosi also mentioned Cao Hanmei in his description:

Yu Feng 郁風 (1916–2007), Ye Qianyu, Zhang Guangyu, Zhang Zhengyu, Dan Zhongyu 但杜宇 (1897–1972), Cao Hanmei, Ding Cong 丁聰 (1916–2009), Lu Shaofei, etc., would gather in the house and talk about the creation of cartoons or woodcuts. Xu Chi 徐遲 (1914–96) and Feng Yidai 馮亦代 (1913–2005) would be discussing film, theater, or translation. And you might meet Hu Lancheng 胡蘭成 (1906–81) by chance. Some of them lived together, some lived alone. At the time, the Academic Terrace was very lively. These scholars came from different cities of mainland China. They came here for the resistance against Japan. They missed their motherland and their family. They used brush and ink to express their feelings.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Tang and Huang, ed., *A Chronicle of Zhang Guangyu*, 140.

¹³⁷ Xiaosi, *A Literary Walk in Hong Kong* 香港文學散步 (Shanghai: Shanghai yiwen chubanshe, 2015), 140.

Yu Feng 郁風 (1916–2007). Born in Beijing. Female cartoonist, painter, and designer.

The War of Resistance against Japan brought these scholars together. In this context, the matters they discussed were all anti-Japanese in sentiment. It is worth noting that Cao Hanmei and other artists discussed cartoons and woodcuts at the time.

At the beginning of 1938, we can find some reports about Cao Hanmei in Hong Kong newspapers. Hence, we can say that Cao Hanmei arrived in Hong Kong no later than March 1938. The *Chinese Daily* and *Shen Bao* (Hong Kong edition) both reported that Cao Hanmei had participated in a meeting of world literature and art in Hong Kong, as the following indicates:

Jian Youwen 簡又文 (1896–1979) invited scholars to a gathering in Sihao Hotel yesterday. They had a happy reunion. And they decided to continue to hold such gatherings in the future. The participants included Fan Zhongyun 樊仲雲 (1901–1989), Sun Hanbing 孫寒冰 (1903–1940), Chen Hengzhe 陳衡哲 (1893–1976), Lin Baisheng 林柏生 (1902–46), Zhu Pu 朱樸 (1902–70), Yao Danfeng 姚丹鳳 (dates unknown), Du Heng 杜衡 (1907–65), Mu Shiyong, Cheng Shewo 成舍我 (1898–1991), Sa Kongliao 薩空了 (1907–88), Ma Guoliang 馬國亮 (1908–2001), Zhang Zhengyu, Zhang Pengzhou 張蓬舟 (1904–91), Ma Jiming 馬季明 (dates unknown), Wang Daoyuan 王道源 (1896–1960), Chen Fuyu 陳福愉 (dates unknown), Guo Jingqiu 郭鏡秋 (1911–99), Feng Hefa 馮和法 (1910–1997), Cao Hanmei, etc. Jian Youwen understood the

Dan Zhongyu 但杜宇 (1897–1972). Born in Nanchang, Jiangxi province. Cartoonist and film director.

Ding Cong 丁聰 (1916–2009). Born in Shanghai. Cartoonist and illustrator. Son of cartoonist Ding Song. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 29.

Xu Chi 徐遲 (1914–96). Born in Wuxing (now Huzhou), Zhejiang province. A poet and essayist.

Feng Yidai 馮亦代 (1913–2005). Born in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. A writer, translator, and editor.

Hu Lancheng 胡蘭成 (1906–81). Born in Shengxian, Zhejiang province. A writer and politician. Served as a propaganda official in the Wang Jingwei regime.

significance of this gathering and planned to have such gatherings every two weeks. Other participants also expressed their opinions. We will inform you of the place when the time comes.¹³⁸

In October of the same year, considering the need for the creation of artworks during the anti-Japanese period, artists Wang Daoyuan, Chen Baoyi, Zheng Ke 鄭可 (1906–87), Zhang Guangyu, He Tiehua 何鐵華, and Ni Yide organized The Art Circle Symposium in Hong Kong 旅港美術界座談會. Specialists came from different art backgrounds, including ink paintings, oil paintings, cartoons,

¹³⁸ *Chinese Daily* (March 26, 1938); *Shen Bao*, Hong Kong edition (March 26, 1938).

Jian Youwen 簡又文 (1896–1978). Born in Xinhui, Guangdong province. Chinese historian, modern writer.

Fan Zhongyun 樊仲雲 (1901–1989). Born in Shengxian (now Shengzhou), Zhejiang province.

Chen Hengzhe 陳衡哲 (1893–1976). Born in Changzhou, Jiangsu province. A pioneering Chinese writer, and the first female professor at a Chinese university.

Sun Hanbing 孫寒冰 (1903–1940). Born in Nanhui, Jiangsu province. He was an editor and a professor of economics who had studied in the United States.

Lin Baisheng 林柏生 (1902–46). Born in Xinyi, Guangdong province. He was Wang Jingwei's secretary.

Zhu Pu 朱樸 (1902–70). Born in Wuxi, Jiangsu province. He was a preeminent connoisseur of Chinese painting and calligraphy.

Du Heng 杜衡 (1907–65). Born in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. He was a writer and translator.

Cheng Shewo 成舍我 (1898–1991). He was a famous journalist.

Sa Kongliao 薩空了 (1907–88) was a journalist and editor.

Ma Guoliang 馬國亮 (1908–2001). Born in Shunde, Guangdong province. He was the fourth editor of *The Young Companion*.

Zhang Pengzhou 張蓬舟 (1904–91). Born in Chengdu, Sichuan province. He was a journalist and editor.

Wang Daoyuan 王道源 (1896–1960). Born in the city of Changde in Hunan province. Graduated from Tōkyō Academy of Art. In 1930 headed Yishu Zhuanke Xuexiao. In 1931 he, Ni Yide, and others founded *Storm Society*. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 153.

Chen Fuyu 陳福愉 (date unknown) was a journalist.

Guo Jingqiu 郭鏡秋 (1911–99). Born in Macao. She was a writer and translator.

Feng Hefa 馮和法 (1910–1997). Born in Shanghai. He was an editor.

sculptures, craft art, woodcuts, and architecture. They planned to establish the China Artists Association 中國美術協會. Chen Baoyi, Wang Daoyuan, Zhang Zhenyu, Cao Hanmei, etc., were appointed to the established committee.¹³⁹ However, according to the chronology of Liang Xihong, the China Artists Association was founded in the summer of 1938.¹⁴⁰ Since Liang Xihong could have misremembered this detail, we base our evidence on the report of Hong Kong newspapers, according to which the China Artists Association was founded in October 1938.

We can see that the above reports only briefly introduced the symposium and its participants, but we do not have further information about its content. One thing is for sure: the list of participants included scholars from literary and art circles, as well as journalists. All of them probably lived in the Academic Terrace. When we look back to the activities of the literary and art world after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, we can see that these activities centered on a war of resistance. This raises a question: Did these activities play a role in Cao Hanmei's later works? In order to understand more about these activities, perhaps we could learn something from Ye Qianyu's article. Ye wrote that,

¹³⁹ *Shen Bao*, Hong Kong edition (October 6, 1938); *Ta Kung Pao* (October 6, 1938).

Zheng Ke 鄭可 (1906–87). Born in Xinhui, Guangdong province. Sculptor and medalist. Trained and worked in Paris, in 1924–34. Returned to teach in Guangzhou Municipal School of Art. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 231.

He Tiehua 何鐵華 (1909–83). Born in Panyu, Guangdong province. Photographer.

¹⁴⁰ Liang Xihong, *Sikhung Leung – Lost Landscape*, 203.

Since the Lugou Bridge Incident, the National Salvation Cartoon Propaganda Corps has been engaged in the anti-Japanese national united front. Unfortunately, several main comic magazines were destroyed by traitors. Therefore, the Corps had to use guerrilla warfare-like strategies. We appointed artists to specific places.¹⁴¹

After the Lugou Bridge Incident, cartoonists painted more on large white cloths or directly onto the walls of village buildings. The magazine *Zhandou* organized a symposium discussing artistic creation during wartime which was centered on cartoons and woodcuts.¹⁴² Ye Qianyu thought that cartoonists needed to employ a wide variety of artistic media and forms to attract three categories of audiences: the first was illiterates; the second was intellectuals; and the third was foreigners.¹⁴³

At the time, peasants made up more than 80 percent of the Chinese population, the vast majority of whom were illiterate. In order to spread the message of resistance as widely as possible, the most effective approach was to use the painting languages that such peasants were already familiar with—that is, folk art forms with simple visual images to stir up patriotism.

Many cartoonists worked with woodcutters. They conveyed messages of resistance by producing murals in the street. They produced a form known as “cartoons and woodblock” 漫木, which encouraged artists to experiment with elements from regional art, and developed new forms of modernism. It was

¹⁴¹ Ye Qianyu, “Jiuwang manhua de di er ge shengming,” 救亡漫畫的第二個生命, *Kangzhan manhua* no. 1 (1938).

¹⁴² *Zhandou* (February 25, 1938).

¹⁴³ Ye Qianyu, “The Problem of the Massification of Art under Wartime Conditions: Part 1,” 戰時繪畫的大眾化問題 (一), *Kangzhan manhua* no. 6 (1938): 14.

probably these experiences that inspired Cao Hanmei to use ink and brushes in order to imitate woodcuts in his later *The Golden Lotus*.

Remarkably, artistic activities during this war of resistance experienced a turning point. Ye Qianyu stated later that more than 95 percent of Chinese comics had been inspired by Western art before the war.¹⁴⁴ During the war, Chinese artists worked hard in pursuit of sinicized painting.

An inscription on a painting recorded that Cao Hanmei took part in an elegant gathering in Yunnan in January 1939.¹⁴⁵ This indicates that Cao Hanmei left Hong Kong at the end of 1938 at the latest. During his stay in Yunnan, he created many ink paintings, which were later published in *Guoyi* in 1941. Compared with his previous works, this represented the largest quantity of published ink paintings. Additionally, Cao Hanmei produced some pieces for the war of resistance. *Xun Bao* reported:

The original works of *The Golden Lotus*, which were displayed in the First National Cartoon Exhibition, each sold for 100 Yuan. Recently, Cao Hanmei brought three pieces to a charity sale in Kunming, namely *Yi Sho Down the Suns*, *Liang Hongyu is Beating the Drums* (hanging scroll, 50 Yuan), and *Lady Guoguo* (500 Yuan).¹⁴⁶

Liang Hongyu 梁紅玉 (1102–35) was a heroine of the Song Dynasty, famous for her wars against the Jurchen. Cao Hanmei painted Liang Hongyu to mobilize the

¹⁴⁴ Ye Qianyu, "National Form of Cartoons," 漫畫的民族形式, *Hua Shang Daily* (October 1, 1941).

¹⁴⁵ *Guoyi* vol. 3, no. 1 (1941): 84.

¹⁴⁶ Zhenfang, *Xun Bao* (May 4, 1939).

masses to resistance during the Anti-Japanese War. This choice of subject indicated that Cao Hanmei was concerned with the future of the country.

Learning from Eura-American art, and especially European modern art, was the preference for most Chinese artists in the 1930s. Cao Ruohong recalled his early experience in learning how to paint in his letter to Yang Taiyang: he turned to Western art because he thought that Chinese culture and art were behind the times, whereas Western culture and art were the embodiment of new things. He judged “new” and “old” from the perspective of form and technique.¹⁴⁷ Many members of the two Chinese modern artistic groups, the Chinese Association of Independent Artists and the Storm Society, learned about European modern art in Paris or Tōkyō. In their opinion, Chinese modern art meant that Chinese artists used European painting materials as well as European art forms and techniques.¹⁴⁸ The cartoonists, however, had not gone abroad to study. Rather, they received

¹⁴⁷ Cai Ruohong, “A Letter to Artist Yang Taiyang,” 給畫家陽太陽的一封信, accessed June 8, 2020. <https://yangtaiyang.artron.net/>.

Yang Taiyang 陽太陽 (b. 1909, native of Guilin, Guangxi province). *Guohua* and oil painter. In 1931 founded the Storm Society with Pang Xunqin and Ni Yide. With Chen Baoyi's introduction, studied in Japan, 1935–37. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 197.

¹⁴⁸ Zeng Ming, *Masterpieces of Modern World Painting* 現代世界名畫集 (Chinese Association of Independent Artists, 1935).

Zeng Ming 曾鳴 (b. 1911, Guangdong province). Painter. In 1934, while studying in Japan, joined the Chinese Association of Independent Artists. In 1934 returned to China; in 1935 showed his surrealist paintings at the society's first exhibitions in Guangzhou. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 210.

information about Euro-American art through print media. They received their artistic training in China, often on the job under an apprenticeship system.

Although learning Western art was a top priority for most young Chinese artists, there were still a few artists who advocated the practice of Chinese folk art. After the First World War, people began to doubt the idea of the omnipotence of science. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell went to China to teach philosophy from 1920 to 1921. He thought China was less mechanistic than Europe. He remarked that “in many ways, China is the greatest country I have ever seen. It is not only the greatest numerically but the greatest culturally. It seems to me the greatest nation intellectually.”¹⁴⁹ Such comments caused bitter debates on Science and the Philosophy of Life in 1923. This prompted Chinese scholars to rethink Chinese traditional culture. In particular, Chinese scholars moved from questioning Chinese orthodox culture to re-examining it. It is worth noting that Zhang Guangyu's work *The Spring in Zishi Street* was selected for the touring exhibition of Modern Chinese Painting in Europe in 1933, which was organized by Xu Beihong (fig. 85). According to *Shen Bao*, the selected pieces came from 71 artists. Most of them were ink painters, and only Zhang Guangyu and Zhang Yuguang were cartoonists. *The Spring in Zishi Street* was based on Chinese folk art combined with modern techniques. Later, Ye Qianyu recalled this event and attributed the success of *The Spring in Zishi Street* to the artist's experiments with Chinese folk woodcut paintings and Miguel Covarrubias's

¹⁴⁹ Interview in *New York World* (May 4, 1924).

exaggerated cartoon style. Ye Qianyu said, “No wonder *The Spring in Zishi Street* was a requisite piece when Xu Beihong organized that exhibition.”¹⁵⁰ In Ye Qianyu’s words, we can feel that he took this event to heart, and indeed he seems to envy it. Obviously, other cartoonists also envied Zhang Guangyu for having his work exhibited in Paris, Berlin, Moscow, etc. We can thus say that the success of *The Spring in Zishi Street* made other cartoonists pay more attention to Chinese folk art.

However, the support for folk art before the Sino-Japanese War varied from a shifting focus towards the styles and techniques of traditional handicraft during the war period. Chinese cartoonists emphasized returning to the roots of Chinese art as they learned further, and blended Western art with native art forms, producing so-called “Sinicized cartoons”. They experimented with a variety of art forms, materials, and techniques, such as wall art, posters, comic strips, sketches, watercolor paintings, drawings using traditional Chinese brush and ink, and so on. They began to realize that the Chinese public required a context to understand European modern art. By contrast, Cao Hanmei devoted himself to creating a new form of art based on traditional Chinese culture. In this framework, modern art not only meant modern-looking images, but also a modern creative consciousness.

¹⁵⁰ Ye, *Autobiography of Ye Qianyu*, 95–96.

Xi Bao reported that Cao Hanmei returned to Shanghai in May 1939, in the hope that he would publish his new paintings in *Xi Bao* soon.¹⁵¹ These “new paintings” might refer to the illustrations of the *Song of Everlasting Regret*, which was serialized in *Xi Bao* between July and August 1939. These illustrations thematized the love story between Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty and his favorite concubine, Yang Guifei. The works showed a visible change in his art. For one thing, composition became more concise, which achieved a similar effect to the painting of 1939 that depicted Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing (**fig. 86** and **fig. 210**). Moreover, Cao Hanmei began to experiment with the use of black-and-white, in order to distinguish different characters from objects in his paintings. When he repainted *The Golden Lotus*, for example, in picture 2, he tried to use black-and-white techniques to distinguish Pan Jinlian from those who taught her to play musical instruments (**fig. 87**). Obviously, this representation was not immature. In picture 40 (**fig. 266**), he finally conceived the combination of woodcut skills with black-and-white to imply night scenes. Furthermore, the pieces of the *Song of Everlasting Regret* also show that they draw strong inspiration from *Ukiyo-e* woodblock print, such as the treatment of the scenery in the rain and the diagonal composition (**fig. 88–91**). The question hence arises: why did Cao Hanmei begin to attach importance to *Ukiyo-e* during his stay in Hong Kong or Yunnan?

¹⁵¹ *Xi Bao* (May 10, 1939).

Cao Hanmei's contemporary Yin An thought that *The Golden Lotus* was inspired by woodcut, but he did not offer further details about whether this meant Chinese traditional woodcut or Japanese *Ukiyo-e*.¹⁵² Similarly, Ye Qianyu and his contemporaries claimed that the creation of *Mr. Wang* was largely the result of the popularity of *Bringing up Father* in *The China Press*, but they did not mention the influence of Japanese cartoons or Japanese experience.

It is noteworthy that *Bringing up Father* was produced by George McManus, published in 1913. *Bringing up Father* was serialized in *Asahi Illustrated News* 朝日畫報 and *Asahi Newspaper* 朝日新聞 in Japanese translation in late 1920, and then in *The China Press* in China. The translation of *Bringing up Father* was a success in Japan. *Nonki na Tōsan* (Easy-going Daddy), an indigenous Japanese strip, was published soon after. Nevertheless, *Nonki na Tōsan* was obviously inspired by *Bringing up Father*. In this sense, we must question what convinced the editorial team of *Shanghai manhua* to learn from *Bringing up Father*; the successful experiences of *Bringing up Father* in Japan or the successful serialization of *Bringing up Father* in *The China Press*.

We know that one aim of the *Shanghai manhua* was to develop and promote cartoon art in China by translating and introducing original articles on cartoons, artistic techniques of cartoons, and masters from Japan, Europe, and America. For instance, *Shidai manhua* published an article by Ōten Shimokawa 下川凹天,

¹⁵² Yin An, "Lun zuojia fengge de zhuanbian," 論畫家作風的轉變, in: Cao, *Jinpingmei huaji* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), 2, unpaginated.

which was translated by Lan Weibang 藍蔚邦. This article mentioned *Bringing up Father* and its distribution in Japan.¹⁵³ Thus, it would be reasonable to believe that Chinese artists ignored the Japanese influence deliberately.

Wu Zhengfang stated in his article that scholars often ignored the Japanese influence on Chinese pictorial magazines. In his opinion, in the process of modernization via inspiration from the West, Japan was ahead of China. At that time, Japanese artists had imitated Western arts and craft for years. In contrast, China had not made a start and was still focused on learning about Western military practices. This problem was complicated by the fact that the Chinese did not admit the Japanese influence when China adopted Western culture through Japan. Japan's role as a mediating figure was transparent, which makes it difficult to find direct documentary evidence to prove it.¹⁵⁴

For the above-mentioned reasons, the existing documents only present some general words referring to *Ukiyo-e*. Moreover, Cao Hanmei did not state that he used Hiroshige as a reference in his own articles. However, the *Song of Everlasting Regret* indeed adopted Hiroshige's technique, such as the treatment of rainy scenes. As we can see, his first attempt showed a crudeness, after much trial and error, while picture 44 of *The Golden Lotus* already highlights his own strong style (**fig. 92–93**). One could speculate why Cao Hanmei learned from *Ukiyo-e*,

¹⁵³ Ōten Shimokawa 下川凹天, "Manhua de zuigao biaoshi he lilun," 漫畫的最高標識和理論, *Shidai manhua* no. 12 (December 1934).

¹⁵⁴ Wu Zhengfang, "Wan Qing sishinian Shanghai shijue wenhua de jige mianxiang," 晚清四十年上海視覺文化的幾個面向, *Renwen xuebao* no. 26 (2002).

especially the works of Hiroshige, was a great sensation of Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints in Europe and successful artistic experiences of Aubrey Beardsley. As mentioned in chapter two, *Ukiyo-e* had an impact on Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Art Nouveau; Beardsley's highly distinctive style was mainly based on inspiration from Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints.

2. The Publications of the Wang Puppet Government Edited by Cao Hanmei and his Works

After the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan, the publishing world in Nanjing, like other enemy-occupied areas, suffered heavy damage. However, after the establishment of the Wang Jingwei regime, the publishing world and cultural production more generally both recovered quickly. *Jing Bao* 京報 was one of the earliest re-organized newspapers of the Wang Jingwei government. Soon, literary and art circles in Nanjing came back to life. The China Literature and Art Association was made public in January 1940, but it was actually founded at the end of 1938. Cao Hanmei was involved in many publications, such as the newspaper *Jing Bao*, the magazines *Guoyi* 國藝, *Zuojia* 作家, and *Osaka Mainichi* (in Chinese) 華文大阪每日, and the weekly *Zhongyang daobao* 中央導報, among others.

According to Lin Dazu, he and Cao Hanmei reunited on a street in Nanjing in April 1940 after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War. In the autumn of that same year, Lin Dazu worked as an editor for the supplement of the newspaper *Jing Bao*, and asked his friends in Nanjing for contributions. Cao Hanmei was

among the most helpful contributors.¹⁵⁵ *Jing Bao* serialized the following of Cao Hanmei's works: *Chen Yuanyuan* 陳圓圓 from 16 August to 1 September 1940, numbering a total of 23 paintings; *Li Shishi* 李師師 from 2 September 1940 to 30 March 1941, numbering a total of 200 paintings; and *The Tragic Story of Yuniang* 魚娘哀史 from April 1 to December 1941, numbering a total of 229 paintings.

Chen Yuanyuan was a courtesan active from the late Ming to the early Qing period. She was born in Suzhou, but later moved to Beijing and became the concubine of Wu Sangui, a general of the Ming Dynasty. The story of Chen Yuanyuan and Wu Sangui became a popular subject in both literature and art. Most authorities reported that Wu Sangui became a rebel in the Revolt of the Three Feudatories, in which he joined forces with the Qing to attack the rebel army of Li Zicheng, because Li had raped Chen Yuanyuan. Then it was reported that Chen Yuanyuan had gone missing. Cao Hanmei, however, used Lin Dazū's adaptation of the story. This version held that Chen Yuanyuan encouraged Wu Sangui to bring down the reign of Manchu. Wu Sangui listened to Chen Yuanyuan's words but ultimately failed in his rebellion against the Qing dynasty. Later, Chen Yuanyuan converted to Buddhism and became a nun.

We notice that the signature character "mei" in *Chen Yuanyuan* is distinct from other signatures in Cao Hanmei's previous pieces (**fig. 94**). Afterward, this

¹⁵⁵ Lin, "Tan tiancai huajia Cao Hanmei."

new style of signature consistently appeared in his later works, including his later version of *The Golden Lotus*. This signature also appeared on the front cover of the magazine *Zuojia* (**fig. 95**). *Zuojia* started publication in April 1941, with a focus on literature, such as poems, essays, novels, literary criticism, and translations. Lin Dazhu and Chen Liaoshi were the editors in chief. Cao Hanmei designed its cover: the two characters “zuo” and “jia” of the magazine’s title are found in the upper right corner of the cover, with a vertical setting of types, and white-on-black writing; Cao Hanmei’s signature with white background is in the lower-left corner of the cover. The styles of the title and the signature are the same.

From what Ma Wu wrote, Cao Hanmei painted this new signature with brush and ink in imitation of the seal form.¹⁵⁶ Without Ma Wu’s article, we would not doubt that the character “mei” was not the seal. I believe that the concept of the signature imitating the seal form bore a relation to Cao Hanmei’s previous artistic practice, in which he constantly experimented with graphic design, especially decorative characters. He had experience in fashion design, book design, layout design, commercial logo design, etc. He designed the cover of the playbook of the opera *The Feast of Peaches* 蟠桃會, which was edited by Yu Zheguang in 1928 (**fig. 96**); in 1929 he designed two images for the city flower of Tianjin, *The Chinese Peony* 芍藥 and *The Pattern of the National Flower* 國花圖案 (**fig. 97–98**); and he designed logos for one of his family’s factories, the Tongyi

¹⁵⁶ Ma Wu, “Du Cao Hanmei hua *Jinpingmei*.”

Dyeing and Weaving Mill in 1933.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, Cao Hanmei's signatures with different characters in his previous works show diversified styles, such as “Hanmei” 涵美, “mei” 美, “han” 涵 and “Hanmei Kefeng shizhu” 涵美可風室主, and so on. (fig. 99–116). Cao Hanmei once said that he pursued the signature character for the sake of graphic design. The styles of most previous signatures are similar to the graphic or pattern design from the design book *Modern Craft and Art* 近代工藝美術, edited by Zhang Guangyu (fig. 117). The exception was when Cao Hanmei painted traditional themes; then he stamped his seal (fig. 118–119).

Cao Hanmei did not stamp his seal but instead painted his name by imitating the seal form. This method, I believe, probably encouraged his development of a cross-media approach in his later version of *The Golden Lotus*. In this way, it inspired him to experiment with more possibilities. Now that signatures could imitate the seal form, the use of techniques of other artistic media could also be incorporated, such as the rubbings of Han stone reliefs, photography, woodcut print, and film language.

Li Shishi was adapted by Yingluo, who based it on “An Unofficial Biography of Li Shishi” 李師師外傳 from *Tales of the Marvelous from the Tang and Song*

¹⁵⁷ Niu Zhiyuan, “Cong Yongyi ranzhichang dao Di yi maofang zhiran chang,” 從同億染織廠到第一毛紡織染廠, *Beitang wenshi ziliao* 北塘文史資料, Part 4 (Wuxi, 1954), 54–63.

dynasties 唐宋傳奇集. In the postscript of *Li Shishi*, Yingluo wrote about why and how he selected this subject:

When *Jing Bao* was reorganized in the autumn of 1940, *Chen Yuanyuan* was drawing to an end. The editor Lin Dazu assigned me to select a new topic that would be serialized after *Chen Yuanyuan*. *Chen Yuanyuan* was serialized for only 33 days; the whole text contains less than ten thousand words. I told Lin Dazu that I could not adopt a history story because of a lack of space. He said it would be acceptable if the text was enlarged a little bit.

When I searched the library for references, the days flew by without any results. There were too many social science books, instead of celebrity biographies. When I saw *Tales of the Marvelous from the Tang and Song Dynasties* on my friend's writing desk, I looked through it and found "An Unofficial Biography of Li Shishi." Soon after, I decided to create a story inspired by this meaty theme.

I intended to write a story that could be serialized over one and a half months. Unexpectedly, this story's length was extended many times—three months, four months... and finally completed in seven months, with more than eighty thousand words.¹⁵⁸

From the above passages we learn that the adaption of *Li Shishi* was not proceeding according to plan, but undergoing constant revision. Yingluo intended to write the text to pair with 45 paintings. Ultimately, there were 200 paintings in total. From another point of view, *Li Shishi* was well-reputed. The following issue also showed its popularity: after the publication of the 21st picture of *Li Shishi* on 22 September 1940, its serialization was stopped for four days, but space in the layout was still reserved for *Li Shishi*, with only the article instead of Cao Hanmei's drawing (**fig. 120–121**). It was explained that Cao Hanmei had returned

¹⁵⁸ Yingluo, "The postscript of *Li Shishi*," 李師師跋, *Jing Bao* (March 27, 1941).

home to attend a funeral and would be back on 26 September.¹⁵⁹ We know from his older brother's chronicle that their biological mother died in this month.¹⁶⁰

We also note that there was a caption beside the heading of almost every picture of *Li Shishi*, which read "Copyright of Filmmaking Restriction" (**fig. 122**). This caption does not show up in the first picture of *Li Shishi*, but consistently from the 17th to the 200th picture of *Li Shishi*. For this reason, I imagine that Cao Hanmei did not paint *Li Shishi* for shooting script at the very beginning, at least. It may well be that, as soon as *Li Shishi* was published, it was well-received, and this encouraged him or a filmmaker to think of filmmaking.

The popularity of *Li Shishi* largely depended on the continuity of the texts and images, as was also the case with *The Tragic Story of Yuniang*. The continuity of images from *Li Shishi* and *The Tragic Story of Yuniang* persisted in *The Golden Lotus* of the 1940s. *Li Shishi* and *The Tragic Story of Yuniang* contain 442 pictures in total, which is a much greater number than the works created in the 1930s. We can see that Cao Hanmei was a productive artist at the beginning of the 1940s, and that a lot of practices contributed greatly to the improvement of his painting skills. Additionally, the texts for *Li Shishi* and *The Tragic Story of Yuniang*, which was treated like a film script, inspired Cao Hanmei later in his approach to editing *The Golden Lotus* himself. Compared with his other pieces, *The Golden Lotus* was the only work in which Cao Hanmei served as both a

¹⁵⁹ Ping Zidu, "Li Shishi huamian bubai," 李師師畫面補白, *Jing Bao* (September 26, 1940).

¹⁶⁰ Tang and Huang, ed., *A Chronicle of Zhang Guangyu*, 167.

“screenwriter” and “film director”, and was hence both “self-directing” and “self-editing”.

3. The Relationship between Cao Hanmei's Works and the Propaganda Ministry of the Wang Puppet Government

Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* was criticized as “Traitor Literature and Art” 漢奸文藝. But what does this criticism actually mean? The expression “Traitor Literature and Art” was first noted in Mao Zedong's talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in May 1942:

Literature and art are in the imperialist's service. Examples of this are the works of Zhou Zuoren and Zhang Ziping, which we call traitor literature and art. Japanese imperialism invaded China in nearly all aspects of politics, the military, economy, and culture. People like Zhou Zuoren and Zhang Ziping were Japanese lackeys. They became traitors for personal gain. They depreciated Chinese culture and helped Japanese imperialist forces to oppress and enslave the Chinese people spiritually. For example, Zhou Zuoren flattered Japanese culture. He edited the “traitor publication” *Artistic and Literary Magazine* 藝文雜誌, and attended the Conference to Regenerate Chinese Culture 更生中國文化座談會, which was held by Japanese invaders in Beijing. “Traitor Literature and Art” engrafted the idea of nonresistance onto the Chinese people, advocated works of irrelevance to the Anti-Japanese War. This is exactly why the traitor Zhang Ziping created many erotic novels. The puppet government promoted collaboration in the cultural sphere under the banners of “Peace Literature” 和平文學 and “Greater East Asian Literature” 大東亞文學, built a New Order in Greater East Asia 大東亞新秩序 or Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere 大東亞共榮圈, etc.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ “Hanjian wenyi,” 漢奸文藝, *Wenyi mingci jieshi* 文藝名詞解釋 (Chengdu: Sichuan shifan, 1973), 103.

Zhang Ziping 張資平 (1883–1959). Born in Meixian, Guangdong Province. In the summer of 1912, he was chosen by the Kuomintang government in Guangdong to study geology at Imperial University in Tōkyō, Japan, where he graduated in 1922. In March 1940, he accepted an appointment as senior specialist to the Ministry of Agriculture and

Here, we can see that “Traitor Literature and Art” followed a policy of non-resistance toward Japan, and depreciated Chinese culture and art.

Did Cao Hanmei's works really serve Japanese imperialism? *The Golden Lotus* provoked the sharpest criticism, because this work was published in *Guomin News*, one of the most influential newspapers of Wang Jingwei's regime, and was later also included in the publication of catalogs of *The Golden Lotus* containing ten volumes. A report that appeared before the serialization of *The Golden Lotus* reads:

This newspaper intends to expand by two pages starting with no. 301. We will close down for several days, in order to readjust and optimize the structure. We will advertise in the major newspapers of Shanghai and Nanjing when we resume publication.¹⁶²

In addition, Huang Jingzhai stated that the reason for the publication of *The Golden Lotus* was the expansion of space in *Guomin News*:

I was dreadfully sorry for Mr. Cao's *The Golden Lotus* after *Shidai manhua* ceased publication. The *Guomin News* expanded its page volume this spring, and I am the editor. If we could publish *The Golden Lotus* in our newspaper, it would compensate for many readers' regret at its ceasing in 1937, including me. I was very happy that Mr. Cao agreed to this project.¹⁶³

Mining under the puppet government led by Wang Jingwei (1883–1944) in Nanjing. *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 374–375.

Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967). Born in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province. He went to Japan in 1906 to study at the University of Political Science and Law in Tōkyō. He and his brother Lu Xun jointly translated the series *Novels from Foreign Lands* (2 vols.). *A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Chinese Writers*, 391.

¹⁶² *Guomin News* (February 6, 1941).

¹⁶³ Huang Jingzhai, *Guomin News* (December 25, 1941).

Hu Lancheng (1906–81), who was heavily denounced as a traitor for serving as a propaganda official in the puppet regime, claimed that he agreed to serialize *The Golden Lotus* in *Guomin News* because of Huang Jingzhai's strong recommendation.¹⁶⁴

Were *Chen Yuanyuan*, *Li Shishi*, and *The Tragic Story of Yuniang* used for propaganda of Japanese political ideology? According to most historical accounts, Chen Yuanyuan was considered a famous beauty who was responsible for the downfall of the Ming Dynasty. However, in Cao Hanmei's painting, Chen Yuanyuan was a patriot, since she encouraged Wu Sangui to overthrow the Manchu regime. Cao Hanmei illustrated Li Shishi, who was very fond of *The Story of Hongxian*, and dreamed of becoming a swordswoman. In terms of their subject matter, *Chen Yuanyuan*, *Li Shishi*, and *The Tragic Story of Yuniang* did not serve Japanese imperialism and did not depreciate Chinese culture.

Lin Dazu stated that Cao Hanmei came to Nanjing for his mistress, not to seek an official position. At Lin Dazu's invitation, Cao Hanmei took part in the publications of the Wang Jingwei regime. Lin Dazu added that he did not intend to expose Cao Hanmei's affair, but rather believed that this information could help later scholars in the study of *The Golden Lotus*.¹⁶⁵ We should note that Lin Dazu's article was written in 1943, meaning that it was not a response to the accusations against Cao Hanmei of being anti-revolutionary. In this sense, Lin

¹⁶⁴ Hu Lancheng, in: Cao, *Jinpingmei huaji* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), 1, unpaginated.

¹⁶⁵ Lin, "Tan tiancai huajia Cao Hanmei."

Dazu's article is more reliable. Furthermore, according to Cao Hanmei's attending doctor Yin Guangyao, Cao Hanmei told him that he did not know Hu Lancheng, who had taken charge of the propaganda department of Wang Jingwei's regime, because he had not seen Hu Lancheng. Hu Lancheng had only added Cao Hanmei's name to the list of the propaganda department in order to exploit Cao's fame.¹⁶⁶

It was true that the puppet regime forced or compelled many Chinese officials and intellectuals to work for them. Take Shao Xunmei, for example, to whom officials of the Wang Jingwei regime offered a position on 20 March 1940, but Shao refused it; the military police arm of the Imperial Japanese Army (Kenpeitai) in Shanghai tried to persuade Shao Xunmei to establish contact with the Chongqing government concerning Sino-Japanese negotiations in 1942, but Shao Xunmei again refused to become involved. We do not know whether Cao Hanmei was forced to serve the Wang Jingwei regime or not, but we do know that Cao Hanmei's unjust case was redressed in 1978, which involved the so-called "removing of the rightist hats" and "removing of the counterrevolutionary label." Therefore, it is irrelevant to evaluate *The Golden Lotus* in political terms, since the criteria for evaluation depended on moral issues instead of the techniques or concepts of art itself.

¹⁶⁶ Documentary Film of Cao Hanmei, "發現欄目", 張派曹涵美·坎坷命運誤天才, Wuxi Radio and TV Station, 2016.

The Golden Lotus was illustrated with a minor erotic element, but Cao Hanmei did not see the cultural policy of the puppet regime as propaganda. Cao Hanmei retained a strong self-identity throughout his creations. As mentioned in chapter two, the creation of *The Golden Lotus* was linked to the appeal of nude painting and the trend of encouraging the revival of late Ming literature and culture in the 1930s. He was still conceiving *The Golden Lotus*, even while he was taking refuge in Hong Kong and Yunnan. Why Cao Hanmei painted this subject was not determined by the propaganda department of Wang Jingwei's regime, but the real issue was closely connected with Cao's own artistic practice and the literary and artistic trends of the 1920s and the 1930s. The artist's concern remained with the language of painting and did not take into consideration political aspects.

What did the propaganda department of Wang Jingwei's regime mean to Cao Hanmei? There were many scholars and artists who wrote prefaces and postscripts for *The Golden Lotus*, including Bao Tianxiao, Wan Laiming, He Tianjian, Dong Tianye, Deng Sanmu, Tang Yunjing, Huang Jingzhai, Fan Heng, Yi Fan, Huizi, Xia Cixi, Yin'an, Ma Wu, Lu Jinghua, Meizi, Lin Yuqing, Qiu Qizi, Chen Liaoshi, Yao Lingxi, and so on. In addition, Cao Hanmei published many pieces of artwork in the magazines and newspapers of the Wang Jingwei regime, such as *Guoyi*, *Zhongyang daobao*, *Xinming*, *Zuojia*, *Osaka Mainichi* (in Chinese), and so on. He also took charge of some columns of these magazines. Cao Hanmei efficiently used his surrounding resources as much as possible. It is hard to say whether the

propaganda department of the puppet regime used Cao Hanmei's works or Cao Hanmei used the platform of the department. The repainting of *The Golden Lotus* was Cao Hanmei's own decision, but its publication was part of the propaganda strategy of the Wang Jingwei regime. It offered an opportunity for Cao Hanmei to publish his works.

After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, many artists created works for political propaganda. Cao Hanmei was also engaged in this propaganda movement, but only for a short period. When he repainted *The Golden Lotus*, his works were dissociated from others that concentrated on propaganda. Most of the creations of Chinese modern art were interrupted in 1937, as the artists shifted their focus towards realism. In this sense, *The Golden Lotus* represented the possibility of continuing the spirit of modern Chinese art. Compared with other artists, Cao Hanmei could explore experiments of Chinese modern art throughout *The Golden Lotus*. To some degree, his artworks free themselves from political hindrance.

The Shanghai cartoon circle was almost dormant from the end of 1930 to the beginning of the 1940s. In contrast, Cao Hanmei was very active.¹⁶⁷ Before 1937, Cao Hanmei spent most of his time on the family business. However, the threat of war depressed business activity. The products of his family's factories were unsaleable, and for a time the factory was even occupied by Japanese troops.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Zhang Yuan, "Dong Nan Xi Bei ji," 東南西北集, *Beijing manhua* vol. 3, no. 9 (1942).

¹⁶⁸ Niu, "Cong Yongyi ranzhichang dao Di yi maofang zhiran chang," 54–61.

This left Cao Hanmei more time for painting, including 23 pictures of *Chen Yuanyuan*, 200 pictures of *Li Shishi*, 229 pictures of *The Tragic Story of Yuniang*, 38 pictures of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, 23 pictures of *New Scarlet Letter "A"*, 227 pictures of *The Family*, and 500 pictures of *The Golden Lotus*, among others (fig. 123-128). He was very prolific in the 1940s, but he still needed to earn a living. Selling his pictures was his first choice. Fengren reported that Cao Hanmei earned more than one million yuan each month by selling paintings.¹⁶⁹ This report may be somewhat exaggerated, but Cao Hanmei certainly made a living with his art.

It is commonly accepted that Cao Hanmei only painted 500 images, which cover only the first thirty-six chapters of *The Golden Lotus* in the early 1940s, although he intended to produce 1500 illustrations for 100 chapters in total. Nevertheless, I have found new sources, which indicate that Cao Hanmei continued to paint *The Golden Lotus* after 1943. Yizhi wrote in his article that Cao Hanmei intended to provide funds to publish *The Golden Lotus* in 1947:

Cao Hanmei did not publish works in Shanghai newspapers and magazines for quite a long time. I heard from scholars from Wuxi that Cao Hanmei painted *The Golden Lotus* behind closed doors. The completion of this project is expected this summer.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, it has been possible to find some paintings which were published in newspapers after 1943. For example, figure 1 of *Xiaoshun ge* 孝順歌 was

¹⁶⁹ Fengren, "Cao Hanmei yue ru bai wan," 曹涵美月入百萬, in: *Dongfang Daily* (May 16 1944).

¹⁷⁰ Yizhi, "Cao Hanmei bimen zuo chunhua," 曹涵美閉門作春畫, in: *Haichao Weekly* no.49 (1947).

published in *Haiguang* in 1945 (**fig. 129**). Although this painting was not titled *The Golden Lotus*, but 詞 *Xiaoshun ge* (a lyric poem *ci*), we can immediately recognize features of these two characters that are consistent with Ximen Qing and Pan Jinlian, if we have read Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*. The scene depicted in this picture and the scene of Pan Jinlian's room in picture 32 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* are the same (**fig. 130**). And finally, we see that the *Xiaoshun ge* comes directly from chapter two of the novel *The Golden Lotus*. Therefore, Cao Hanmei had probably already finished his project by then. If so, it would be a pity that we do not have any information about those paintings that were not reproduced in magazines and newspapers and are now lost.

4. Representation of Women

With the introduction of Europeans and Americans advocating freedom, the emancipation of women became one of the most important themes in the Republican period. Chinese intellectuals had various imaginary versions of modern women, and earnestly hoped that Chinese women could also have modern images, because these were regarded as national progress. The major newspapers and periodicals used all their strategies to spread the representation of new women in various ways, especially the female body. In this case, the printed medium became the most efficient tool to shape the images of new women. As Barbara Mittler pointed out, the New Woman of the magazines could be seen as active

catalysts, by thus forming possible models of thinking and imagining the New Woman (as well as the New Man).¹⁷¹

Women became a favorite motif of Republican artists. Newspapers and magazines published numerous images and beauty guides to teach female readers how to embody a modern look. “Beauty” was clearly defined with images, such as “The 15-Beauty-Points of a Woman” (**fig. 131**). Fifteen parts of a charming woman’s body including hair, eyebrows, eyes, ears, nose, lips, teeth, hands, shoulders, waist, neck, arms, feet, thighs, and breasts, are each represented by an image with a caption. Beauty guides could attract female readers, while the erotic images could cater to the taste of male readers. All these could promote newspaper and magazine sales. So, how Cao Hanmei does represent female motifs? How does he address female body and gender issues?

Foot binding, breast binding, and long hair had ruined the bodies of Chinese women, and they were shackles preventing women’s freedom. In 1927, the government officially banned breast binding. As a response to this anti-breast-binding movement, which called on women to allow the chest to develop naturally, Cao Hanmei drew *A Demonstration of the Natural Breast Association*, *The Development of Women’s Underclothes*, *The Development of Costumes of Chinese Women*, etc. (**fig. 132–133**).

¹⁷¹ Barbara Mittler: “Press Powers: China, Gender and the Media in a Global Context,” in: *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2019): 338.

From 1926 to 1930, Cao Hanmei published around 160 paintings in *Pei-Yang Pictorial News*, including *Female Occupations*, *Clothing Fashions*, *Hair Dressing Fashions*, and others (**fig. 134–135**). The 54th issue of *Pei-Yang Pictorial News* reported the reason for launching the column *Female Occupations* (**fig. 136**):

We suggest that women's occupations are important for advocating women's liberation...This newspaper specially invited Cao Hanmei to illustrate female occupations.¹⁷²

This column introducing women's occupations was intended to encourage more women to emancipate themselves from traditional bondage. Generally speaking, upper-class women were not allowed to be present in public before the Republican period. They could only live in a limited space. When we look carefully through *Female Occupations*, we notice that Cao Hanmei did not merely introduce women's occupations, surprisingly, he implied some erotic content. Nearly all of the depicted males were indecent; for example, picture 40, *Famine Refugee*, shows a boss or a salesman of a shop standing at the counter, his finger pointing at a woman who is suffering from the famine, carrying a baby pick-a-back. Her left hand is holding a crabstick, while her right hand holds an alms bowl. She is cinctured with a ragged cloths (more rag than cloth), which shows her bound feet. Of particular notice is that most of her chest is exposed. The rag and her snow white skin contrast sharply. We can see that the boss's or the salesman's eyes seem to rest on the woman's chest; he is talking about something, and the woman is turning her head to look at him (**fig. 137**).

¹⁷² *Pei-Yang Pictorial News* no. 54 (Jan. 12, 1927).

The next example is picture 25, *Wet Nurse* (**fig. 138**). It depicts a lady standing at a traditional table, who opens her upper garment, expressing breastmilk. In the lower left-hand corner of the painting, a male is standing with his hands clasped behind his back beside the screen, peering at the lady.

Picture 47, *Nurse*, shows a man with a hospital gown sitting on a bed, a bandage wrapped around his head, his right hand tightly clasping a woman nurse's hand (**fig. 139**). The nurse, with high-heel shoes, is resting lightly on the bed, and her left hand seems to be holding a thermometer. She puts up a token show of reluctance.

In picture 66, *Nut Seller*, we can see a woman carrying a basket with nuts, and passing some nuts to a man who is drawing his pipe (**fig. 140**). However, this man does not seem to care about the nuts. He does not catch the nuts, which are falling on the floor. He is looking at her bare foot.

Picture 80, *Water Drawing*, shows two barefoot ladies drawing water to irrigate the fields. Somewhat surprisingly, they have removed some clothes (**fig. 141**). The lady on the left is only wearing a dudou (traditional Chinese female underwear) and trousers; the lady on the right is naked to the waist, and has her back toward the viewer. Although a strip of cloth appears around her loins, we can still see her naked posterior.

The above examples suggest that males often appear in Cao Hanmei's depiction of female occupations. Even if there are only women in the paintings, it does not really mean the absence of the male. In contrast, Cao Hanmei sometimes

implied male presence through a milieu. Moreover, the presence of the male is not for the purposes of information about female occupations but for the sake of humour: sometimes a man is peering at a woman in a corner, sometimes a man is molesting a woman. Zhang Yingjin stated that the Chinese female body is represented in three distinctive modes: as artwork, commodity, and signifier of a culturally significant event. As commodity items, artistic creation was transformed into commodity production by capitalizing on the male appetite for the female body. Female bodies were offered for public consumption (for men as well as women) and frequently, to increase the circulation of pictorials.¹⁷³ It is true that Cao Hanmei's works introduce feminine charm, advocate for the emancipation of women, and more or less imply erotic elements. This situation also happens in many artistic forms, such as literary and photographic counterparts, as well as in cartoons.

Cao Hanmei's *A Demonstration of the Natural Breast Association* (**fig. 142**) was a response to the evolution of the bra and upper torsos of women with exposed breasts. But it does not seem to be an illustration of female liberation but rather a humorous depiction of the female body under the male gaze. Picture one of Zhang Guangyu's *Folk Love Songs* seems to portray parts of the back view of a lady at first glance—that is, the upper part of the body and her buttocks—but after examining it and reading a folk love song beside it, we find it is a Chinese

¹⁷³ Zhang Yingjin, "Artwork, commodity, event: Representations of the female body in modern Chinese pictorials," in *Visual culture in Shanghai 1850s–1930s*, ed. Jason C. Kuo (Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2007), 121–161.

dudou: "(They) were personally acquainted with each other. She made a dudou for her darling. Two straps at the top tied her darling's neck, two straps at the waist tied at her darling's back." Obviously, this folk love song is erotic, and the illustration becomes an expression of erotic imagination (**fig. 143**). Lu Shaofei's cartoon *The Effective Way to Raise Money* shows a modern woman with a bikini top and short pants standing on the street (**fig. 144**). She is showing off her nice figure to a man who is passing by, and ringing a bell in her right hand simultaneously. The man looks back and throws some coins. There is a poster between them, which depicts a mother who is very weak from hunger, and carrying a baby in her arms, which reads as follows: "Help for refugees who suffer from cold and hunger!" We can see that much headway has been made. The basket is filled with coins, and there seems to be a bag of coins beside the woman. This cartoon satirizes the selling of a woman's charm as an effective way to collect money.

Maybe Guo Jianying's two works and the captions could enable us to understand the trend of representating the sensual female body (**fig. 145**). The captions are as follows:

Erotic culture: Like the black snake or red snake, Josephine Baker's charm and Wae West's sex scandals had crawled into urbanite female cells. Shanghai women are affected by hunger. They hunger for new blood. The black and red curvy figure penetrates in men's life, in men's pants. And Shanghai erotic culture starts a new direction again.

The charm of ferocity: The female praying mantis often eats the male after they mate, in order to restore energy. Far from resistance, the male rather ingratiates himself with the female, and shows his sensual pleasure. It is commonly accepted or recognized by biologist. In fact, this is equally true

for human society. According to Freudian thought, the male is physically and metaphysically under the heel of the female. It is the satisfaction of instinct in love. If the ferocity of the female mantis were to happen in the human female, it would reveal personal charm.¹⁷⁴

Guo Jianying had chosen the images of Josephine Baker (1906–1975) and Wae West (1893–1980). The former was famous for her singing and dancing; the latter, an actress, was known for her frank sensuality. The Hollywood immortals were not only models for Chinese film stars, but also made erotic culture wide-spread in Shanghai; a lot of people indulged in sensual pleasures.

There is a paradox in the works of many artists, namely simultaneous respect for and depreciation of women; on the one hand, they advocate for women's liberation, and on the other, they use the female body to attract a male readership. There were likely some publishers who used pornographic contents to turn quick profit. And the artists added erotic but innocent elements in a humorous vein in their pieces in order to boost sales. In most cases, they did not depict erotic motifs superficially, and criticized men's uncontrollable desires.

Some readers considered Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* to be a pornographic painting: 春宮圖 “old goat screw the arse off, draw cakes to stave off hunger, feed on illusions. Am I an old goat or not? I do not have to explain. That is quite true, some sanctimonious persons regard Cao's painting as obscene literature.”¹⁷⁵ Indeed, there are many erotic descriptions in the novel. Cao Hanmei

¹⁷⁴ Guo Jianying, “*Erotic Culture and The Charm of Ferocity*,” *Shidai manhua* no. 1 (1934), unpaginated.

¹⁷⁵ Cao, “How I paint *Gongbi* style painting.”

did not skirt around these sensitive scenes. He did not depict them directly, but sometimes used props to hint at them, and sometimes vague contour lines. It all creates an erotic atmosphere within a milieu. In the following discussion, I will compare Cao Hanmei's treatment of erotic scenes with the Chongzhen edition of the illustration of *The Golden Lotus*.

The illustration from the eighth chapter of the Chongzhen edition and picture 73 of Cao Hanmei's version in 1941 depict the same scene: monks overhearing sounds of venery during the tablet-burning 燒夫靈和尚聽淫聲 (fig. 146–147).

This is the text underneath Cao Hanmei's painting:

Now that the monks had seen how beautiful Wu Da's widow was, they could not put her out of their minds. When they came back again from their temple after the evening meal, Pan Jinlian was still drinking and making merry with Ximen Qing. There was only a wooden partition between her room and the temporary chapel. One of the monks had come back before the others and was washing his hands in a basin outside the window of her room... He stopped washing his hands and stood still to listen. It never occurred to them that a monk was listening to every word they said.

In comparing Cao Hanmei's text with *The Golden Lotus* in the original, we can see that he used an ellipsis to omit some erotic description, that is "when he heard soft whisperings and gentle murmurings which left him in little doubt about what was going on." In the Chongzhen version, Ximen Qing and Pan Jinlian are depicted in Pan Jinlian's room, having sex. Outside the door, two monks are cautiously approaching the room. In Cao Hanmei's painting, he represented the space of Pan Jinlian's room and the temporary chapel. He used the double lines to indicate that there was only a wooden partition between her room and the

temporary chapel. The window of Pan Jinlian's room is locked. The monk is sitting on the windowsill of the temporary chapel. His left hand is in a basin. He is listening carefully, with an exaggerated facial expression, and dribbling at the mouth.

When one compares these two versions of the visualization of the text, one can see that the Chongzhen version emphasizes the action of the figures. Although Cao Hanmei did not depict the scene in Pan Jinlian's room, he was very skillful in arranging the setting. He represented the closed window and the monk's facial expression to indicate the erotic information that he had omitted.

The illustration from the 13th chapter of the Chongzhen version and picture 128 of Cao Hanmei's version in 1941 depict the same scene, which shows the maid Yingchun peeking through a crack and getting an eyeful of the scene 迎春兒隙底私窺 (fig. 148–149).

In the Chongzhen version, Ximen Qing and Li Ping'er are both visible in the bed through one side of the window. The maid Yingchun is peeking on the other side of the window. However, this representation does not answer to the description in the original novel. The text had read: "When the Lady of the Vase sent the maids away, she shut the casement so that, though there were lights in the room, they could not be observed from outside." In contrast, Cao Hanmei carefully designed the double window and gave a faithful representation of the text. As a result, we could not see the inside of the room through the window. Cao Hanmei depicted Yingchun bending with her legs crossed, her left hand placed on

the window, and her right hand holding a pin, peeking through a crack. In the top right of the painting, there is a poem which contains the following text: “The moonbeams shine upon the flowers, the water-clock seems very slow. They meet. It seems like Gao Tang’s dream. She takes the silver lamp to light it in the deep night, careful lest, through the crevices, the light should pass.”

The illustration from the 27th chapter of the Chongzhen version and picture 359 of Cao Hanmei’s version in 1942 depict the same scene, which shows Li Ping’er communicating a secret in the Kingfisher Pavilion 李瓶兒私語翡翠軒 (fig. 150–151).

Just as in the other two paintings, Cao Hanmei omitted some erotic descriptions. The foreground of the Chongzhen version represents a lake in front of the pavilion. The upper right corner of the painting depicts Ximen Qing and Li Ping’er having sex. Pan Jinlian stands listening behind the artificial hill. By contrast, Cao Hanmei noticed that Ximen Qing stayed at home with his hair undone and his clothes unbuttoned, trying to keep cool. He depicted Ximen Qing carrying Li Ping’er to a long summer couch. Li Ping’er held a fan in her left hand and looked back at Ximen Qing. The lower half of her body was hidden. Nevertheless, their dim outline indicates that they are having sex. In addition, the windows and cabinets are well-designed. Cao Hanmei depicted Pan Jinlian with a fan, standing and listening outside the door. Meng Yulou 孟玉樓 comes up suddenly from behind and Pan Jinlian signals to her to be silent.

The illustration from the 27th chapter of the Chongzhen version and picture 372 of Cao Hanmei's version in 1942 depict the same scene, which illustrate Pan Jinlian engaging in a drunken orgy under the grape arbor 潘金蓮醉鬧葡萄架 (fig. 152–153). The Chongzhen shows that Pan Jinlian's feet were tied to the grape arbor. Ximen Qing and Pang Chunmei are sitting opposite Pan Jinlian. But, by comparison, we cannot find Pan Jinlian in Cao Hanmei's painting. Pang Chunmei is holding the jar of wine in her hand and looking at something lying on the ground in front of her. From the previous text, we know that Pan Jinlian ordered Qiuju 秋菊 to bring a summer mat and pillow, which is depicted in picture 370. Therefore, Pan Jinlian is probably lying down on the mat. Over the mat, there are two sticks with shoelaces, which point towards the grape arbor. Therefore, Cao Hanmei's version hints that Pan Jinlian's feet were tied to the grape arbor.

From the above examples, we can see that the Chongzhen version directly represented erotic scenes, where Cao Hanmei only skillfully hinted at them. Cao's version is not particularly pornographic. Cao probably took the catalog *Palace scenes with figures* as an important reference. As already stated in previous chapter, Zhang Guangyu introduced this catalog to Cao. I speculate that, on the one hand, this catalog depicting wedded bliss (閨房之樂) is considered a brilliant performance, which represents character relations in a humorous and implicit vein, and on the other, *Palace scenes with figures* was painted in the Qing period, but

shows the costume and personal adornment of the Ming period.¹⁷⁶ It was a tremendous help for Cao Hanmei to understand the vessels, costumes, and hairstyles of Ming Dynasty. Here are two examples. This (**fig. 154**) shows a couple in a room, the woman sitting on the bed, her right hand plucking at the man's sleeve, her left hand on her right foot. The man is holding a little red thing in his left hand. After examining it carefully, we find that it is one of the lotus shoes of the woman. We notice that the bedclothes are tumbled. A further example shows that a bed is depicted from a side view (**fig. 155**). The curtain of the bed shuts out the view. Two pairs of shoes, of a man and a woman, are strewn on the floor. A maid is overhearing them near the bedside.

These implicit strategies of *Palace scenes with figures* are very common in Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*, as well as in Zhang Guangyu's *Folk Love Songs*. For example, picture one of *Folk Love Songs* shows a woman carrying two buckets on a yoke from the back view, standing in shallow water (**fig. 156**). She tucks up her skirt, and seems to scratch an itch. Another one depicts a barefoot woman sitting on a bench after a bath, crossing her legs, holding a feather fan in her left hand (**fig. 157**). Maybe her sleeveless undershirt is thin and transparent, as her breast is visible.

Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* developed in a context that was substantially different from the Chongzhen version. The illustrated Chongzhen

¹⁷⁶ Shen Congwen ed., *Research on Ancient Chinese Costumes* 中國古代服飾研究 (Taiyuan: Beiyue wenyi chubanshe, 2002), 464.

version had a very small readership since it was a banned book. In comparison, Cao Hanmei's version was published in cartoon magazines and a daily newspaper. Interestingly, Cao Weiyun, Cao Hanmei's daughter, who was six years old at the time, wrote an inscription for the catalog cover of volume three of Cao's *The Golden Lotus* (fig. 158). One could speculate that Cao was censored in his works because of the title of *Jinpingmei*. He was probably a target in this publication. However, he fended off press censorship through his implicit manner, and kept the essence of the original. Cao Hanmei stated that he also painted some erotic scenes which had not been published due to fear of censorship. In his opinion, this was a good thing, because it looked more elegant on the whole.¹⁷⁷ This was probably Cao Hanmei's strategy: when he created progressive subject, such as *Female Occupations*, he would add some pornographic elements, which could attract readers, and also satirize the indulgence in sexual activity; when he painted *The Golden Lotus*, which was considered obscene, he acted in a diametrically opposite way. He did not directly show the erotic scenes, but hinted at them with milieus.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* was originally inspired by nude painting. At the time, nudity meant physical health and liberation. For many artists, nude painting projected European modern art and

¹⁷⁷ Cao Hanmei, *The Golden Lotus* (Shanghai: Shanghai Modern Publishing Company, 1936), 1.

signified an emancipated mindset and progress. Chinese artists had a new conception of the female body, which was as an aesthetic object. How could Cao Hanmei represent the female naked body as he shied away from directly showing erotic scenes? I speculate that his compromise was depicting the costumes as transparent, so that the body was visible. Indeed, Cao Hanmei was concerned about the careful treatment of the naked body when he painted *The Golden Lotus*. For example, he published *Pan Jinlian Suffers Ignominy for Adultery with a Servant* 潘金蓮私僕受辱 in *Shidai manhua* in 1935 (**fig. 159**). Incidentally, most of his works are in black-and-white. I have only seen four paintings that are in color, of which figure 12 is one. This painting shows Ximen Qing 西門慶 enfolding Pang Chunmei 龐春梅 in his embrace, swishing a whip in his right hand; Pan Jinlian 潘金蓮 is kneeling, naked, the lower half of her body hidden by the bamboo beside her. Cao Hanmei revised this painting when he published the second volume of *Catalog of The Golden Lotus* in 1936 (**fig. 160**). Compared with the previous piece, the composition was just slightly changed. Cao Hanmei left out the bamboos and painted Pan Jinlian with underpants. He revised it again as picture 107 when he repainted *The Golden Lotus* in 1941 (**fig. 161**). We can see that Pan Jinlian's upper body is turned toward us instead of a side view. It seems that Pan Jinlian is naked, but if we look carefully, we can see lace at her waist. Thus, she is presumed to be wearing a transparent undergarment. Cao Hanmei mentioned in his article "How I paint *gongbi* style painting," that he used transparent gauzes to represent the naked body. Thus, female breasts may be seen

indistinctly, even though they are covered in clothing, as seen in picture 71, which shows Old Woman Wang bringing a letter from Wu Song to Ximen Qing and Pan Jinlian (**fig. 162**). The latter two quickly leap out of bed, throw their clothes on, and read the letter.

Perhaps we might not recognize the transparent gauzes in *The Golden Lotus* at first glance, but it is evident in a non-*Golden Lotus* example, namely *Warm Bath in the Chill of Spring* 春寒賜浴華 (**fig. 163**). The inscription in this painting comes from Bai Juyi's poet *Song of Everlasting Regret* 長恨歌, which reads as follows: "In the still chill of spring Yang Guifei was granted a bath in the pool of Huaqing. Her smooth skin bathed in the warm spring water. So delicate, she was helped up by her maids. That's the first time she enjoyed the love of the emperor." Cao Hanmei depicted Yang Guifei as having on a light yellow chiffon dress, revealing her shapely back. She is placing her left hand on the maid's shoulder, looking somewhat back. We could trace the outline of her breast, buttocks, and legs.

The representation of the back of a woman was also a popular subject with many Republican artists. For instance, *Shidai manhua* published Dan Duyu's and Chen Jiazhen's photographs, which introduce the ideal back view of a woman, the line of beauty from ribs, waist, and legs (**fig. 164**). Cao Hanmei liked to paint the back of a woman too. Picture 200 of *The Golden Lotus* shows Jinlian shining the light on the mosquitoes at night (**fig. 165**). As we can see, Jinlian is naked, her back and buttocks facing the viewer. She is kneeling down on the bed, holding a

lamp in her right hand, her outspread legs covering a thin cloth, looking back at Ximen, who is sleeping deeply.

We notice that some of Cao Hanmei's figures are awkward, such as in the front cover of *Spring* in an Art Nouveau style (**fig. 57**). Cao outlined a naked lady with rosebuds. This lady dominates two-thirds of the painting. At the lower left, it depicts a man looking up to this lady. There are two bees, one red and one white, above the man's head. Compared to the man's image, the lady expands to great heights. The result is not sensual but creepy. This painting seems to imply the spring season for males, or to criticize males' uncontrollable sexual thoughts. One of the reasons for this could be that Cao Hanmei was inspired by the morbid imagination of Aubrey Beardsley. Another reason may have some connection to his emotional pain. According to his friend Lin Dazu, Cao Hanmei was deeply hurt by a woman, and could not fully recover. This was the inspiration for his painting of *The Golden Lotus*.¹⁷⁸ Cao Hanmei was a complicated figure. He had a love-hate relationship with women.

In the postscript of his catalog of *The Golden Lotus* in 1936, he stated that, after seeing the illustration of the Chongzhen version, he was more certain than ever that he had new approaches to representing *The Golden Lotus*.¹⁷⁹ Cao Hanmei had the ambition to create his own version of *The Golden Lotus*, so as to

¹⁷⁸ Lin Dazu, "Tan tiancai huajia Cao Hanmei," 談天才畫家: 曹涵美, *Taipingyang zhoubao* vol. 1, no. 89 (1943).

¹⁷⁹ Cao Hanmei, *The Golden Lotus* (Shanghai: Shanghai Modern Publishing Company, 1936), 1.

purge the strong prejudices of this novel. Cao Hanmei was a reformer of Chinese *gongbi* style painting. He made *The Golden Lotus* from a very personal desire for a popular publication, serialized in cartoon format. Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* are considered modern, not just his treatment of the female body, but also his new conception of women as aesthetic object. He applied his cross-media approach, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

Chapter IV

The Cross-Media Approach in Practice

Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* was first published in cartoon magazines *Shidai manhua* 時代漫畫 [Modern Sketch], *Duli manhua* 獨立漫畫 [Independent Sketch], *Shanghai manhua* 上海漫畫 [Shanghai Sketch], and *Manhuajie* 漫畫界 [Modern Puck] from 1934 to 1937, amounting to around 70 paintings. Unfortunately, he could not continue painting *The Golden Lotus* because of the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Until the early 1940s, Cao Hanmei repainted *The Golden Lotus* based on his works from the 1930s. This new version contains 500 images, which cover only the first 36 chapters of the work. This chapter does not attempt to illustrate each image of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* but addresses questions about its modernity that relate not only to the internal composition of the painting, but also to the relations between images.

I have consulted a study of writings by his friends and colleagues that were published as prefaces and postscripts in catalogs of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* from 1942 to 1943. This evaluation merits close attention. However, some scholars questioned those articles, because Cao Hanmei's friends' and colleagues' descriptions made *The Golden Lotus* sound like a masterpiece.

In addition, Cao Hanmei's own writings, which reflect his views on art, are significant. Cao Hanmei, one of the organizers of The First National Cartoon Exhibition in Shanghai on November 4, 1936, wrote an article evaluating those selected pieces; he published the article "How I paint *gongbi* style painting" in defense of *The Golden Lotus*, and in which he discussed his other paintings; he also wrote several film reviews in which he suggested how to arrange props and actors when telling the story. Analyzing the above-mentioned articles will help us to understand Cao Hanmei's interpretation of Chinese traditional art and European modern art, and how he used filmmaking language.

1. The Publication of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* and the Public Response

Cao Hanmei deliberately painted *The Golden Lotus* to be distinct from the Chongzhen and Kangxi versions, whether in format, composition, or technique. In previous versions, called *Xiuxiang xiaoshuo* 繡像小說 (Illustrated Fiction), these inserted illustrations are placed at the beginning of the books. The Chongzhen edition and the Kangxi edition include 100 chapters, each with two illustrations: 200 illustrations in total. But the format of Cao's version is painting above, the

text below 上圖下文, or image on the right side, text on the left (**fig. 166–168**).

From 1934 to 1937, Cao Hanmei published one or two images from *The Golden Lotus* monthly. In this period, the series of paintings does not narrate a continuous story, but rather contains the illustrations of three characters: that is, a series on Pan Jinlian, a series on Li Ping'er, and a series on Pang Chunmei. They were very popular at that time. Many readers wanted to have catalogs of these paintings. They also advertised in *Shen Bao* and *Shidai manhua*, which asked to publish the catalogs. The first volume of this catalog was published in June 1936 (**fig. 169**). The Modern Publications Company and *Shen Bao* publicized this catalog widely.

Below is an announcement from *Shidai manhua*:

This catalog is printed with superior coated paper in cream-colored/ beige, duotone, 12 inches high, 9 inches wide, with more than 40 pages, Chinese traditional thread binding, an old-fashioned and antique flavor. It costs 1,5 Yuan, while the cost for the registration of the letter is 0,16 Yuan.¹⁸⁰

This message did not exaggerate the reality. Compared with other artists' catalogs that were edited and published by The Modern Publications Company, the catalog of *The Golden Lotus* is very beautifully designed and bound. *Mr. Wang* by Ye Qianyu, for example, cost 0,8 Yuan; *Folk Love Songs* by Zhang Guangyu cost 0,8 Yuan. However, Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* cost 1,5 Yuan, almost twice as much as the other two catalogs.

The presale advertisement of the second volume of *The Golden Lotus* appeared in *Shidai manhua* on 20 May 1937 (**fig. 170**). Less than a week after the

¹⁸⁰ *Shidai manhua* no. 27 (1936).

publication of *The Golden Lotus*'s second volume, the July 7th Incident broke out. In comparison with the works published in cartoon magazines, these two volumes of catalogs of *The Golden Lotus* were not simply compilations of the published works. It may well be that the form of the publication changed during this time, which led Cao Hanmei to consider the continuity of the story. So Cao Hanmei painted more than ten new paintings inserted into the published pictures, in order to tell the story in a way that flowed smoothly. For example, figure 104 was inserted after picture 7 from 1934 *The Golden Lotus* (**fig. 171**). Figure 104 shows Pan Jinlian sputtering that Wu Song molested her after she failed to seduce him.

After its publication in cartoon magazines, Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* met with a favorable reception. Nevertheless, a minority of readers thought the following: "Mr. Cao's painting, its style is like Tang- and Song style. We appreciate it. But the modern element, for example, the floor is depicted with wood grain. As such, there are too many lines. As a result, it gives the viewer a sense of disorder."¹⁸¹ In response, Cao Hanmei mentioned in his article "How I paint *Gongbi* style painting" in 1936 that:

Some scholars thought that I had inherited the tradition of Song and Yuan scholar-artist styles of painting. As a matter of fact, there are unexpected modern techniques which are blended in Song and Yuan style. In contrast, other scholars claimed that I am a modernist painter. However, such a style is based on techniques from Song and Yuan.

¹⁸¹ Wang Rumei, *Jinpingmei banben shi* 《金瓶梅》版本史 (Shandong: Qilu chubanshe, 2015), 162.

Cao Hanmei continues:

I used the *Palace scenes with figures* and the works of Chen Hongshou and Qiu Ying as references. There are even some elements which are neither from modern nor from traditional painting techniques. They are my own creation, such as conveying feeling and ideas through eyes and eyebrows, the treatment of the naked body through a transparent gauze, the changing point of view and view line, painting my signature with a pattern effect, and cloud patterns implying erotic scenes. Can my works really not be considered cartoons? But I represent facial expressions on cows and horses with comics techniques. Is there no perspective in my *The Golden Lotus*? The treatments of the distant view and short-distance view are different in my paintings. I use different techniques to convey the scene at night.¹⁸²

This statement helps us to understand Cao Hanmei's painting technique and his views on art. In this passage, Cao Hanmei expressed his opinion on Chinese traditional painting and modern art. Some readers complained that Cao Hanmei's painting "turned back the clock"; its modern element was "neither fish nor fowl". However, Cao Hanmei denied that he had "turned back the clock" because he believed that he had combined traditional and modern elements. It did not matter to Cao Hanmei if his work was "neither fish nor fowl". In a sense, this description indicates that Cao Hanmei was a courageous innovator. In his opinion, a perfect fetishizing of modern art was harmful. Therefore, he hoped artists could research traditional Chinese culture objectively. Cao Hanmei emphasized that he had developed a new approach. He was quite proud that his painting blended techniques from traditional and modern elements.

¹⁸² Cao, "How I paint *Gongbi* style painting."

Cao Hanmei's cross-media approach was a major innovation, which makes his work striking. He blended techniques from various media in his work. His composition shows inspiration from rubbings of Han stone reliefs and from ukiyo-e woodblock prints, namely diagonal composition; he used comics techniques to present the figure's expression; he painted in woodcut style; and he used filmmaking techniques in his painting, among other things.

By comparing Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* of the 1930s with his statement above, we can see that his artworks did not relate well with his ideas. His article "How I paint *Gongbi* style painting" was published at the end of 1936, after the publication of his catalog of *The Golden Lotus* (volume one). In this regard, these ideas may have contained the seeds of future attempts. Because of the second Sino-Japanese War, Cao Hanmei could not continue his creation. However, he put all of his above theory concerning his new approach into practice when he painted *The Golden Lotus* in the early 1940s.

The later version of *The Golden Lotus* shows a clearer *manga* skill than the earlier one, which could be related to Cao Hanmei's experience at The First National Cartoon Exhibition, where the inclusion of his *The Golden Lotus* was called into question.

As a matter of fact, Cao Hanmei played a crucial role in The First National Cartoon Exhibition. Cao Hanmei and Wang Dunqing were the editors of the special issue of the magazine *Manhuajie* for this exhibition. This special issue

published ninety selected cartoons, as well as several informative articles written by the members of the organizing committee (**fig. 172**). Among these, Cao Hanmei's article is the only contribution that commented on the selected works of The First National Cartoon Exhibition. What is more, the order of the publishing exhibits matched the commented exhibits in Cao Hanmei's article "Benjie Quanguo manhua zhanlanhui chupin wo jian".

The Young Companion reported some works from this exhibition (**fig. 173-174**). Judging from the list of the exhibits, 83 artists took part in The First National Cartoon Exhibition, with 201 exhibits (**fig. 175**). Ten pieces from Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* were selected for this exhibition, which was questioned by some readers. In response, Cao Hanmei wrote in his article:

Did my version of *The Golden Lotus* really not have a *manga* element? It is not necessarily so. I depict a group of Ximen Qing's friends who are more like ghosts than human beings; the panderer is greedy for money; the prostitute sees off the old and welcomes the new; the whoremonger steals something in passing; I also depict venal officials who serve their personal interests through trickery. These all distinguish my version from the Ming and Qing versions. If these are not enough cartoon elements, how can these paintings with the popular decorative line, without profound significance, that merely presents an erotic sense, be considered cartoons?¹⁸³

Cao Hanmei stated that "cartoons" should not be defined by techniques or forms. The elements of the cartoon in his works lay in using the past to disparage the present. In other words, he used the Ming novel *The Golden Lotus* to critique modern society: the novel *The Golden Lotus* exposed the unfair and corrupt

¹⁸³ Cao, "Benjie Quanguo manhua zhanlanhui chupin wo jian," 本屆<全國漫畫展覽會>出品我見, *Manhuajie* no. 7 (October 1936).

society of the mid-late Ming period; this history repeats itself 300 years later in the metropolis of Shanghai. Cao Hanmei and his colleagues should know this history intimately because Sima Road (today's Fuzhou Road) was full of warehouses. At the same time, the center of publishing and journalism, including The Shanghai Modern Publications Company, was also located on this road.

The above ideas of Cao Hanmei were written at the end of 1936, but they were not put into practice in *The Golden Lotus* until 1941. Take picture 99 of the 1941 version, for example: this picture shows Ximen Qing ready enough to deflower Li Guijie, and, when Ying Bojue and Xie Xida urge him to do so, he yields to their suggestions without raising any difficulties (**fig. 176**). There a banquet is prepared, and there is singing, dancing, and wine for three days. We can see that the illuminated areas are depicted with black lines on a white background. In contrast, their surrounding is depicted with white lines on a black background. Picture 99 consists of six scenes: The lower-left corner represents the boys who are looking after the horses and cannot get in to share in the repast, so they content themselves by pulling down the statue of the local divinity and urinating upon it; when the time comes for them to go away, Sun Guazhui takes a gilded image of Buddha, which is venerated in an inner room, and slips it inside his trousers; Ying Bojue pretends to kiss Cassia, and steals a gold pin from her hair; Xie Xida makes off with Ximen Qing's fan; Zhu Shijie goes secretly to Cinnamon's room and steals her mirror; as for Chang Shijie, he does not hand

over the money he had borrowed from Ximen Qing, but has the sum put down to his account.

Cao Hanmei depicted the monks' facial expressions and body language with *manga* skill for comic effect. Pictures 72 and 75 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* depict Pan Jinlian inviting monks to burn the tablet (**fig. 177–179** and **fig. 147**). The monks overhear sounds of venery while Pan Jinlian is entertaining Ximen Qing. After that, Pan Jinlian sits in a sedan chair in her best clothes. She is going to her new home to marry Jinmen Qing. Everybody in the neighborhood knows what is happening, but people fear the rich and powerful Ximen Qing, and nobody dares to interfere. But someone composes a little poem in honor of the occasion, asserting that people laughed at Ximen Qing in scorn. He first had an affair with Pan Jinlian, and later married her. The loose woman sat in the sedan chair, and Old Woman Wang, the panderer, followed. 堪笑西門不識羞！先奸後娶醜名留；轎內坐著浪淫婦，後邊跟著老牽頭。 This poem, shown in picture 75, is like a form of dialogue or comment typical of Japanese *manga*.

As we know, Buddhists must follow certain precepts, one of which is that monks abstain from sexual misconduct. Overhearing sounds of venery is also forbidden. In contrast, in Cao Hanmei's painting, all the monks know that Pan Jinlian is entertaining her lover in the house. They wave their arms and feet wildly without the slightest idea of what they are doing. The depictions of the monks' facial expressions recall Cao Hanmei's cartoons *Portraits of the Very Important*

Persons of Kuomintang Government (fig. 180-181), which show a trace of Ōten Shimokawa's work (fig. 182).

Cao Hanmei adopted a comic technique—the treatment of movement—in his works. Picture 38 of his 1941 version of *The Golden Lotus* shows Wu Dan going to Old Woman Wang's house to catch Pan Jinlian in the act of adultery since Junge has discovered that Pan Jinlian is having an affair with Ximen Qing, and has told Wu Da about it (fig. 183). At first, Ximen Qing is afraid and hides under the bed. But Pan Jinlian shames him into coming out so that Ximen Qing might strike down Wu Da and make his escape. So Ximen Qing crawls out nervously and throws open the door, crying, "Stand back there!" Wu Da tries to close it, but Ximen Qing kicks at Wu Da and, as he is very small, his foot catches him in the ribs and knocks him backwards. Cao Hanmei's illustration emphasizes Ximen Qing's kicking motion.

Other examples of the above-mentioned comic techniques can be seen in picture 210 and picture 321 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus*. Picture 210 shows Pan Jinlian pushing Chen Jingji away after he approaches her for a kiss, and he stumbles (fig. 184). Picture 321 shows Yuxiao and Song Huilian on a swing (fig. 185). Song Huilian grasps the rope and, standing perfectly upright, dances upon the seat. She will have no one to push the swing for her, but she drives it high into the air and down again. It is indeed a wonderful sight.

Such treatment of motion already appeared in Cao Hanmei's cartoons from 1929, namely *The Characters of Two Persons, One is too Naughty, Another is too*

Tolerant and Newspapers and Periodicals of China and other Countries (fig. 186–187). The former cartoon depicts a young boy kicking out at a middle-aged couple who is sitting on the ground, with his hands crossed before him. In *Newspapers and Periodicals of China and other Countries*, the running cow represents newspapers in China; the running horse represents newspapers in other countries, which this indicated that Chinese newspapers lagged behind other countries. Other countries' policies were based on a global view; in contrast, the Chinese viewed the world from the perspective of the Shanghainese. Other countries were using airplanes to deliver newspapers, manuscripts, and photographs; we still depended on posters and postmen.

Cao Hanmei preferred to use interesting expression techniques in *The Golden Lotus*. Take picture 282 of the 1942 version, for example (fig. 188); this picture shows Song Huilian cooking pig feet. She is uncovering the pot, and it spreads a delicious smell. The strikingly impressive thing about this picture is the depiction of smog from the pot. Cao Hanmei painted the smog with curved lines. This vivid depiction benefited from his years of practice in comics, such as *Shattered Dream* (fig. 189). He also depicted a cat beside Song Huilian, who is attracted by the smell of the meat. It seems that this smell makes its mouth water.

His contemporaries placed a high value on Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus*, with *manga* skill in the version from the 1940s. For instance, Ma Wu stated that

Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* broke new ground in Chinese painting and *manga*, and brought additional credit to the history of Chinese painting.¹⁸⁴

2. Analysis of *The Golden Lotus* of the 1940s

To better understand Cao Hanmei's later version of *The Golden Lotus*, it is necessary to compare it with his early version. There are significant differences between the two, including in perspective and painting language. Cao Hanmei spent a lot of effort on *The Golden Lotus*, for more than ten years. He valued the composition and painting technique; he elaborately researched characters' gestures, facial expressions, ancient clothing styles, building structures, etc.; and he considered the continuity between images. From the correspondence between Cao Hanmei and his brothers, it appears that Cao Hanmei had been puzzling about the composition of each painting. He must have spent a lot of time studying the original novel. Analyzing the development of the style of *The Golden Lotus* would help us to better understand Cao Hanmei's conception of artistic composition, which also reflects his interpretation of modern art in a different period.

Picture 2 from the 1934 *The Golden Lotus* and picture 6 from the 1941 version both depict the same scene (**fig. 190–191**). Both images show the scene after the marriage of Pan Jinlian and Wu Da, in which Zhang heaps kindnesses upon the bridegroom. If Wu Da needs money for ingredients to make his pies, the

¹⁸⁴ Ma Wu, "Du Cao Hanmei hua *Jinpingmei*," 讀曹涵美畫金瓶梅, in: Cao, *Jinpingmei huaji* vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), unpaginated.

rich man provides it, and when Wu Da goes out with his baskets, the rich man, after making sure that there is no one about, goes to console Pan Jinlian in her loneliness. Wu Da cannot help seeing that Zhang treats his wife as though she belongs to him, but he is not in a position to object.

The second picture from the 1934 version is a side view. It depicts Zhang and Pan Jinlian in the house. In contrast, Wu Da is outside the gate. In Wu Da's position, he cannot see what is happening inside the house. Wu Da's daughter Ying'er is depicted from the back, squatting in the open space on the left side of the house. Later, Cao Hanmei rearranged the composition and the four "actors". Picture 6 in the 1941 version is a front view. There are four Chinese characters on the wall, which read "Back Door of the Wu Family", while one character on the right side of the window reads "wedding", which indicates a newly married couple's house. We can see Pan Jinlian and Zhang in the room through the window. Wu Da is going out with his basket, although he has seen that Zhang is in his house.

Picture 3 in the 1934 *Golden Lotus* and picture 8 in the 1941 version both depict Pan Jinlian sitting beneath the blind, chewing melon seeds, and pushing her tiny feet forward in the hope of attracting the attention of some young ne'er-do-wells (**fig. 192–193**). In camera terms, picture 3 from the 1934 version is a long shot; picture 8 from the 1941 version, by comparison, is a medium shot. The later piece illustrates these young ne'er-do-wells, who are loudly dressed so as to better present their personalities. In addition, Wu Da is portrayed shooting an

angry glance at those young scoundrels. In this way, the revised version better corresponds to the text. The treatment of Wu Da illustrates the reason why he decided to move to a new house.

Picture 4 from the 1934 *The Golden Lotus* and picture 10 in the 1941 version also represent the same scene (fig. 194–195). They show Wu Da coming across his younger brother unexpectedly in the street. Wu Da at once invites his brother home with him and takes him upstairs to sit down. Then he calls Pan Jinlian to come and see Wu Song. They are going to have dinner, and Wu Da is going to buy some wine.

Picture 4 depicts Wu Song's back in the foreground, sitting on a chair; Pan Jinlian is sitting at the table; Ying'er is leaning over the stair railing, looking at her father Wu Da who is going downstairs. However, one sentence from the original text is as follows: "Wu Song, realizing the seductive charm of his sister-in-law, modestly refrained from looking at her." Additionally, the text shows that Pan Jinlian and Wu Song are having a conversation. We can see that the depiction in the earlier version does not correspond to the text. In the later version, Cao Hanmei must have realized his limitations. The locations of the figures are slightly modified: Wu Song has shifted from the front to take a seat at the table. The main difference between the images is that Cao Hanmei put all figures on the same horizontal line in the later version. This rearrangement of the figures' location would better match events in the text.

Picture 6 from the 1934 *The Golden Lotus* and picture 15 in the 1941 version both show Pan Jinlian standing beneath the lattice and waiting until she sees Wu Song trampling down the glistening snow as he hastens home (**fig. 196–197**). She quickly raises the lattice for him and smiles. Wu Song comes in, taking off his hat. Pan Jinlian offers to take it, but he brushes the snow away himself and hangs it on the wall. Picture 6 depicts Pan Jinlian in full-length portrait; Wu Song's left side is blocked by the door. By comparison, the later version modifies the position of the door; Pan Jinlian is drawn in profile and Wu Song in a full-length portrait. Therefore, we can see clearly that Wu Song waves his hand, in order to stop Pan Jinlian from taking his hat.

As can be seen in the four group images above, the early version was largely represented from a bird's-eye perspective, and Cao Hanmei chose to create distinct diagonals in the composition, from a side view, such as in pictures 5 and 13 (**fig. 198–199**). This version shows too many props, which do not help to develop the story. By contrast, in the later piece, Cao Hanmei modified his actors' body language, location, props, and so on, which better serves the development of the plot. In addition, *The Golden Lotus* of the 1930s was obviously in a style reminiscent of traditional Chinese paintings of beautiful women 仕女畫, such as the works of Zhou Fang, Li Gonglin, Qian Xuan, Qiu Ying, Chen Hongshou, and Fei Xiaolou, and his contemporaries He Tianjian and Yao Lingxi, as Cao Hanmei

himself stated.¹⁸⁵ Liu Shuofu 劉碩甫, who worked for the Nanjing Nationalist Government, analyzed Cao Hanmei's *gongbi* style painting, and wrote:

Cao Hanmei's treatment of the body construction is similar to Chen Hongshou's; the posture looks like Gai Qi's; the treatment of the drape of ancient clothes is like Fei Xiaolou's; the brushwork is similar to Li Gonglin's; the pavilion depicted with monochrome drawing is like Ding Yunpeng's; Cao Hanmei learned composition, perspective, and scenery from Wu Youru. And then he developed his own style.¹⁸⁶

However, Cao Hanmei employed a straight-line drawing style in *The Golden Lotus* of the 1940s, which shows a trace of Cubism, especially the dress on the chair in picture 311 (**fig. 200**). This picture depicts Song Huilian changing into a dress of red silk with a white skirt, setting a red and gold kerchief on her head, and pins and flowers in her hair, because she wants to join Pan Jinlian, Li Ping'er, Chen Jingji, etc., to go shopping at the lantern fair. From the *ruyi* shape pattern (**fig. 201**) on the neckline, we recognize that the changed dress on the chair in picture 311 is the one Song Huilian wears in picture 308 (**fig. 202**). We can see that Cao Hanmei broke up and reassembled this dress in an abstract form, as well as the treatment of the drape of the red silk dress in picture 311.

What is more, Cao Hanmei did not only revise his works of the 1930s, but also the 1940s pieces. Picture 66 was published in *Guomin New* in 1941 (**fig. 203**).

¹⁸⁵ Cao, "How I paint *Gongbi* style painting"; Tianjian He, in: Cao Hanmei, *Jinpingmei huaji*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), unpaginated; Yao Lingxi, in: Cao Hanmei, *Jinpingmei huaji* vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), unpaginated.

¹⁸⁶ Liu Shuofu, in: Cao Hanmei, *Jinpingmei huaji*, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), unpaginated.

Later, Cao Hanmei revised it, and published it in the catalog of the first volume of *The Golden Lotus*, as picture 67 (**fig. 204**). Both images show Ximen Qing coming and seeing Pan Jinlian. She is complaining that Ximen Qing has not come to see her for a long time. Ximen Qing explains that he has been busy planning for his daughter's wedding. Pan Jinlian cries that he has a new sweetheart and has forgotten her. She pulls a pin from his hair, holds it up, and looks at it. It is gold, with two rows of characters engraved upon it. The pin belonged to Meng Yulou, but Pan Jinlian thinks some singing-girl has given it to him. She thrusts it into her sleeve. "Now will you say you haven't changed? Where is the pin I gave you?"

Picture 66 depicts Pan Jinlian's right hand resting on the desk, her left hand holding the pin. Old Woman Wang stands in front of Pan Jinlian, bending down to pick something up. However, in picture 67, Cao Hanmei later placed Pan Jinlian in the center, instead of behind Old Woman Wang. After Pan Jinlian has pulled the pin from Ximen Qing's hair, her body turns to the left, and looking carefully at the characters on the pin, she reads "The horse, with a golden bridle, neighs on the sweet turf. In the season of apricot blossoms, they who dwell in the jade tower drink till they are merry" 金勒馬嘶芳草地, 玉樓人醉杏花天. These characters are written on the upper-right edge of the painting, with two symbolic cloud patterns. Pan Jinlian's posture and gesture in the later image better lead our attention to the pin.

Picture 151 was published in *Guomin New* in 1942 (**fig. 205**). Later, Cao Hanmei revised it, and published it in the catalog of the second volume of *The*

Golden Lotus, as picture 152 (**fig. 206**). Both paintings show Ximen Qing's servant Dai'an bringing presents to Li Ping'er, as the following day is her birthday. There are four courses of food, a large jar of wine, birthday cakes, pastries, and a suit of quilted silken clothes embroidered in gold. Li Ping'er is dressing and tells Yingchun to give Dai'an some cakes. In picture 151, Yingchun is standing in front of the box, which Dai'an is showing to Li Ping'er, so that part of the box is hidden by Yingchun's body. By comparison, picture 152 depicts Li Ping'er closer to the box, with one eye on it as she is dressing. In addition, Yingchun is standing behind the box. Therefore, we can see clearly what Dai'an is showing to Li Ping'er.

The following three paintings better illustrate the stylistic development of the later version: namely, picture 21, which was published in *Guomin News* in 1941 (**fig. 207**); picture 22, published in the catalog of *The Golden Lotus* in 1942 (**fig. 208**); and the front cover of the catalog of *The Golden Lotus*, which was published in 1953 (**fig. 209**). These three paintings represent the same scene, in which Old Woman Wang invites Pan Jinlian to her house and asks her to help with some needlework because Ximen Qing has asked her to arrange a rendezvous between him and Pan Jinlian. It seems that Cao Hanmei was not satisfied with picture 21 of the 1941 version, and repainted picture 22 in the 1942 catalog. By comparison, picture 21 almost separated Old Woman Wang, Ximen Qing, and Pan Jinlian from one another, in that the right-hand foreground shows Old Woman Wang's back, as she sets foot inside the door, holding a tray of food and drink. Ximen Qing and

Pan Jinlian are sitting opposite each other in the room; picture 22 depicts these three figures sitting side-by-side. In this way, he shows the movements of each figure more clearly.

Interestingly, in the front cover of the 1953 catalog, Cao Hanmei used another technique to present the same scene. He painted in the realistic style, and in particular depicted the floor with a focus perspective. This front cover could be an experiment in the transition period completed between the 1930s and the 1940s. Another experiment could see the painting that represents Pan Jinlian and Ximen Qing in Old Woman Wang's house, which was repainted by Cao Hanmei in 1939 when he was in Yunnan (**fig. 210**). Cao Hanmei depicted this scene for the first time in 1934 (**fig. 211**). By comparison, the repainted piece of 1939 only focuses on these two characters, without any background. The final version of this scene was painted in 1941 (**fig. 212**). All of these signs indicate that Cao Hanmei kept rethinking *The Golden Lotus* even after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

The style of the front cover of the 1953 catalog is the only one that I can find in the existing paper documents. It is clear that its publication date did not reflect its creation date, but whether it was painted earlier or later than 1942, this style was not finally adopted in *The Golden Lotus*. Why, then, did Cao Hanmei use it as the front cover? We might speculate that Cao Hanmei intentionally used this cover to "reveal the secret" of his elaborate creation process, by noting how he shaped

his objects with a straight-line drawing style, placing all the figures on the same horizontal line. A similar impression is given in Lu Jinghua's article:

The highest skill of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* was the straight-line drawing style... The composition of *The Golden Lotus* is precise and strives for the best. Cao Hanmei arranged the figures very well. In the majority of the paintings, Cao put his figures in the foreground. No matter where the figures stand, their feet are positioned on the same horizontal line. The human figures are different sizes; those in the foreground are larger than those in the background. Cao Hanmei combined the composition of Chinese painting with the perspective of Western painting.¹⁸⁷

Lu Jinghua described the characteristics of *The Golden Lotus* by pointing out that all figures stand in the foreground on the same horizontal line. Nevertheless, he did not name the source Cao Hanmei used as a reference. Looking into compositions of Chinese art, we find that one of the key features of the Han stone reliefs is that all the figures are engraved on the same horizontal line.

a. Appropriation of Composition from Rubbings of Han Period Stone Reliefs and Utagawa Hiroshige

Cao Hanmei adopted rubbings of Han stone relief and developed his own style of composition which runs across nearly 500 paintings. Additionally, Cao Hanmei also appropriated the perspective of Utagawa Hiroshige, especially drawing from Hiroshige's *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*.¹⁸⁸ One of the

¹⁸⁷ Lu Jinghua, "Guanyu Cao Hanmei xiansheng *Jinpingmei* huaji de hua," 關於曹涵美先生金瓶梅畫集的話, in: Cao Hanmei, *Jinpingmei huaji* vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), unpaginated.

¹⁸⁸ Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川広重 (1797–1858), Ukiyo-e painter, printmaker. Lived in Edo; son of an official of the fire department assigned to Edo Castle. Showed an early interest in art; his first teacher was Okajima Rinsai. Also studied *nanga* painting under Ōoka Unpō; interested in Western art and the work of the Shijō school. In 1812, took name of Hiroshige. In 1833, the year following a trip on the Tōkaidō, produced his

features of Hiroshige's composition is a disproportionate perspective: objects in the foreground are exaggeratedly large and the background objects much smaller; in other words, the objects are big when near and small when far, as can be seen in *Plum Park in Kameido* 亀戸梅屋舗, *Suidō Bridge and the Surugadai Quarter* 水道橋駿河台, *The Ferry at Haneda and the Benten Shrine* はねだのわたし弁天の社, *Naitō Shinjuku in Yotsuya* 四ッ谷内藤新宿, *Kinryūzan Temple in Asakusa* 浅草金龍山, etc. (**fig. 213–217**).

Picture 500 of *The Golden Lotus* of 1943 depicts a messenger from Zhai, the Comptroller of the Imperial Tutor's household, riding over to Ximen Qing's house to bring him a letter (**fig. 218**). The horse is represented in the foreground and almost dominates the whole painting, from left to right, from top to bottom. The horse seems to be taking a rest, eating grass. The messenger stands by the horse's tail, submitting the letter to a servant of Ximen Qing. We can see that Hiroshige extensively used cropping and offered unusual viewpoints; that is, the subject matter in the foreground is virtually on top of the viewer. By comparison, Cao Hanmei usually kept the whole image of the foreground intact.

Another feature of Hiroshige's composition is the diagonal composition, as seen in *Night View of Saruwaka-machi* 猿わか町よるの景 (**fig. 219**). Chinese traditional painting is not constrained by focus perspective, but often uses moving point perspective. Buildings are often depicted at an angle of 45° (**fig. 220**). But

famous *Tōkaidō Gojūsan Tsugi* (Fifty-three Stations on the Tōkaidō). Laurance P. Roberts, *A Dictionary of Japanese Artists* (Tōkyō: Weatherhill, 1990), 44–45.

Cao Hanmei preferred to paint only one side of a building (**fig. 221**). He could have been inspired by Okamoto Ippei's works (**fig. 222-223**); as mentioned in chapter two, Okamoto Ippei's cartoons and the translations of his articles were frequently introduced in *Shidai manhua*.

Picture 18 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* illustrates Pan Jinlian meeting Ximen Qing for the first time (**fig. 224**). She is dressed in her best clothes and stands by the door beneath the lattice, in order to seduce passersby. Thinking it is nearly time for Wu Da's return, she prepares to pull down the shutter and go back to the room to wait for him. But now the fates intervene. A man passes beneath the lattice. Pan Jinlian is holding the pole and preparing to pull down the shutter when a gust of wind suddenly blows it out of her hand. She cannot catch it, and it falls upon the man's head. She smiles her apologies.

Picture 157 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* depicts Ximen Qing, with his friends Ying Bojue and Xie Xida, at the lantern fair (**fig. 225**). Here they are represented in the center. They happen to meet their friend Zhu Rinian, who suggests drinking wine. Figures on both sides are admiring the lanterns. The vanishing point draws our attention to Ximen Qing and his friends, although their size is smaller than those figures on the right. Cao Hanmei did not present a horizontal distance in his painting.

Cao Hanmei burned with zeal for narrative. He experimented as much as possible with different narrative strategies. Early in his career, he made a few crude attempts, such as picture 7 and picture 36.

Picture 7 shows Pan Jinlian imputing all faults and wrongs to her husband and Master Zhang, after she discovers that her husband is not much of a man (**fig. 226**). When she is quite alone, she sings this song:

This was an ill-made match. A man I thought him; now I know that he is no true man. I would not boast, but it is plain. The crow can ne'er be mated with the phoenix. I am as gold deep buried in the ground. And he a lump of common brass. Who may not hope to stand beside my golden glory? He is naught but stupid clay. Shall my jade body, lying in his arms, thrill him with ecstasy? As the Ganoderma from a dunghill? How can I pass my days with him forever? How can I suffer him so long as life shall last? I, that am the purest gold, can never rest upon a bed so vile.

Cao Hanmei translated these verbal metaphors into pictures. Images of a crow, a phoenix, gold, brass, and Ganoderma are woven around Pan Jinlian. Again, cloud patterns also appear around the above-mentioned images, which indicate that these images are not from reality, but from the song Pan Jinlian sings.

Picture 36 shows Jun Ge telling Wu Da that his wife is having an adulterous affair with Ximen Qing because Jun Ge cannot contain his anger at the way Old Woman Wang has treated him, so he takes his basket and goes to find Wu Da (**fig. 227**). Jun Ge says, "Those two are making merry at this very moment. They wait till you have gone out, and then they go and meet at Old Woman Wang's house." Jun Ge seems to be pointing at Old Woman Wang's house. His finger also points

to the upper right of the painting, in which Ximen Qing and Pan Jinlian are shown in a semi-circle, enacting the scene that Jun Ge describes.

When Cao Hanmei tried to illustrate an event with several moments occurring at the same time or a sequence of events, he needed new approaches and strategies for composition. He studied rubbings of Han stone reliefs and Hiroshige's works and then developed new types of composition by employing different methods, such as adding and modifying some elements, designing cloud patterns, combining distinct perspectives, etc.

Take the rubbing from the Wu Liang shrine, for example: it is characterized by a flat composition and two-dimensional representation (**fig. 228**). It is evenly divided into three sections with horizontal lines. By comparison, Cao Hanmei divided sections in his painting based on the need for the narrative. He used one horizontal line to depict one scene, or two or three horizontal lines or cloud patterns to divide a painting into several scenes. The cloud patterns are important symbols that indicate the presence of two or more scenes. If we miss this symbol, we miss a crucial aspect of Cao Hanmei's genius. To identify a cloud pattern and consult the painting's attendant text is to find a delightful and skillfully arranged surprise. In the following section, I categorize his images into three types.

Type 1 represents two or more events happening at the same moment in time. Picture 496 of the 1943 *Golden Lotus* is divided into upper and lower sections by a horizontal line (**fig. 229**). The upper section depicts Li Ping'er in her sedan chair

with two lanterns. The lower section illustrates Wu Yueniang 吳月娘 and the others setting off in their four sedan chairs, with only one lantern to guide them.

Horizontal cloud patterns divide picture 80 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* into three scenes (**fig. 230**). The lower section shows Ximen Qing now married to Pan Jinlian, living in a splendid house and wearing the finest clothes. So close is the attachment between Ximen Qing and Pan Jinlian that nothing can separate them. The upper sections show two scenes: on the left, Wu Song is going to his brother's door; Wu Da's daughter is sitting outside the room, spinning thread; Old Woman Wang tells Wu Song that his older brother is dead. On the right, the neighbors see that Wu Song is back; they are excited, and break into a sweat. "Now the trouble will begin," they say.

It is not easy to find some of the scenes that are surrounded with cloud patterns, but the text can help us a little bit. It seems that Cao Hanmei tried to hide them; take picture 100 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus*, for example (**fig. 231**). The text for this painting reads:

Ximen Qing was so delighted with Li Guijie's 李桂姐 beauty that he stayed at the bawdy-house for several days. Wu Yueniang sent servants with horses to bring him back many times, but Li Guijie's family hid his hat and clothes, and would not let him go. The ladies of his own household were quite content, but Pan Jinlian was not yet thirty years old, and her passions were by no means under control. Day after day, she made herself look as pretty as a jade carving, and stood at the main gate with gleaming teeth and scarlet lips, leaning upon the door and waiting for her husband to return. Not until evening did she go to her room.

Cao Hanmei depicted two ladies standing in the middle of the scene. From their earrings and a lotus foot, we can recognize Pan Jinlian from the side, on the left, looking upward; Meng Yulou is on the right, turning her head back. Their postures are full of movement. Their eyes focus in the same direction, in which there is a surprise: a tiny scene (**fig. 232**). According to the text, this scene shows Ximen Qing in Li Guijie's house. It seems that Pan Jinlian and Meng Yulou can see what is happening in Li Guijie's house. This shows how these two ladies await their husband's return with great expectation. Cao Hanmei did not paint these two scenes in a realistic style but used a metaphor. He painted two Chinese characters, "da men" 大門 (main gate), over the two ladies' heads, and parts of the wooden structure of the main gate, instead of a realistic depiction of the main gate (**fig. 233–234**). There are also patterns of a deformed Chinese character, *shou* 壽 (**fig. 235**), which symbolizes wealth. How did Cao Hanmei imply that these scenes happened at night? He used the woodcut technique to represent the scene in Li Guijie's house. This will be addressed in further detail later.

Type 2 is a dialogue in visual representation. Picture 204 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* depicts Pan Jinlian sitting on her bed, playing the pipa-lute (**fig. 236**). Chen Jingji goes into Pan Jinlian's room and asks her for a cup of tea. The upper scene shows their conversation: Where is Ximen Qing? How is the party going in the forecourt? We can see that Cao Hanmei painted the real scene and the fictive scene together. It is worth mentioning that Cao Hanmei had thought about how to

represent their conversation. He first published this picture in *Guomin News*, without the visualization of their conversation (**fig. 237**), but with a prepared space for it.

Picture 268 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* shows Ximen Qing dicing with his wives, guessing fingers, and making up charades (**fig. 238**). Wu Yueniang suggests that they should take the title of a song and the name of a domino and make them fit with a line of the “Story of the Western Pavilion.” Whoever happens to be holding the domino that is named must drink a cup of wine. As we can see, Cao Hanmei painted Ximen Qing and his wives sitting at a round table and visualized the titles of songs and the names of dominos that are called out. Ximen Qing and the ladies are surrounded by these visualizations.

In picture 268—its first publication as picture 266 in *Guomin News*—as in picture 204, Cao Hanmei also made a specially prepared space about the subjects’ topic of discussion (**fig. 239**). When he compiled his published works in *Guomin News* and published the catalog of *The Golden Lotus*, he added these visualized images.

Wu Yuniang herself begins. She says, “The Sixth Lady is drunk. Yang Fei dropped her eight jewels, and her hair is caught by the roses.” This is depicted in area A (**fig. 240**). Area B shows Ximen Qing’s words: “The lovely maiden Yu watched the battle between Chu and Han. The chief marshal was wounded and the noise of gongs and drums seemed like the heavens quaking.” Area C shows the words of Li Jiao’er 李娇兒. Area D shows Pan Jinlian’s words. Area E shows the

words of Li Ping'er. Area F shows the words of Sun Xue'e 孫雪娥. Area G shows Meng Yulou's words; she says, "A beautiful woman leans upon the scarlet rail, holding her silken skirt. She prays that the winds of spring may bring the moon within her net of gauze."

Picture 387 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* shows Pan Jinlian having lost her shoe and ordering Pang Chunmei and Qiuju to find it (**fig. 241**). The lower section shows Pang Chunmei bringing the shoe to Pan Jinlian after she has found it. Pan Jinlian, who is sitting on a summer mat, is depicted on the lower right-hand side. Her image fully occupies the entire composition from top to bottom. Pan Jinlian takes the shoe in her hand and compares it with another of her shoes. She tries on the shoe. It is a little tighter than her own. She realizes that it must have belonged to Song Huilian 宋蕙蓮. She gazes at the shoe for a while. Then she waves a hand and says: "This is not my shoe." She asks Pang Chunmei where she found it. The center of the upper section of the painting shows Pang Chunmei describing how she and Qiuju searched for the shoe in the Snow Cave and finally found it on the book-shelves of Ximen's summer house.

Type 3 represents two or more events in chronological order, a visual metaphor of a continuous story process. Picture 219 of *The Golden Lotus* in 1942 consists of three sections (**fig. 242**). The upper section shows Li Ping'er longing for Ximen Qing. She leans upon the door and waits for his coming. The middle section shows the servant Dai'an finding Ximen Qing, who is washing his hands

in the back court. Dai'an says that Li Ping'er is very sorry now for what has happened and that she cried for a long time. "She still wishes to marry you. She is much thinner than she was. She told me I must ask you to go and see her, and if you can, please tell me, because she is waiting to hear what you say." Ximen Qing says, "If you are telling the truth, say I'm too busy to go. Say she need not send presents, just let her choose an auspicious day and I'll take her home." The lower section shows Dai'an going to Li Ping'er's house and telling her what his master has said. She is delighted. She goes to the kitchen to cook something for Dai'an.

Picture 293 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* shows Pan Jinlian helping Ximen Qing and Song Huilian to meet in a grotto (**fig. 243**). When the ladies separate at night, Pan Jinlian tells her maid Qiuju to take bedclothes and a stove to the grotto under the artificial mound. We can see the mouth of the grotto in the lower right corner. Ximen Qing is approaching the grotto, and Qiuju is lighting the stove. Thus, this section is the only part shown with light. The artificial mound is depicted with white lines on a black background. On the left side of the painting, we find cloud patterns, a signal that there is a scene or scenes there. When we read the text closely, we recognize two scenes: the upper section shows Wu Yueniang, Li Jiao'er, and Meng Yulou going to their apartments. The lower section shows Song Huilian seeing that no one is about, and going swiftly to the artificial mound (**fig. 244**).

Cao Hanmei was not limited to conceiving different scenes in a painting with horizontal lines or cloud patterns; he also used multiple forms of frames.

In Picture 451, Ying Bojue asks Ximen Qing to send for Li Guijie. Ximen Qing sends Dai'an to summon Li Guijie (**fig. 245**). In the foreground, we can see that Li Guijie is going to the hall in the company of Dai'an, holding a gilded fan before her face, assuming an air of modesty and toying with her ornaments. Li Guijie and Dai'an are depicted from the back. Li Guijie's image, from her feet to her head, totally occupies the painting from top to bottom.

On either side of Li Guijie and Dai'an are folding screens. We notice that there are images of a lady on these two folding screens. When we observe them carefully and compare them with previous pictures, we see that the lady is Li Guijie. According to the text, when Dai'an came to the inner court, Li Guijie was playing the lute and singing in Wu Yueniang's room for the ladies there. This scene appears in the rounded form on the right side of the folding screens. In the rectangular form on the left side, we can see Li Guijie standing before Wu Yueniang's mirror, repainting her face, after Dai'an tells her, "The other urged him; they persuaded him to send me." As we can see, this is an instance of Cao Hanmei inventing of a continuous pictorial narrative, in which the same character appears three times.

Picture 230 is another example of Cao Hanmei's skill at using frames to show more scenes in his painting. This picture shows Ximen Qing in Li Ping'er's room after she has been rescued from a suicide attempt (**fig. 246**). Pan Jinlian, Meng Yulou, and Pang Chunmei are standing outside the door and listening. This

painting indicates four scenes in three frames, and the different horizontal lines on which the characters are standing. The window frame indicates the first scene (**fig. 247**). Through the window, we see the back of a woman who is embracing a man. From her hairdo we recognize her as Li Ping'er, referring back to picture 229 (**fig. 251**). So we identify Li Ping'er and Ximen Qing in her room, as the text reads, "Li Ping'er, with her sweet ways and persuasive words, dispels Ximen Qing's anger. They embrace and are perfectly happy." Ximen Qing tells Pang Chunmei to set a table and go to the inner court for wine. The second scene shows Pang Chunmei standing outside the window, peeking at Li Ping'er and Ximen Qing in the room (**fig. 248**). From the door in picture 227, we can see a doorknob over Pan Jinlian's hand (**fig. 252**). The third scene shows Pan Jinlian standing outside the door, her left hand pointing at Li Ping'er's room. It seems she is asking Pang Chunmei what is happening inside the room. Pang Chunmei is telling her in a whisper what Ximen Qing and Li Ping'er are saying (**fig. 249**). The fourth scene shows Meng Yulou taking Pan Jinlian by the hand and drawing her away to the other door because Meng Yulou is afraid that Ximen Qing can hear them (**fig. 250**).

We can learn a great deal about what the court looks like from picture 227. However, in picture 230, Cao Hanmei did not depict the court realistically, but condensed this court scene with different frames to indicate different scenes in different positions of the court. So the picture shows us a flattened impression, only symbolically representing a spatial location. Without the intensive study of

the characters' inner world, he could not have achieved this effect. Cao Hanmei elaborately conceived the perfect mode for each figure. Although the figures remain still, their facial expressions, eyes, and gestures convey multiple meanings, as they are represented in different phrases. Pang Chunmei and Pan Jinlian offer cohesion: Pang Chunmei's eyes focusing on the window means that she is in the second scene. Her gesture indicates that she is in the next scene, where she whispers in Pan Jinlian's ear; similarly, Pan Jinlian's left hand indicates that she is in the third scene, and her right hand shows that she is in the fourth scene.

From the above analysis, we can see that Cao Hanmei invented different types of continuous visual narrative by using horizontal lines, cloud patterns, or frames to represent marvelous modes of pictorial narrative. He usually designed some scenes in hidden positions in a painting. With the help of text and the clues that he deliberately exposed, we can find the hidden scenes, and feel unexpected pleasure. To some extent, it provides an interaction between the works and the readers.

The invention of these three types of composition is attributable not only to the Han stone reliefs, I think, but also to a sense of camera angle. What's more, dividing different sections in a painting can also be regarded as a film editing technique, that is, montage. Using filmmaking techniques will be discussed in more detail later.

Additionally, Cao Hanmei depicted his objects from different viewing angles, and combined focus perspective with moving point perspective, as can be seen in pictures 110, 129, and 186.

Picture 110 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* shows Pan Jinlian telling Pang Chunmei to bar the corner door when she hears Li Guijie coming (**fig. 253**). The court where Pan Jinlian lives is depicted in bird's-eye perspective. In this way, we can clearly see the scenes in and outside the court. Li Guijie and Pang Chunmei lean their weight on the door; one is strenuously trying to open the door, the other is holding it shut. Pan Jinlian is depicted at eye level. She is standing by a porch column, signaling "don't open the door" to Pang Chunmei. So Li Guijie must go away, greatly abashed.

Picture 129 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* represents two scenes (**fig. 254**). The first scene shows Pan Jinlian and Meng Yulou sewing in the arbor after dinner in the foreground, where a piece of brick suddenly seems to drop from the sky quite close to them. Meng Yulou is bending down to fasten her shoe and does not see it, but Pan Jinlian looks everywhere, unable to ascertain whose it is. The second scene is in the upper section of the painting, also depicted from a bird's-eye view. It shows a pale face that appears once at the wall and then vanishes.

Picture 186 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* consists of two scenes, showing Ximen Qing's servants Lai Bao and Lai Wang setting out for the Eastern capital to try to put matters right there (**fig. 255**). The first scene dominates almost the whole painting and represents Lai Bao and Lai Wang politely greeting the keeper of the

gate, and asking if Master Zhai is at home. The keeper of the gate informs the lesser Comptroller Gao An. When Gao An appears, Lai Pao goes forward and makes a reverence, at the same time offering ten taels of silver. The second scene is in the top right corner of the painting and shows Gao An taking those two servants to see the Vice-Chancellor. He takes Lai Bao through the entrance hall, and passing through a side door they come to three large rooms on the north side of the building.

Picture 186 creates a singular visual effect. In the foreground, we can see a pair of statues of guardian lions sitting on either side of the entrance, and two keepers of the gate are standing by. We also note that the statue of the guardian lion and the keeper on the left are much bigger than those on the right. However, Cao Hanmei placed all of them on the same horizontal line, creating a visual contradiction.

The above-mentioned paintings show that different view angles coexist in one painting. Objects are not depicted from a single viewpoint, but from a side view or a front view, from a low angle or a high angle, etc. It seems that Cao Hanmei combined the scatter perspective from traditional Chinese painting and elements of Cubism. As Cao Hanmei stated in his article “How I paint *gongbi* style painting,” “there are unexpected modern techniques which are blended in my traditional Chinese painting style.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Cao, “How I paint *gongbi* style painting.”

b. Filmmaking language

As mentioned in the previous chapter, going to the cinema was one of the most popular forms of entertainment for artists in Shanghai. Cao Hanmei was a dedicated movie fan. In this sense, Cao Hanmei's artworks were more or less inspired by filmmaking techniques. Several scholars mentioned that Cao Hanmei used filmmaking language in his painting. Lin Dazu (also known as Lin Hanzhi), one of Cao Hanmei's colleagues at Modern Publications Company, wrote,

Viewing Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* is like seeing a movie. Cao painted *The Golden Lotus* just like a film director directs the making of a film. Cao was a screenwriter, film director, scene designer, and actor in one.¹⁹⁰

Lu Jinghua claimed in his article,

Although it depicts the same place, each image of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* is unique. For example, Pan Jinlian's room was depicted from the front, from the left side, from the right side, from a distance, or in close-up. The props have a fixed position. Therefore, we can identify which is Pan Jinlian's room. It is like a movie scene, just changing the camera angle.¹⁹¹

Huizi stated in his article that someone had compared Cao Hanmei's work with the films of the German film director Ernst Lubitsch (1892–1947).¹⁹² At the time, Ernst Lubitsch was very popular in China. The magazine *Wanxiang*, which was edited by The Shanghai Modern Publications Company, introduced Ernst Lubitsch as one of the four most famous film directors in the world. The other

¹⁹⁰ Lin Dazu, "Tan tiancai huajia Cao Hanmei," *Taipingyang zhoubao* vol. 1, no. 89 (1943).

¹⁹¹ Lu Jinghua, "Guanyu Cao Hanmei xiansheng *Jinpingmei* huaji de hua."

¹⁹² Huizi, in: Cao Hanmei, *Jinpingmei huaji* vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004), unpaginated.

three film directors were the Austrian Georg Wilhelm Pabst, the Soviet Sergei Michailowitsch Eisenstein, and the American Cecil B. Demille.¹⁹³

From the above-mentioned articles, we can see that all these contemporaries admired Cao Hanmei's use of film language in *The Golden Lotus*. Cao Hanmei was able to skillfully use film technique in his works not only because he had a passion for movies, but also because he often reflected on the development of Chinese movies. When new movies were being shown, he was always optimistic, but always disappointed.¹⁹⁴ Without these experiences, Cao Hanmei would never have acquired the skills he needed for his art. Cao Hanmei's movie review of *Late Spring* 殘春 in 1933 reads in part:

The movie was so boring already in the first act. During late spring, why not film the garden scene outside the windows? Trees nod in the wind. The shot pans slowly from the outside window across the room. A lazy, modern maiden is reading a book. The softness of the breeze is making her feel sleepy. What a perfectly beautiful scene which would be on topic. Unfortunately, the film director did not think of it. He filmed a maiden reading a book at her desk. The maiden always maintained the same posture. What a wooden performance!¹⁹⁵

This movie review brings a vivid series of images to mind. Cao Hanmei was good at scene-setting. He praised the use of filmmaking skills in painting when he commented on the selected works of The First National Cartoon Exhibition. He appreciated the cartoon *Yanshi* (The Naked Corpse) because it drew from cinema

¹⁹³ "Tongzhi shijie yingtian de si wei ming daoyan," *Wanxiang* no. 1 (1934).

¹⁹⁴ Cao Hanmei, "Buzhi suo yun de Yaoshan yanshi," 不知所云的猹山艷史, *Shiritan* no. 6 (1933).

¹⁹⁵ Cao Hanmei, "You shi yizhang shiwang de guochanpian canchun," *Shiritan* no. 7 (1933).

scenes, which was very modern, he said (**fig. 256**).¹⁹⁶ In the following text, I analyze how Cao Hanmei used film techniques with concrete examples.

Pictures 154 and 155 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* shows Wu Yueniang, Li Jiao'er, Meng Yulou, and Pan Jinlian going to Li Ping'er at her house because it offered a good view of the fair during the lantern festival (**fig. 257–258**).

Picture 154 depicts the back view of Pan Jinlian and another lady, who are leaning out the windows, watching the lantern fair. We can see a sea of people through the windows, which is a good fit for the text:

They looked out of the window at the fair. There were hosts of people at the fair, and it was a wonderful sight. Dozens of arches, with lanterns hanging all round them, had been set up in the street. There were all kinds of booths, surrounded by crowds of men and women admiring the lanterns, some red as roses, and some green as willows. Horses and carriages made a noise like thunder.

Picture 155 depicts Pan Jinlian, Meng Yulou, and the two singing-girls looking out of the window at the fair. Pan Jinlian flaunts her silken sleeves and points with her fine fingers, showing off her gold rings. She leans half out of the window, biting melon seeds and throwing the skins at passers-by. She and Meng Yulou laugh.

In pictures 154 and 155, Cao Hanmei used the film technique shot-reverse-shot, which often represents dialogue scenes: one actor is shown looking at another actor, and the other actor is shown looking back at the first one.

¹⁹⁶ Cao Hanmei, "Benjie Quanguo manhua zhanlanhui chupin wo jian."

Here Cao Hanmei did not depict a dialogue scene, but two scenes: one is the lantern fair, and the other is Pan Jinlian, Meng Yulou, and the two singing-girls.

Pictures 189 and 190 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* are examples of Cao Hanmei using a tracking shot, where the camera moves in on the subject (**fig. 259–260**). Picture 189 depicts Ximen Qing having heard that Li Ping'er has married Jiang Zhushan. He is very angry as he goes home. When he passes through the inner door, Wu Yueniang, Meng Yulou, Pan Jinlian, and Ximen Dajie are skipping in the courtyard. When Ximen Qing comes, they withdraw to the inner court. Picture 190 represents Pan Jinlian leaning against a pillar to tie her shoelaces. Ximen Qing cries, "Have you nothing better to do than fool about like this?" He kicks her twice and then goes to the inner court.

Picture 373 shows Ximen Qing seeing Pang Chunmei at the top of the artificial mound, called the Land of Clouds. He lifts his head and looks at her, and then he beckons to her to come down, but she refuses (**fig. 261**). Picture 374 depicts Ximen Qing leaving Pan Jinlian and running up the stone steps to the arbor. Pang Chunmei flees down a tiny path to the right, through the grottos (**fig. 262**). Picture 375 shows Ximen Qing catching Pang Chunmei and taking her in his arms (**fig. 263**). Picture 376 shows Ximen Qing carrying Pang Chunmei like a feather to the Arbor of the Vines (**fig. 264**).

In pictures 373 to 376, Cao Hanmei adopted the film editing technique known as montage, separating the scene into four "camera shots" by using a high

angle shot, a birds-eye shot, a medium shot, and a close-up shot. Cao Hanmei used the strategy “the part for the whole” to show the process of Ximen Qing going to an artificial mound to chase after Pang Chunmei. Such an effect could not be produced with a panoramic image. Cao Hanmei was good at choosing camera angles and shots. It is little wonder that he was disappointed with the movie *The Love Story on Yao Mountain* 猺山艷史, as the director showed a clear lack of ability to use camera shots. The first act seems to show the audience where Yao Mountain is located, but even after several shots in transition, the audience still has no idea where it is.¹⁹⁷

Cao Hanmei admired a 1931 Soviet silent drama film called the *Golden Mountains* directed by Sergei Yutkevich. He wrote,

The camera shots were perfect. Angles, movements, and light effects were just right for the occasion. He used a low-angle shot to photograph the employers. This had the effect of making them look powerful. He used a high-angle shot to film the employees. The film director considered every trivial scene in detail.¹⁹⁸

Picture 238 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* could have been inspired by the low-angle shot strategy of the film *Golden Mountains* (fig. 265). It depicts Li Ping'er coming to offer tea to Wu Yueniang and the others. Li Ping'er is beautifully dressed in a gown of red silk embroidered with gold and a skirt with

¹⁹⁷ Cao Hanmei, “Buzhi suo yun de Yao shan yanshi,” *Shiritan* no. 6 (1933).

¹⁹⁸ Cao Hanmei, “Jinshan jianping,” “金山”簡評, *Shiritan* no. 5 (1933).

an embroidered pattern of green leaves. Yingchun is with her, carrying a silver pot and hibiscus, with a box of tea leaves.

Cao Hanmei depicted Li Ping'er and her maids from below eye level. This has the effect of making her look powerful, which indicates that Li Ping'er's status rose after she married Ximen Qing.

c. The Scene at Night: Woodcut Technique and Photography

In his review of the movie *The Love Story on Yao Mountain*, Cao Hanmei wrote:

There are contradictions too numerous to mention one by one in this movie. For example, several scenes at night are too bright, which make them impossible to differentiate from daytime scenes.¹⁹⁹

Cao Hanmei laid great emphasis on the distinction between night scenes and daytime scenes, especially with regard to lighting techniques. As mentioned before, Cao Hanmei stated that one of his new approaches was to use different techniques to convey night scenes. Cao Hanmei indeed broke new ground to portray scenes at night. The night scene in Chinese traditional painting often manifests through the moon, candles, and stars. In addition to these, Cao Hanmei implied a scene taking place at night by adapting the woodcut print technique, and imitating black-and-white photography.

Picture 40 of the 1941 *Golden Lotus* shows Pan Jinlian poisoning her husband Wu Da at midnight (**fig. 266**). Pan Jinlian is sitting at Wu Da's bedside, her right hand pushing on Wu Da's shoulder, forcing medicine on her husband.

¹⁹⁹ Cao, "Buzhi suo yun de *Yaoshan yanshi*."

Wu Da is putting on a long face, shaking his hands in disapproval at having to take the medicine. Pan Jinlian's clothes and her surroundings are depicted with the woodcut print technique.

During the 1930s, cartoonist Wang Dunqing 王敦慶 called for using woodcut techniques in cartoons as European cartoonists did.²⁰⁰ In response, Cao Hanmei also painted cartoons in this style. For example, in the cartoon *People in the Metropolis go to the Village for Adventures* 都會裏的人獵奇到農村去, people who live in the metropolis do not expect this kind of street (**fig. 267**). The lady thinks that she has never seen such clothes in a dress shop. The car cannot drive on this road, and they must get out and walk.

In addition, Pan Jinlian's and Wu Da's faces, their hands, and the candle nearby are depicted in white. It seems that the candle illuminates them. Worth mentioning is a photographic work, *Bajiao yuan* 芭蕉怨 by Cao Hanmei, which was published in the magazine *Shidai* in 1934 (**fig. 268**). This photograph shows a lady standing behind banana trees. The sunlight shines from the upper right. The lady's forehead and her nose are highlighted. Other parts of her body are in shadow because the banana trees block the sun. In this sense, a similarity can be seen between Cao Hanmei's treatment of the figure's face and the shadow in black-and-white photography. It is more obvious that pictures 162 and 496 imitate techniques from black-and-white photography.

²⁰⁰ Wang Dunqing, "Manhuajia de xiuyang: Part 2," 漫畫家的修養 (下), *Shidai manhua* no. 24 (20 December 1935).

Picture 162 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* shows Ximen Qing going to see Li Ping'er at her house in Lion Street (**fig. 269**). Li Ping'er, holding a candle, is waiting for him in the hall. She looks very charming in her pretty head-dress and soft white clothes. She is leaning on the lattice longing for him to come; and when he comes, she runs downstairs to meet him, her lotus-like feet moving swiftly, her silken skirt fluttering.

The three figures (Li Ping'er, Ximen Qing, and his servant Dai'an), a horse, a candle, and the moon are depicted with black lines on a white background. In contrast, their surrounding is depicted with white lines on a black background. This produces sharp contrasts between light and dark areas in the painting, which shows a silhouette effect, or flat surface.

Picture 496 from the 1943 version, as mentioned above, is divided into upper and lower sections (**fig. 229**). Cao Hanmei distinguished the two sections by using two specific iconographic signs: movement and light. The upper section is lighter than the lower section. The different movement was deliberately designed. In the upper section, Dai'an, who carries a lantern, and two servants who carry Li Ping'er in a sedan chair, are running at full speed. The figures in this section are depicted running in the same direction. The figures' mood is emphasized by their motion. In other words, the images emphasize that Li Ping'er is eager to go back to take care of her baby. Conversely, in the lower section, the primary servant, Qin Tong, is looking back at Pan Jinlian and Wu Yueniang, who are sitting in the sedan chair. Pan Jinlian and Wu Yueniang are looking at each other. It seems that

they are talking about their four sedan chairs with only one lantern. In addition, we also notice that the movement of the figures is more of a stage effect than a real-life condition, or the body movement of Peking Opera performers, to be exact. Indeed, Cao Hanmei once said that he and his brothers were crazy about Peking opera, sneaking out to the theater and becoming so absorbed as to forget dinner, coming home very late at night and falling asleep the moment their heads touched the pillow. They talked opera in their sleep, and when their mother discovered their obsession, she punished them for it (**fig. 270**). Interestingly, they also put on plays at home, using materials available in their house, such as using the patio as a stage, making a wooden sword and wrapping it with a sheet of aluminum foil, etc. (**fig. 271–272**).²⁰¹ Opera was very popular, not only in the circles of literature and art but also among common people. The editorial team of *Shidai manhua* produced a calendar of Peking opera facial masks and advertised it in its first issue (**fig. 273**). In this circumstance, Cao Hanmei spontaneously applied elements of opera in his works; for example, picture 16 depicts Wu Song full of fierce anger, which suggests a Peking opera mask (**fig. 274-276**).

Picture 312 of the 1942 *Golden Lotus* shows Pan Jinlian, Li Ping'er, Meng Yulou, Song Huilian, and Chen Jingji going shopping at the lantern fair after their family dinner on January 16 (**fig. 277**). Chen Jingji and Laixing are walking beside them, setting off fireworks as they go along. There are lotuses that slowly

²⁰¹ Cao Hanmei, "Huiyi ertong shidai de xin jiu nian," 回憶兒童時代的新舊年, *Shanghai manhua* no. 44 (1929).

throw fire, golden thread chrysanthemums, and orchids ten feet high. The representations of fireworks and the starry sky could be inspired by the fireworks photographs in *The Illustrated London News* (**fig. 278**), one of the favorite magazines of the editorial team of The Modern Publication Company (see chapter two).

Shanghai, as a boomtown, was flooded with modern conveniences. Among them, electric light brought new vitality to the nightlife. The electric light became popular in the early 20th century.²⁰² At the time, the night scene symbolized modernization. *Shanghai manhua* published columns of night scenes—for example, a series of night scenes of the fair in the West Lake of Hangzhou: *The Light in front of the Fair Ground*, *The Lighthouse of the Pier at the Fair*, *The Night Scene of the Fair at the West Lake* in issue 61, *The Night Scene of the Music Pavilion at the Fair in the West Lake* in issue 62, and *The Aerial View of a Night Scene at the Fair* in issue 64. A series of *The Night in Shanghai* in issue 102 bears the caption:

The smoke-ridden city of Shanghai is proud of its brilliant light in the nighttime. Three to five colorful pictures were taken along the Nanjing Road and the front view of the Capital Theatre.

It is a pleasure to take a moment in the night market where light is blazing. Shanghai is a joyous place for lucky men of the world. The lights glare down on people on a drinking spree. All of these are temptations. And if

²⁰² Xiong Yuezhi, *Shanghai tongshi* 上海通史 vol. 9 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999), 5.

those people who are suffering could also see the night scene of Shanghai, it would please their eye.²⁰³

I believe this is why Cao Hanmei was so devoted to presenting nighttime scenes.

To sum up, the 1940s version of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* employed a cross-media approach: he appropriated compositions from rubbings of Han period stone reliefs and Utagawa Hiroshige, imitated woodcut and photography techniques, used filmmaking skill, and adopted the *manga* language. All of these achieved an effect of flatness. The reasons for this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The creation of Cao Hanmei's *The Golden Lotus* was closely connected to the artistic trends of the time, mass media, and market economic elements. Chinese modern art, literature trends, popular print media, and national development were entangled.

As Shanghai grew into a metropolis and urban culture boomed, Chinese ink painting as high art no longer dominated the mainstream, and popular visual art began its inexorable march to prominence. To some extent, the prosperity of industry and commerce promoted the progress of art. The boundary between commercial art and the fine arts was indistinct; for instance, beauty poster

²⁰³ *Shanghai manhua* no. 102 (June 1930).

calendars not only decorated indoor space but were also channels to learn the techniques of Western art. Chinese artists were eager to understand European and American art. Cao Hanmei hit upon the idea to paint *The Golden Lotus* when the nude painting was introduced in China. But he got off to a bad start, because the novel was still banned at that time, and his painting skill was immature. Up until the rebirth of late Ming literature and culture in the 1930s, he used this trend to study nude painting, and pursue his artistic ideals.

In the course of the late Ming literary revival, the ban was lifted from the novel *The Golden Lotus*. What is more important, it led to a furious study of this novel, and Cao Hanmei was able to gain a penetrating insight into it and convey his singularly original opinion about the text. He explored Euro-American art through print media, rethought modern art in an imaginative way, and exerted himself to experiment with different painting techniques and art forms, in order to develop Chinese modern art. The success of the Japanese pavilions at the Great London Exposition of 1862, the International Exposition of 1867 in Paris, and the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, caused a great sensation in European art circles. Thus, the decorative patterns of craft art and planes of color found in *Ukiyo-e* were considered the epitome of modern art. This visually powerful plane effect was exactly what Cao Hanmei pursued in his works.

Cao Hanmei's cross-media thinking depended largely on his multiple identities in publishing pictorials, as illustrator, journalist, editor, cartoonist, designer, and sponsor. He lived in an age when multi-media art emerged. His

experiences brought him into contact with artists from many different realms. He was good at learning various techniques and making them his own. In doing so, he created a novel representation in *The Golden Lotus*, which gave his art a strong and marvelous visual appeal.

The cartoon circle called for integrating woodcut techniques into their works in the 1930s. In response, Cao Hanmei painted some pieces in this style; cartoonists and woodcutters co-created works, as was often the case, when Cao Hanmei took part in the National Salvation Cartoon Propaganda Corps. All of these laid the foundation for his woodcut techniques in *The Golden Lotus*.

Cao Hanmei improved the technique after years of experimentation in his early artworks, such as experiments from *Song of Everlasting Regret*, *Li Shishi*, *Chen Yuanyuan*, and *The Tragic Story of Yuniang*. We can say that without the compilations of the published *The Golden Lotus* in cartoon magazines of the 1930s as catalogs, Cao Hanmei might not have considered the necessity of continuity in his works; without the “Copyright of Filmmaking Restriction” in *Li Shishi*, there would not be such a strong sense of filmmaking in his later *The Golden Lotus*.

Cao Hanmei had rich experiences in design, and his signature even showed a pattern effect. He respected Chinese traditional art, insisting on painting with ink and brush. Painting his signature with a brush, in imitation of Chinese seal forms, created a cross-media effect. No matter whether it was consciously or unconsciously achieved, he subsequently made the best of this cross-media

approach and developed a new way of conceiving Chinese art, blending techniques from various media in his work. Thus, we can see that he revived Han stone relief, and developed new types of composition. He was inspired by European art; he applied filmmaking skills, woodcut languages, black-and-white photography techniques, *manga* languages, etc. He used all the skills he had, traditional or modern, Chinese, European, or American. He translated all of them for his story, reconstructing an interesting narrative with singular images. Compositions, perspectives, line styles, etc., all of these were employed to create a plane visual impression, especially with a straight line drawing-style.

Cao Hanmei painted many pieces for classic and modern novels. Even the *New Scarlet Letter "A"*, *Classic of Poetry* 詩經構意, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, and *The Family* show styles similar to *The Golden Lotus*. However, unlike *The Golden Lotus*, they were not in step with the zeitgeist. *The Golden Lotus* deserves further study because the artist included so many innovations. The relationship of historical background with the process of his creation, his approaches, and his own cultural taste provide us a remarkable case through which to understand Chinese modern art. *The Golden Lotus* was his experiment with art itself, which distinguishes it from most other works that were created for political or military propaganda.

The Golden Lotus was what made Cao Hanmei both famous and notorious. He met the trend of reviving the literature and culture of the late Ming Dynasty in the 1930s, and leaped at the opportunity. However, as an erotic novel, *The Golden*

Lotus had an impact on the reception of his version. We can see that Cao Hanmei promoted Chinese modernization by considering the traditional Chinese culture system and literati painting, instead of merely imitating the techniques and forms of European modern art. He was involved in publishing pictorials and had original views on Chinese and Western culture. Encountering the cult of Euro-American modern art and Japanese *manga*, he showed caution. He was well aware that he could not simply copy others. He had no opposition to returning to the ancients and tradition. He developed his own variation based on Chinese and Euro-American arts. *The Golden Lotus* shows his compromise strategy, his aesthetic sentiment regarding the female from the viewpoint of a male artist, and his interpretation of the term “modernity”, which can enrich our understanding of Chinese modern art in the Republican period.

Glossary

Ai Lianjun	愛蓮君	
<i>Asakusa Kinryūzan</i>	淺草金龍山	Kinryūzan Temple in Asakusa
<i>Bali wuchang zhi yinxiang</i>	巴黎舞場之印象	Impression of Paris Dance Hall
<i>Bajiao yuan</i>	芭蕉怨	
<i>Baimei yaji</i>	百美雅集	Gathering of One Hundred Beauties
Bai Yushuang	白玉霜	
<i>Baituo Zhong jinshi</i>	拜托鐘進士	Request Zhong Kui
Bao Tianxiao	包天笑	
<i>Bie Shikui</i>	別石簣	
<i>Bingzhai huayao</i>	兵災畫謠	Scourge of War
<i>Canchun</i>	殘春	<i>Late Spring</i>
Cao Danyun	曹淡雲	Cao Hanmei's daughter
Cao Hanmei	曹涵美	
Cao Weiyun	曹味韻	Cao Hanmei's daughter
Cao Yuru	曹鈺如	Cao Hanmei's grandfather
Cao Ziyu	曹子瑜	Cao Hanmei's adoptive father
Cao Zhenxiang	曹臻庠	Cao Hanmei got this name after he was adopted.
<i>Changhenge</i>	長恨歌	Song of Everlasting Regret
Changshan	長衫	A traditional Chinese robe
Chang Yu	常玉	
Chen Duxiu	陳獨秀	
Chen Fuyu	陳福愉	
Chen Hongshou	陳洪綬	
Chen Hengzhe	陳衡哲	
Chen Qiucao	陳秋草	
Chen Shuren	陳樹人	
Chen Yuanyuan	陳圓圓	
Cheng Shewo	成舍我	
<i>Chuxia fuzhuang</i>	初夏服裝	Dress of Early Summer
<i>Chungong tu</i>	春宮圖	Pictures of spring
<i>Chun</i>	春	Spring

<i>Chun tu</i>	春圖	Erotic painting
Cuihua	粹華	Bookshop Cuihua
Da Dongya gongrongquan	大東亞共榮圈	Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere
Da Dongya xinzhiyu	大東亞新秩序	New Order in Greater East Asia
Da Dongya wenxue	大東亞文學	Greater East Asian Literature
<i>Dagua</i>	大褂	A traditional Chinese robe
Da Shanghai	大上海	Metropol Cinema
Dai'an	玳安	Ximen Qing's servant
Dan Zhongyu	但杜宇	
<i>Dian zhong hua sheng</i>	滇中畫賸	
Ding Cong	丁聰	
Ding Song	丁悚	
Dong Qichang	董其昌	
Du Heng	杜衡	
<i>Duhui li de ren lieqi dao nongcun qu</i>	都會裏的人獵奇到農村去	People in the Metropolis go to the Village for Adventures
Duli chubanshe	獨立出版社	Independence Press
<i>Fayang zhi yi</i>	發樣之一	One of Hair Dressing Fashions
Fan Zhongyun	樊仲雲	
Fei Xiaolou	費曉樓	
<i>Fensui haomeng</i>	粉碎好夢	Shattered dream
Feng Hefa	馮和法	
Feng Menglong	馮夢龍	
Fukuchi Fukuichi	福地復一	
Gai Qi	改琦	
Gao Jianfu	高劍父	
Gao Qifeng	高奇峰	
Ge Gongzhen	戈公振	
Ge Baoquan	戈寶權	
Gengsheng Zhongguo wenhua zuotanhui	更生中國文化座談會	Conference to Regenerate Chinese Culture
<i>Guohua tu'an</i>	國花圖案	The Pattern of National Flower
<i>Guofu yaoren</i>	國府要人群像	Portraits of the very Important

<i>qunxiang</i>		Persons of Kuomintang Government
Guo Jingqiu	郭鏡秋	
Guo Linfeng	郭林鳳	Ye Lingfeng's wife
Guo Moruo	郭沫若	
Guozijian	國子監	Imperial Academy
Hai weng	海翁	Liu Haisu's <i>hao</i>
Hanjian wenyi	漢奸文藝	Traitor Literature and Art
Hanmei Kefeng shizhu	涵美可風室主	Studio-Host of Hanmei and Kefeng
<i>Haneda no watashi Benten no yashiro</i>	はねだのわたし 弁天の社	The Ferry at Haneda and the Benten Shrine
Han Yunzhen	韓雲珍	A movie star
Hang Zhiying	杭穉英	
Heping wenxue	和平文學	Peace Literature
He Tianjian	賀天健	
He Tiehua	何鐵華	
Hu Boxiang	胡伯翔	
Hu Die	胡蝶	A movie star
Huabao chao	畫報潮	Pictorial Tides
<i>Huagu niang</i>	花鼓娘	Play Flower-Drum Woman
<i>Hua Mulan</i>	花木蘭	
Huang Dade	黃大德	
Huang Dagang	黃大剛	
Huang Miaozi	黃苗子	
Huang Wennong	黃文農	
Ichikawa Sadanji	市川左團次	
Ishino Ryuuzan	石野龍山	
Jian Youwen	簡又文	
Jiang Dongliang	江棟良	
<i>Jianglai zui modeng de yi shi zhu</i>	將來最摩登的衣食住	Most Fashionable Necessities of Life in the Future
Jiang Xiaojian	江小鶻	
Jiang Wenbo	江文波	Qi Foqing's wife

<i>Jinlian yihen</i>	金蓮遺痕	Foot binding and shoes for bound feet
<i>Jinpingmei</i>	金瓶梅	The Golden Lotus
<i>Jinpingmei cihua</i>	金瓶梅詞話	The Golden Lotus, Wanli edition, the oldest edition (dated 1573–1620).
<i>Jinpingmei huaji</i>	金瓶梅畫集	Catalog of The Golden Lotus
<i>Jinpingmei quantu</i>	金瓶梅全圖	The Golden Lotus
Jinwu shudian	金屋書店	Golden House Bookshop
Jin Sujuan	金素娟	Ding Song's wife
Jiuwang manhua xuanchuandui	救亡漫畫宣傳隊	National Salvation Cartoon Propaganda Corps
Juelan she	決瀾社	Storm Society
<i>Junquan</i>	軍權	Military Sovereignty
<i>Kameido Umeyashiki</i>	龜戶梅屋舖	Plum Park in Kameido
Kefeng	可風	Cao Hanmei's wife, original name Yuan Yuzhen
Kuriyagawa Hakuson	廚川白村	
<i>Kuramoto Hideaki Shijian yu Ye Muhua an zhi duibi</i>	藏本事件與葉木華案之對比	Comparison of the Case with Kuramoto Hideaki and Ye Muhua
Laiqingge	來青閣	Bookshop Laiqingge
Lan Weibang	藍蔚邦	
Lang Jingshan	郎靜山	
Li Dandan	李旦旦	A movie star
Li Guijie	李桂姐	Singing-girl
Li Jiao'er	李嬌兒	Ximen Qing's first concubine. She was originally a courtesan.
Li Mengyang	李夢陽	
Li Ping'er	李瓶兒	Ximen Qing's sixth concubine. She was originally Hua Zixu's wife.
<i>Li Ping'er siyu Feicuixuan</i>	李瓶兒私語翡翠軒	Li Ping'er Communicates a Secret in the Kingfisher Pavilion

<i>Li Shishi waizhuan</i>	李師師外傳	An Unofficial Biography of Li Shishi
<i>Liti de dushi shenghuo</i>	立體的都市生活	The Cubist Life of the Metropolis
<i>Li Yu quanji</i>	李漁全集	
Li Zhi	李贄	
<i>Liangge ren de texing, yige jin wanpi yige jin daliang</i>	兩個人的特性，一個盡頑皮一個盡大量	The Characters of Two Persons, One is too Naughty, Another is too Tolerant
Liang Hongyu	梁紅玉	
Liang Qichao	梁啟超	
<i>Liangxi shi'er qiren xiaozhuan</i>	梁溪十二奇人小傳	Biographies of Strange Persons from Liangxi
Liang Xihong	梁錫鴻	
<i>Liaozhai zhi</i>	聊齋誌	Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio
Lin Baisheng	林柏生	
Liu Dajie	劉大傑	
Liu Haisu	劉海粟	
Liu Hanjun	劉漢鈞	A movie star
Liu Na'ou	劉訥鷗	
Liu Shuofu	劉碩甫	
Ling Qing	菱清	A movie star
Lu Jianfen	陸劍芬	A movie star
Lu Shaofei	魯少飛	
Lu Xiaoman	陸小曼	
Lu Xun	魯迅	
Lu Zhixiang	陸志庠	
Lü Cheng	呂澂	
<i>Lü Gang meishujie zuotanhui</i>	旅港美術界座談會	The Art Circle Symposium in Hong Kong
Ma Guoliang	馬國亮	
Ma Jiming	馬季明	
Mao Jianpei	毛劍佩	A movie star

Manhuahui	漫畫會	The Cartoon Society
Manmu	漫木	Cartoons and woodblock
<i>Mei de zhuangshu</i>	美的裝束	Clothing Fashions
Mei Lanfang	梅蘭芳	
<i>Meiren tu</i>	美人圖	The Beauty
<i>Meiren baitai</i>	美人百態	Varieties of Beauty
Mei Sheng	枚乘	
<i>Meisho Edo Hyakkei</i>	名所江戸百景	One Hundred Famous Views of Edo
Meng Yulou	孟玉樓	Ximen Qing's third concubine. She was originally the wife of Yang Zongxi 楊宗錫
<i>Minjian qingge</i>	民間情歌	Folk Love Songs
Min Liying	閔麗鶯	A movie star
Ming chao de xiaohua	明朝的笑話	Jokes from the Ming period
Ming ren baijia xiaoshuo	明人百家小說	Collected Novels of the Ming Era
<i>Mingxing baitai</i>	明星百態	Varieties of Movie Stars
<i>Mingxing baitai zhi shisi</i>	明星百態之十四	Picture 14 of Varieties of Movie Stars
Mu Shiyong	穆時英	
<i>Naliang tu</i>	納涼圖	Enjoy the Cool
Neya Churoku	根箭忠綠	
Ni Hongyan	倪紅雁	A movie star
Ni Yide	倪貽德	
Ni Yingming	倪英明	Huang Wennong's wife
<i>Ningxiang tu</i>	凝香圖	<i>Condensed Fragrance</i>
Nong Huaying	濃化影	A movie star
<i>Nüzi sanbai liushi hang zhi ershiwu: Zheng nainai</i>	女子三百六十行之二十五：掙奶奶	Female Occupations: Breast-Feeding
<i>Nüzi sanbai liushi</i>	女子三百六十行	Female Occupations: Nurse

<i>hang zhi sanshi: Nainiang</i>	之三十：奶娘	
<i>Nüzi sanbai liushi hang zhi yi: Da huagu</i>	女子三百六十行 之一：打花鼓	Female Occupations: Playing the Flower-Drum
<i>Nüzi sanbai liushi hang zhi sanshiqi: Tiao wunü</i>	女子三百六十行 之三十七：跳舞 女	Female Occupations: Dancers
<i>Nüzi sanbai liushi hang zhi sishiba: Gewu mingxing</i>	女子三百六十行 之四十八：歌舞 明星	Female Occupations: Dancing Girls
<i>Nüzi sanbai liushi hang zhi liushijiu: Nüzi shangdian</i>	女子三百六十行 之六十九女子商 店	Female Occupations: Female Shopkeeper
<i>Nüzi huxiong de bianqian</i>	女子護胸的變遷	The Development of Women's Underclothes
Ōten Shimokawa	下川凹天	
Pailou	牌樓	Archway
<i>Paiyongchang</i>	派用場	
Pan Jinlian	潘金蓮	Ximen Qing's fifth concubine. She was originally Wu Da's wife.
<i>Pan Jinlian zuinao putao jia</i>	潘金蓮醉鬧葡萄 架	Pan Jinlian Engages in a Drunken Orgy under the Grape Arbor
<i>Pan Jinlian lantang yao wuzhan</i>	潘金蓮蘭湯邀午 戰	Pan Jinlian Enjoys a Midday Battle in the Bathtub
<i>Pantao hui</i>	蟠桃會	The Feast of Peaches
Pang Chunmei	龐春梅	One of Pan Jinlian's maids
Pang Xunqin	龐薰琴	
<i>Piyacilü shihua ji</i>	琵琶詞侶詩畫集	Poem and Painting Collection of Beardsley
<i>Pinghuazhai ji</i>	瓶花齋集	Vase Studio Collection
Ping Jinya	平襟亞	
Pingju	評劇	Ping opera
Qifa	七發	

<i>Qijie</i>	起解	Arraignment
<i>qipao</i>	旗袍	Cheongsam
Qian Shoutie	錢瘦鐵	
Qiao Wenshou	喬文壽	
Qingliange	青蓮閣	A teahouse for prostitutes
<i>Qingnian jie</i>	青年界	
Qiuju	秋菊	One of Pan Jinlian's maids
Qiu Ying	仇英	
Ren Hong	任鴻	
<i>Rensheng de sige shiqi</i>	人生的四個時期	
Rong Desheng	榮德生	
Rong Zongjing	榮宗敬	
<i>Ruci Bali</i>	如此巴黎	Such is Paris
<i>Rulin wai shi</i>	儒林外史	Unofficial History of the Scholars
Sa Kongliao	薩空了	
Sasaki Shōdō	佐々木象堂	
<i>Saruwaka-machi yoru no kei</i>	猿わか町よるの景	Night View of Saruwaka-machi
Shanghai meishu zhuanke xuexiao	上海美術專科學校	Shanghai School of Fine Arts
Shanghai meizhuan zhangce	上海美專賬冊	The Account of Shanghai Meizhuan
Shanghai shidai tushu gongsi	上海時代圖書公司	Shanghai Modern Publications Company
Shanghai yishu xunkan	上海艺术旬刊	
Shang tu xia wen	上圖下文	Painting above, text below
<i>Shao fuling heshang ting yinsheng</i>	燒夫靈和尚聽淫聲	During the Tablet-burning Monks Overhear Sounds of Venerary

Shao Xunmei	邵洵美	
<i>Shaoyao</i>	芍藥	The Chinese Peony
<i>She yu furen</i>	蛇與婦人	Snake and Woman
<i>Shen Bao</i>	申報	Shanghai News
Shenmei shuguan	審美書館	Shenmei Bookstore
Sheng Peiyu	盛佩玉	
Sheng Xuanhuai	盛宣懷	
Shidai gongyi meishu zhi yanjiu	時代工藝美術之 研究	Arts and Crafts and Fine Art Research
Shijie renti zhi bijiao	世界人體之比較	A Comparison of the Bodies of Peoples Worldwide
<i>Shiju quantu</i>	時局全圖	Political Map of 19th-Century China
<i>Shinü hua</i>	仕女畫	Beautiful Women
<i>Shiren you diyu</i>	詩人遊地獄	A Poet Wanders in Hell
Shishi manhua	時事漫畫	Column, “cartoon of current events”
<i>Shiyin Hanmei tuhua</i>	石印涵美圖畫	Periodical Shiyin Hanmei
Song Meiling	宋美齡	President Chiang Kai-shek's wife
Song Huilian	宋蕙蓮	Laiwang's wife
<i>Suidobashi Surugadai</i>	水道橋駿河台	Suidō Bridge and the Surugadai Quarter
Sun Hanbing	孫寒冰	
Sun Xue'e	孫雪娥	Ximen Qing's fourth concubine. She was originally a widow.
<i>Tang Song chuanqi ji</i>	唐宋傳奇集	Tales of the Marvelous from the Tang and Song dynasties
Tang Suzhen	湯素貞	Zhang Guangyu's wife
Tang Wei	唐薇	
Tao Kangde	陶亢德	
Teng Gu	滕固	

Tian Han	田漢	
Utagawa Hiroshige	歌川広重	
<i>Wan Ming shiba jia xiaopin</i>	晚明十八家小品	The Late Ming Essay from 18 Scholars
Wang Daoyuan	王道源	
Wang Dunqing	王敦慶	
Wang Hanlun	王漢倫	A movie star
Wang Jiyuan	王濟遠	
Wang Shuyang	王叔旻	
Wang Xiaomou	王小某	
Wang Yachen	汪亞塵	
<i>Weilai zhi tianru da youxing</i>	未來之天乳大遊行	A Demonstration of the Natural Breast Association
Wei Xiubao	魏秀寶	A movie star
Wen Zhu	文珠	A movie star
Wu Guanli	吳觀蠡	
<i>Wuxi zhuming chuanniang A'Qin</i>	無錫著名船娘阿琴	The Famous Boatwoman A'Qin from Wuxi
<i>Wuxi Xishan shuhua she</i>	無錫錫山書畫社	Painting and Calligraphy Studio of Xishan in City Wuxi
Wu Youru	吳友如	
Wu Yueniang	吳月娘	Moon Lady, Ximen Qing's second wife
Xibian caoying	溪邊草影	Grass on the Bank of the Stream
Ximen Qing	西門慶	
<i>Xixia tu</i>	膝下圖	
Xia Yuerun	夏月潤	
<i>Xiao Chen liu Jing waishi</i>	小陳留京外史	Story of Xiao Chen in Beijing
Xiao pinwen	小品文	Short Literary Essay
<i>Xiao shenmi</i>	小神秘	Little Mystery
<i>Xiaoshuo jie geming</i>	小說界革命	Fiction Revolution
<i>Xiaoshun ge</i>	孝順歌	

Xiesheng	寫生	Lifelike painting or sketch life
<i>Xin honglou shier jinchai</i>	新紅樓十二金釵	New Version of Jinling Twelve Beauties in The Dream of the Red Chamber
<i>Xinke xiuxiang piping Jinpingmei</i>	新刻繡像批評金瓶梅	Review on <i>The Golden Lotus</i> with Newly Carved Illustrations
Xin wutai	新舞臺	New Stage Theater
<i>Xinghua tian</i>	杏花天	The Apricot Blossom Season
Xiuxiang xiaoshuo	繡像小說	Illustrated Fiction
Xu Beihong	徐悲鴻	
Xu Lai	徐來	A movie star
Xu Su'e	徐素娥	A movie star
Xu Zhimo	徐誌摩	
<i>Yanqin yiqing</i>	燕寢怡情	Palace scenes with figures
<i>Yanshi</i>	艷尸	The Naked Corpse
Yan Yuexian	嚴月閑	A movie star
Yang Naimei	楊耐梅	A movie star
Yang Oufang	楊藕芳	
Yang Yifang	楊藝芳	
Yao Danfeng	姚丹鳳	
Yao Lingxi	姚靈犀	
Yao Shan yanshi	猺山艷史	A movie, The Love Story on Yao Mountain
Ye Lingfeng	葉靈鳳	
Ye Qianyu	葉淺予	
<i>Yidui wulü de beijing</i>	一對舞侶的背景	The Background of a Pair of Dancers
<i>Yiwen zazhi</i>	藝文雜誌	Artistic and Literary Magazine, traitor publication
<i>Yiyang de miyan</i>	一樣的迷眼	
Yingchun'er	迎春兒	
<i>Yingchun'er xidi sikui</i>	迎春兒隙底私窺	The Maid Yingchun Peeks through a Crack and Gets an Eyeful
<i>Youyongchi</i>	游泳池	Swimming pool

<i>Yotsuya Naitō Shinjuku</i>	四ッ谷内藤新宿	Naitō Shinjuku in Yotsuya
Yu Dafu	郁達夫	
Yu Feng	郁風	
Yu Lingzhi	鈺靈芝	
Yuan Yuzhen	袁毓珍	Cao Hanmei's wife
<i>Yuan Zhonglang quanji</i>	袁中郎全集	Collected Works of Yuan Zhonglang
<i>Yuniang aishi</i>	魚娘哀史	The Tragic Story of Yuniang
Yunshang shishang gongsi	雲裳時尚公司	Yunshang Fashion Company
<i>Zhanlanhui</i>	展覽會	Exhibition
Zhang Delu	張德祿	
Zhang Guangyu	張光宇	
Zhang Meiyu	張美宇	Cao Hanmei's old name
Zhang Pengzhou	張蓬舟	
Zhang Yongqi	張永淇	
Zhang Yuguang	張聿光	
Zhang Zhenhou	張珍侯	
Zhang Zhengyu	張正宇	
Zhang Zhiyun	張織雲	A movie star
Zhang Ziping	張資平	
Zhao Jingxia	趙靜霞	A movie star
Zhen Shan Mei shudian	真善美書店	Bookshop of Truth, Goodness and Beauty
Zheng Guanghan	鄭光漢	
Zheng Ke	鄭可	
Zheng Mantuo	鄭曼陀	
<i>Zhongguo funü fuzhuang zhi bianqian</i>	中國婦女服裝之變遷	The Development of Chinese Women's Costumes
Zhongguo meishu kanxing she	中國美術刊行社	China Fine Arts Publishing Company
Zhongguo meishu xiehui	中國美術協會	China Artists Association

Zhongguo qingnian xuetang	中國青年學堂	Youth Association
Zhongguo yu shijie geguo de baozhi shiye	中國與世界各國的報紙事業	Newspapers and Periodicals of China and other Countries
Zhongguo yinxiang: Gongyuan youhui	中國印象：公園幽會	China Impression: Date in a Park
Zhongguo yinxiang: Baobiao yu fuweng	中國印象：保鏢與富翁	China Impression: Bodyguard and Nabob
Zhongguo yinxiang: Shanghai nuzi	中國印象：上海女子	China Impression: Women in Shanghai
Zhonghua duli meishu xiehui	中華獨立美術協會	Chinese Association of Independent Artists
Zhonghua minguo: Neizhan, waijiao, xuechao	中華民國：內爭、外交、學潮	Republic of China: Civil War, Diplomacy, and Student Strike
Zhu Pu	朱樸	
Zhuoren	卓人	
Zhou Xiuyi	周修一	Lu Shaofei's girlfriend
Zishijie zhi chun	紫石街之春	The Spring in Zishi Street
Zuijin benbao zhuzuo zhe zhi fufu shuangying	最近本報著作者之夫婦雙影	Contributors to <i>Shanghai manhua</i> and their Wives
Zuijin lai Hua xuanchuan Jieryu zhuyi zhi Shane furen chuandao tu	最近來華宣傳節育主義之山額夫人傳道圖	Margaret Higgins Sanger recently propagandized Birth Control in China

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