

THE FOLK-INDIVIDUALIST ARTIST IN 1970S TAIWAN:

HUNG TUNG (1920-87) AND HIS ART

by

CRYSTAL HUI-SHU YANG

Under the Direction of Bonnie Cramond and Carole Henry

ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary study explores the relation between intuition and art through a case study of Taiwanese self-taught painter Hung Tung (1920-1987) and the controversy his art caused in 1970s Taiwan. There were two turning points in this illiterate rural man's life. At age of 50 (in 1969), Hung suddenly plunged himself into maniacal art creation, and his fame reached the top during the Hung Tung exhibition of 1976. These two turning points resulted in the legend of Hung Tung.

An intuitive feeling is hard to verbalize, and intuitive art is ineffable. In order to understand Hung's intuitive approach in art, the unconscious human mind (wherein the infinite creative potentials are hidden and intuitive cognition works involuntarily) is examined. As an amateur and untrained spirit medium, Hung revealed his hallucinatory and shamanistic visions in his paintings. In trance, Hung was able to access the forgotten, collective memories from time immemorial. The analysis of Hung's paintings involves the subjects of Chinese ancient pictographs, Taoism, Taoist art, talisman, folk art, spirit-mediumship, shamanism, creativity, abstract thinking, hallucination, mythology, the art of children, primitive art, expressionist art, and abstract art.

Usually, self-taught artists are inspired by religions or indigenous cultures, and driven by inner impulses to create art. They gather objects from

their living environment, then manipulate and transform them into art works with personal touches—as they pick up subjects from their daily lives, internalize them, and turn out individual styles. Their intuitive art reflects very basic human natures, individuality, and folk culture. The term *folk-individualist artist* is applied to Hung—in contrast to such inadequate terms as primitive, naive, folk, Art Brut, and outsider artist.

The controversy caused by Hung and his art represents the everlasting battle between the orthodox (who believe that art should be taught with formal training or learned in an educational setting) and the intuitive type artists (and their supporters) anywhere at anytime. As the term *folk-individualist artist* emphasizes both tradition and individuality, conclusively, the reconciliation of academic discipline and tradition with the intuitive approach in art education is advocated in this study.

INDEX WORDS: Hung Tung, art, intuition, self-taught art, folk-individualist artist, primitive art, naive art, folk art, Art Brut, outsider art, calligraphic painting, Taoist talisman, Chinese/Taiwanese folk art, spirit-mediumship, shamanism, creativity, abstract thinking, hallucination, mythology, children's art, expressionist art, abstract art.

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B.A. Chinese Culture University, Taiwan, R.O.C., 1985

M.F.A. Radford University, 1996

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003

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Dedicated to my parents
and
my homeland, Taiwan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Due to the mass media's intensive coverage, I knew about Hung Tung in the 1970s. However, I never took a special interest in this self-taught artist until in 1999, when I was asked who would represent an “outsider” artist in Taiwan. Hung Tung was the first name that came to my mind. Taking advantage of a trip back home to Taiwan in the summer, I started to review literature on Hung. Surprisingly and intuitively, I found that his life stories fit my philosophy of art so well that I decided to choose Hung as my research subject. Since then, I have received a great deal of help from many people, so I would like to address my appreciation to them. In Taiwan, my family, relatives and friends have helped track down people and collect data for me. I highly appreciate my interviewees' cooperation during the three trips I took to Taiwan in 2001. Hung's youngest son, Hung Si-Bau, and the art collector, Lyau Jr-Syang, were among the interviewees who also showed me their collections of Hung's paintings. Also, information provided by the present publisher of the *Artist Magazine*, He Jeng-Gwang, was important. In my several visits to the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, the staff of the temple and villagers gave me assistance with great enthusiasm. Especially, I would like to thank Hung's close friend, Wu Ming-Syung, whose understanding of Hung and his art, as well as knowledge of religion and art, led me to associate Hung's spirit mediumship with ancient sorcery in China. In addition, the spirit medium, Chen Jin-Je, answered all my inquiries about his professional secrets without reservation and provided me with videos of his spirit medium performance in the folk Taoist rituals—which was of great help for my research. Importantly, I have to thank the Tainan County Cultural Bureau for

letting me access county archives and review the collection of Hung's paintings in the Tainan County Cultural Center. I certainly do not want to neglect to mention the advice and encouragement of my husband, Dr. Arthur F. Jones, who shared with me his insights on American folk and outsider artists. Finally, I would like to thank my dissertation committee: Dr. Bonnie Cramond, Dr. Carole Henry, Dr. Robert Nix, Professor Arthur Rosenbaum, and Dr. Noel Kathy Gregg. My first interest in the topic of creativity arose from attending Dr. Cramond's characteristics of the gifted child course. This course was a turning point of my academic life—through which I was able to develop an interdisciplinary connection with art education. I further highlight my appreciation of Dr. Henry for her efforts to facilitate my involvement in this interdisciplinary study and her assistance in helping to find other appropriate members for my dissertation committee. In the final revision of this dissertation, Professor Rosenbaum (an artist with considerable expertise on American folk art as well as outsider art) has offered very constructive suggestions. His guidance was also highly appreciated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale and Research Questions

This interdisciplinary study examines the correlationship between intuition and art through a case study of Taiwanese self-taught painter Hung Tung (洪通) (1920-87) and his art. While the subject connects this study to the field of art history, in order to explain Hung's intuitive approach in art, a psychological perspective is adopted. Hung's life story is legendary, and his art is controversial and puzzling. The art collector, Jou Yu (周渝) (1997), asserted that "his (Hung's) works, in terms of content, are valuable for the study of anthropology, cosmology, mythology, cosmogony, Taoist art, shamanism, etc. In terms of the pure artistic style and expression, his art provides the sources of revelation and inspiration for the new generation artists; it is also an unavoidable subject in the field of art theory and art history." (p. 56) The interpretation and classification of Hung's art has been a challenge to art critics and scholars. In this in-depth dissertation on Hung and his art, I intend to bring forth new findings and contribute unique insights to the subject of self-taught art. Using Hung and his art to illustrate the correlation between intuition and art, ultimately, I aim to establish theories applicable to the field of art, creativity, and art education. Importantly, through this holistic approach, Hung's ineffable art can be better understood and valued, and Hung can thus be properly placed in the world of art.

The relation between intuition and art is as complicated as Hung's paintings. An intuitive feeling (which is hard to describe in words) when

transformed into a visual image also appears to be indescribable. However, self-taught art might so easily be associated with the uncultivated, untrained and unsophisticated that it is assumed to be done freely without any efforts, structures, or restrictions. Some even consider that promoting self-taught art can cause harm to formal art education. To discredit these false assumptions (and further to find a way to reconcile contradictions), the key issue of this study, intuition, will be weightily looked into. Consequently, two main research questions are considered: “How does intuition play a role in art creativity?” and “Why is Hung’s art so ineffable?” Hung’s life story and art provide insightful responses to these questions.

A Brief Biographical Sketch of Hung Tung

Hung was born and lived throughout his life in a fishing village of southern Taiwan, Nan-Kun-Shen (南鯤身). Due to poverty, Hung never went to school. He lived by odd jobs and worked as a part-time spirit-medium at one of the most famous folk Taoist temples in Taiwan, Dai-Tayn-Fu (代天府). There were two turning points in his life, which took place at age 50 (in 1969) and 57 (in 1976), and resulted in the legend of Hung Tung. This illiterate, poor, rural man, who did not receive any formal art training suddenly plunged himself into maniacal art creation at age 50. Later, Hung’s fame reached the top during the Hung Tung exhibition of 1976. These two turning points will be carefully explored in this study.

To understand this legendary figure and his art, his life story needs to be inspected in the context of Chinese/Taiwanese culture. From 1968 to 1976, Hung produced his best works as he was driven by inner necessity. In a dim and narrow studio, Hung fulfilled his unfulfilled dream of being an intellectual—through art creation. Also, he transcended the external limitation to reach the

highest hierarchy of art, as Taoists achieved *Tao* (see explanation in Chapter 3). However, Hung intended to further actualize his dream in reality by pursuing official recognition in the mainstream. A few years after Hung began to paint, he precipitously flourished in the art world. Due to good timing, as a consequence of Taiwan's provincialist movement in the 1970s, Hung's grassroots background and his unusual art and individualistic style soon gained public attention. The tension created by the promoters and the opponents of Hung's art was heated to a boiling point by the mass media in 1976, when a large Hung Tung exhibition was held in Taipei. The sensational controversy it generated attracted a large crowd into the gallery and propelled "Hung Tung rage" to an unprecedented climax.

Confucius' concept of "rectification of characters," apparently, had an significant impact on Hung. In a Confucian structured society, only someone with an appropriate official rank or academic degree could speak for his or her position. To compensate for his loss of formal education, Hung achieved a sense of fulfillment in art. Hung thought that he could further strive to gain honor by means of his paintings. However, for a person without a respectable diploma like Hung, it was difficult to fit into the circles dominated by orthodox literati. Also, as the first self-taught artist being placed in the limelight in Taiwan (when people still did not know how to appraise his kind of art—or even doubted if it could be called "art"), Hung was stuck in a contradictory quagmire. The Hung Tung exhibition induced controversy, sensational news, crowds, and avarice. Speciously, he won a victory through the publicity. As a matter of fact, at the most glorious and disturbing moment of his life, Hung was disappointed, because his hope of gaining recognition as a notional maestro failed. Many contemporary artists create controversies in order to gain "fifteen minutes of

fame.” Likewise, Hung could have profited by this once-in-a-lifetime chance. Nevertheless, the situation was too complicated for an uneducated rural to handle, so he rejected easy wealth.

Many self-taught artists start to create art for self-satisfaction. However, once they are discovered by the outside world and engage in commercial trading, the quality of their work often appears to decline. For Hung, being an legitimate artist was much more important than profiting by selling his work. As Hung received more and more attention, some expressed worry that so many intrusions on Hung’s life might taint his innocence and his artistic style. In fact, after the Hung Tung exhibition, Hung was still productive, but the quality of his artistic creation seemed to descend. From 1976 to 1979, the negative impact from the outside world on Hung’s life and art were in effect. In this time period, when his financial situation became worse (because Hung was in bad health and his second son was also bedridden), the conflicts between his life and his dreams were intensified. He still strove to maintain his pure approach to art creation (free from monetary transaction), but, the criticism from the intellectuals, especially, led Hung to modify his early intuitive approach in art. He wanted to prove that his paintings were not nonsense, and attempted to fit both social standards and academic criteria. However, many remarks on works produced after the Hung Tung exhibition also tended to be unfavorable, perhaps because Hung no longer approached art intuitively.

As the Hung Tung rage that was boosted by the mass media gradually faded away, this impractical artist lacked the ability to deal with realities. In attempting to maintain his vanity fame, his shortcomings were exposed. As a result, he let ensuing international exhibition opportunities (including an invitation from Dubuffet) slip out of his hand, and ended up remaining in poverty

throughout the rest of his life. On February, 23, 1987, he was found dead, alone in his desolate small house.

Hung was a genuine artist whose life stories and art displayed remarkable intensity, which thus makes him a valuable research subject. In particular, the issue of how intuition plays a role in art creativity will be explored in the context of the controversy cause by Hung and his art during the Hung Tung exhibition of 1976. So too will the impact of outside influences (such as fame, criticism, market price, social standards, and so on) on Hung be explained. Furthermore, answers to why his art is so ineffable will be revealed in the investigation of the connection between Hung's art and his being an amateur spirit medium. Drawing from this research on a self-taught artist, art educators might be inspired to consider how to adopt free and constructive ways to foster artistic creativity. Similarly, artists might reconsider how to achieve a reconciliation between formal art discipline and free individual expression.

Overview of the Study

The second chapter will first provide a brief historic background of Taiwan, and consider Hung's living environment, where supernatural costumes, fabulous tales, and religious rituals were parts of the residents' lives and the pivot of their belief system. Due to the inseparable relation of Hung's life and art with the folk Taoist temple, Dai-Tyan-Fu, in his hometown, a history of the establishment of this temple follows. Then, a grand Taoist ceremony, which took place in this temple in 1968 (and is speculated in this study to be the turning point of Hung's life and the touch-off of Hung's remarkable artistic creation) is described, and will be referred to later in the analysis of Hung's art.

Chapter 3, Hung's biography, focuses on the years after Hung started to paint, and is organized into four significant periods: birth to the rising years (1920-76); the period of the art exhibition (March 13 to 26, 1976); the aftermath (1976-79); and the finale (1980-87).

In the analysis of Hung's art, in Chapter 4, the paintings are divided into three categories: the naive (primitive) style, calligraphy paintings, and ink paintings. Importantly, the term, *folk-individualist artist*, is applied to this unique painter, since no other terms seem adequate for describing Hung's art.

From Chapter 5 to 9, in order to explain why Hung's paintings are so controversial and puzzling, the role of intuition in art creativity is explored. Self-taught artists approach art intuitively, and their works often convey child-like innocence or primitive rawness. For this reason, self-taught art is often degraded, or even dismissed as not being real art. In the post-modern age, the definition of art came to be ambiguous and confusing. Therefore, in Chapter 5, a sub-question "What is art?" is aimed to lead this study to the direction of *following your intuition*.

During the Hung Tung exhibition, two opposite opinions on Hung's art favored and objected to the same thing—the intuitive, innocent qualities in his paintings. As people are often unconscious of the existence of air, the primary human natures are commonly ignored, underestimated or even declined, since they are not taught or learned. However, some artists tend to look inwardly to follow their heart. In Chapter 6, the subjective perspective in the intuitive approach to art will be explained through the discussion of how and why Hung's visual language is similar to that of children, primitives, and expressionist and abstract artists.

Some artists strive too hard to make good art and fail. Too many restrictions may impair creative production. However, frequently, creative ideas occur unexpectedly, and remarkable works are done spontaneously under a restful or pure state of mind. Self-taught artists are not trained with traditional discipline, but this does not mean that they create art without effort. Although Hung's paintings possess naive qualities, they are different from children's art. Intuition, as matter of fact, is the accumulation of life-long wisdom. Therefore, to clarify some false concepts on intuition, in Chapter 7, intuitive cognition and Hung's intuitive approach will be investigated.

Artists, especially of the spiritual type, often live at strife between reality and dream, which can be well illustrated by Hung's life story. In Chapter 8, the contradictory nature of art will be discussed in regard to how such antagonistic elements as intelligence and emotion produce conflict and tension inwardly and Janus-faced characteristics outwardly in highly creative people. Art provides an intermediate realm between fleeting, material existence and the eternal, spiritual world. The great artists tend to seek to reconcile the discord. The longing for an eternal harmony leads to the attempt to immortalize, which is thus one of the ways to explain Hung's urge to paint at age 50.

To further develop concepts inferred from previous chapters, Chapter 9 will reveal how an intuitive approach leads to psychological regression and a tendency toward abstraction in art. It will also be confirmed that Hung's abstract visual language resulted from his intuitive (inward, subjective) approach to art, and his straightforward expression displayed his idiosyncratic personality.

Chapter 10 explores the controversial art case caused by Hung's art in 1970s' Taiwan, which indeed represents the everlasting battle between the mainstreamers and the so-called outsiders (and their supporters) anywhere at

anytime. In order to explain that Hung's art is not a threat to formal education, this chapter will explore the the deficiencies and strengths of academic art and self-taught art.

From Chapter 11 to 14, the main research inquiry will be: "Why does Hung's art seem so indefinable?" In order to explain the ineffability of Hung's art, and to investigate if his works were executed in a hallucinatory state of mind, the exploratory direction is led to the unconscious realm. In Chapter 11, the creative cognition will be further researched under the inquiry: "How is Hung's hybrid imagery formed?" Through Wassily Kandinsky's (1866-1944) statements of his artistic approach developing from representation to abstract, the connection of perception and abstract thinking can be examined. Kandinsky's statements explain that innermost feeling (provoked by perceptive experiences) is intersensory, so that only poetic, metaphorical language and abstract image can describe it. In addition, through the statements of Galton's research subjects, the animated mental image will be able to illustrate how intuitive, creative, divergent cognition leads to hybrid imagery in Hung's painting.

Chapter 12 further considers whether Hung's art reveals his hallucinatory vision. Exploring this issue involved a historical review of Taoist religion and research on spirit mediumship. When the dawn of spirit mediumship is traced back to ancient Chinese sorcery, the exploratory direction reaches the origin of art in the form of shamanistic art creation. Spirit media's and shamans' hallucinatory vision hitherto appear to verify images in Hung's paintings. Also, Hung seems to perfectly fit the profile of a shaman. The speculation that Hung's vision is shamanistic will confirm the concept of "inspiration from god (or muse)" and draw a parallel with the theories developed in Chapter 5 to 9.

Art originates from religious rituals. Taoist sacred dancing, singing, music, and poetry fused and took shape in the form of talismanic calligraphy. Calligraphic talismans correspond with the rhythmical movement in space and time recording the airy trace of energies, emanating an indescribable supernatural aura. Influenced by talismanic calligraphy, Hung attempts to capture the intangible in his paintings, which will be analyzed in Chapter 13.

Chapter 14 analyzes why Hung's painted images convey antediluvian myths and archetypal images—transcending cultural differences as advancing into the deepest level, the collective unconscious (in contact with the forgotten, primitive heart of all mankind).

This study intends to illuminate the issue of cultural identity in Hung and his art. Accordingly, the impact of Chinese/Taiwanese folk art and Chinese fine art on Hung's paintings is discussed in Chapter 15. As the term *folk-individualist artist* indicates, tradition and individuality are fused in Hung's artistic style. On the one hand, traditions provide a framework for art creation; on the other hand, up to a certain point, creative artists depart from established conventions and foundational disciplines to bring forth a breakthrough, and to exceed their precursors. Therefore, how Hung's learning from Chinese or Taiwanese folk art (in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu) and orthodox Chinese painting (in his teacher's studio or some art galleries) resulted in an individual style in his paintings will be analyzed under three categories: the naive (primitive) style, calligraphy painting, and ink painting. Followed by a final conclusion, a general appraisal of Hung's art will explain why he should be ranked among the most outstanding self-taught artists.

New Perspectives, Discoveries, and Invention of this Research

In researching the topic, I have applied my experience as an artist, art educator and scholar to identify problems, detect clues, and analyze and synthesize gathered materials to draw inferences and conclusions through my insights, cultural background, knowledge, philosophy, and academic training in both Taiwan and the United States. The methodology used in data collection involved reviewing literature (such as coverage and articles from newspapers and magazines), internet information, and video publication, and conducting interviews. Fieldwork included interviewing people and visiting Hung's hometown's famous folk Taoist temple, Dai-Tyan-Fu (which conglomerates the essence of Taiwanese folk art in its architecture and religious rituals). Interviews were recorded by video-taping, audio taping, and note taking. Visual information was video-taped, taken as slides or photographs, and photo-copied. Since most of Hung's old friends were no longer alive, and Hung often appeared in mass media during the 1970s, the sources of Hung's life story mainly relied on published literature. My interviews with people who knew Hung in person were used primarily as supplementary materials. As for Hung's paintings, in addition to reviewing the published materials, I made arrangements to see original art works by visiting private art collectors in Taiwan, as well as examining the collection of Hung Tung's paintings at the Tainan County Cultural Bureau.

In 1999, I first took interest in Hung as my research subject because I felt that his life story was perfect for interpreting my philosophy of art. When I put the collected data together, and portrayed Hung through my perspective, he was no longer superficially considered an "eccentric artist," "genius painter," or "mad painter" as the mass media defined him, nor an illiterate bumpkin making

ruleless, childish paintings as many people downplayed him, but a traditional and provincial Taiwanese expressing his individuality through his self-invented art forms. As an artist advocating pure artistic creation, I empathized with Hung's struggling between his idealistic dream and cruel reality. With understanding and sympathy in mind, I was able to see through Hung's attempt to fulfill his wish of being a literate by creating art, and his eagerness to be recognized as a national painter in real life. Hung's eccentric behaviors seemed so incomprehensible that he was assumed to be insane. But, I sought for logical reasons to interpret his unusual behaviors. Importantly, I have added a new dimension to the portrait of Hung by pointing out the significant influences of traditional heritage and values on him, his life, and his art—which have previously not been highlighted due to Hung being illiterate. There are three “isms” that Chinese culture, life, philosophy, and art are based on: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. It is not an overstatement to say that these three “isms” run in every Chinese individual's blood. However, since they are rooted deeply as the innate traits of Chinese, they are sometimes not consciously noticed. As the anthropologist, Margaret Mead is said to remark: “If humans were fishes, the last thing they'd discover would be water” (McQuillan, 1998, p. 3) After coming to the United States, it took a number of personal experiences with culture shock and the resulting conflicts for me to rediscover the Chinese parts in myself, and later, to recognize them in Hung during my research.

Another unprecedented undertaking is to call attention to the influence of Hung's teacher, Dzeng Pei-Yao (曾培堯), on Hung's art. Because Hung has been placed in the category of self-taught artist, Dzeng's teaching the tradition of Chinese painting to Hung has been overlooked. Some praised Dzeng for *not*

teaching Hung (therefore preserving his innocence and individuality as a self-taught painter), but no one has noted how Hung learned from Dzeng in his individual way. This assertion thus led to the connection of Hung's art with orthodox Chinese ink painting in my analysis of Hung's art in Chapter 15.

The most challenging and interesting part of this research is the process of exploring the relation between Hung's art and his being an amateur spirit medium. I read and heard about various assumptions that Hung painted in a trance because he was possessed by gods. Like most modern intellectuals, I, at first, dismissed this idea as ignorant superstition, although hallucination and art creation have been associated in various cultures throughout different eras. When I visited Hung's youngest son in 2001, he mentioned that the ancient calligraphy and landscapes that appeared in his father's paintings were visions from dreams as his soul disembodied and traveled to distant lands in mainland China. I did not take this idea seriously, but later I heard similar superstitious talk in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. Following this experience, I decided to investigate the basis for this idea. First of all, the process of finding a spirit medium who was willing to be interviewed by me seemed as supernatural as those talks. My interview with this spirit medium enabled me to peep into a spirit medium's unusual psychological phenomena. However, at that time, I had been told that the Five Kings of the Dai-Tyan-Fu were military generals of the Tang Dynasty adept at poetry, calligraphy and painting, and Hung was the spirit medium who served the Five Kings. Consequently, I had the speculation in mind that the Five Kings were Hung's spiritual tutors, when I conducted the interview with the spirit medium. A few months later, I took another trip to the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. By conversing with people there, I found that Hung was a part-time spirit medium at the temple, and the spirits who supposedly

possessed Hung were unknown—and not necessarily the Five Kings. Also, during our conversation, Hung's friend, Wu, pointed out a new lead to the origin of the Taoist spirit mediumship, ancient Chinese sorcery. After finishing my field work in Taiwan, I further advanced my research into finding substantial links among scholarly studies on hallucination, spirit mediumship, and shamanism with Hung's art creation.

The analysis of Hung's painting images involve an art historian's approach in reference to the subjects of Chinese antediluvian pictographs, Chinese classical literature, Taoism, Taoist art, talismanic calligraphy, shamanism, shamanistic art, children's art, Huichol Indian art, Egyptian art, Chinese/Taiwanese folk art, modern art, mythology, and so on. The joy of doing this research is making meaningful connections between sporadic dots of clues, and multiple lines of leads, then interweaving them into a holistic picture.

This dissertation provides several original contributions regarding Hung Tung. One of the important discoveries in this research is the association of the colossal religious ceremony of 1968 in Hung's hometown with the onset of Hung's artistic creation in 1969. Moreover, in virtue of the recognition of Hung as a traditional Chinese or Taiwanese expressing his individuality through his paintings, my application of the term, *folk-individualist artist*, provides a better classification for Hung's art.

CHAPTER 2

THE CATASTASIS OF A TAOIST CEREMONY

This chapter will first give a brief history background on Taiwan, and consider Hung's living environment, where supernatural costumes, fabulous tales, and religious rituals were parts of the residents' lives and the pivot of their belief system. Due to the inseparable relation of Hung's life and art with the folk Taoist temple, Dai-Tyan-Fu, in his hometown, a history of the establishment of this temple is presented. Then, a grand Taoist ceremony, which took place in this temple in 1968 (and is speculated in this study to be the turning point of Hung's life and the touch-off of Hung's remarkable artistic creation) is described, and will be referred to later in the analysis of Hung's art.

A Brief History of Taiwan¹

Taiwan is an island located in the Pacific Ocean about 100 miles off the southeastern coast of mainland China. The date for the aborigines' first settlement in Taiwan is uncertain. However, according to the written history, fishermen from southeast China discovered this offshore island in the 7th century. They marveled at and likened it to the Chinese fairyland, Peng-Lai Island (蓬萊仙島). To Westerners, Taiwan was recognized with the name of "Ilha Formosa," which was denominated by the Portuguese seafarers in the late 16th century meaning "beautiful island." Sporadically, fishermen, tradesmen, and migrants from the Fu-Jyan and Gwang-Dung province came to the Pescadores (namely, Peng-Hu Archipelago [澎湖群島] situated off the southwestern coast of Taiwan) and Taiwan for centuries. Large scale immigration did not, however,

¹ The information of this section is referred to in Kaulbach & Proksch, 1984; and Lui, 1982.

emerge until the 17th century, when the Ming Dynasty started to decline, especially, during the famines in Fu-Jyan around 1625. In 1624, the Dutch dominated southern Taiwan through the operation of the Dutch East India Company, while the Spanish occupied the north two years later. The Europeans were apparently unable to share the island in peace, so they went to war. Eventually, the Dutch ousted the Spanish and took over the entire island in 1642.

During this time period, the Chinese pirate, Jeng Jr-Lung (鄭芝龍), who was pacified by the Ming government (in 1624), and later surrendered to the Ching had the control over the sea between mainland China and Taiwan. However, his son, Jeng Cheng-Gung (鄭成功), claimed his loyalty to the Ming against the Ching. After the fall of the Ming in 1644, he lost battles to the Ching in Fu-Jyan leading to his pullout from the mainland to Taiwan. Succeeding in besetting the Dutch fort, in 1662, he defeated and expelled the Dutch and established a new regime on the island. Unfortunately, both Jeng Cheng-Gung and his son died at a young age (both at 39). Jeng's 12-year-old grandson relinquished the island to the Ching in 1683. Henceforth, Taiwan was officially integrated with China.

In 1895, the Ching government ceded Taiwan to Japan following defeat in the Sino-Japanese war. Fifty years later, Japan's rule in Taiwan came to a closure at the end of the World War II. Another large scale of migration from mainland China took place in 1949, when the Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan, due to the communist takeover of mainland China. Since then, Taiwan and mainland China have been separated under two governments and people on the both sides of the Taiwan Straits were unable to resume contact with each other until 1987, when martial law was lifted in Taiwan.

The Chinese who migrated to Taiwan in the 17th century are distinguished as *Taiwanese* from the so-called *mainlanders* who arrived around 1949. In general, Taiwan inherited the Chinese traditions. Subculturally, the Taiwanese have rooted deeply in this island and absorbed the Japanese influences also, while Mainlanders anticipated reunification with China as the only conclusion. In the face of Western modernization, and under the Nationalists' "big China" propaganda and suppression of Taiwan's regional culture, the Taiwanese felt the need to find their own identity after overcoming their Japanese colony status. As a result, a provincialism movement bloomed in 1970s' Taiwan. It was the time when Hung gained public attentions.

Nan-Kun-Shen and the Temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu²

One year before Hung's going to fanatical art creation, in 1968, a colossal religious ceremony took place in his home town, Nan-Kun-Shen, an out-of-the-way fishing village located at the northwestern corner of the Tainan county in southern Taiwan. In Chinese, Nan denotes south (or southern); Kun is a fabulous fish said to be thousands of miles long;³ Shen means body. Referred to "Nan-Kun-Shen Temple Record" (Lin, 1955), originally, Nan-Kun-Shen was in part of a chain of shoals lining up off shore near a delta on the southwestern coast of the island of Taiwan. A shoal floating on the moody ocean evokes an imaginative association with the titan fish from the immemorial North Sea. Therefore, Kun-Shen (meaning a giant fish's body) is a common name for places along the southwestern seashore. The name of Nan-Kun-Shen is distinguished from others by its southern location. During the period of the late Ming and early Ching Dynasty, fishermen often dwelled for the night in the straw

² The information of this section is referred to in Lin, 1955; Lyou, 1995; Wu, 1967; Li, 1984; Hwang, 1992; *Taitian Temple of Nan Kun Shen*, n.d.; Wu, 1969; and Wu Ming-Syung (personal communication, June 15 & 16, 2001).

³ The giant fish, Kun 鯤, is derived from the Book I, "逍遙遊" [Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease], in *莊子 Chuang-Tzu*, authored by 莊子 Chuang-Tzu from the Warring State period, 475-221 B.C.

huts on these shoals. Mentioned by Lyou (1995), one night, a fisherman, Yang Shr-Syang (楊世鄉), was awakened by arcane orchestral music from the ocean. He was drawn to go outside, and saw a three-masted ship sailing on the tranquil sublunary water towards the lagoon. Waiting until dawn, he went to check up on that flamboyant ship. However, he found nothing but a small, ragged boat without navigators. There were six silken statues of gods, and a banner, on which the gods' identities were written as the Great King Li, the Second King Chr, the Third King Wu, the Fourth King Ju, the Fifth King Fan (李, 池, 吳, 朱, 范, 五王), and the Central Military Commander (中軍府) in the boat. Thereafter, the gods were venerated by the fishermen and villagers at a temporary site. The ensuing occurrence of a torrent of miraculous manifestations eventually facilitated the establishment of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu (also commonly known as the Nan-Kun-Shen Temple) in 1662.

In the course of nature, four seasons cycle. The topographical visage of the earth alters incessantly. Cataclysm washes out terrestrial existence, while newborn innings rise in shore. As the whirligig went on, the mammoth-fish-like shoal grew conjunct to the inner land. Here, in Nan-Kun-Shen, instead of the typical emerald rural scenery of southern Taiwan, the seaside landscape was constructed by the geometric-shaped salt fields outstretching in succession. For centuries, the diligent inhabitants labored in the field and sea to earn a living. On this sterile land, most of them lived in poverty. Life was artless. Nevertheless, the poor residents would move heaven and earth to raise funds and to fetch master artisans from mainland China to create their spiritual sanctuary, the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. Since its first establishment in 1662, and a later relocation to its present site in 1817, this temple has been rebuilt once and remodeled twice with a number of expansion constructions. Facing the ocean,

the temple was curled up by the dragon-like Rapid Creek (急水溪) situated on the Tiger mound (虎丘) of the Gwang-Lang Mountains (桃榔山). This resplendent temple erected within its exquisitely gardenized precincts against the infertile landscape, as if a Fata Morgana, apparitionally emerges on the infinite ocean (see Figure 1).

The Jyang-Jyau (建醮) Ceremony of 1968⁴

From the Ming Dynasty, Ching Dynasty, the Japanese regime to the Republic of China, the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu has gone through more than a tercentenary. Due to political reasons, the celebration of the completion of this temple's reconstruction in 1937 was postponed several times. In 1968, the *jyang-jyau* ceremony was finally carried out. According to Lyou's *Treatises of Taiwan's Folk Religion* (1995), in Chinese, *jyang* signifies "to build, to establish." Derived from the original meaning of "to offer sacrifices to gods," the Taoists took in the word *jyau* to denote "priests set up an alter to worship gods." In Taiwanese custom, a *jyang-jyau* ceremony is held within a community to offer votive tributes to gods, and to supplicate for blessings, especially when a temple's reconstruction or decorations are completed. In addition, in terms of the scale of *jyang-jyau* ceremonies, they can be classified into three types: three-day (三朝), five-day (五朝), and seven-day *jyau* (七朝醮). In Taiwan, the most commonly seen is the three-day *Jyau*, the seven-day is almost extinct, because the costly expenditure is too much for civilians to afford. The five-day is rare, and considered to be a large-scale ceremony. The *Jyang-Jyau* ceremony most likely takes place in September, October, and November during the farmers' resting season (after the autumn harvest).

⁴ The information of this section is referred to in Lyou, 1995; and Wu, 1969.

In addition to the major ceremony, the five-day *Jyau*, was intended to commemorate the completion of the Dai-Tyan-Fu's reconstruction and to pray for the nation's prosperity and people's happiness (代天府慶成祈安清醮科儀). This massive event also included the minor rites: the Water and Fire *Jyau* (水火醮科儀), the festivity of the establishment of the Wan-Shan-Tang (萬善堂慶成謝土科儀), and *Pu-Du* (普度). Wan-Shan-Tang is a small joss house next to the Dai-Tyan-Fu. The host god of the Wan-Shan-Tang is a young deity, who used to be a shepherd boy. His legend started with his discovery of a magical land by accident. On a rainy day, he took shelter under a tree. Strangely, he found himself staying totally dry in the pouring rain. He thus noticed the supernatural phenomenon of this place. Prior to his death at age 17, he requested to be buried in this mysterious site. After his death, henceforth, his spirit absorbed the psychic quintessence of the earth, and grew powerful. Later, he got to reign all the goblins in the Gwang-Lang Mountains. When the Five Kings selected this location to settle down, this child spirit declared war on them. Both sides sent out countless ghost troops. This fierce combat quaked the earth, and eclipsed the firmament, continuing for days without breaking a tie. Finally, the Gwan-Yin Buddha (觀音佛祖) and the Bau-Sheng Emperor (保生大帝) came up to mediate, and had two parties to share this divine land. The Wan-Shan-Tang has affiliated to the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu thenceforth. It is said that the Third King was wounded by the child spirit in this battle. The scar on his forehead was never erased—even the best craftsmen could not fix it to date.⁵

For the advent of the *Jyang-Jyau* ceremony, the whole village got into an exhilarated spirit. Around 6:00 in the morning of October 29, incense tables

⁵ The tale of the Wan-Shan-Tang is referred to in Lin, 1955; Wu, 1967; Li, 1984; Hwang, 1992; and *Taitian Temple of Nan Kun Shen*, n.d.

were set up in front of every civilian house to offer glutinous rice balls to gods. In the temple, ceremony workers reported their arrivals and started their vegetarian diet. Officiated at the ceremony by the 63rd generation successor of the head of the Taoists since the Han Dynasty, Jang En-Pu (姜恩普), and at the altar by the 63rd generation successor of the Taoist high priest since the Han Dynasty, Jin Deng-Fu (金登富), the one-day rite of Water and Fire *Jyau* officially raised the curtain of this unsurpassed Taoist ceremony. Then the five-day *Jyau* ensued. At midnight of November 1, the main hall of the temple was sealed down except an entrance. The egress and ingress permission of this sacred region was only given to the priests and certain ritual participants. Talismans were pasted up around the hall to keep out the evil spirits and homeless ghosts. In the interior altar, there were 17 pietistic lamps called *Dou Deng* (斗燈) soon being lit up. The pietistic lamp was a wooden cylinder container, which was traditionally filled with white rice. An oil lamp was placed in the middle. Additionally, there were 5 accessories: a mirror, a scale, a rule, a sword, and three characters “才子壽” (meaning fortune, children, and long life). Each item respectively symbolized brightness, fairness, justice, health, and auspiciousness. Outside the temple, an additional seven sacred altars had been set up. Twenty-three outstanding bamboo poles had been erected in the courtyards. Hung at the top of each pole was a red pietistic lantern (which had to be lit up throughout the ceremony) and a long streamer wagging in the wind. Those bamboo poles stood aloft functioning as signal transmitters to invite the divine descent of celestial deities, and to guide the infernal ghosts.

On November 2, the ceremony of the five-day *Jyau* began with roaring drumbeats. Two thousand nine hundred and forty-seven deities had been invited from all quarters, and properly seated on the terraced decks in the main

altar. Concurrent with the shaking noise of outdoor firecrackers, boisterous music filled in the air of the enclosed indoor space. The ritual officiants and Taoist priests formally ascended to the altar, burning incense to greet the imperial carriages of the immortals. For four days, this ceremony went on with the reciting of Taoist scriptures and the performing of Taoist rituals in private.

At 5:00 p.m. in the afternoon of November 5, the ritual of sending out water-lanterns (放水燈) heralded the *Pu-Du* Ceremony of the next day. *Pu-Du* is derived from a Buddhist ritual and intended to save all beings with mercy. Therefore, at a *Pu-Du* ceremony, exuberant foods have to be offered to the homeless, roving ghosts, and the ceremony was performed to raise the soul from suffering in the next world. The carnivalesque atmosphere was permeating, as the colorful parade itinerated on the streets of the village, then finally, moved to the Rapid Creek. In the dusk, hundreds of lanterns were sent out to the water. The flickering lanterns quietly drifted down toward the ocean, lighting up the obscure paths of Hades, and leading the ghosts to the world of the living for the upcoming sumptuous feast on the following day.

From the 1st to the 7th of November (September 11 to 17 in the Chinese lunar calendar), approximately a half-million people (by conservative estimation) crowded in this small village to take part in the grand festivities. Highways toward the ceremony site were packed with automobiles, pilgrims, visitors, photographers, and journalists. Innovationally, on November 6, a pilgrimage mission, which was comprised of 75 colorfully decorated fishing boats loaded with devout followers and an abundance of offerings, approached the temple from the sea, and anchored in the Rapid Creek on the north side of the temple. At 10:00 am, the observance of the Heaven God (拜天公) was warming up this colossal exterior gathering. At noon, the *Pu-Du* ceremony

started. This exultant rejoicing shared by the mortals and the immortals was brought to catastasis. The 16.5-hectare precincts were jammed with more than 200,000 people. Sacrifices were displayed on more than 12,000 round tables all over the outskirts of the vast ceremony ground, and on pilgrim boats over the water. When night fell, the open-aired puppets and Taiwanese opera theaters, as well as electronic lantern shows, initiated the nocturnal entertainment. Numerous lights on the fishing boats twinkled in the dark sea. Fireworks darted into the black sky—scintillatingly unfolding, expanding, fading away in succession. This unprecedented spiritual assembly in grandeur reached its culmination after 307 years (from the founding of the temple in 1662). The collective pneumatic vigor of this sublime cerebation clustered and ascended from the earth into Heaven.

The moon begins to wane the moment it becomes full.⁶ Ultimately, on November 7 (viz. September 17 on the Chinese lunar calendar), the time to bring down the curtain arrived. While the billowy crowd ebbed, the enormous ebullient energies (gathered in the ceremony) went glimmering. The accustomed quietness returned to the community. Villagers went back to the beaten track. However, the fortissimo score had vibrated a person's innermost chords resonating within his heart of solitude. In the face of hills of pure, monochrome salt in the field before sunset, and of his mediocre 49 years of life, the man, Hung Tung, was saddened because his heart could no longer be the same.

⁶ The moon waxes till it becomes full on the 15th day of every lunar month, and then starts to wane after the fullest on the 16th.

CHAPTER 3

HUNG TUNG AND HIS LIFE STORIES

In this chapter, Hung's biography is stated in four significant periods: birth to the rising years (1920-76); a sensational and controversial art exhibition (March 13-26, 1976); the aftermath (1976-79); and the finale (1980-87).

Birth to the Rising Years (1920-76)⁷

The fiftieth year of Hung's life was a turning point (Taiwanese count one's age from conception). Before then, he was just an ordinary country person born and still living in the geographically isolated village, Nan-Kun-Shen. It was said that Hung Tung (see Figure 2) was a posthumous child. Upon the heel of his father's death, his mother also passed away when he was about 3 years old. Raised by his grandmother in one of his uncle's families, this poor orphan never had a chance to go to school. Some newspapers said that Hung had attended the primary level of the public education program (see "People from his community," 1976, & Shu-Shr-Chwan, 1980). However, he always exclaimed with regret: "I am a man who did not kowtow to Confucius." (Lai, 1973, p. 20) Confucius is the greatest teacher in Chinese history. In ancient China, one formally became a pupil or apprentice to a master through a solemn ceremony at the Confucian temple. Therefore, in this sentence, Hung meant that he never received formal education. Nevertheless, this poor, illiterate man seemed talented and intrigued in literature and arts. With an attempt to psychologically compensate for the loss of education, perhaps, he looked up to the epitome of Chinese classical scholars. He often interluded ancient-toned poetry in his talk. The writer, Lai Chwan-Jyan (賴傳鑑), (1973) became speechless once,

⁷ The information of this section is mainly referred to in *Lion Art Monthly*, 1973, April & May issue.

because he was taken aback by Hung's suddenly standing up and intoning aloud a verse during their conversation. In countryside life, the Taiwanese opera and puppet shows often performed in the open courtyard of the temple to celebrate gods' birthdays were the major entertainment through which rural people were edified with the Confucian ethical criteria, along with the Taoist admonitions of punishing wickedness and encouraging virtue. Hung's behavior appeared to be so inept in the modern age that Lai assumed that Hung learned this kind of dramatized airs from professional storytellers or traditional theater performances. In addition to live theaters, I infer that Hung might have learned from radio programs.

According to Lai's description in "Nan-Kun-Shen's Remarkable Man—An Account of An Interview with Hung Tung" (1973), Hung's childhood was full of poignant and melancholy memories. Because the land contained too much salt, only a few farm crops, such as sweet potatoes or peanuts could be grown there. Usually, the young child, Hung, just had a few sweet potatoes to fill his starving stomach, while pasturing cattle, carrying water, and doing odd jobs. This helpless child used to go to his parents' graves to tell them his sorrows in tears during those years. Due to such distressed encounters in his earlier life, the characteristics of fortitude, eccentricity, stubbornness, and perseverance evidently emerged in the adult version of Hung. In many people's impressions, Hung could be so wordless and idiosyncratic. But, if a person or a topic appealed to him, he could become very talkative, amiable and eloquent. In fact, Hung was a kind, frank, sincere, reasonable and honorable person, who looked up to Confucian etiquette along with Taoist morality and loftiness as his models.

Nevertheless, this illiterate country man surely reasoned and acted in a way which made sense to himself, but might not be understood by others. For

example, like many of the young men in the village did, Hung once went to work in the city of Kaohsiung (the biggest city of southern Taiwan). Every Tomb-Sweeping Day (when the Chinese traditionally sweep ancestors' tombs) Hung went back to his hometown to clean and offer sacrifices at his parents' tombs. However, because he was unable to read, he sometimes could not find his parents' tombs. Thus, he expediently displayed the offerings and burned incense in the field. These behaviors seemed so odd that the rumor of Hung's lunacy has been passed from mouth to mouth in this community ever since.

Living by doing odd jobs (such as farming, fishing, labor work, etc.), Hung was barely able to maintain a basic living for himself and his family. Nevertheless, at age of 50, an irresistible desire urged Hung to paint, although he had never received any art training previously. Afterward the legend of Hung Tung commenced, as he maniacally plunged himself into artistic creation. In 2001, I accessed the archive on the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu in the Tainan County Cultural Bureau. The date of the *Jyang-Jyau* Ceremony at the Dai-Tyan-Fu (from November 1st to 7th, 1968) drew my attention. I believe that for decades, Hung was imbued with the beauty of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu But, which embodies the essence of Taiwanese folk art in its architecture and religious rituals. But, the magnificent event of 1968 was a catalyst, through which latent desire were aroused, and the accumulated spiritual energy was about to explode (see further discussion in Chapter 12). After a whole year of struggling between his miserable reality and what his heart desired, eventually, the urge to paint could no longer be confined. Persistently, Hung pleaded to his wife on three occasions. On November 4, 1969, with his wife's agreement to take full responsibility of the family's financial support, his unusual artistic career began (see Lai, 1973).

In a newspaper article, “The Never Resolved Puzzle—Writing on Hung Tung” (1987), Chen mentioned: “At age of 50, Hung’s landlord forbade him to place an altar of his parents in the house. Hung’s feeling of putting his ancestors to shame resulted in his psychopathic breakdown. After recovering from his illness, he started to paint....” (p. 6) In addition, another newspaper account (“People from His Community”, 1976) stated: “...in the year of age 50, he (Hung) fell seriously ill. In his sick bed, he heard a story on the radio that a poor, jobless man had nowhere to put his ancestral tablet (altar), so that he held the tablet weeping bitterly beside a well. This story made him realize that he should devote himself to a career, in order to glorify his progenitor.” (p. 3) Although these narratives might be mere hearsay, most likely, something happened to change his life. Certainly, he drew a magnificent vista for his future career at this time.

Hung's wife, Lyou Lai-You (劉來豫), was a traditional Chinese woman. Her marvelous virtues manifested in her undergoing all sorts of hardships and deprivations. She gave birth to three sons and two daughters. In addition to child care and household affairs, she also farmed, fished, and peddled incense in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. For her, it was a disaster when her husband frantically devoted himself to art at the age of 50. But, she could not resist Hung's persistent pleading (see Lai, 1973). Afterwards, not only did she have to take over the exacerbate load of her family's financial support, but also had to provide Hung with additional money to buy art supplies every month. She bore all responsibilities by herself and tolerated the villagers' contempt. Unfortunately, this was just the beginning of her sadness.

Hung and his family lived in a one-floor brick house. Referred to *Traditional Taiwanese folk crafts* (Liu, 1982), in the traditional Taiwanese

civilian house, the living room is situated in the middle. More rooms (bedrooms) are symmetrically added onto both sides of the living room forming a long horizontal strip. Sometimes, both ends of the long strip make right-angle turns, since a kitchen and storage room(s) are annexed in front of the rooms on both end of the building. The family altar is always placed in the living room facing the entrance—which means that if visitors walk in a traditional Taiwanese family, they encounter the ancestors' shrine first. When children get married, the new families will be assigned to the rooms in the east or the west wing. Therefore, for wealthy families with several generations living together, the long-stripped building can be expanded into a square—a courtyard surrounding by rooms; the square can also be further added on with more squares behind one another—the extremely wealthy families may own up to four courtyards. From the constructive layout of the house, the traditional Chinese family ethics can be observed.

Hung's poor hut, which measured approximately 143 square feet of living space, had the very basic structure of the traditional house (see Jang, 1973). Next to the living room, Mrs. Hung's and children's bedroom was on the right, and Hung's on the left. In his small room, there was a tattered old cotton quilt on a small wooden bed and, under a window, a low table displaying varied pigments and brushes. Hung worked in both his bedroom and his studio, which was a smaller, rectangular room connected to his bedroom. Hung literally painted day and night in those two dim and narrow (and stuffy in summer) areas. He often went for days without eating while focusing on his painting. This creative environment might seem unbearable to most people, but undoubtedly, was enjoyable for Hung. He could not be freer, while he spread a drawing or rice paper on the bed, and squatted, sat, or positioned himself prostrate to paint.

Sometimes, he worked on the small table to receive the daylight coming through the window. Within a few years after Hung began painting, his spaces had been filled with works—rolls of paintings piled up on the floors and the bed, and some hung on the walls. On rainy days, Hung had to protect this artistic productions from the leaking roof by putting them in plastic bags, or covering them with some waterproof materials. In “Visiting Hung Tung in A Light Wind and Downpour,” Yang (1974) said that while Hung spoke with him, the artist held a rag to wipe away the drippings anytime they landed. Also, dirty bagasse boards blocked the glassless window, in order to shield the unfinished work on the table.

This self-taught artist painted with unusual determination and hard toil. However, his paintings appeared to be so unacceptable to the villagers that one of them even suggested that Hung should see “real” artists’ works. This suggestion was reasonable for Hung. He thus took the advice, and often visited the galleries in the city of Tainan (see Lai, 1973). In an art exhibition, he became acquainted with an artist named Hung De-Gwei (洪德貴) with whom Hung sometimes consulted about art. Later, this artist recommended that Hung see another artist, Dzeng Pei-Yao (曾培堯), who had recently come back to Taiwan from the United States (see Su, 1973). It took a great deal of courage for Hung to show his pictures to a stranger, especially an academically-trained artist. In July, 1970, Hung brought his works to Dzeng’s studio and pretended that they were made by a friend of his. Dzeng described his first encounter with Hung’s paintings:

When he (Hung) unfolded a painting signed in the name of Hung Tung, I was immediately attracted by the mystical aura and child-like innocence in the work. The naive, but very refined line quality, and the universe

composed by the bright colors from all flowers in bloom can seemingly bring you to an obscure realm in the lower world, wherein you are able to perceive the sorcery imagery that is not receivable in the living world. The unreadable, self-invented pictographs, the woman figures tangling like serpents, rocket, moon, sun, geometric, mandala fabric patterns, all sorts of flowers, cereal-like leaves... and so on, constructed in alternation, and repeated in pulsation to reveal a sort of the purest spiritual account of mind, so beholders can come into contact with the artist directly. (Dzeng, 1973, p.39)

According to Dzeng (1973), after he expressed his thoughts on these paintings, Hung seemed delighted, so he acknowledged that he was the painter, and that it was the first compliment he ever heard. Hung was very grateful to Dzeng, since hitherto, no one had ever praised his paintings. His neighbors despised them. The galleries refused to exhibit them, and other artists rejected them as well. The most unpleasant criticism he heard was that his works were recklessly done; they were worthless, and worse than children's doodles. It was understandable that Hung asked to be Dzeng's student at once. But this art teacher thought that Hung's technique had been completely developed in a natural, individual style. Therefore, because it seemed that there was not much for Dzeng to teach, he did not accept Hung's request at first. However, due to Hung's sincerity, Dzeng finally agreed, but his instruction principle was not to allow formal training to interfere with Hung's unique qualities. Therefore, when Hung came to the studio, most of the time, he just sat among other students and painted quietly by himself. This sensible teacher once told the newspaper reporter: "I never influenced his (Hung's) composition or subject. I only instructed him in the use of rice paper and ink. Sometimes, I

told him a little bit about techniques.” (Chen, March 11, 1976, p.3) Perhaps, because Hung appreciated the recognition from a formal art teacher, and Dzung’s studio provided him a liberal learning environment, he continued to go to Dzung’s studio irregularly (sometimes once a week, sometime once every other week or less) for one and half years. Later, Dzung showed his strong support for this eccentric student when Hung gained national attention. In return, Hung always paid his respect to this teacher. As for Hung’s education in art, he appears to have absorbed some elements of mainstream art from the galleries and this art studio, and internalized them into his personal style. Hung, in particular, seemingly grasped the essence of Zen paintings in his black-white ink paintings (see Chapter 15 for further discussion).

Hung’s application of art materials was as unrestrained as Hung’s artistic methods. Generally speaking, Hung applied Chinese black ink, watercolor, and color pencil or marker on regular drawing papers and rice papers. Due to the financial shortage, the brushes, pigments, and papers Hung used were inexpensive art supplies which could be purchased in most of the stationery stores in 1970s’ Taiwan. According to Lai’s description (1973), to save money, Hung used fine black markers to draw in elementary students’ blank exercise books. He exhaustively took advantage of space on every single page, although the papers of this sort of cheap exercise books were so thin that the ink drawn on a page often penetrated into the reverse side yielding double images.

A Chinese saying: “Impasse is followed by change, and change will lead to solution.” Pecuniary disadvantage seemingly did not cripple his creation, but, on the contrary, led him to search for immediate materials in his living environment. Indeed, the discovery or the employment of a new material

frequently resulted in inventive techniques to enrich his artistic expression (see Lai, 1973). For instance, bagasse boards were cost-free, and produced special texture on his painting surfaces. Red is the main color of Chinese folk art. The Taiwanese used glossy red paper to make paper cut-outs, decorations, lucky money bags, couplets, and so on, for wedding ceremonies, New Year Day, festivals and religious events. Hung easily acquired pieces of this kind of widely used bright red paper and painted striking colors on them. The savor of this common material linked Hung's artistic expression with his cultural roots.

Also, Hung thought that artificial pigments were unable to compete with the beauty of natural colors. He thus looked for and picked up flowers, grasses, and leaves in the field. There were a small stone mortar and stone pestle on his painting table. The art collector, Jou (1997), pointed out that Hung used them to grind flowers in order to make his own brand of pigments. Furthermore, because he could not afford to buy fine brushes, he trimmed the cheap brushes into the size or shape that he needed, or even made his own brushes.

Hung also worked on oil paintings. He was not hesitant to combine Western material, with his primitive method and local products, while Dzeng bestowed a roll of canvases to him. According to Hwang (1996a), Hung ingeniously ground the seeds of *Abrus precatorius* into powder, then mixed the powder with house paints to build up a relief texture on canvas surfaces. He also inlaid native plant seeds in paint to make beaded pictures. In addition, in Hung's studio, Yang (1974) saw an unfinished painting, which was glued with small sea shells and painted with house paints on board.

Moreover, inspired by the traditional Chinese paintings, Hung started to use erect scrolls. For economical reasons, in order to spare the expense of framing, Hung also worked on ready-made mounted scrolls (which were

purchased in the gift shops) in place of using drawing paper for his watercolors (see Lai, 1973). However, Hung used this kind of orthodox formatted painting surface in an individual way, as the influence of traditional fine art and folk art on Hung's works came out in an unclassifiable manner. After Hung became well-known, he started to use more professional materials that he purchased himself, or that were given to him by others. However, the distinctive folk aroma seemed to be lost in his later works, as the materials changed (He, personal communication, June 11, 2001).

During the imperial era, Chinese scholars had to go through ten years of strenuous study. Afterward if one passed the civil service examination, he would acquire fame and achieve success in his future official career, and glorify his forebears as well. The blueprint Hung had drawn for the future should have included an ultimate goal—to ride on the crest of his success. Therefore, after several years of intensive, arduous efforts, Hung tried to attend the national juried art exhibition, which then represented an official recognition for Taiwanese artists (as did the civil service examination in former times for Chinese intellectuals). Not too surprisingly, he failed. Attempts to show his works in the American Culture Center in Tainan and the Tainan Municipal Social Education Center also resulted in rejection.⁸

In May, 1972, Hung took advantage of a photography competition event in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu displaying his paintings outside the temple. This temporary "street show" attracted a journalist's attention (Hung being referred to as a "mad painter") and his pictures were introduced in the English magazine, *Echo*. The art circles soon noticed this eccentric painter. After a 66-paged special edition on Hung Tung was issued by the *Lion Art Monthly* magazine in April, 1973, his fame rapidly increased. The symposium on Hung Tung held by

⁸ The information of this paragraph is referred to in Lai, 1973.

the *Lion Art Monthly* magazine in April 4, 1973, was packed with a crowded audience. In addition, ten days after this special edition was published, it was sold out. To answer readers' request, this issue was reprinted. Through the mass media, Hung became widely known in Taiwan.⁹

In Nan-Kun-Shen (the artist's conservative fishing village where people struggled for a basic livelihood from day to day), Hung, a unemployed man relied on his poor wife's support doing nothing but painting grotesque, useless graffiti. The residents despised him, or regarded him as a mentally unbalanced old man (see Lai 1973 & Jang, 1973). Also, in a place where religious rituals, supernatural customs, folklore, fabulous myths, and legendary narratives were lavishly fostered, people inevitably associated Hung's unusual behavior (such as unexpectedly starting to paint at age of 50, with no apparent reason, and crazily painting day in and day out) and his unintelligible art with his being an amateur spirit medium. A rumor circulated:

... One of the 'Five Kings' worshiped in the temple (of Dai-Tyan-Fu,) the Fifth King Fan, was a prominent painter in the Tang dynasty. The horoscopic time, date, month and year of his birth (denoted in the Celestial Stems and the Terrestrial Branches) were the same as Hung Tung's. Therefore, he possessed Hung Tung and made him a spirit medium to draw talismanic calligraphy and mumble incantations. (Chen, 1987, March 26, p.6)

In 2001, when I visited Hung's hometown, hearsay similar to this notion was still being spread.

Regardless of the gossip in the community, Hung loitered in his imaginative universe oblivious of the self and the outer world, as if he was an old Buddhist monk meditating truth. While he was no longer confined by

⁹ The information of this paragraph is referred to in He, 1973; Lai 1973; and Lyou, 1973.

physical existence, he was aware of that he had reached the zenith of art.¹⁰ He believed that one day, his paintings would become a national treasure of Taiwan, although people thought that he was getting too irrationally haughty. Some American and Japanese tourists seemed very interested in his works. However, Hung rejected an American tourist's offer of 8,000 New Taiwan dollars (which meant a big chunk of money for him) to purchase a piece of his work (see Lai, 1973; and Jang, 1973). His reason was that if he sold a painting and it became owned by somebody else, then he would never be able to see that painting again. He also turned down the *Lion Art Monthly* publisher's proposal of a Hung Tung solo exhibition, because after being rejected by several galleries and art exhibitions, he felt that it was not the right time yet. He claimed with great confidence: "I am now like a lonely wild goose dwelling in a humble hut in an obscure salt village. One day, when I grow fledged, I will flap my wings soaring in the sky." (Jang, 1973, p. 34)

A Sensational and Controversial Art Exhibition (March 13 to 26, 1976)¹¹

The right time had finally come, when this lonely wild goose had become fully fledged. On April, 1975, the senior editor of *Artist Magazine*, He Jeng-Gwang (何政廣) (who previously was the senior editor of the *Lion Art Monthly* compiling the special edition on Hung Tung), visited Hung's home, and found that Hung's humble abode had been transformed into a charming artist's house. The exterior walls were painted in the genuine style of "Hung Art;" the self-invented calligraphy of "Hung ideograms" was written on rice papers hanging down under the eaves. The studio door was decorated with Hung's couplets,

¹⁰ The comments on Hung's spiritual state of mind in terms of his art creation can be referred to in Yu, 1973, pp. 8-10.

¹¹ The information of this section (about the Hung Tung exhibition in Taipei) is mainly referred to in *Artist Magazine*, 1976, March and April issue; *The United Daily News*, 1976, from March 11-27; and *The Central Daily News*, 1976, March 22.

and little clay sculptures by Hung were aligned in the yard. He exclaimed Hung's artistic talents. Luckily, at this time, this characteristic artist was willing to take a break from working and open his studio door for He and his two companions. However, as usual, he just showed a few paintings to his guests, and did not allow videotaping. Actually, most of the time, Hung prohibited his pictures from being photographed, his speech from being audio-taped or even note taking as he spoke.¹²

In the fall of 1975, unexpectedly, Hung took the initiative in holding a Hung Tung show sponsored by *Artist Magazine*. With some doubt in mind, He visited Hung again. Due to the previous experiences of being rejected, He was not sure if Hung's decision was to be trusted this time, until Hung first unveiled his entire treasure—more than 300 pieces of his opus—in front of He. This Hung Tung exhibition was scheduled to be held from March 13-25, 1976, at the American Culture Center in Taipei.

Hung's illiteracy and poverty, his maniacal passion for painting, his occult connection with folk religion, his unusual painting style, his self-reliant declaration of his art as national treasure, and his refusal to sell works were qualities perfectly fitting into the profile of a typical artist. The press called him a "mad painter," "legendary painter," or "genius painter" (see Hwang, 1996a). The public read about Hung out of curiosity, and Hung's stories made a great topic in citizens' daily conversations. Journalists, photographers, and people from art and literary circles constantly came to Nan-Kun-Shen to see this legendary figure. This Hung Tung fad reached its climax during the Hung Tung exhibition in Taipei.

With the Hung Tung exhibition opening impending, a jubilant atmosphere brooded above the town of Nan Kun Shen—like the advent of the

¹² The information of this and next paragraph is referred to in He, 1976.

jyang-jyau ceremony and the annual celebrations of the Five Kings' birthdays. Hung's relatives and neighbors raised money for Hung's traveling expenses with great enthusiasm. This humble man used to be treated with disdain and judged as a lunatic or idler who avoided labor to engage himself in the luxury of useless activity—painting; but now he was hailed as a hero. He brought tremendous glory to his hometown as did the top successful candidate of the imperial examination (portrayed in the classical dramas). On March 11, 1976, Hung, his wife, and a number of the villagers took an overloaded pilgrimage bus on an eleven-hour-trip to Taipei.¹³

For the first time in his life, Hung arrived at the capital of Taiwan, Taipei. In a new suit and a pair of black cloth shoes (instead of his usual plastic shoes), the skinny and short old country man, Hung, carried a cloth wrapper and was soon surrounded by the reporters and flashlights. In a cheerful mood, he likened himself to a fledgling bird making his debut flight (see "Likening himself to a bird," 1976). This uneducated rural man did not show any sign of stage fright at all. On the contrary, he handled those metropolitan intellectuals with ease. Actually, he charmed them with his sense of humor, and was able to provoke their curiosity. For example, a reporter asked why he always wore a woolen cap even in the hot weather. Hung explained that he had no hair on his head, and called his head a "ba-gwa" (eight-diagram) head, which was not supposed to be exposed. The mysterious term of "eight-diagram head," and a close-up photograph of Hung in his woolen cap immediately appeared in the following day's newspaper (see "Claiming to love to use brain," 1976). Although he was being himself, he made great news material for the press.

¹³ The information of this paragraph is referred to in "People from his community," 1976; and "Likening himself," 1976.

On March 12, the 3:00 pm press conference was late beginning. The American Culture Center was packed, although the day's preview was not open to the public. At last, the leading role, Hung (in a dark suit) showed up and at once sent forth his magnetic field. The crowd surged towards Hung. He was hardly able to budge in the room. With difficulty, he was guarded to push his way upstairs into a more private room in order for the press conference to take place uninterrupted. Accompanied by his wife, Hung faced the press and put on a new shirt, the front of which was painted by Hung with four big personalized characters recognizable as “中華民國” (“The Republic of China”) and a person beating a drum (see Tyan, 1976; and “Likening himself to a bird,” 1976). It seemed that he intentionally created this attire with a symbolic official hallmark for the grand opening of his exhibition. During the previous day, he expressed his wish (conveyed in the illustration on this shirt) that he wanted to paint continuously, as the drum player was making endless sounds: “tung, tung, tung...” (which was a pun implying his first name, Tung) (“Likening himself to a bird,” 1976, p. 3). By means of his shirt painting, Hung indirectly disclosed his anticipation of being an artist representing the nation.

The big crowd seemingly made Hung nervous, so an exception was made to this nonsmoking room for Hung. A cigarette finally calmed him down, and he started to answer journalists' questions with confidence and composure. The “Hung type” responses were like subtleties of Zen principles, insinuating profound and mysterious truths. The following dialogue (Tyan, 1976) sounds as intriguing and puzzling as his art!

Question: “Why do you always paint human (faces) without ears?” (p. 117)

Hung: “For the matter of painting, it is not necessary to paint every detail. If the concept of a human figure is communicated, then it should be good enough. Why must I paint precisely? A painting should always lead observers to imagine freely.” (p. 117)

Later Hung added: “However, I may give an example for your reference. For instance, the sun is the refinements of water, and the moon is the extraction of (the glistening light of) ripples.” (p. 117)

This abstruse theory really made the listeners astonished.

Next Question: “Mr. Hung, why did you suddenly want to paint?” (p. 117)

The journalist meant to ask why Hung suddenly decided to paint at age 50. However, perhaps, because this question had been put forward too many times, Hung gave another unexpected answer: “It happened as such that I saw a bird peck a leaf on the ground. I felt that it is lovely, so I drew it down. I also saw a bird peck a fish in a pond, so I painted it too. This is it.” (p. 118)

Question: “Why you draw so many heads in your pictures?” (p. 118)

Hung: “The human brain is a very important subject. Everything in the world is created by human beings.” (p. 118)

Question: “There are so many English letters in your paintings. How can you draw them? Do you understand their meanings?” (p. 118)

Hung (using one of his fingers to trace on his other palm) said: “I draw this way. If you say I don’t understand, then I don’t, or if you say I do understand, then I do.” (p. 118)

Hung’s psychological state has been constantly discussed.¹⁴ Some so-called experts asserted that Hung was psychopathic. However, people close to Hung held that not only was he mentally sound, but also clever. Some

¹⁴ There are many writings involved the topic of Hung’s psychological state. The articles on this specific subjects can be referred to in Lyou, 1973; Pan, 1973; Syu, 1973; Lyou, 1976; Ke, 1976, April; Hou, 1976, June; Yang, 1976, June; and Li, 1976, June.

concluded that there is only a fine line between genius and insanity, or that an artist and a madman are one of a kind. A reporter directly brought out this subject: “A-Bye (what Taiwanese call a male elder,) sorry that my question will be embarrassing. In your hometown, many people say that you are insane. What do you think?” (Tyan, 1976, p. 118)

Hung: “I work on my paintings alone at home. Sometimes, I feel bored, so I sing. People don’t realize, as to assume that I am insane.” (Tyan, 1976, p. 118) Hung further clarified that his art was not madly made: “My pictures, some asserted, are painted at random, and some alleged, are not realistic. I hold that painting too realistic makes a painting unlike a painting.” (Tyan, 1976, p. 118)

When the senior editor of *Artist Magazine*, He, first heard about Hung, the self-taught artist was described as “a mad painter,” since the first coverage on Hung by the *Echo Magazine* called him so. However, when He met Hung in person, he saw “a typical country man”—sincere, plain, but stubborn.” (He, 1973, p. 4)

Hung’s teacher, Dzeng refuted this kind of rumor: “Hung Tung is not psychotic” (Chen, 1976, March 11, p. 3). For Dzeng, Hung was purely a country man. Dzeng held that due to being uneducated, Hung lacked self-confidence. Also, because his inferiority complex led to improper egotism, and he was too frank to beat around the bush, Hung was thus mistaken as talking crazy.

The collector of Hung’s art, Lyau Jr-Syang (廖志祥), also disagreed with the notion of Hung’s insanity. He recalled that during his last meeting with Hung (a year before the artist’s death), when Lyau came over with an artist couple, Hung crossed his legs smoking under a tree outside the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. Because Hung thought that a woman should always wear a skirt, he seriously censured the female visitor for the pants she wore. At that time, Lyau described

Hung as having eyes with a determined gleam, which contained a supreme rational force (Syu, 1996, p. 122, & personal communication, June 12, 2001).

From Hung's paintings, a psychiatrist, Tsai, diagnosed Hung as schizophrenic. He asserted that because so many people went to see Hung and praised his art so highly, it would make Hung more ill. He even joked about Hung's admirers, saying that birds of a feather flock together and suggesting that "people who have visited Hung should go to take an examination to see if they are also schizophrenic" (Lyou, 1973, May, p. 118).

When the provincialist writer, Yang Ching-Chu (楊青矗), first visited Hung, he had one of his relatives who was also related to Hung, and lived in the same community as Hung, show him the way to Hung's home. After talking to Hung for hours, Yang went back to say goodbye to his relative. This relative was surprised to see Yang still around: "I assumed that you have been gone. How did you talk to him (Hung) until now? You are as crazy as he is." Agreeably, Yang thought that maybe he was a madman, too (Yang, 1974, p. 12).

The art critic, Gu Syan-Lyang (顧獻樑), held that Hung was happy when he enjoyed painting in his small room. Therefore, even if Hung was sick, art could have healed him. Gu also asserted that "how much people appreciate art, then how abnormal they are. How creative artists are, then how crazy they are. Without abnormalities in life, art no longer exists." (Lyou, 1973, May, p. 119)

Hung's wife definitely denied the assumption of her husband's insanity, as she said: "I am his wife. We live together. I know best whether he is insane or not. He is not lunatic!" (Chen, 1976, March 13, p. 3) After the conference, someone questioned her about Hung's temper and she responded: "Not bad. At times, however, he wants to paint and needs to buy pigments and papers. Then

he will ask me for money. If I don't have money for him, he will quarrel with me and recklessly go out to borrow money from neighbors." (Tyan, 1976, p. 118)

Joy had hardly appeared on Hung's wife's face since her arrival in Taipei. She was devastated because her beloved first son had recently died from cancer (see Chen, 1976, March 11). She thought that it would be more meaningful if her first son could have lived to see this show (see "Hung Tung feels so happy," 1976). Indifferent to the press and the crowd, she quietly buried herself in the deepest melancholy. For seven years, she had to keep up her rational mind and volition in the greatest strength, leaving absolutely no dreams to herself. Otherwise, she could not have been there face to face with cruel realities all by herself, while her husband fanatically indulged himself in reverie.

The traditional Chinese marriage was usually arranged by a matchmaker with the consent of parents. As other traditional Chinese women, Mrs. Hung accepted her marriage as fate. Whatever the marriage was, good or bad, she put up with it, so that she said: "What can I do? It is what I got...." (Lei, 1987, p.6). She respected her husband and was willing to support his choice, although she did not understand what he was doing at all. The burden she carried on her shoulders was so heavy that she was unable to share her husband's glory, pride and happiness at this moment. She sadly expressed: "My family has always been in poverty. Now, it is getting more difficult." (Chen, 1976, March 13, p. 3) Some among the literary and art circles had sympathy with Hung's family and intended to help her by giving her cash behind Hung's back. But, she did not take it because her husband would not accept charity. The worse part was that more and more art people came to visit Hung, as Hung's fame increased. In order to live up to the hospitality of Taiwanese custom, the poor couple always tried their best to treat their guests, even to the extend of taking a loan. One

time, Mrs. Hung ordered seven dishes from the restaurant for three visitors. However, seeing the distressed hostess and her humble living environment, the guests were barely able to move their chopsticks (see Chen, 1976, March 13).

I met Hung and his wife in person once. In 1979, I attended the first seance of the Salt Region Literature Summer Camp, which took place in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. One morning when there was no course scheduled, a writer suggested a visit to nearby Hung. It was said that a bunch of young students knocking on Hung's door had the best chance to get it open. It seemed true in this case. He was in a very good mood, and very talkative that morning. I forgot the content of Hung's talk, but remember his wife's comment on his lecture: "He is talking crazy again!" In an interview, she made a remark on Hung's making art as "kids set off firecrackers for fun—what a waste!" (Jang, 1973, p. 35) It sounded like a complaint against her husband's artistic creation. Yet, somehow, there seemed to be a tacit understanding and leniency between this lifelong couple. For example, at the conference, Hung refused to answer questions until his wife came in. He tried to cheer her up by saying: "Children are others (others' wives or husbands); (This) wife is mine. Therefore, (my) wife should be well taken care of." (Chen, 1976, March 13, p. 3) In addition, he humored his wife telling the press that his "eight-diagram head" should not be shown carelessly. Only his wife had the privilege to see and to touch it.

It was circulated that Hung refused to sell his paintings, but gave away his works for free to people congenial to him. His stubbornness in refusing to sell is illustrated in this story mentioned by Hwang (1996a, pp. 113-4): A famous actor intended to purchase one of Hung's paintings. After long efforts to convince him, Hung remained unmoved by the promise of 5,000 NT dollars. The actor inserted the cash into the window of Hung's studio, but it got thrown

out by Hung. Therefore, this persistent buyer turned to ask a favor of Mrs. Hung. She went in to talk to Hung, yet, she got scolded by her furious husband: “Woman, what do you poke your nose into other’s business for?” The actor could not do anything but give up.

At the conference, this issue was raised: “Many people like your paintings. If they want to buy your works, would you sell them?” (Tyan, 1976, p.118) Suddenly, Hung recited a verse aloud. Because the meaning of the verse was incomprehensible to the audience, he explained it: “This means that the living slave for money. I simply hope to have a house of my own.” (Tyan, 1976, p.118) As for what kind of house, a simple dwelling with a very basic function, “livable,” would suffice to the satisfaction of this old man and his needy family. (“[Hung Tung is very popular,” 1976)

Hung had owned an old house, but it had been destroyed in a typhoon a long time ago. In the 1970s, Hung and his family stayed in someone’s abandoned house for free (see “Hung Tung is very popular,” 1976; Tyan, 1976; and “I comes home safely,” 1976). Due to the leaking roof, some even contributed plastic bags for Hung to protect his paintings from rain. Therefore, it was understandable that Hung was eager to have a house of his own. Also, Hung uttered a wish that he was willing to donate his paintings to the nation, if he was awarded a house. Also, he hoped that the government might build an art museum in his hometown to display his and the other artists’ works (see Tyan, 1976). Once and again, Hung revealed his ultimate goal: an official recognition, along with an ideal solution between his pragmatic needs and his purity in pursuing artistic creation—a public granted house for his family, and a honorable home for his art.

On March 13, 1976, the Hung Tung exhibition started at 10:00 am. Around 8:30 am, audiences showed up outside the gallery forming a waiting line. This line soon grew beyond a street-block long by the opening time. Over 40 floral baskets were bestowed by people (most of who were strangers to Hung) from Nan-Kun-Shen and Tainan county to congratulate Hung's success and to share his glory. The villagers (included old men, old women, and women with children, etc.) coming to Taipei on the same bus as Hung flocked around the gallery. Four policemen controlled the traffic of the large crowd flow at the entrance. Apparently, many of those in attendance had never been in an art gallery before. As Hung said: "My paintings are for people to see with endless interest, and to appreciate with their brain" (Yi-Er, 1976, p. 112). The observers enjoyed what they saw, and interpreted Hung's art with their own thoughts as documented below (see "Nan-Kun-Shen," 1976, p. 3).

A child in the elementary school student group cheerfully told the guiding teacher: "I can paint like this too." ("Nan-Kun-Shen," 1976, p. 3)

A tailor said: "Hung Tung's work is done more elaborately than my tailoring." ("Nan-Kun-Shen," 1976, p. 3)

Another followed: "These patterns can be applied to the export fabric. Good for neckties too." ("Nan-Kun-Shen," 1976, p. 3)

A young house painter stated: "There are all sorts of colors in this kind of paintings, and they are all 'Chinese color'!" ("Nan-Kun-Shen," 1976, p. 3)

A hoary-haired elder told his son: "Honestly, I can't paint like this. This man's brain is unusual." ("Nan-Kun-Shen," 1976, p. 3)

The reporter, Tyan (1976) had a conversation with a taxi driver on the way to the gallery. The driver did not go to see the show, but gained an impression of Hung's art from newspapers. He held that unlike those modern

abstract paintings, which were too remote to be understood for him, Hung's art made him feel straightforwardly refreshing. Also, he would like to buy a copy of the *Hung Tung's Painting and Drawing Album*.

The general public candidly expressed their opinions—some fell in love with Hung's art, while others felt that it was incomprehensible. Some intellectuals really valued Hung's paintings. A history professor from the National Taiwan University, Yang Yu-Ping (楊雲萍), believed in telepathic harmony between art and viewers. Accordingly, in response to the comment that "it is hard to understand Hung's paintings," he held that verbal language is superfluous for a good picture (see, Tyan, 1976). Lin Bo-Ting (林柏亭), who worked in the calligraphy and painting division at the National Palace Museum in Taipei asserted that Hung's art conveyed what has been lost in academic art. However, Hung's exhibition was not welcomed by everyone. The history professor Yang noticed that he did not meet any artists in his two visits to Hung's show. Indeed, a number of artists outrageously protested against this exhibition (see, Tyan, 1976).

The former senior editor, and the present publisher of *Artist Magazine*, He, revealed (personal communication, June 11, 2001) that this controversy was initiated by the art professors from the National Taiwan Normal University. At that time, the art department at the National Taiwan Normal University was seen as the academic leader of the art world in Taiwan. One of their renowned art professors, Lyau Ji-Chun (廖繼春) (who came of the Japanese education system and specialized in western style painting), had recently passed away. Against the art faculty's expectation of a memorial edition for this highly respectable master, *Artist Magazine* instead had sponsored an art exhibition and issued a special edition for someone they viewed as an illiterate bumpkin.

Furious art professors and other jealous artists, resenting that Hung had received too much attention, launched an aggressive critical campaign to undermine Hung's public recognition. Their reviews berated Hung's achievements, noting as follows: Hung's paintings should not be called art; this loutish old man created paintings in isolation (unlike trained artists who have spent years to learn from different schools or traditions of art), so it was doubtful how good he could be; Hung painted like a child with no philosophy, no national (orthodox) characteristics; Hung's paintings should not be encouraged. Some sour and bitter attacks even turned into personal abuse, such as: Hung was just a nobody and his works were worthless; Hung faked his mysterious acts to puzzle people intentionally; Hung's psychological state, learning experiences, and living environment were all deviant; Hung was insane, and his works were created under an unconscious, hallucinating state of mind; if paintings by an uneducated rural like Hung could be seen as art, then everybody would be an artist, and so on.¹⁵ In the gallery of Hung's show, a plumber gave a very wise response to those educated (and mean-spirited) professionals: "Painting styles are various, like pipes are made into hundreds of molds. You paint yours, and he (Hung) paints his own, as if water moves in the pipes (leading to different directions.) What are they fighting for?" (Tyan, 1976, p. 119)

Staying away from the flagrant battle field, the traditional Chinese brush painters maintained their conservative attitude with no comments on Hung's art and his exhibition, because they believed that birds of different feathers will not flock together (see Tsai, 1976b, March 22). Some neutral people from art circles deemed that the mass media calling Hung a genius was overstating the matter, but respected Hung's purity and passion, as well as his entire devotion to art

¹⁵ These criticisms are summarized from Tsai, 1976; and "Artists talk about Hung Tung," 1976.

and productivity in artistic creation (see “Artists talk about Hung Tung,” 1976). A newspaper editor did not like the instigated way that the press had made the Hung Tung exhibition into a sensational event: “I don’t like it at all. The whole thing is like ‘a farce.’ Only is Hung’s frankness peerless among those common artists.” (Tyan, 1976, p. 119) Some art people appreciated the imaginative qualities, inventive methods, child-like innocence, and the richness of local colors in Hung’s paintings, and strongly endorsed this exhibition—especially, Hung’s teacher, Dzeng. At a symposium on Hung Tung, Dzeng stated three positive observations about Hung’s show: First, it brought more people into the art gallery; second, it encouraged everyone to make art; third, it announced that the contemporary Taiwanese paintings are raised in the soil of our mother land.¹⁶

Earlier, in 1973, after the special editions on Hung Tung were sold out and reprinted, the *Lion Art Monthly* held a symposium in April. Among the hundreds of attendants, Liu Senhower (劉文三) (who was an artist, art educator, and folk art collector and researcher) humorously mixed Mandarin and Taiwanese dialect in his talk, revealing his grassroots inheritance: “... Both Hung Tung and I are country men, but today Hung’s paintings are so special, and entirely different from mine. This has to be attributed to the failure of school art education...” (Lyou, 1973, May, pp. 117-118) Moreover, in the gallery of the Hung Tung exhibition, the art critic, Jyang Syun (蔣勳), (Tyan, 1976) declared that:

¹⁶ Dzeng’s statement is referred to in “Artists talk about Hung Tung,” 1976. In the original text, the third point should be translated as that “it announced that the contemporary ‘Chinese’ paintings are raised in the soil of our mother land.” At that time, for political reasons, identifying with Taiwanese culture could be seen as claiming Taiwan independency. Some could go to jail for this kind of political incorrectness. Therefore, Dzeng used “Chinese paintings.” But, “Taiwanese paintings” should be more relevant here.

... However, at present, the most important issue is not to argue whether Hung Tung's paintings are good or not, or if this exhibition should be held or not, but to investigate why this Hung Tung exhibition can attract so much attention, and bring in so many audiences. This consequently leads us to think about our current education in art. Facing this sort of stimulation, we academic people should scrutinize our art education. (p. 115)

This kind of allegation could cause panic and fear in art academia. As a result, objections to Hung's show included that to promote Hung's art would frustrate the educated artists who put decades of efforts in study, damage art students' confidence in their academic training, and even overthrow the criteria for art appreciation.

The Chinese saying, "high trees attract the wind," could be a very pertinent description for Hung's situation then. As the debate continued, an arrangement for the Premier, Jyang Jing-Gwo (蔣經國) (who later became the President of Taiwan), to visit Hung's exhibition was called off. Hung made a painting for Jyang, after he was first notified about the honor of the planned visit. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, Hung was very disappointed when informed of the cancellation.¹⁷

In the modern city, Taipei, this country man complained about the bad air and noise. Although Hung lost his appetite and become sleepless, he still tried to draw and made plans for his future art creation. However, what really disturbed him and made him fretful was that he found himself caught in a chaotic situation. Due to his show, friends and relatives suddenly came from everywhere to curry favor with him. The American Information Office in Tainan

¹⁷ The information of this event is referred to in He (personal communication, June 11, 2001); Jyang, 1976; Jwang, 1994; and Hwang, 1996a.

and the Tainan Municipal Social Education Center had earlier rejected Hung, but now the mayor of Tainan flew to Taipei to invite him to hold a show in the city of Tainan (see “Hung Tung feels so happy,” 1976).

During the first day of his Taipei show, the artist went to the gallery followed by several of his relatives who were so concerned about the pricing of Hung’s paintings that they would not let him alone. Hung got indignant with their greedy and affected manners, and left the gallery mumbling “headache! headache!” (“Nan-Ken-Shen,” 1976, p. 3)

Spending most of his time in the hotel, Hung declined numerous tour and luncheon or dinner invitations, although some invitations were from people who had formerly been treated with courtesy and warmth in Hung’s home (see Chen, 1976, March 14). On March 15, Hung and his wife departed from Taipei by train. After staying in the city of Tainan overnight, Hung and his wife were welcomed home by the enthusiastic villagers of Nan-Kun-Shen. The red posters of congratulations on Hung’s exhibition were pasted up all over the exterior of his house. Hung seemed happy to be away from the hectic disturbance in Taipei and he could not wait to wolf six bowls of homemade yam congee. Nevertheless, Hung soon discovered that his handwritings on a door plate and a hanging scroll (which were adhered above the door frame) had been stolen. Furthermore, his old cottage had become an additional stop for the tour of the Nan-Kun-Shen pilgrimage. Bus-loads of tourists were constantly brought to Hung’s house. Hung often had to escape from his own home and hide in the field—not feeling free to return home until it got dark. Sometimes, he would hang several paintings outside the house and then lock himself in the studio to focus on his creation—paying no heed to the curious visitors. In

addition to the tourists, reporters and photographers arrived like a flood.

Government officials also came to deliver plans on building a house for Hung.¹⁸

In Taipei, after seeing Hung's show, a German businessman expressed his willingness to exhibit Hung's works in Germany. But, perhaps, because Hung did not want his precious art out of his sight, he dismissed this offer. Hung still did not agree to sell his paintings before leaving Taipei, although he decided each picture's monetary value by himself before the show (see Jwang, 1994). many intended buyers booked the paintings and left their names and addresses to the exhibition sponsor, in case Hung changed his mind.¹⁹

During the exhibition time, the American Culture Center was overwhelmed by the large crowd and the employees' working hours increased (see Tsai, 1976b; and "Hung Tung Exhibition Ended Yesterday," 1976). On March 23, Hung, accompanied by his two children, came to Taipei again. On March 25, Hung went to the American Embassy in the Republic of China to express gratitude for the patronage of the American Cultural Center in Taipei. The ambassador, Leomard Unger, had visited the exhibition, and appreciated Hung's unique style very much. At this meeting, the ambassador accepted one of Hung's paintings as a gift (see Figure 44) (see "Hung Tung comes to Taipei," 1976 & "Hung Tung expresses his appreciation," 1976).

The Hung Tung exhibition was extended one more day ending on March 26. The number of visitors to the exhibition over its two-week run was estimated to be about 100,000 (see "Hung Tung exhibition ended yesterday," 1976). In "Remember that Spell of the Big Hung Tung Rage," Jwang Bo-He (莊伯和) (who was involved in the organization of the Hung Tung exhibition) (1994) assessed

¹⁸ The information of this paragraph is referred to in "A few days of exhibition," 1976; "Hung Tung's door plate," 1976; "I comes home safely," 1976; "Paintings win fame," 1976); and "Hung Tung is going to have a new house," 1976.

¹⁹ The information of this paragraph is referred to in "Hung Tung does not agree ," 1976.

the value of the booked paintings up to about 1.5 million NT dollars. With this amount of money, Hung could have purchased four or five regular apartment units in the city of Taipei at that time. However, in the end, Hung decided not to sell his paintings. He said: "I never sell my paintings. If they are sold, I will never get to see my paintings again; then I will cry." (Tyan, 1976, p. 120)

Aftermath (1976-79)²⁰

In the classical Chinese dramas, the persevering leading role (either a scholar or a warrior) is always able to get through all sorts of tribulations to reach the meridian of success (which was often symbolized by a title or government post bestowed by the emperor), then ends up returning home in glory. When Hung cast about his future accomplishment referring to the typical play plot, he did not figure on himself being trapped in such a quandary. He did not realize that this kind of story was composed under the structure of Confucian decorum. Confucius drew up a thorough education system to reform the social and political climate of his time—in order to actualize an ideal state as the ultimate goal. By selecting and editing the classics as textbooks, Confucius set up the foundation for the civil service examination (and all scholarship). Through this national test, qualified scholars gained political power to dominate Chinese society for centuries. Consequentially, Confucius said: "He who holds no rank in a State does not discuss its policies," (Waley, 1938, p.135) In addition, Confucius advocated the importance of "the rectification of characters" (Hunag, 1997, p. 132), as he explained the concept of legitimacy:

... For if characters are not correct, speech will not be relevant; if speech is not relevant, affairs will not be accomplished; if affairs are not accomplished, the rituals and music will not prevail; if the rituals and

²⁰ The information of this section is mainly referred to in the coverage from *The United Daily News* issued between May, 1976 and December, 1981.

music do not prevail, tortures and penalties will not be just right; if tortures and penalties are not just right, the people will not know where to put their hands and feet. Therefore, when the gentleman adopts a character, he surely can use it to say things; when he says something, it surely can be put into practice. The gentleman, in regard to his speech, is never negligent, that is all (Hunag, 1997, pp. 132-133).

Certainly, Confucius emphasized that one's role or duties should be proper in relation to one's title. So to speak, in the hierarchy of a Confucian society, only someone with an appropriate official rank or academic degree could speak for his or her position. In other words, an unschooled country man like Hung was not supposed to win eminence within orthodox cliques. It thus explained why Hung was so eager to gain an official recognition.

In addition to title and degree, another accountable measurement is market price. Because Hung refused to sell his works, no trading value was left on record—meaning that his paintings might be invaluable to himself, but valueless to the art market. Because Hung's meteoric rise to fame relied heavily on the mass media's touting (see Syu, 1996a), once the rage receded into the background, he found himself just having an evanescent dream and woke up with a vanity reputation. The Hung Tung exhibition in Taipei did not come to the happy ending he expected.

The renowned Chinese scholar and professor, Syu Fu-Gwan (徐復觀), commented on Hung's art: "Hung's emergence manifests a spirit of art that is not ulcerated and contaminated by fame and wealth" (Yi-Er, 1976, p. 113). When Hung was urged by an irresistible inner force to paint day and night, oblivious of the self and the outer world, he possessed the pure state of mind close to which the Taoists, the Zen Buddhists, and the great Chinese artists

have attempted to attain. In “The Demonstration of the Essence of the Spirit of Chinese Art,” Syu asserted:

The immediate accomplishment of the Lao Tzu’s and Chuang Tzu’s thinking (Taoist philosophy) in life is, indeed, the life of art; and the pure spirit of Chinese art, in fact, is derived from this thinking system. In Chinese history, the great painters and art theorists have consciously or unconsciously realized this point to different extents; but, in terms of theorization, they have not contemplated or self-examined it thoroughly (Syu, 1983, pp. 47-48).

Syu held that Taoists intend to embody their highest concept, *Tao*, in real life, and “Chuang Tzu’s so-called *Tao* was often sublimated from the actual art activity” (Syu, 1983, p. 51). As Syu pointed out that *Tao* is the highest hierarchy of the spirit of art, this notion can be illustrated by one of Chuang Tzu’s allegories:

Woodcarver Ching carved a piece of wood to form a bell support, and those who saw it were astonished because it looked as if ghosts or spirits had done it. The Marquis of Lu saw it, and asked, “Where does your art come from?”

“I am just a woodcarver,” Ching replied. “how could I have ‘art’? One thing is certain, though, that when I carve a bell support, I do not allow it to exhaust my original breath, so I take care to calm my heart. After I have fasted for three days, I give no thought to praise, reward, titles or income. After I have fasted for five days, I give no thought to glory or blame, to skill or stupidity. After I have fasted for seven days, I am so still that I forget whether I have four limbs and a body. By then the Duke and his court have ceased to exist as far as I am concerned. All my energy is

focused and external concerns have gone. After that I depart and enter the mountain forest, and explore the Heavenly innate nature of the trees; once I find one with a perfect shape, I can see for certain the possibility of a bell support and I set my hand to the task; if I cannot see the possibility, I leave it be. By so doing, I harmonize the Heavenly with Heaven, and perhaps this is why it is thought that my carvings are done by spirits!"

(Palmer, 1996, pp. 162-163)

In his studio, Hung loitered in his imaginative universe, and his spirit was pure and free as the way of Woodcarver Ching's forgetting public acceptance, social criteria, material temptation, or physical existence (such as praise, reward, titles, income, glory, blame, skill, stupidity, his four limbs and a body, the Duke and his court, and external concerns). To prepare a purest heart for the unity of Heaven, material, and artist is the way leading to the the highest hierarchy of art, Muse's or God's works.

Many people have respected Hung for his striving for keeping his art creation pure. However, art is contradictory (see the explanation in Chapter 8). As modern researchers have provided evidence that rewards could erode one's inner locus of control and weaken one's creative production (see Hennesey & Amabile, 1988). The highest art can only be reached while the creators are free from secular limitations (including desires for fame and profit, worries about gain and loss, etc.)(see the discussion in Chapter 9) and able to surpass existing criteria to bring out ineffable, ruleless, magic-like phenomena. Accordingly, great artists are not always recognized, while renowned artists are not guaranteed to be the best. Furthermore, after being recognized, good artists may no longer produce the first-rate works under the sway of the art market and art reviews. Therefore, really good artists are doomed to battle in conflicts.

Probably, the perfect condition is that the masterpieces are discovered after the great artists have passed away.

Hung himself was contradictory. He was almost illiterate, but lived in an environment suffused with traditional folk arts (such as architecture, crafts, performance art, etc.), and classic literature (drama, poetry, calligraphy, etc.). Also, he learned the old Chinese concepts of propriety from theaters and stuck to those anachronistic views, sometimes like an out-of-date pedant. In addition, Hung's uneducated, provincial background had narrowed his scope of mind. As a result, he, a backward figure, often came out with ludicrous ideas and eccentric behaviors when interacting with the outside modern world.

Moreover, art can surpass the boundary of verbal language. Therefore, for an uneducated person like Hung, he could naturally express himself in paintings from his heart without inner or outer inhibitions. At the age of 50, when he felt unsatisfied with his mediocre life, he surrendered himself to the id retreating to the imaginative world. After he gained pure happiness and a sense of fulfillment in his art creation, he wanted to improve his life and his social status, so that he was determined to strive for glory through his art. As he threw himself in the world of regulations, unfortunately, he could not fit in and his art was not taken seriously in all the ways he wanted. (Hung wanted to be a national artist, but he was recognized as a provincial self-taught painter.)

From 1968 to 1976, Hung produced the best works, as he was driven by the inner necessity. As Hung gained more and more attention, some expressed worry that so many intrusions on Hung's life might taint his innocence and his artistic style (see Lyou, 1973, May). In fact, after the Hung Tung exhibition, Hung was still productive, but the quality of his artistic creation seemed to decrease. From 1976 to 1979, the negative influences from the outside world on Hung's

life and art were in effect. After the Hung Tung exhibition, Hung decided to become a professional artist and had no intention of ever going back to doing labor jobs. However, this impractical artist lacked the abilities (social skills and literacy) to deal with reality. In attempting to maintain his vanity fame, his shortcomings were exposed. Especially, when his financial situation became worse (since Hung was in bad health and his second son was also bedridden), the conflicts between his life and his dreams were intensified. Therefore, during this time period, he capriciously shifted between decisions of whether to sell his paintings or not. Also, his effort to grope for ways to meet both social standards and his practical needs led to some strange solutions that ended up being futile.

After showing in Taipei, the Hung Tung exhibition was moved to the Da-Tung Department Store in the southern city, Kaohsiung, beginning on May, 27, 1976. Hung stayed in his hometown burying himself in painting. He was still in the spotlight, and some changes seemed to occur in him. First of all, a newspaper article, "Hung Tung Acts More and More Like a VIP; His Wife's Life Gets More and More Difficult" (Dzeng, 1976), recounted that as usual, Mrs. Hung itinerantly peddled incense in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, in spite of her getting a toothache and a swelling cheek. After the Hung Tung exhibition, the heavy burden on her shoulders was not unloaded but further taxed because Hung became more and more particular about the art materials he used, and they were more costly. This reporter, Dzeng, tried to encourage Mrs. Hung by telling her that it was always hard to be an artist's wife. She forced a smile replying: "Is Hung Tung recognized as an artist?" (Dzeng, 1976, p. 3) Obviously, she was not deluded by the fugitive Hung Tung fad, while her husband was enmeshed in his empty fame.

In July of 1976, Hung got sick, then his second son followed. Two sick persons' medical expenses were not affordable for this struggling family. Then, disasters came one after another in a row. Mrs. Hung's low-income peddling job was banned by the police, so the whole family got into a desperate position. At last, Hung painfully announced that he decided to sell one of his paintings. Once this news was released, the buyers immediately crowded in Hung's home. Facing so many people, Hung did not know how to price his painting. Therefore, he had them to leave their addresses and their quoted bids. As a result, all the intended buyers left with empty hands.²¹

It can be seen that once the price issue was brought up, this spiritual artist always fell into immediate conflict. Then he would become moody. In front of the buyers, Hung wept and complained that some people made his paintings into prints without his permission. He resented them profiting a lot, while he (the artist) got nothing. It is uncertain if Hung was accusing *Artist Magazine*. Nevertheless, Chen (1977) mentioned that after the exhibition, *Artist Magazine* paid Hung a sum to help him solve financial problems. Unfortunately, Hung invested this money in a failed business venture that involved reproducing his paintings. Apparently, this uneducated artist was not a good businessman.

Although Hung was poor and sick, his integrity did not seem not to be shaken by his poverty. He declined an artist's offer to bring him to a doctor and rejected intended buyers' offers of medicines and money. Later, according to Chen's account (1977), Hung's paintings were exhibited in a show for which the artist was awarded more than 10,000 NT dollars. This amount of money might have released this family's financial burden of paying his son's daily hundreds-of-dollars in medical bills.

²¹ The information of this and next two paragraphs is referred to in "Hung Tung gets sick," 1976; "Hung Tung sells paintings," 1976; "Hung Tung only sells one of his paintings," 1976; and "Hung Tung weeps," 1976.

In July of 1977, Hung came up an incredible solution for managing his artistic career. The news of Hung Tung seeking for a concubine soon became a farcical topic in common people's daily conversation. Hung gave the profile of his ideal concubine—a high-school-graduated (or above) young woman (see "Worried that the meaning" 1977).

In the special edition of Hung Tung issued by the *Lion Art Monthly*, Lia (1973) mentioned that Hung wished to have a secretary to record his thoughts during his creative process because he always forgot about his creative thinking after finishing a painting. However, Hung held that such a person could be only met by chance at an opportune moment. The trip to Taipei, apparently, made Hung realize that without an academic degree he could never be recognized in the way he wanted to be. In the eye of some academic artists, he was nothing but an ignorant vulgarian, and his works were meaningless scribbles. Whereas, he was aware that his painting vocabularies implicated infinite messages, he also felt a need to explain the significance of his paintings in scholarly parlance. This need became urgent, especially, after hearing those malicious remarks from the mainstreamers. In the process of dealing with the outside world for his professional career as an artist, his deficiencies in interpersonal skill and literacy (which are not a requirement for making art) were exposed. Also, while his old-fashioned notions and insular prejudices made him eccentric enough to attract the mass medium's attention, these same qualities held back his further development in mainstream society. Pure art creation is private and spiritual, but once open to the public and/or involved in monetary transaction, it can become very complicated and irritating. Besides, how the real art world works was beyond Hung's comprehension and knowledge.

On the one hand, Hung would not want to owe anyone a debt of favors; on the other hand, he feared being cheated and distrusted others. These attitudes reflected on Hung's preventing his paintings from being photographed. Lai (1973) presumed that Hung valued his own works as some kind of precious curios and was afraid of his self-invented style being imitated, and of his paintings being exploited in various ways by others. Furthermore, in a small community, the ignorant villagers' limited good sense and their gossip would be very annoying. For example, one of the villagers showed Hung the coverage on him in the *Echo Magazine*, and stirred up bad feelings by telling Hung that the magazine profits by selling the photos of his pictures to foreigners. However, not only did this magazine not pay Hung anything, it also did not send him a copy of the photos. Thereafter, Hung became very distrustful and closed.

Yang (1974) also noticed that "Hung had an old Chinese feudal concept of keeping occult arts a secret. He was afraid that if people saw his invention, then they would steal his secret knack." (p. 12) Moreover, Hung believed that his art would be a national treasure. In consequence of his logic, he called people who took pictures of his paintings, but never sent a copy of them to him "national thieves," since they stole the national treasure of Taiwan.

Another instance is that during preparatory time preceding the Hung Tung exhibition, someone said something to Hung making him anxious about leaving his paintings with the sponsor. Hung was so panic stricken that he almost went to Taipei to get back his opus immediately (see Chen, 1976, March 11). In addition, later, the postcards of Hung's pictures and the *Hung Tung's Paintings and Drawings Album* published by *Artist Magazine* and the Artist Publishing Company were well sold, but Hung felt that he did not get a fair share. Referred to Jwang (1994), he and the editor of the album and the senior

editor of *Artist Magazine*, He, visited Hung not too long after the exhibition ended. However, Hung appeared to be cold and complained to his guests that people made a lot of money out of the postcards of his pictures, and someone got an opportunity to go to France because of him, etc. The senior editor, He, felt frustrated, since he tried his best to explain to Hung, but still could not bring Hung to reason. While Jwang and He were leaving, an unforgettable scene happened—Hung's wife rushed out of the house holding the door of their car and desperately begging them to hold another exhibition for Hung.

Hung used to have great expectations of the most educated person in the family—his first son (Hung Si-Bau, personal communication, January 31, 2001). Also, Hung was very fond of his son's fiancée and once expressed his wish to his teacher, Dzeng, that his daughter-in-law-to-be would be the perfect person to manage his paintings. Contrary to Hung's hopes, he buried his oldest son before seeing him get married. In addition, during the show, Hung was irritated by his relatives' covetous behaviors. Apparently, he was eager to find an intellectual and reliable person to complement his deficiencies. In former times, it was not unusual for a Chinese man to have more than one wife. Sometimes, those wives could assist the husband performing miscellaneous duties of family business or domestic economy. Chen (1987, March 26) mentioned: "(Hung's) father took four wives, and he was the only son of the fourth wife. Therefore, he regretted being unable to tread the steps of his father leaving his long-fostered wish of having a concubine unfulfilled." (p. 6) However, one of Hung's relatives, Hung Ping, (whose father was a cousin of Hung's father) told me that Hung's father had no concubine, and Hung's mother was a succeeded wife in place of the deceased (personal communication, June 16, 2001). If Hung was the offspring of a concubine, then, in addition to his illiteracy, it might spell out why

Hung cared about legitimacy in the art world so much. Whether Hung's father had concubines or not, Hung's obsession with the idea of having an additional wife was definite.

Hung expressed that he needed an intellectual to record his creative thoughts. He reasoned that some Western artists had secretaries, so he should also have one. His theoretical concubine had combined obligations of a wife and a secretary. Actually, like most of artists who want to put their art works up on the market, Hung needed an agent. Yet, he distrusted people outside his family and his wife, whom he praised highly, was also illiterate. So getting a concubine seemed perfect for him, although his academic idea could not be tested in reality. Hung told a reporter that his wife had no objection to this plan. But, Mrs. Hung, apparently, had a clearer head and asked who would be willing to marry an old guy like Hung? Not to mention, how much would he have to earn in order to support a concubine? She held that Hung just talked—it would never happen. In Hung's thinking mold, he neutralized those obvious bugs in his theory, then came up the requirements: she has to be ugly, have at least a high school education, as well as does not reject his poverty and has a willingness to share bliss and adversity together.²²

Hung got some responses in the mail. One suggested that Hung open a "cultural business company," and give up his concubine idea, since that is a rich person's privilege; besides, having two wives was not always enjoyable. Another letter was from a female who was willing to be Hung's secretary, but not his concubine, and asked for a 5,000 NT dollars monthly salary. Hung said that he did not have money to either set up a company or hire a secretary. Earlier, while a reporter questioned how he could feed his concubine, this old man in

²² The information of this paragraph is referred to in "Worried that the meaning of his paintings," 1977; and "Hung Tung has sons and daughters," 1977.

the sick bed replied that although he was poor, she could sell his paintings to support herself (see “Worried that the meaning”, 1977) . Now, the reporter proposed that Hung give the secretary a piece of his art every month as her salary. However, Hung dismissed his suggestion for the reason that his painting’s value was higher than that amount. In short, this contradictory artist had a hard time dealing with reality.²³

Two years passed. Predictably, Hung still did not get an additional wife. After a group of young school teachers visited Hung, stirring up his peace of mind, he emotionally exclaimed to the journalist, Jang (1979, July 5):

“Why I would like to take a concubine is because I want to have a literate woman who can help me manage my works of calligraphy and painting, arrange business, and take care of my everyday life at home. Like those college graduates who just left would be the best. But, I hold that the uglier she is, the better. It means that I want to have the ugliest woman in the world as my concubine.”

Jang tried to reason him out of his fantasy:

“I see that you presently do not have any money. What do you get a concubine for? It doesn’t do your wife good. It would be more practical that you sell your paintings, then hire a secretary to help you.”

“In fact, my so-called concubine is different from its general definition, but only to do the job of a female secretary. You see that one with a diploma above high school requires at least 3,000 to 5,000 dollars a month. How can I afford it?”

“In the countryside like North Door (which is the district in which Hung lived) even if you are able to pay 3,000 to 5,000 dollars, no one would really be interested. As to your saying of that the college graduate is best,

²³ The information of this paragraph is referred to in “Hung Tung receives a letter,” 1977.

without at least 7,000 to 8,000 dollars a month, probably nobody would pay attention to you!”

Hung still did not give way to reality, although his plan was self-evidently paradoxical. He said:

“Don’t speak this way, I know (what you meant)! College graduates who are unmarried and unable to find a job are not rare nowadays. If I have money, getting a concubine or hiring a secretary is always possible.” (p. 3)

Not surprisingly, no educated modern women would be interested in being an illiterate, poor old man’s illegitimate wife. This outrageous wish, of course, never came true.

In September, 1978, he had another fantastic idea—he wanted to study in the Chinese Department at the National Cheng-Gung University (see Jang, 1978a). His behavior seemed laughable to others, but it was explicable for his cognitive mold. The criticism from the intellectuals did have a significant impact on Hung and his art. After the Hung Tung exhibition, in an attempt to prove that his paintings were not nonsense, Hung intended to show his intellectual capabilities. Thenceforth, he started to further develop his so-called “calligraphy painting (文字畫).” He explained this self-invented style of art as follows: “There are images in calligraphy, and words in painting; calligraphy and painting unify as one. If you see it as words, then it is calligraphy; if as images, then it is painting.” (“Hung Tung gets poor,” 1978, p. 3)

In addition to his change in painting style, this eccentric artist revealed his longing to have an academic degree. He bought a high school student’s hat to replace his trademark, woolen cap, and expressed his wish to study in the Chinese Department at the National Cheng-Gung University. Jang (1978a)

asked Hung why he wanted to study Chinese literature. He replied, "I think that I should devote more time or effort on literature in order to make my paintings more valuable." To answer the question of whether he would take painting courses if he got an opportunity to study at the university, Hung seriously declared, "There is no need to learn painting from others anymore. I only need to study literature." Although he was so self-conceited, he was aware of the impossibility. So he said:

"However, after thinking it over and over, I held that going to study at the Cheng-Gung University is just my dreaming. Because I lack formal schooling, being illiterate and having no diploma, the Cheng-Gung University would never admit me. Alas! No more talks on this matter." (p. 7)

Hung was chasing a rainbow in reality in lieu of in art. Fantasies may be actualized in the form of art, but not always feasible in real life. Like many artists, Hung was incapable of equalizing the imaginative and the actual world, so that he often appeared to be inconsistent and paradoxical.

The more rational, stable force in Hung's life was his wife. In the summer time, there were a few of strange-costumed female peddlers sweatily hawking goods outside the temple of the Dai-Tyan-Fu. Except two eyes and two palms their whole bodies were covered up with long-sleeved clothes, long pants, a broad-brimmed hat, and a face cloth to block out the burning heat of the sun. One of them was Hung's wife. After the exhibition, her hope of improving their financial situation came to nil, since Hung rejected the selling of his works. She never forced her husband to sell his paintings. However, the living was getting worse and worse. Before, Hung occasionally went out to do some odd jobs. But,

now, her impractical husband tried to maintain his celebrity manner, doing nothing to earn money. Hung seemed to have his reasons.

One time, Hung was said to collect snails for sale, because his economic shortage was getting worse. Hung appeared to be embarrassed by this fact, so when the reporter, Jang (1978b) tried to confirm the reliability of this information, Hung replied out of ire:

“Our Hung family has this descendent, me, Hung Tung. Am I such a complete failure? If I have let my ancestors down, as to live by selling snails, then my last name is not Hung anymore. Just call me ‘a bit of red (一點紅)’.” (p. 7) (In the Taiwanese dialect, “red” and “Hung” are pronounced the same. Hung’s play of words meant that he had dishonored his ancestors, so that he was too ashamed to be a Hung, but only a tiny bit of Hung)

Jang asked what he lived by. Hung said:

“Same as before. My children being out of town²⁴ send a little money home every month, and my old wife peddles incenses in the temple earning some meal fees. Like today, she went to plant green onions in someone’s farm. I would like to help but I can’t.” (p. 7)

The reason that Hung could not help was because the small community residents sometimes could be very gossipy and mean. Hung blamed the senior editor of *Artist Magazine*, He, for putting him in this dilemma, saying: “It’s all He’s fault. You made me so famous.” (Chen, 1978, September 30, p. 3) Hung said to He: “Now I tried to find a job, nobody would hire me, and told me that I, Hung Tung, am so famous, with no need to do such low labor task.” It thus can be understood why Hung got irritated or moody once the topic focused on his fame

²⁴At that time, Hung’s first son had passed away; the first daughter was married; the second son was sick; the youngest daughter and son were out of town working in factories.

and his economic condition. In addition, Hung had a hard time dealing with the fact of his missing out on good opportunities during the Hung Tung exhibition. For example, when he was asked why he did not want to sell his paintings in Taipei, he sadly replied: “Who says I didn’t want to sell. It was them (the sponsors of the show) who didn’t sell for me.” Hung explained himself away: “You see, my living is so difficult. If some (of my paintings) get sold, my life more or less can be improved.” (Shu-Shr-Chwan, 1980)

Like an animal in the zoo, Hung in his old hut was constantly observed and interrupted for free. Hung’s wife lost patience with strangers’ never-ending inquiries about Hung, as she said: “Ju-Dou (Hung’s nickname), famous, useless...” (Chen, 1983). Hung’s financial situation was at the end of its rope, and Hung’s health was not good most of the time. Also, Hung was probably fed up with numerous intrusions on his privacy, and resented that his empty reputation had brought him nothing good. So he started to make rules to collect fees, such as charging 1,000 NT dollars for him to meet a foreign visitor, and for his interpretation of each one of his self-invented characters, etc. Moreover, no photography of and no questions about his paintings, unless one intends to buy them. Yet, he always claimed that his works were priceless so that they could not be traded down for lucre. Surprisingly, in April of 1978, he announced that he decided to sell the 160 pieces of paintings (which were displayed in the Hung Tung exhibition) at wholesale for the total of 5.5 million dollars—exactly as the figure he had decided for the show before. Nevertheless, in keeping with the Chinese saying, “Strike while the iron is hot,” it was assumed that Hung had missed his favorable timing and that his paintings were no longer worth as much as they used to be.²⁵

²⁵ The information of this paragraph is referred to in “Hung Tung gets poor,” 1978; “Thereabouts three years,” 1978; and Jang, 1978b.

Whether Hung's works were still marketable or not, Hung's attitude towards selling his works was always mutable. He might emphasize that his paintings could not be purchased at retail, but in the next minute tell a reporter that one of his paintings could be sold for 100,000 NT dollars (see Jang, 1979, July 4). Even if he agreed to part with a painting, he sometimes change his mind at the last second. Shu-Shr-Chwan (1980) stated that someone mailed 10,000 NT dollars to Hung as he requested. When the buyer received the picture in mail, he found that it was indicated as a gift, although the money was accepted. This was, possibly, Hung's compromised way of vending his works.

In another narration, in May of 1979, an art collector, Hwang Sywan-Yen (黃宣彥) and his friends carried 200,000 in cash to Hung and intended to buy his works. Hung let Hwang select about 20 pieces. However, when the topic came to prices, the stubborn artist changed his attitude at once, and quoted 100,000 NT dollars apiece for oil paintings, and 50,000 NT dollars apiece for watercolors. As a result, this trade ended in failure. Hwang went out to find Hung's wife in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu and asked her to talk Hung around. But it still turned out to be in vain. Mrs. Hung looked sad, yet, she did not lay eyes on the 200,000 dollars cash on the table. Hwang wanted to help her and asked how much the key rings she was selling were. However, this strong woman insisted on giving the key rings to Hwang as gifts, since he came a long way there for nothing. Due to Hwang's insistence of paying something, at last, Mrs. Hung only accepted a sum for the capital of the key rings, and the visitors left with respect for this old couple.²⁶

Many remarks on Hung's works produced after the Hung Tung exhibition tended to be negative. It could be because Hung no longer painted for his own happiness and approached art intuitively. A vignette (Shu-Shr-Chwan, 1980)

²⁶ The information of this paragraph is referred to in "Hung Tung insists in high prices," 1979.

recounts that Hung showed the author and three other guests one of his new calligraphy paintings, and wanted to sell it to one of them, Chen. Hung, bashful to quote a price, insisted on Chen making a bid. However, nobody was interested in buying it because this new painting lacked the unique qualities of his earlier works. Hung thus said:

“The ancient people’s single word was worth 1,000 pieces of golden coin (this sentence is literally said of superb writing.) It is worth more than this sum nowadays, so it should be 10 grants. Look how many words there are in this picture, then you will know how much it is worth.” (p. 6)

Listening to his calculation method, it finally dawned on the author that Hung was selling calligraphy, not painting, and the price was based on the number of characters. Perhaps, for Hung, words represent the social regulations and academic criteria, so they were countable. Nevertheless, his paintings were too spiritual to be measured by profane standards.

It seemed that Hung was reluctant to merchandise his paintings, but did not mind trading off his calligraphy. His behavior was indebted to the ancient Chinese scholars who were supposed to be adept in painting, calligraphy and poetry. In addition, some old Chinese scholars down in luck might set up a booth to demonstrate and retail calligraphy in the street. Hung probably envied the masters who could act casually and elegantly to complete a sought-after piece of calligraphy in one breath, and believed that being intellectual would certify his status as an artist in the mainstream and his painting’s value in the art market. Indeed, now for Hung, high price, authorized credit and literacy were a trinity. These three elements interconnected each other to indicate the degree of his achievement. Therefore, his intention to sell his works was not for material satisfaction, but for the eligibility. This thus explains why Hung priced his

paintings unreasonably high. Furthermore, artists are too subjective to merchandise their own works, especially for the spiritual type artists. If they try to do so, they often make themselves terrible dealers. Hung's wholesale idea may be decoded as the result of his perfectionism. One part of him understood that cash could release his family's (especially his wife's) misery, and cease slanderous gossips in the community. Plus, under the leaking roof of his old hut, some of his beloved oeuvre sometimes got damaged in the rain by accident, or ended up getting mildewed. The other part of him just could not bear letting his works go scattering about to various locations. During his exhibition in Taipei, he wished the nation to collect them. Now, he romantically hoped for someone (especially a national museum) to preserve them as a totality. Besides, Hung tended to reserve his best works, and merely was willing to sell the secondary ones. But people seemed not so interested in buying those second rate works. Therefore, only a small number of Hung's paintings were sold when he was alive, and his reality and his aspiration stayed in strife.

The Hung Tung fad gradually ebbed. While this ebb tide seemingly came to an end, a resurgence emerged. At the end of September, 1978, about two and half years after the Hung Tung exhibition, big news on Hung caught the attention of the public once more. A professor, Georges Goornaghtigh from the University of Geneva, traveled to Hong Kong in 1977 and read a published article on Hung Tung. After going back to Switzerland, he shared this exciting discovery with Michel Thévoz, the director of the Collection de l'Art Brut. The term "Art Brut" was invented by the French painter, Jean Dubuffet (1901-85). Dubuffet's intention to subvert the authoritative aesthetic criteria and the asphyxiating art tradition led to his unconventional artistic style and his collection of the art by children, psychiatric patients and graffitists who were

eliminated by the orthodox art world. The Collection de l'Art Brut was Dubuffet's original collection permanently housed in a purpose-built museum in Lausanne, Switzerland. This museum director fell in love with Hung's paintings at first sight, so he had Goornaghtigh take a trip to Taiwan exclusively for inviting Hung to exhibit his works in his museum.²⁷

Through a roundabout course, this young professor (who was originally from France, but fluent in Chinese) was brought to the American Information Office in Taipei, then got connected with the senior editor of *Artist Magazine*, He. To express his sincerity and determination for meeting Hung in person, Goornaghtigh showed up in He's office with two air tickets to the city of Tainan. Goornaghtigh and He flew to Tainan, and invited an artist Chen Hwei-Dung (陳輝東), and his wife as advisers and Taiwanese dialect translators. They could not wait to tell Hung this great news. Arriving at Hung's home, they found that an outer door was added, probably, for blocking numerous intrusions. Yelling and knocking at the door finally got a response. The host ushered in the visitors, but did not look up to this foreigner guest who traveled all the way from the other side of the earth only for him. He dismissed the invitation to Switzerland and insisted on his wholesale declaration. Hung pointed to a pair of pants, which were hanging down the edge of one side of his bed with a pair of socks lying near the ankles and a red cloth strip surrounding the waist, and said: "This is the previous Hung Tung!" Then he philosophically continued: "The previous Hung Tung was in the spotlight. He is dead!" (Chen, 1978, October 1, p. 3)

Later, this recondite artist with maestro-like air looked over the catalog of the Collection de l'Art Brut brought by Goornaghtigh and commented: "I paint better than them. Jang Da-Chyan (張大千) and Picasso paint what a corporal

²⁷ The information of this and next four paragraphs about Goornaghtigh's discovery of Hung' art and coming to Taiwan to visit Hung is referred to in Chen, 1978.

eye can see, but I paint what is going on in the mind.” (Chen, 1978, October 1, p. 3) Jang Da-Chyan (1899-1983) was the most eminent contemporary Chinese painter, and had been likened to be “Eastern Picasso.” Due to Jang’s moving from the U.S. to permanently residing in Taiwan, both Hung and Jang often appeared in the news during that time period. Hung also showed up in Jang’s exhibition in Tainan later. Obviously, Hung considered himself to be much superior to the artists of the Collection de l’Art Brut, and paralleled himself with the most revered artist in Taiwan, Jang, and the art master in the world, Picasso. Therefore, he did not want to be grouped with the artists of the Collection de l’Art Brut.

Hung picked up a ball pen and signed his name, Hung Tung, and some arcane signs on the first page of the catalog under Dubuffet’s writings. Goornaghtigh translated Dubuffet’s sentences: “If you give art the best bed, she would not sleep on your bed. Once her name was mentioned, she would run away. What she likes is to be unknown, and when she reaches the acme, she is oblivious of her own name.” He held that this portrayal corresponded with Hung.

In an effort to seek Hung’s cooperation, Chen talked for two hours, but Hung still remained unmoved. However, Goornaghtigh was absolutely falling for Hung’s mysterious behaviors and paintings, and thought that this trip was worthy, although his main mission was incomplete.

Goornaghtigh went back to Switzerland with the special edition of the Hung Tung exhibition in *Artist Magazine* and the reproductions of Hung’s pictures. Those printed materials were forwarded to Jean Dubuffet. In 1979, this world-known artist wrote a letter to *Artist Magazine*. The content of this letter was translated from French into Chinese (He, trans., 1979, p. 63), and I translated it from Chinese into English as follows:

Michel Thévoz is the director of the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne, and a friend of mine. He has mailed the reproductions of Mr. Hung Tung's paintings, which were printed in the special edition of his exhibition. He also sent me a copy of your publication, the special edition of the *Artist Magazine*. I read it repeatedly for a long time, but only could appreciate the mysterious beauty of the written language, and was unable to understand the meanings of the words. I did not know any characters except for three Latin words—my name, Scottie Wilson and Madge Gill. This reminded me that your information was acquired from the Collection de l'Art Brut where you have visited (Michel told me about this in a letter).

The documents on Hung Tung were sent by Mr. Georges Goornaghtigh from Geneva.

Michel told me that Hung Tung's exhibition was sponsored by you. His paintings impressively touched me, and I was surprised that his works perfectly matched the theoretical direction of the Collection de l'Art Brut.

I am glad Hung Tung's oeuvre and our collection could bring you benefits.

I sincerely wish to include and display Hung's paintings in the Collection de l'Art Brut. They will be among the most important and valuable works. I know that it is very difficult to make Hung agree to part with his paintings. But, maybe you can persuade him to give the Collection de l'Art Brut an exceptional favor, and assure him that his paintings would be understood, appreciated, and respected here, as Hung anticipated, and their future values can be surely guaranteed.

Of course, I am willing to purchase Hung's works for the Collection de l'Art Brut with the prices Hung quoted.

Jean Dubuffet

P.S. In our upcoming museum publications, we would like to publish a special edition on Hung Tung illustrating Hung Tung's paintings in black-white and colors. Can slides be developed into good-quality photos in Taiwan?

Hung seems not to have been notified about Dubuffet's letter until the reporter, Jang, told him about this news (see Jang, 1979, July 4). It was very much likely that Hung never let go of his discontentment with *Artist Magazine's* profiting from the reproductions of his paintings, and laid the blame on He. Also, possibly due to Hung's unstable attitude towards selling his works, He did not want to initiate any further involvement. Hung himself still insisted on his 5.5-million-dollar-wholesale price. Therefore, the trade between Hung and the museum was never made (see Chen, 1987, February, 24). After Hung passed away, the museum purchased two of Hung's paintings from a Hongkongese collector, Myou Le-Ming (繆樂名) (see Tai-Nai, 1996).

Because Hung was uninformed of the art world, he unrealistically hoped to be ranked atop in the orthodox art tradition. Hung did not identify himself with the artists of Art Brut, yet, he was unable to fit into where he desired to be. It was also because of his awkward interpersonal communicating skills, insular biases, and provincial point of view that this very rare chance slipped away. Hung gained international attention to some extent through the coverage of the *Time Weekly*, the *Reader Digest's* Chinese issues, and some world news agents (see Chen, 1978, October 1). However, Hung had rejected the proposal

of showing his works in Germany and Switzerland. Hung once complimented the contemporary Chinese art master, Jang Da-Chyan, as a great man faithful to his own country (Jang, Chen, & Tsai, 1983). Hung probably meant that Jang's spending his last years in Taiwan demonstrated his loyalty to his fatherland. Therefore, the assumption could be made that Hung was looking up to his model and following the ancient teachings, so that he declined the invitations from foreigners.

Furthermore, before the invitation from Switzerland, one of the American officials in Taiwan did not want to see Hung bury himself in poverty and sickness the rest of his life, so he proposed a circulating exhibition in America to the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. Nevertheless, the response was: "How can he (Hung Tung) represent the art of the Republic of China!" (Chen, 1978, October 1, p. 3) The authoritative representatives ostracized Hung, and Hung himself pushed the good opportunities away. This resurgence of the Hung Tung fad finally retrogressed and ceased.

Finale (1980-87)

In an allegoristic story which I read in childhood, a young lady is told to walk through a pebbly path without turning back. She is allowed to pick up only one stone. At the other end of the path, she will be rewarded with a gift as valuable as the size of the stone she picks. She goes on her journey. When she first sees a big stone, she hesitates to take it, since she expects a bigger one down the road. After giving up several big rocks, she found no stones bigger than the previous ones anymore. Therefore, she regrets her mistakes and was reluctant to accept the smaller one. At last, she arrived at the terminus with empty hands. Hung's encounter is reminiscent of this narrative.

As time progressed into the 1980s, Hung's piecemeal artistic career languished in the desolate corner of the world. At his height, Hung once asked his teacher, Dzeng, why people had rejected exhibiting his paintings before? (see Chen, 1976, March 11) At his downturn, he still could not figure out how the art world worked, so he felt hurt and protested against people outside his idealistic universe: "You are all liars..." (Lei, 1987, p. 6) At the last stage of Hung's life, occasionally, the name of Hung Tung arose in reporters' or nearby tourists' minds, who still came to take a peek at his crude abode. However, it was said that Hung hardly picked up his brushes anymore. His artistic production had declined quantitatively. Hung's bosom friend, Wu Ming-Syung (吳明雄), thought that too many interruptions caused by visitors were the reason. (personal communication, June 15 & 16, 2001) But, the collector of Hung's art, Lyau, believed that "*chi* (energies) disassembled" leading to the end of Hung's art creation (personal communication, June 12, 2001). In terms of the metaphysical theory, the massive polymerization of energies triggered Hung's explosive art creation at the opportune moment; then his artistic production weakened, while the energies evanesced with temporal transition. The former reason may be partially true, but I tend to agree with the latter conjecture more. Every master has his or her peak period—some last longer, some shorter; after the summit, an atrophy phase likely follows. I speculate that the *Chien-Chiao* Ceremony of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, which clustered pneumatic energies up to the climax was the catalyst. Concurrent with those of Vincent Van Gogh (1853-90), thereafter, Hung's passionate and impulsive creative drives resulted in his extraordinary productivity over a few years. But, unlike Van Gogh's neurotic way of burning the candle at both ends until his suicidal death, Hung went through the natural course of degression after the vertex—namely the

Hung Tung exhibition in Taipei. The invitation to Switzerland was awaited to be a comeback of the Hung Tung fad; yet, this revival was feeble and transient. As for the extraneous disruptions, it should have had an impact on Hung's artistic creation, but not be the main or the only reason leading to the qualitative or quantitative decline in his artistic productivity. For example, after Hung was reported in *Echo Magazine* in 1972, people increasingly came to Hung's home. But, frequently, Hung just shut his door tight ignoring all calling, shouting, pleading or knocking, if he was not in the mood to see guests. The unbearable time period would be during and right after the exhibition. At that time, bus loads of tourists were constantly brought to his house, as to he had to escape from home. When Goornaghtigh visited Hung in 1978, Hung stated that he locked himself in all day long without leaving his studio, and only drank three bowls of water and ate several crackers per day. He still painted day and night, until he felt exhausted and then fell asleep. In the 1980s, Hung was nearly forgotten, and he abandoned artistic creation almost entirely (see Su, 1996, p.96).

When Hung started to gain public attention, some suggested not to interfere Hung's life style in order to preserve his purity. In Hung's imaginative world, he was absolutely innocent and peaceful. However, he did not simply want to be a hermitic type of outsider or naive artist. He once haughtily walked into this vanity fair with great ambitions, but he found no place for himself in the legitimate art world where he wanted to fit in so badly. The Hung Tung exhibition induced controversy, sensational news, crowds, and avarice, and so forth, which were too complicated for an illiterate rural to handle. Speciously, he won a victory on the publicity. As a matter of fact, he was disappointed and frustrated because the more meaningful and honorable recognition—the Premier's visit to the show—was canceled, and the academic leader of the art

world in Taiwan (the Department of Art at the National Taiwan Normal University) ostracized him and held his works in contempt as well. Throughout the rest of his life, he was trapped in conflicts between his dreams and reality, and unable to resolve them. Inevitably, he ended up suffering defeat.

Hung's wife took in all Hung's faults. They were posited in the two antipodes of a scale; the more her husband expanded towards the extreme end of fantasy, the more ponderous weight she needed to put on herself. During the Hung Tung exhibition, she expressed her hope of having their own house. At that time, Hung's fame was in vogue, so several plans for building a house for Hung had been proposed by the local government and private enterprises. However, none was ever put in action due to such reasons as Hung's disqualification as a destitute household, his occupation that did not fit regulations, the proposed location being illegal, etc. Later, due to the Dubuffet incident, Hung attracted the mass media again. Upon this, the house plan was brought up once more. While Hung heard the news from the reporter, he first responded with anger: "I don't know how many times his kind of bestowing a house thing has been said. So far, there is not even a trace. I don't want to hear about it." Then, he looked at his paintings in his bed. He became crestfallen, so he weakly said: "If they want to build the house, then do it quickly. Don't talk so much!" (Jang, 1979, July 17, p. 7) Unfortunately, it was still academic talk until the end.

At the nadir of her hope, Mrs. Hung clearly saw through Hung's phantasmic fame, and managed to keep her strength going in order to survive, especially, when her second son tried to commit suicide by jumping from a building—and ended up to becoming handicapped and divorced by his wife. Outside the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, she itinerantly hawked incense as usual but

shadowed by a little figure—her second son’s child. Her burden was augmented. In the early 80s, she probably got to the point of completely giving up on Hung so that she moved to live with her children in the city of Tainan. But, Hung insisted on staying in the old hut by himself. When she passed away in the spring of 1986, he accepted this sad news with teardrops in silence (see Hwang, 1996a) . He buried his pains and guilt, and their never-verbalized love, in his mind forever.

After the plan of building a new house for Hung was held in suspense for years, Hung started to appear to be indifferent to this matter. To this point, he was satisfied with his ragged residency, and he learned to be open-minded, to convince himself that a new house was not necessarily better than the old one. As he told a reporter: “The pigsty is not warmer than the dog house” (Dzeng, 1980, p. 12). According to Hwang (1996a), someone intended to offer a house for Hung, but Hung rejected it because he did not want his artistic creations being intentionally or unintentionally controlled by the house provider. In addition, he did not move to live with his children. He seemed too individual to give up his independence. However, he was Janus-faced. Sometimes, people were enchanted by his casual “free-as-a-bird” spirit, and admired his being impervious to the temptation of wealth, as well as his integrity not to be shaken by his destitution. However, now and then journalists ran into him drowning in his physical and psychological afflictions by drinking all day long in the vicinity of his house—even though during the Hung Tung exhibition, he told the press that he had to smoke a pack of cigarettes everyday, but hardly drank (see “Claiming to love to use brain,” 1976).

He stored most of his paintings in a wooden chest placed on his bed and against the wall, and literally became a loyal guardian of his art treasures

throughout the remainder of his life. He was very parsimonious when it came to showing his pictures to others. He always worried that his paintings might be imitated, whereas, sometimes, he would declare with great confidence: "It is fine for me. You can see (my paintings) as you like. Tomorrow, my style will not be the same anymore." (Gau, 1973, p. 48) Even when some got to see his works, he would vigilantly stare at them to make sure there was no photographing or memorizing of his paintings. He was always reluctant to separate himself from his art works. However, when he was asked why he posted his paintings outside, regardless of the weather wearing them away, Hung replied profoundly: "They are originally like this way, then they will end up to be the same way" (Shu-Shr-Chwan, 1980).

Hung always had a solitary nature, now he was in severe depression. In particular, after his wife left for their children, nobody took care of him, and he appeared to be more isolated and withdrawn. Without a job and the financial support from his wife, he asked for a translation fee for his self-invented calligraphy and for food from visitors, but his paintings were still not for sale. Then, he was stricken with rheumatism. After the artist suffered a fall, his house, which was once decorated as splendidly as a palace, lost its quondam luster entirely. This red-bricked dwelling senesced with its host, whereas the wild vegetation, bugs, and small animals prosperously displayed their vitality within and around it. It barely sheltered the treasure tutelary from the inclemency of wind, rain, sun, summer heat and winter cold.²⁸

Most of the time, the old artist disregarded his visitors. Although he sometimes might open his door, he received guests coldly, while the dim, narrow, enclosed space of his bedroom and studio greeted the visitors with the damp, stinking, and rotten smells, as well as numerous cigarette butts on the

²⁸ The information of this and next paragraph is referred to in Chen, 1983.

floor. Usually, a young lady's giggling would cheer up this dispirited artist to usher in the guests and revivify his sense of humor. Most of the time, Hung locked himself in, and even the neighbors did not know what he was doing in the house. In the morning, about seven to eight o'clock, Hung often rode a bicycle to the market. Although he was around people, he was indifferent to others. Customarily, he took a nap in the afternoon with his old electric fan creaking loudly in the summer time. About five to six o'clock in the afternoon, he took his routine walk, sometimes to the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. He often strolled to and fro in his front yard, or sat under the hibiscus tree alone. Perhaps, he would have looked up at the floating clouds, thinking back to the days when he was once soaring in the lofty sky, before he ended finding himself becoming more and more solitary and remote to the mundane earth. With a cigarette in his hand, he would have realized that all bygones were bygone, as the smoke faded away right before his eyes.

After his wife's passing, he gave up the strength to survive. Without the rational force, his life lost balance, and he helplessly submerged himself in a mess. In the very last days of Hung's life, the decrepit roof of his only asylum did not make it through the last summer's typhoon leaving a big hole for Hung to enjoy the moonlight at night. However, it would be too heartsore to just image the scene of monsoon and winter season in this open-aired house. Stolid to the strangers, a few cats moved among the collapsed beams and the rubbed earthenware in the house. The emaciated old master walked in and out of the room with a stagnant gleam of the eyes ignoring any living existence. The feminine comfort from one of the visitors finally softened this emotionless elder. He pliantly sat down on the chair. "Did you cook?" Hung silently answered the question by pointing to several foil soybean packages on the chaotic, dusty

table. The kitchen was completely abandoned by the host, except spiders and cockroaches who animatedly crept among the rusty bicycle, gas stove, large water jug, knife, cutting board, and unfinished bottles of soy source and cooking oil, and so on. In this familiar, but somewhat deserted environment, the lonely old man could not hold back his affections for his late wife. Recalling to mind the memory of the earlier days, he sadly exclaimed: "... She and I slept under a single quilt and ate at the same table..." However, now he embraced nothing but the reminiscence alone. The pileup of the empty foil soybean packages and scattered cigarette butts indicated the sources of this languid man's daily nutrition. Hung's vital energy was wearing out.²⁹

Chen's last visit to Hung was in a chilly day after Chinese New Year in 1987. He was glad to see Hung outside the house. With unfocused expression of the eyes, the old artist was unshaved, appearing to be even skinnier in his maculated clothes. Paying no attention to the visitors, Hung left Chen and his friend in the yard, then locked himself in the bedroom. They peeped into the window seeing that Hung was covered by a filthy quilt. Regardless of their calling, Hung did not come out anymore. There was some dry food (such as rice, crackers, and sweet rice cakes) and several packages of cigarettes in the house. The neighbor said that they were left by Hung's married daughter for the New Year Day.

Prior to his death, Hung chose one of his photographs and inscribed a couplet in his self-invented characters to go with the photo. The meaning of the couplet and most of his paintings remained obscure, however. On February 23, 1987, leaving all the sadness, Hung Tung quit this world in a peaceful sleep. Hung's neighbor brought some leftovers from a wedding banquet for Hung, but no answer came from the house. As the door was pushed open, Hung was

²⁹ The information of this and next paragraph is referred to in Chen 1987.

found resting in the bed with his legs crossed and with a cigarette in his right hand. Although his life journey had ended, his bodily pose still contingently evinced his casual manner and true characteristics.³⁰

³⁰ The information of this paragraph is referred to in "Painting brush no longer talks," 1987; "Hung Tung's cause of death," 1987; and Hwang, 1996.

CHAPTER 4

THE FOLK-INDIVIDUALIST ARTIST

This chapter considers the classification of Hung's art, in order to place it within the context of the art world. First of all, Hung's paintings will be divided into three categories: the naive (primitive) style, calligraphy paintings, and ink paintings. Because the terms naive art, folk art, Art Brut, and outsider art do not accurately describe Hung's art, the term *folk-individualist artist* is used instead.

Categorization of Hung's Paintings

In 1975, Hung, for the first time, showed his entire art works to the senior editor of *Artist Magazine*, He. According to He (1976), there were more than 300 pieces. He also inferred that Hung might have given part of his works to his first son's fiancée (personal communication, June 11, 2001). In regard to how many paintings were sold by Hung himself, it was unknown. There was a narrative about an auction businessman, Li Cheng-Yuan (李承遠), acquiring three paintings from Hung (Wang, n.d.). One day, Li came to visit Hung. After three hours of persistent persuasion, Li still could not make Hung agree to part with his paintings. It was noon, and Li was about to leave. However, he found out that Hung had nothing to eat for lunch, and went next-door to ask for two portions of tofu. Li grasped this opportunity to negotiate with Hung again, and finally got to purchase three paintings with the price of 3,000 NT dollars for each. In addition, Hung once replied to a reporter's inquiry about how many of his paintings were sold (Jang, 1979, July 4) saying:

"I can not remember all the details. However, a human figure painting was sold for 50,000 dollars. Someone 'snatched' one of unfinished

pennant paintings giving 10,000 dollars to me. The rest were small paintings sold for 2 or 3 thousand dollars apiece.” (p. 3)

Moreover, Hung gave some paintings away for free (to people such as the provincialist writer, Yang Ching-Chu, the American ambassador Leonard Unger, some Taiwanese government officials, etc.), and Hung burned some of his own paintings in his late years. After Hung’s demise, his oeuvre was passed to his youngest son, Hung Si-Bau (洪世保). Because some works were damaged too badly to repair, Hung Si-Bau burned them with incense and ghost money to his deceased father (In Taiwanese custom, burned offerings are provided to the deceased through the ritual). It was then claimed that 312 pieces were left behind. So far, most of Hung’s best works are still in Hung Si-Bau’s possession.

Hung did not title most of his paintings. Some titles were added for the Hung Tung exhibition in 1976, or for the exhibitions and the auctions after Hung’s passing. Moreover, Hung did not put dates on most of his works. Furthermore, when he was alive, Hung held parsimoniously onto most of his works, and was stingy about letting others photograph or video-tape them. Therefore, the precise creation date of each picture is impossible to know. In addition to the few pictures published in the special edition on the Hung Tung exhibition by *Artist Magazine* (1976, April) and *Hung Tung’s Painting and Drawing Album*, which were indicated with dates by the editor, some of Hung’s extant works appeared in the auction markets between 1992 and 1998 and were verified with creation years. Beside those, some clues may have been left for inferring the approximate dates. For example, the use of art materials can be an indication. Hung applied the materials with better quality as his interaction with the outer world increased. Also, the special edition on Hung Tung by the

Lion Art Monthly in 1973, along with the publications by *Artist Magazine* and the Artist publishing company, and some literature with descriptions or photographs of Hung's art works as well can be used as references. In addition, in 1978, Hung told a reporter that he renamed himself as "a bit of red." Therefore, the paintings with the signature "一點紅" must have been made after the Hung Tung exhibition (probably, in or after 1978). Furthermore, Hung's "intellectual approach" distinguishes his later calligraphy paintings (done after the Hung Tung exhibition in 1976) from his earlier intuitive style calligraphy paintings. Importantly, it is sure that Hung created many of his best works before 1976.

In spite of the uncertainty on the precise creation dates of most of Hung's works, it does seemingly not matter at all while analyzing Hung's works. In 1973, paralleling the sequence of Hung's creative time periods, Lai (1973, April) divided Hung's painting styles and media into three categories. The works of the first stage include watercolors on drawing paper or some other type of paper. Lai held that these bright-colored paintings appeared to be too loudish. The calligraphy paintings on the colored erect scrolls were attributed to the second stage. The works of the third stage were characterized by the media of black ink on rice paper and were highly appraised by Lai. In fact, to take a general view of Hung's works, it is found that Hung's artistic styles did not develop beyond these three categories. It thus can be asserted that from 1969 to 1973, Hung had established his basic artistic style. Afterward, as the consistent characteristics appear in the works of the self-taught artists of all time periods, in general, Hung's paintings do not possess progressive features distinctive of his developmental timetable. After Hung's demise, the art collector, Jou Yu, helped Hung's youngest son, Hung Si-Bau, sort out Hung's extant works. By using free combination of diverse media and varied themes, Hung's

paintings were attributed into more than 20 categories. However, this method seemed to be more suitable for inventory arrangement rather than research categorization. In 1973, when Hung intentionally showed his works to Lai, probably, he already had ideas about his artistic style in mind. Therefore, in order to study Hung's works more systematically, similar to Lai's classification principles, I take out the variable—namely, the media used—and categorize Hung's works into three types: the naive (or primitive) style, the calligraphy painting, and the ink painting (水墨畫). Although the third type, the ink painting involves media, indeed, it mainly means to refer to the tradition of Chinese ink painting. These three types of paintings will be further discussed in Chapter 15.

Defining the Term: Folk-Individualist Artist

In order to place Hung and his art in history, one first needs to consider the designation of his art. Evidently, Hung's art shares some characteristics with the art of modern expressionists and abstractionists (which were inspired by primitive art), children, the mentally ill, and the primitive (meaning ancient and tribal art as well). Generally, terms such as naive art, modern primitive art, folk art, Art Brut, and outsider art, are often used to indicate the type of works produced by the self-taught artists. Also, the art of the self-taught is frequently associated with the art of children and psychiatric patients. However, none of these terms fit Hung's art properly.

First of all, in a reference book, *The Burchfield Guide to Art History*, the term "naive art" is defined as: "Art, particularly painting, produced in technologically advanced societies which uses less sophisticated processes. Naive art from all periods shares common features—colors are bright and non-naturalistic and fill all available space, and perspective is rarely employed." (West, 1996, p. 653). *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, denotes: "The term 'primitive' is sometimes used

more or less synonymously with naive....” (Chilvers & Osborne, 1988, p. 348) In my classification of Hung’s paintings, the first type, the naive (or primitive) style, draws affiliation with the naive art. But, this term cannot cover the other two types of Hung’s art.

As for the term “Art Brut,” Hung refused to be arrayed under the category of Art Brut (which included the art by children, psychiatric patients and graffitiists). Hung’s art is more sophisticated than children’s drawings and graffiti. Besides, although the hearsay of Hung’s insanity was spread, Hung’s paintings do not display the fear and rigidity often seen in the works by psychiatric patients. For example, Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930), started to create and completed his giant creation of art at the Waldau Mental Asylum in Switzerland. Park, Simpson-Housley, and de Man (1994) construed that “Wölfli confronted a personal world filled with chaos... by imposing order on chaos he expressed his needs for establishing and controlling a new world of his own making, a new reality within which he could exist” (p. 195). Through Wölfli’s schizophrenic perspective, his inner space (see Figure 3) was eerily constructed in his drawings. It seemed that his soul was trapped in a never-wakened nightmare, and making art was the only way for him to balance between his physical and mental realities. Hung’s inner landscape (see Figure 4) is mysterious and filled with details. However, unlike Wölfli’s enclosed and distorted space that often provokes a feeling of phobic panic, Hung’s vision conveys a sense of playfulness or joy. Furthermore, as a matter of fact, Hung did not possess Dubuffet’s rebellious traits at all. On the contrary, Hung was eager to be included in the tradition.

In terms of traditions, Chinese folk art and Taoist art had a significant impact on Hung’s paintings. However, in terms of the opposite perspective of

the insider of the art world, self-taught artists are discriminated against as outsiders under the scholastic stigmatization. The term, *outsider art*, was used by Roger Cardinal for the title of a book he authored in 1972 (see Cardinal, 1972). From the title of a thesis by a masters degree student in Taiwan, *Judgment on Boundaries—Using Hung Tung as An Example to Discuss the Issues on Categorization and Demarcation in the Art Discourses in Taiwan* (Shen, 1998), it can be seen that the academic-guided author attempted to import the term, outsider, for this provincialist artist. Yet, Hung had assimilated some properties of mainstream art from the art galleries and the studio of his teacher, Dzeng. Also, cultural heritage and regional color are affluent in Hung's art, but are often lost in academic art and fine art (see the further analysis in Chapter 10). Therefore, it is arguable as to who represents the Taiwanese culture better? Hung? Or the so-called mainstreamers or insiders? However, Hung cannot be attributed to the category of the secondary stream of Chinese art traditions, folk art, either. In a broad sense, Taiwanese folk art involves craftsmanship (such as stone carving, wood carving, painting, pottery, porcelain, woodblock printing, embroidery, knotting, paper cutting, etc.) applying in religion, architecture, furniture, daily utensils, costume, game, and performing arts (such as puppet theater, regional opera, lion dancing, etc.), etc. Traditionally, a folk artist is called an artisan, or craftsman, in China or Taiwan. Young pupils have to be trained by a master for several years to complete their apprenticeship in a trade and make a debut as a professional. As fine artists work under a particular school of learning, folk artists meticulously follow the use of traditional methods, techniques and/or materials displaying regional colors. Hung did not learn any traditional folk craftsmanship, but did live in an environment full of folk arts. He was inspired by his surrounding culture,

mingling with his individual qualities, then intuitively expressed his innermost edifice in his unique, subjective, self-learned ways. As a result, the painting and carving craftsmen in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu did not recognize his works as art, and his community regarded him as a mentally insane, jobless old man and even despised him. The fine art circles and the academies excluded him as an outsider. On account of Hung's deep rooting in the soil of his nascence, but turning into an "other" among majorities, I call him a folk-individualist artist, which denotes both Hung's cultural origin and his uniqueness. In Chapter 15, the connection of this term with the Chinese painting tradition will be discussed.

Self-taught artists often pick up materials in their living environment to create, or they explore themes related to their lives. Self-taught art is so close to daily life that it often reflects folk cultures. Therefore, the term folk-individualist artist will be able to cover this type of artist. In addition, it happens that some folk artists' individual expression may overgrow their traditional content. In *Ganga Devi: Tradition and Expression in Mithila Painting*, Jain (1997) stated that

In the case of the Mithila artists, collective tradition and individual expression have acted as complementary processes. Such processes must have been integral to the artistic expression of all ages in the past, but the cultural historian's preoccupation with preserving an "authentic" past imbued with "mythic consciousness" has often undermined the role of artistic innovation. (p. 25)

Mithila painting is an ancient folk art drawn on the walls of the nuptial chamber in the Mithila area of north Bihar in India. The Mithila painter, Ganga Devi (1928-1991), was trained to produce this type of ritual art (see Figure 5), and she was one of the best Mithila painters. However, when her personal life caused so much affliction in her, painting gradually became a channel for her to

express her personal emotion (see Figure 6), and a way for her to transcend secular sufferings. Therefore, her individual expression and creation predominantly emerged from her earlier traditional Mithila painting style. For artists as such, the term folk-individualist artist is also applicable.

Research Questions

The controversy stirred up by Hung and his art in 1970's Taiwan has ceased, but how to appraise Hung's art and how to position Hung in the art world are still moot. Ironically, the promoters and the demoters of Hung's art adore and censure the same qualities in his paintings. Therefore, let's take a general look at Hung's paintings. Usually, viewers are bewitched and puzzled by Hung's imagery. Through his art, Hung conjured up a cryptic, intricate, imaginative world wherein enigmatic human face and figure, bird, fish, plant, airplane, boat, train, traditional Chinese architecture, geometric diagram, regular and irregular pattern, his self-invented ideogram, and Taoist-secret-talismanic-like writings alternate with or superimpose on each other organically. In his paintings, the use of color is compelling. The lines are constructed rhythmically as patterns of natural pulsation. Following the controlled fine lines is like tracing the artist's cognitive path. A grotesque face, a monstrous chimera, or a mutant vegetation unexpectedly crop up from the artist's brush tip in an endless flow (see Figure 7). He expressed his unbridled imagination freely and playfully, while sophisticatedly and systematically assembling assorted mini universes which nest within a vast cosmos (see Figure 4). The appreciators of Hung's paintings perceive an incredibly mysterious and spiritual force, irresistible enchantment, untamed boldness and expressiveness, inexhaustible imagination, philosophical complexity, and a joy of innocence as well in his art. These kinds of feelings appear to be so intuitive and ineffable that the

beholders—even Hung himself—have been unable to verbalize them thoroughly. Due to this indescribable fact and the unruly quality, the reviews of Hung’s art thus appeared to be a mixture of praise and condemnation.

During the Hung Tung exhibition, some mainstreamers downgraded Hung’s paintings as meaningless scribbles due to his uneducated background. The child-like naivety led to the conclusion of lacking sophisticated philosophy and serious theory. The unruly freeness was discredited for his deficiency in discipline. The arcane images were undermined as hallucinatory vision. As a result, the demoters felt threatened, as if Hung’s unrestrained nature might liberate the inner beast, and cause the established orders to fall apart. Thus, they were afraid that if this uneducated country man might overshadow the disciplined, hard-studied artists, it meant that Hung’s “effortless” approach would frustrate the former art education. However, people who used this assumption to attack Hung have ignored the truth that from 1969 to 1976, Hung worked diligently creating more than 300 hundred pieces of art work in less than six and half years—a record that most artists are unable to compete with.

When Hung worked day and night indulging himself in his imaginative world unconscious of the limitations of the physical world, his intuitive thoughts vented as a constant flow. Nevertheless, while he tried so hard with his reason to convey meanings in his paintings in order to fit the social expectations, his art works failed. Why are the intuitive feelings hard to put into words? Does intuition mean coming up with something without any effort at all? Were Hung’s paintings done under the hallucinatory state of mind? Is Hung’s art a threat to the art education? These issues will be inspected in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT IS ART

In order to explain why Hung's paintings are so controversial and puzzling, Chapters 5 through 9 consider the role intuition plays in art creativity. Self-taught artists approach art intuitively, and their works at times convey child-like innocence or primitive rawness. For this reason, self-taught art is often degraded, or even disapproved as being art. Moreover, in the post-modern age, the definition of art has become ambiguous and confusing. Therefore, in this chapter, I will begin by clarifying a very basic question: "What is art?"

Aesthetic Experience

As Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson explained what is the aesthetic experience, "For as far back as there are written records, we find evidence of the awe and exhilaration people feel upon seeing or hearing something beautiful" (1990, p. 5). In daily life, people often have aesthetic experiences. Taking further steps, artists attempt to capture these kinds of thrilled moments by recreating them in art (see Kandinsky's statement in Chapter 11). Therefore, from the initial stage that artists are inspired to create art, then, the creation process—making art by means of their artistic languages and media—to the final phase of exhibiting the completed art works (and their appreciation by viewers), the aesthetic experiences artists perceived are transferred into and embodied in other forms to forward to viewers. Between the initial aesthetic experiences perceived by artists and the one (if sensed) by viewers, the whole process could be very complicated. Therefore, I would like to discuss it as follows.

Inspiration

We may wonder how aesthetic experiences happen? Aesthetic experience, as Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson put it, is the intriguing sensation of feeling something beautiful. However, when or how the sense of beauty emerges in someone's mind is arbitrary. Usually, depending on the contextual and dynamic relations between the variables in a certain setting, aesthetic experiences unexpectedly emerge at various thresholds—for example, at the moment you are amazed by the scene of sunset. In this case, the aggregated variables that caused this aesthetic experience may include time, place, weather, and most importantly, you. Within "you", the five senses, emotions, individual cognition, idiosyncratic propensity, prior knowledge, experiences, and memories are mingling together to result in a magic moment. If you attempt to catch this magic moment by taking a picture of the sunset, you are very likely to be disappointed by the outcome of the photograph, because the aesthetic experience is not simply a fragment of a visual impression. However, while a great artist uses uncanny sorcery to create an illusion which recalls a spiritual flash in the audience's mind, words may slip out of his or her lips: "It is art!"

In this manner, generally, if we call something "art", we must feel it possesses certain unique qualities that touch our hearts. The term of "art" also evokes associations with characteristics such as beautiful, creative, imaginative, novel, free, spontaneous, unique, peculiar, witty, original, skillful, fascinating, unconventional, and so on. How these characteristics are aroused is related to what and how good artistic languages and media are manipulated by the artists. When the quality of a creative performance reaches a certain threshold, it is called "art". However, what or where is the threshold (or when the threshold is broken through) is hard to define. Actually, the beauty and the charm of art is

due to its hard-to-define nature. Therefore, the convergence of variables in the creation process shape the final outcome of a piece of art work.

Creation Process

As we know, people detect the surrounding environment with five senses (optical, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory perception). Each sensory receptor inputs information into the brain where existing cognitive schema and idiosyncratic affection come to interact. In this manner, writers interpret the fusion of perception, emotions, and intelligence into words; musicians represent it as melodies, and visual artists decode it into images. In terms of visual art, making art involves the artist's psychological constellation, art materials and tools, as well as techniques and skills. Sometimes, the creation environment would be essential too. If an artist's psychological constellation is analyzed, it may include the artist's culture and education background, knowledge, philosophies, cognitive schemata, affective preferences, mental state at the moment, and so on. Therefore, when an artist works on his or her art, these personal elements will consciously or unconsciously interplay with the choices and the manipulations of a variety of materials, tools, skills, and techniques in every step. So to speak, if a blank painting surface presents the onset of a new universe, every move the artist's brush makes upon it creates a tension—an instinctive urge for rebuilding a visual balance or psychological comfort. In a painting process, when any one of the variables (such as: line qualities, color hue and value, light tone, shape, space, texture, and so on) is added to or removed from the painting surface, the ecological structure on the painting surface is changed. Then a psychological concord needs to be restored again. Therefore, the artist's intuition, which mainly involves cognitive and affective function, comes into play—to deal with a propagating matrix of variables and

with latent interrelationships, and then to make ensuing decisions. So to say, every painting surface provides a challenging arena for the artist to try out different possibilities and combinations, then to develop individual formulas. While cognition, affection, perception, psychomotor skills, and tangible materials cooperate in rapport reaching at an absolute perfection on the art work, the creator feels a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction—namely, in Kandinsky's words, "an inner harmony" (Kandinsky, 1977, p. 15).

During the artistic creation process, this kind of dynamic networking among the artist's inner forces, works of art, and the exogenous factors can be found in some artists' statements. For example, in "Perspectives and Reflections of A Sculptor: A Memoir" (1968), the American Abstract Expressionist Sculptor, Ibram Lassaw (1913-), recounted his sculptural production:

... When one works with different materials and techniques, there takes place what is called in cybernetics a 'feed back' effect. The concepts that are in many drawings and in my imagination are changed by the character of the materials that I use. One must think and dream directly with the material. The experience of manipulating material teaches the imagination. The discoveries, the accidents, the experiments one makes lead to an expansion of the areas of exploration. (p. 352)

For Lassaw, the same concept present in a drawing, may be handled differently in a sculpture. If one element (such as the material) is varied, then the conceptual framework may need to be reformed. Also, when a new element is added, a piggybacking effect may be activated, as creative thoughts and imagination spring out in succession. A single change can lead to countless possibilities, and hundreds of changes always happen in the process of creating art. Therefore, artists need to cope with the ever-changing situation

(dealing with accidents), as Lassaw said: “In the arena of the studio there takes place a collaboration of material, tools, unconscious forces, ego and other factors. I respond to the felt needs of the work as it progresses...” (1968, p. 361) Likewise, Kandinsky said: “Here is a world partly formed by the will to create pictures long since painted, partly generated and determined by chance, by the mysterious play of forces foreign to the artist.” (1994, p. 372)

Although the process of artistic creation seems fickle, the ultimate end is constant. In the writings of the Fauve painter, Henri Matisse (1869-1954), the organic evolution of his artistic creation process and the absolute perfection—namely, “an inner harmony” (in Kandinsky’s words)—he searched for, were described. In “Notes of A Painter” Matisse stated:

... There is an impelling proportion of tones that may lead me to change the shape of a figure or to transform my composition. Until I have achieved this proportion in all the parts of the composition, I strive towards it and keep on working. Then a moment comes when all the parts have found their definite relationships, and from then on it would be impossible for me to add a stroke to my picture without having to repaint it entirely. (1995, p. 41)

In “Statements to Tériade: On The Purity of The Means,” Matisse wrote:

... At each stage, I reach a balance, a conclusion. At the next sitting, if I find that there is a weakness in the whole, I make my way back into the picture by means of the weakness—I re-enter through the breach—and I reconceive the whole. Thus everything becomes fluid again and as each element is only one of the component forces (as in an orchestration), the whole can be changed in appearance but the feeling sought still remains the same... (1995, p. 123)

From these descriptions, we can understand why Kandinsky asserted: "It is impossible to theorize about this ideal of art. Real art theory does not precede practice, but follows her. Everything is, at first, a matter of feeling." (1977, p. 35) Here, Kandinsky's belief that art is difficult to be theorized—and that real art theory comes after practice—is due to the complex and organic interrelations among elements in art making. Art can be analyzed within a specific case. But, "the reality," as Ibram Lassaw put it: "I see before me is living organism and, I believe, all its parts are ultimately in ecological interdependence" (1968, p. 354). Therefore, art theory derived from a closed case cannot be applied in reverse to another ongoing one without considering the relativity and fluidity in practice. The application of art theory requires keen insights to recognize the applicable context under the seemingly chaotic phenomena of reality. Kandinsky thus criticized strict adherence to art theory: "All the rules discovered in earlier art and those to be discovered later—which art historians value too highly—are not general rules: they do not lead to art." Paralleling my earlier comment that "the beauty and the charm of art is due to its hard-to-define nature," Kandinsky continued to give an example: "I know the craft of carpentry, I will always be able to make a table. But one who knows the supposed rules of painting will never be sure of creating a work of art." (Kandinsky, 1974, pp. 169-170) It is also why Kant held that genius cannot be confined by rules, because "genius gives rules to art" (Kant, 1996, p. 38).

Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the term "art" calls forth affiliations with characteristics such as beautiful, creative, imaginative, novel, free, spontaneous, unique, peculiar, witty, original, skillful, fascinating, unconventional, and so on. By examining the creation process, it thus can be understood why art has been frequently associated with these adjectives.

Consequently, if artists are inspired to create and able to toy with their artistic languages and materials skillfully, precisely, and freely appearing as if using some sort of uncanny sorcery to amaze and affect beholders, then their messages can be communicated and aesthetic experiences will be provoked in beholders.

Art Appreciation

The occurrence of a touching sparkle (that motivates artists to create) and the art-making process are influenced by environmental and personal factors. As for the aesthetic experience perceived by art appreciators, it results from the interrelation of the art work itself and the viewer's individual forces. While so many variables come into play, we may wonder if an artist's feelings conjure up the same spiritual sparkle within art appreciators? I believe that according to their cultural, educational background, or life experiences, artists may choose different visual vocabularies and media to interpret a spiritual sparkle, which is the mingling of varied elements appearing to be an ineffable feeling. However, a really good piece of art will be self-sufficient enough to convey the essence, and able to touch the collective chord within beholders, although, due to individual and conditional factors, beholders may approach the art work or decode this inner vibration in disparate ways. So to speak, some classic masterpieces (of literature, theater, music, painting, etc.) often can surpass cultural boundaries and temporal limitations to reach diverse audiences.

Art speaks for itself

It has been an age of confusion in the art world, since the 1970s. In the postmodern phenomena, open-ended inquiries led to endless, tentative interpretations. Also, kitsch garbled high art, and the appropriation of historical imagery took place, while the valued tradition was deconstructed. The

uncertainty, ambiguity, plurality, and contradiciveness have seemed to complicate the aesthetic view of new art. The old structure was savagely overthrown and trampled under foot, whereas the art vandal was impotent of cultivating a new one, as to leave the art world in anarchy and indecisive agitation. In this chaotic era, since all conventional rules have been denied, with nowhere to turn to, it is thus deceptively claimed that everything can be art, if I say so! The definition of art, originally, comes forth to be a tacit understanding, or an indescribable accord between mind and truth. But, now, it becomes so confusing as to make one ask: "What is art?" As in the children's story, "The Emperor's New Clothes," some asked: "Do you see the emperor's new garments?" Similarly, you are often puzzled by a contemporary piece of "art" in an art gallery or museum, but feel hesitating to admit your doubt: "Is it art?" Perhaps, all you should need to do is to ignore the eloquent artist's verbal statements (or the explanations printed on text panels next to the work), in order for art to speak for itself; or, you may close your eyes, so you can listen to your heart directly. Then, you will follow your instinct to tell the truth, like the naive and honest child yelling out: "The emperor is naked!"

As people have grown feelings of disappointment and loathing toward this type of postmodern art, more and more attention has been directed toward the art of the self-taught. The more confusing the outer world has become, the stronger the longing for returning to the pure and the sincere is aroused. However, while the mysterious nature of these artistic minorities (self-taught artists) in the 20th century were unveiled for the curious crowd, they were ushered in to an art world that was not too much different from the one of fine artists. On the one hand, the purity of their art appeals to modern audiences; on the other hand, this intact virtue faces a threat of pollution. Some start to mass-

produce their works, once they become sought-after objects. As a result, the borderline between their art and commercial merchandise becomes ambiguous.

For scholarly studies, art and artists are categorized. The traditional art world promotes fine artists and demotes self-taught artists. Also, there is a great gap in pricing between fine art and the art of the self-taught in art markets. However, the arbitration of a real good artwork should not be restricted by the conditional categorization. There are many bad works in fine art. Also, it is possible to find spiritual, classic pieces in popular culture or craft arts. Conclusively, categorization does not correlate to the qualification of good art. In addition, the formalistic hierarchy is changeable as the Zeitgeist shifts from an age to another. In spite of the inconsistencies in the outer world, there is always something invariable in our mind. Regardless of the classification by scholars or historians, the answer to how to take the first step for appreciating paintings by Hung, can be found in a Zen Buddhist scenario below:

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868-1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen.

Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring.

The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!"

"Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

(Reps, 1961, p. 5)

By the same token, you have to discard preconception, bias, and indoctrinated regulations, as you close your eyes to depart from physical perception, and

allow yourself to contemplate, to listen to your heart and your soul. This spiritual purification is thus concurrent with Hegel's remark: "Mind, and mind only, is capable of truth" (Hegel, 1997, p. 24). If you do so, then you will understand Hung's art, because he was a man who possessed a child's innocence, and strove to be true to his heart throughout his life course, even at the time when he was struggling in poverty, conflicts and frustration.

CHAPTER 6

VISUAL LANGUAGE

Comparisons of Hung's art to the art of children, primitives, or modern artists (such as expressionist or abstract painters) have been made by many people (see "Artists talk about Hung Tung," 1976; Gau, 1973; He, 1976, March; Jen, Ke, 1976; 1973; Pan, 1973; Sye, 1987; and Syu, 1976). However, how and why they are similar never has been answered clearly. Therefore, an explanation will be provided in this chapter.

Objective and Subjective Perspective

As mentioned earlier, a great artist uses uncanny sorcery to create an illusion, which recalls a spiritual flash in the audience's mind. This so-called "uncanny sorcery" can be seen as a sort of visual language in paintings. I remember that in 1996, the artist, Dorothy Gillespie (1920-), used a story about two of her same-aged grandsons as example to explain that artists chose different painting styles to express themselves. She recalled that at the learn-to-speak stage, her two grandsons used to talk with each other over the phone. However, when they intended to tell adults that they wanted to use the telephone, one pointed to the telephone, and called it "phone," while the other referred to it as "talk." Two young children were indicating the same object, but communicated in two fairly different ways. When this story came to my mind, I tried to further interpret it. From different perspectives, people select a direct or indirect speech to convey their thoughts. By the same token, painters choose different styles to visualize what they attempt to express. If these two children are likened as two types of artists, the former should be a naturalist who focuses

on the external appearance of a concrete object, and endeavors to reflect his immediate vision precisely. However, the latter would be an expressionist or abstract artist, since he based his expression on his subjective experiences, talking, to describe the telephone as “talk.” Naturalists attempt to imitate their visual impression of the physical world. But, more introspectively, expressionists are apt to act out their individualities, and abstract painters tend to capture the innermost, ineffable, spiritual beings. Therefore, beholders of naturalist art receive the realistic message directly, while those of expressionist or abstract art need to fill in with their personal life experiences, imagination, knowledge, or affection (which are conjured by the allusive visual language) to complete this insinuated ocular communication.

At the conference of the Hung Tung exhibition in 1976, Hung explained his philosophy on art very clearly, as he stated:

“For the matter of painting, it is not necessary to paint every detail. If the concept of a human figure is communicated, then it should be good enough. Why must I paint too precisely? A painting should always lead observers to imagine freely.” (Tyan, 1976, April, p. 117)

It can be seen that, in Hung’s case, due to his intuitive self-expression approach, he can thus be considered as an expressionist or abstract painter. This straightforward approach toward mind is also resemblant to children’s. To better understand Hung’s visual language, I made a comparison of Hung Tung’s and children’s art. As a result, some insights have been gained through the juxtaposition of Hung’s creation process and behaviors with those of children.

Hung's and Children's Art

A five-year study of children's art creation by Cornell University (Brittain, 1979) reported that unlike adults' practice, younger children do not have a preplan prior to drawing. Usually, depending on the first step, they decide the next move. Some young children like to chat with others while painting. It was thus discovered that in the creation process, they frequently digressed from their original subjects, or renamed the finished images, because they followed contingent associations. For example, a wavy line initially presented a water surface, then ended up to be the trace of a running dog. So to speak, a drawing of a very young child records his or her thinking process, but not the depiction of sensory impression or a specific design. Moreover, many young children could not recognize their own works in the ensuing day; they seemingly enjoy the painting process more than the outcome (see Brittain, 1979, pp. 12-14).

The analogous phenomenon happened in Hung, as the dialogue between Hung and the interviewer, Jang, indicated below:

Hung: "I do not have a schema in mind before starting to work. Only when a sudden idea hit me, I grabbed a brush, then wielded the brush following my heart's dictation. I took a break when feeling tired, then kept working until I felt satisfied."

Jang: "What does 'satisfied' mean?"

Hung: "Satisfaction is a straightforward happiness. When feeling purely happy, there is no need for eating or sleeping." (Jang, 1973, April, p. 36)

Hung also explained to another writer, Lai, (1973, April) that during the creation process, he was conscious and perfectly knew what he was expressing on the paper. But, he forgot these thoughts entirely after the painting was completed.

Abstraction and Expression

From the aforesaid recounts, we can see the resemblance between Hung's straightforward expression and very young children's candid acts. According to Piaget's so-called "egocentrism" (Meece, 1997), preschoolers tend to reason and perceive the world in terms of their own perspectives. In this manner, the X-ray-like vision (such as the interior scenes of aircraft) and multiple perspectives (such as people standing in a circle being depicted as their feet forming an inner circle, and their bodies and heads lying toward surrounded directions forming a blooming flower pattern), which reflect the egocentric concept of space, are often found in children's works (see Meece, 1997); so too are they found in Hung's (see Figure 8 & 9). For children, they are not depicting the outcome of what they see, but of the blending of their prior perceptual experiences or memories with the function of their reasoning system, emotional affect, personal predilection, and imagination. In the nature of children's lack of objective perspective, the main figures and background scene appear to be out of normal proportion in Hung's paintings (see Figure 10). Through this mind-oriented approach, the artistic methods thus lead to diminution (abstraction) and exaggeration (expression).

For example, in Brittain's five-year study, a 6-year-old girl drew her own sleeping image (see Figure 11). Her feet were enlarged (compared to her body) because she placed an emphasis on her action of kicking a blanket away. Also, in a drawing describing the subject of eating (see Figure 12), a face dominates the drawing surface. Interestingly, a big mouth full of sharp teeth highlights the act of eating. The body's form is ignored, except an arm growing out of the neck (which is implied by a few lines) which crosses from right to left, since this hand has the essential function—holding food. By means of abstraction and

expression, the act of eating is vividly brought to life in this drawing. This is why children's art and comics frequently trigger a smile or laugh. However, the naturalistic method would not reach the same effect. It is also why some argue that abstract art is more realistic than naturalist art. Also, Hung claimed: "My pictures, some asserted, are painted at random, and some alleged, are not realistic. I hold that painting too realistic makes a painting unlike a painting." (Tyan, 1976, p. 118)

Akin to children's art, these kinds of abstract and expressive methods also appear in primitive art. For instance, a fertility figure has exaggerated breasts and pelvis, but simplified facial features (see Figure 13). In addition, the religious or ritual statues are made in unnatural forms (see Figure 14), because only abstract language can describe deities or animistic beings. Also, in the prehistoric cave art, animals were often drawn in X-ray style, sometimes, with "lifeline" (which indicates breath, or life force) with the intention to capture the invisible spirituality (see Figure 15). In consequence of the subjective approach, Hung's art shares some similarities with the art of children, primitive, expressionist, and abstract. These common features and their relations will be further discussed.

Overlooking Intuitive Qualities

During the Hung Tung exhibition in 1976, the child-like innocence and the intuitive approach were used as the reasons against and in favor of Hung's art by the academically-trained artists. In my interview with Hung's good friend, Wu, (personal communication, June 15 & 16, 2001) he thought back to the time he spent with Hung and a smile appeared on his face. The joy seemed to come back to him. He recalled that talking to Hung made him think like Hung, then he found himself able to paint like Hung did. I asked him to give a more lucid

explanation on how his conversations with Hung related to their similar painting style. At first, he described that Hung led him to a state of mind, but he seemed unable to put this kind of psychological state in words, or to spell out the correlation between the state of mind and the painting style. After my continuous inquiries, the key point suddenly hit him. He said that their conversation was so playful that it led him to a child-like state of mind, so he could paint like Hung did. However, it was too bad that he could not remember the content of their conversations, he thought, and he should have audio-recorded them, but he has not. From Wu's reaction, it can be understood why people often overlook this kind of intrinsic nature, or even downplay it, since it is not learned. Also, many have mistaken intuition as effortless outcome—as will be clarified in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

INTUITION

Some artists work very hard to make good art, but fail. Too many restrictions may impair creative production. However, frequently, creative ideas occur unexpectedly, and remarkable works are done spontaneously under a restful or purest state of mind. In addition, Hung's intuitive approach in art was disparaged by some trained artists, since it was not learned or taught and seemed to work against conventional disciplines. Was Hung's intuitive approach effortless? The intuitive cognition and Hung's intuitive approach will be investigated in this chapter.

Intuitive Feelings Reflect Life-Long Wisdom

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the creation process of art involves a very intricate kinetic interaction among the artist's inner forces, works of art, and the exterior circumstances. Hence, I infer that high creativity requires an intellectual capacity to analyze a complex state of anarchy to sort out constant laws, to synthesize and apply several matrices of variables sophisticatedly and fluently, and to deal with dynamic contextual relationships with great flexibility. However, how can a human brain process a huge amount of information with extreme complexity so fast? As Kandinsky said: "Everything is, at first, a matter of feeling." The answer, thus, can be condensed in a word: intuition.

In an attempt to clarify some false concepts about creativity, de Bono (the inventor of the notion of "lateral thinking") provided two definitions of the word "intuition." One meaning suggests "'insight' and the sudden viewing of something in a new way," while the other meaning conveys "a feeling that is

generated from experiences and considerations" (de Bono, 1992, p. 37). In fact, an instant insight results from long-term and sophisticated life wisdom. It is hard to explain in a few words, so we refer to it as "a feeling." This intuitive feeling can also be illustrated by a Zen Buddhist scenario as followings:

Sen no Rikyu, a tea-master, wished to hang a flower basket on a column. He asked a carpenter to help him, directing the man to place it a little higher or lower, to the right or left, until he had found exactly the right spot. "That's the place," said Sen no Rikyu finally.

The carpenter, to test the master, marked the spot and then pretended he had forgotten. Was this the place? "Was this the place, perhaps?" the carpenter kept asking, pointing to various places on the column.

But so accurate was the tea-master's sense of proportion that it was not until the carpenter reached the identical spot again that its location was approved. (Reps, 1961, pp. 44-45)

If we used a computer to calculate this "right spot," then the relevant inputs will include the color, shape, scale, texture, light tone of the flower basket and of the column, the relative distance among objects, as well as their interrelationship with the surrounding environment, and so on. If any one of the elements in the whole picture (such as the position of the flower basket) is modified, then the situation will become "fluid" (in Matisse's words quoted in Chapter 5) or "progressing" (in Lassaw's statement quoted in Chapter 5). Thus, it could take a great deal of effort to systematically calculate a perfect spot. It may turn out to be in vain if irrelevance does not get filtered out, or a consequential component is misjudged as trivial. However, the Zen master was so insightful as to intuit a perfect balance under a seemingly complex situation spontaneously.

Coinciding with the Zen master's intuition, Lassaw responded to "the felt needs of the work," along with what Matisse perceived as "an impelling proportion of tones" and "a weakness" in the whole painting intuitively. This sense of imbalance or deficiency thus become a creative impulse attempting to restore an order, "a conclusion," "a balance." It can not be ceased until, in Matisse's words, a moment "when all the parts have found their definite relationship" (1995, p. 41) is reached. This tendency to perfection, thus, leads to a constant, harmonious state, as Matisse said: "the whole can be changed in appearance but the feeling sought still remains the same." (1995, p. 123) Therefore, as we can see here, intuition seems to be a powerful means for artistic creation. But, if you intend to analyze this matter of intuition, you may find that it is so ineffable that a thick book still cannot explain it completely. Therefore, one may ask: "How does intuition work?"

How Does Intuition Work?

Jung theorized this powerful creative function as an "autonomous creative complex." He explained that the notion of an autonomous complex "is used merely to distinguish all those psychic formations which, at first, are developed quite unconsciously, and only from the moment when they attain threshold-value are able to break through into consciousness" (Jung, 1923/1996, p. 122). However, while this autonomous complex is consciously felt, Jung speculated that it "cannot be subjected to conscious control, whether in the form of inhibition or of voluntary reproduction" (Jung, 1923/1996, p. 122). Because this psychological function works mainly under the conscious threshold, it can thus elucidate why Hung often could not completely utter the meanings of his paintings.

A similar phenomenon can also be found in daily life. In Taiwan, for example, it is quite amazing to see how quickly street hawkers calculate a lot of numbers by mental arithmetic while making a trade. But, if asked, they might not be able to explain how they do it. For Hung, his epistemological methods and artistic techniques were not cultivated by formal education systems, so they occurred to be purely intuition-directed. Furthermore, because Hung was illiterate, he could not theorize his art after practice, as Kandinsky did.

In addition, because this kind of autonomous complex can not be controlled by will, some thus misunderstand that artistic creation is conducted under the unconscious state of mind, as some have the same false concept regarding Hung's art making process. Therefore, it usually happens that the stereotypical artists prefer to seek out sensory pleasure, or tend to drown in morbid or self-destructive depression. Some even use chemical aids to alter their mental state into sub- or unconsciousness, in order to strengthen their creative drives. However, according to Kris' psychoanalytic theory, the creation process involves shuttling between the primary process of cognition (e.g. dreaming and reverie) and the secondary process of thought (e.g. logical thought, problem solving, and purposeful reflection) (Kris, 1952/1996, pp. 137-138 & Martindale, 1989, p. 216). Kris delineated that during creation processes, the emergence of fantasy or reverie leads to the phenomena of ego regression when ego appears to be feeble, namely, a more restful state. It can be thus inferred that if artists surrender themselves to drug abuse or destructive emotions constantly staying in the pre- or unconscious state of mind with weakening ego-strength, then their works would become anarchistic jumble, or they would lose control of their lives. So to say, some American Abstract Expressionist artists ended up to be alcoholics or committed suicide. Hence, it

should not be ignored that the creation process is a continuum of alternating between conscious and pre- or unconscious cognition processes, and ego-strength plays an essential role in creativity (further discussions can be found in Chapter 12 & 15).

The shifting between two types of cognition can also be explained in terms of the information process approach (see Meece, 1997 about the information processing theories). In my hypothesis, a creator's mind has to shift between short-term (the working) and long-term memory during the creation process. Because the capacity of the working desktop (in conscious process) is limited, therefore, some information has to be transferred into the long-term memory (in subconscious and unconscious process). Then the stored long-term memory may be retrieved and reenter into the short-term cognition, when needed later. In art creation, if the basic artistic techniques and skills are practiced repeatedly until one becomes proficient, then the raw information will be gradually transported into the long-term memory. Afterwards the artist can manipulate tools, materials, and master skills and techniques automatically. It thus puts the creator at ease, because the occupation of the short-term memory space and the labor of shifting between two cognitive functions are minimized. The conscious territory has a boundary, but the unconscious human mind is unfathomable. The infinite creative potentials are hidden under the conscious threshold. Sometimes, if the working capacity is full, then there will be no more leeway for the unconscious cognition to emerge above the threshold. So to say, if too many rules and disciplines are enforced on an artist, imaginative thoughts and creative acts will thus be blocked. But in a free, relaxing, or playful environment, the autonomous complex functions can pop up above the conscious threshold voluntarily. Also, enjoyable, humorous, sprightly, witty, and

spontaneous creative behaviors will occur if coordination between mind and hands of the creator is reached.

In short, intuition, which appears to be ineffable and effortless is actually derived from the accumulation of life wisdom and the result of diligent, strenuous practice. Hence, I would agree with Thomas Alva Edison's remark that genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. In addition, in his stage theory of the creative process, Wallas suggested that phases of illumination and verification follow after those of preparation and incubation. Hence, a sudden enlightenment (illumination) is most likely to occur after long time periods of painstaking hard work and methodical, logical speculation (preparation and incubation) (Wallas, 1926/1996).

In addition, how the complex intuitive cognition works may be illustrated in some cases, such as, in the famous example of the French mathematician, Herri Poincare, who stated as follows:

One evening contrary to my custom, I drank black coffee and could not sleep. Ideas rose in crowds; I felt them collide until pairs interlocked, so to speak, making a stable combination. By the next morning I had established the existence of a class of Fuchsian functions, those which come from the hypergeometric series; I had only to write out the results, which took but a few hours (cited in Martindale, 1989, p. 215).

This psychological phenomenon of visual imagery happened after his hardworking on a sleepless night, and probably, the black coffee triggered some chemical mechanism in his brain as to bring out this vision. Indeed, his animated picture presents a condensation of time and space; it requires a large amount of intellectual capacity and accelerated speed (analogous with computer "hardware") as well as very sophisticated cognitive facilities (similar to

“software”) to complete its performance, and thousands of words to interpret its meanings. Try to imagine, how many pictures have to be drawn for a simple movement in an animated film? Therefore, the visual imagery depicts a creative brain's unusual speed and complexity of mental networking, which normally is executed in the sub- or unconscious cognition process, and perceived consciously as an intuitive feeling (see further discussions in Chapter 11).

Hung's Intuitive Approach

In Hung's case, his lacking of formal education segregated him from the mainstreamers. However, he was not like other ordinary country men either. He intuitively learned from his culturally rich living environment through his individual way. A staff in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu said that while the poetry club had routine gatherings in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, Hung often sat quietly to listen to the members' recitals (personal communication February 21, 2001). In addition, there was a vignette stated by Hung Tung's youngest son, Hung Si-Bau. He recalled that his father sometimes mumbled to himself like reciting a verse. On a Poets' Day, a bus of poets were brought to Hung Tung's house. They improvised poems in front of Hung's paintings. This talented artist was completely delighted. Then, Hung Si-Bau was shocked by the ensuing happening. His father and some poets started intoning backwards and forwards to each other spontaneously (Hwang, 1996, p.115). Moreover, Jang, Chen, and Tsai (1983, May 6) said:

Hung Tung is uneducated... but, he is able to comprehend Four Books and Five Classics, and to recite and write verses, and create the ideogram of his own universe. Listening to his interpretation of the ideogram, one would approve his remarkable imagination and his unique brilliance and talents (p. 6).

Due to his being free from the restriction of conventional rules and methods, his child-like (playful state of) mind facilitated intuitive feelings and divergent thoughts to spring out inexhaustibly. In Hung's paintings, a thought of a tree may jump into one of a human face (see Figure 16), as if a very young artist is frequently diverted from the initial thought of the painting subject during the creation process. Upon this, a single figure often contains several leaps of Hung's divergent cognitive process. The intricately combined units, and esoteric chimeras in his paintings manifest Rothenberg's so-called "homospacial thinking" (which indicates "actively conceiving two or more discrete entities occupying the same space") and "janusian thinking" (which refers to "actively conceiving two or more opposites or antitheses simultaneously during the course of the creative process") (Restak, 1993, pp. 167-168).

Also, like a Zen master, Hung intuited "essence" or "subtlety" spontaneously, as another paragraph described:

Although Hung Tung is illiterate, he likes to 'read' books. After chatting with us for a while, he was no longer shy, and did not reject photo-taking. While he got into a talkative mood, he even did not allow one to put a word in. He told us that he has read many books on agriculture, history, culture, and even on politics. Somewhat unexpectedly, he said that it only takes a few minutes for him to read a book. By thumbing through the entire book, he can quickly pick up the outlines. If this is not a talent, then what is it? (Jang, Chen, and Tsai, 1983, May 6, P. 6)

This talent displays the tendency towards abstraction. In the holographic brain theory (see McKenna & McKenna, 1975), the cognitive structure of brain can be likened to a hologram. A hologram is a 100-percent three-dimensional duplicate photographed from a real object in space, and can be observed from

any point of view. A spot in a hologram corresponds to numerous spots in the holographic plate, and any portion of a hologram contains the entire image. Because the information is scattered omnipresently all over the holographic plate, a bit can be used to blow up to reconstruct the whole. However, using a too small particle may lose details in the reconstruction process, but the essence of the whole will always remain. Therefore, if the essence of an image is superimposed upon layer by layer, then details will be added to until the whole is restored. In Hung's intuitive thinking mold, by swiftly scanning a great amount of data, the essence can be picked up. These abstracted outlines (clues) are like a number of pivotal switches sporadically consisting in a three-dimensional space. Once one or a few of them are touched, then the complex internetworking among dendritic microprocesses (associations) will be activated, and an intact, sophisticated schema (a holistic picture) will be invoked. Therefore, by drawing an analogy, the rest can be inferred from what is already known. Also, a creative brain can blend information harmoniously and grasp thoroughly, if the neural circuits are electrified and network freely between the macro- and microprocesses reaching the inhibitory areas. However, the holographic theory explains a way that the brain works, but does not illustrate what is shown in the brain. The information processing through the neural transmission is representational from one level to another. The perceived messages are encoded into different patterns of neural activity in algebraic forms, and extracted in the convergent mold of cognitive processing. Consequently, as Pribram used a computer simile to spell out the relations among brain representations in the holonomic brain theory, it is asserted that "the search for 'pictures' in the brain was misplaced" (Pribram, 1991, p. xxvi). Upon this, the essence picked up by Hung may be filled in with diverse

isomorphic details and turned into a representational whole picture in his brain different from the original source, the book, as if his abstracted painting imagery is not identical to his sensory experiences. But, in the intuitive approach, essence always remains consistent.

When Hung was totally concentrating on artistic creation, unconscious of the being of himself and the outer world, he possessed the purest state of mind as a very young child or a Zen master. His intuitive thoughts thus welled out uninhibitedly, and his pictures conveyed infinite meanings. However, while Hung endeavored to rationalize his inner imagery or thought, his calligraphy paintings (if seen as paintings) seemed inadequate and more artificial, since some intuitive gusto was lost. Hung hoped to study literature in a university once, but thought of no need to study art. Apparently, he believed his earlier painting language was self-sufficient, whereas like the post-modern artists do, Hung sometimes used oral explanations to supply his written statement—his calligraphy paintings done after the Hung Tung exhibition. Accordingly, this shy and quiet man dressed himself like a high school student, and spoke eloquently like a scholar wittily uttering his theories of art and the meanings of his self-invented pictographs. Sometimes, his talk seemed to overshadow his paintings. However, whether his calligraphy is considered as good art or not, at least Hung's intention to show off his intelligence could be very successful, as Jang, Chen, and Tsai commented: "To art, Hung Tung has his own philosophy. To his calligraphy painting, he is able to spell out every character so clear and cogent that he let no one debate a bit on it." (1983, May 6, p. 6)

CHAPTER 8

ANTITHESIS AND RECONCILIATION

As an epitomical artist, Hung's life was full of conflicts. In light of this condition, the contradictory nature of art will be discussed in regard to how such antagonistic elements as intelligence and emotion produce conflict and tension inwardly and Janus-faced characteristics outwardly in highly creative people. Art provides an intermediate realm between the fleeting, material existence and the eternal, spiritual world for creators to reconcile the discord. The longing for an eternal harmony lead to the attempt to immortalize, which is thus one of the ways to explain Hung's urge to paint at age 50.

To Fulfill The Unfulfilled through Imagination

As Freud "agitated the sleep of mankind" (Freud, S., 1989, p. 1) at the turn of this century, the terra incognita of the unconscious was unveiled. In Freud's psychoanalysis, three psychic institutions (ego, id, and super-ego) are attributed to the system conscious, unconscious, and preconscious. Speculatively, if instinctive impulses of the id "invade the ego in search of gratification," then "feelings of tension and 'pain' will emerge." (Freud, A., 1946, p. 5) Also, when the super-ego "confronts the ego with hostility or at least with criticism," a sense of guilt will be triggered. (Freud, A., 1946, p. 6) The solicitation of self-perfection often causes these three psychic institutions to be at odds. For Freud, dream, imagination, reverie, and fantasy can fulfill unsatisfied needs and suppressed desires, particularly, while the instinctive wish is socially confined. Therefore, through imagination, the tension among the id, ego and superego is able to be tranquilized. Also, by way of imagination, so

to speak, a sublimation can be achieved, while the unfulfilled expectation is lived up to, or a sense of guilt is purged in the other form of reality.

Furthermore, Kant believed that imagination “is very powerful in creating another nature.” (Kant, 1952/1996, p. 40) When daily life becomes too boring or too plain, imagination comes into play freely to reform reality without conflicting with “analogical laws” (Kant, 1952/1996, p. 40) and logic. A visionary lingers in reverie, and is contented with the implausible reality. But, an artist (or a writer, composer, performer, scientist, etc.) carries out the dream in different forms with feasible logic.

In addition, in light of the forever quarrels among id, ego and superego, artistic creation provides an intermediate region wherein imagination can be visualized and the dissension can be neutralized. Then, suffering individuals can survive. Therefore, in a letter to Émile Schuffenecker, the French artist, Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), stated that “...I am living in silent contemplation of nature, devoting myself entirely to my art. Without that there is no salvation, and it is the best means of keeping physical pain at bay. In that way, I acquire the strength to live without too much bitterness for my fellows.” (Thomson, 1993, p. 84)

Antagonistic Forces

Moreover, Nietzsche asserted that “the continuous development of art is bound up with Apollonian and Dionysian duality—just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations.” (Nietzsche, 1967, p.33) Similar to Nietzsche’s concept that two polar powers co-produced the splendid culture of ancient Greece, Chinese Taoist philosophy asserted that two forces, *yin* (female, negative, lunar energy, etc.) and *yang* (male, positive, solar energy, etc.), coexist in the grand universe and within every existent entity as well. Two

opposite forces, on the one hand, conflict with and expel each other; on the other hand, they supplement and neutralize each other. Upon this, the orders of the whole cosmos is set in motion rotating in cycle and all creatures breed in an endless succession.

The polarity, as Nietzsche mentioned, concurs in art creation. Human intelligence appears to be rational, logical, systematic, definite, organized, calm, steady, and controlled. In contrast, emotion appears to be capricious, unpredictable, uncertain, chaotic, sensitive, vulnerable, and intractable. Without an intellectual (conscious) curb, emotion can run wild and amount to a destructive force. Yet, without emotional interactions, the artificial intelligence appears to lack a soul. They not only clash with, but also coordinate each other. If two antagonistic currents with great intensity encounter each other, an inner violent collision will be agitated, tormenting the highly creative; simultaneously, a magnificent creation climax is built up. This afflicting turbulence can merely be reconciled in art; between this conciliation to the next clash, the creator only gains temporary peace. Due to their super sensitivities and the conflation of two polar forces, as a result, the highly creative persons appears as one of the Janus-faced with excessive capriciousness. According to the studies in creative personality, Barron (1969/1996) gave a cogent description for creative individuals:

... They are much more troubled psychologically, but they also have far greater resources with which to deal with their troubles. This jibes rather well with their social behavior, as a matter of fact. They are clearly effective people who handle themselves with pride and distinctiveness, but the face they turn to the world is sometimes one of pain, often of

protest, sometimes of distance and withdrawal; and certainly they are emotional. (p. 197)

These creative characteristics are often evident in art masters. For example, as a gifted child, Kandinsky was disturbed by the psychological tension of inner turmoil and nightmares. In adulthood, he underwent periodic states of depression because opposite emotions always juxtaposed inside him, as he told Gabriele Münter in a letter: "I am sadly happy" (Grohmann, 1958, p. 46). With creative supremacy he enthroned himself at the zenith of spiritual hierarchy, while he felt alienated and mistreated. Therefore, standing alone at the highest place with tremendous loftiness he alluded:

At the apex of the top segment (of the spiritual triangle) stands often one man, and only one. His joyful vision cloaks a vast sorrow. Even those who are nearest to him in sympathy do not understand him. Angrily they abuse him as charlatan or madman. So in his lifetime stood Beethoven, solitary and insulted." (Kandinsky, 1977, p.6)

Also, all his life, Gauguin mentally struggled in a conflicting state of opposites—between the civilized and the barbarian, the materialistic and the spiritual. These contradictory forces coincided within him as he dealt with this world with noble pride, while feeling bitter and shameful of his pennilessness. He wrote: "In big cities, and in Paris especially, you spend three quarters of your time and half your energy chasing after money. On the other hand, it is true that suffering sharpens genius. Yet too much suffering kills you" (Gauguin, 1978, p. 67). As a result, he abandoned this world as it spurned him. He took refuge in the tropical islands declaring that "as soon as possible I'll go bury my talent among the savages and no one will hear of me again." (Gauguin, 1978, p. 103) Paradoxically, although he claimed that if he stayed in Oceania forever, "then I'll

be able to spend the rest of my life free and easy—without worrying about tomorrow and without having to struggle all the time with imbeciles " (Gauguin, 1978, p. 104), he was still longing for recognition from the society he eschewed.

Reconciliation and Immortalization in Art

As religion enables the suffering mortals to transcend the physical and sensory pains, art provides an intermediate realm wherein antithetical forces can be reconciled, and unfulfilled desires can be satisfied via the way of the other form of reality (such as dream, imagination, etc.). In the essay "Life and Creation," Rank (1932) connected artistic production with life experience. He reckoned that a creative urge, which is regulated by will, comes from the inclination toward immortalization. The outer, mundane world is fleeting and ever-changing. The artist often responds to the sensed phenomenon of the mutable world with extremely emotional sensitivity and intensity, so the artist intends to "protect himself against the transient experience, which eats up his ego" (Rank, 1932, p. 115). Therefore, the highly creative individual is always longing for a peace of mind by attending "to turn ephemeral life in personal immortality" (Rank, 1932, p. 115). Putting it in other words, by means of artistic creation, an eternal harmony and spiritual state can be reached. It also can be said that the immortalization of artistic creation is similar to the sublimation of religious ritual.

Art creation involves two antagonistic forces. Art is the reconciliation of polarity. Artists, especially the spiritual ones, are destined to live at strife. Hung, a poor, illiterate rural, was supposed to live on the outer fringes of civilization. Surrounded by vulgarity, contradictorily, he was intrigued with the artistry (such as the painting, calligraphy and poetry) of the rich and intellectual classes. For decades, however, he had to undertake physical labors in order to maintain

marginal subsistence and to take care of his family, leaving no possibility for his creative drives to be released. The sublimation of the colossal religious ceremony in 1968 vibrated deeply down to his soul, while reality became too painful or monotonous for him. He was neither able to curb his instinctive desire, nor willing to bury himself in a mediocre life.

Without a certifiable diploma from the regulated society, he followed his intuition to create paintings, which are presumed to be free from the circumscription of written and verbal languages. Within his artistic world, his spirit sauntered freely attending to a Zen or Taoist crystal-like state of quietude—oblivious of self-existence and independent from material seduction and physical restraint—so he found perpetual harmony. However, his shirking responsibility to his family, adhering to what his heart was yearning, was inevitably censured by villagers. To cease the battles among ego, id and superego, he made an attempt to live up to the social expectation by pursuing a recognizable position for himself in the orthodox world. Yet, he was ostracized. When he grew fledged and flew in the lofty sky, as the solitary man stands at the apex of the top segment of Kandinsky's spiritual triangle, he found himself being offended as a madman.

Similar to Gauguin's being in conflict, Hung, on the one hand, felt inferior about his humble background; on the other hand, he was an unparalleled painting maestro in his own conceit, and appraised his opus as a national treasure. But different from Gauguin's resentfulness, he did not shout defiance at the society, even when he was under nasty attack by the jealous mainstreamers. The hierarchical mainstream was too complicated for an uneducated country man like Hung to handle, so he just held on his stand quietly, in spite of a world of objection.

To solve a quandary, Hung fell into another. Once he put his art up in public, he would be cruelly judged by audiences in terms of secular standards, such as certified qualification, market value, and authorized recognition, etc. However, the zenith of artistic hierarchy is pure and the spiritual opposite to the pedantic criteria and pecuniary measurement. Between the secular and the spiritual world, many artists have been struggling for millennia. After all, this folk-individualist artist was not exceptional for this discord. When his financial situation sank into quagmire, the conflicts were intensified; he capriciously shifted between being true to himself and meeting his practical needs. But, the solutions he came up with were too infeasible in reality. Choosing to insist on his perfectionism throughout his life, he closed himself up away from this society which once gave him a dream, but ended up hurting and discarding him. At the end of his life, Hung left a unforgettable legend and remarkable art works to this mundane world.

CHAPTER 9

THE PROCESS OF ABSTRACTION

This chapter will examine how the attempt to immortalization displays the tendency toward psychological regression and leads to abstraction in artistic style. It is thus inferred that Hung's intuitive (inward, subjective) approach to art results in his abstract visual language, and his straightforward expression reveals his idiosyncratic personality.

Longing for The Primitive, Innocent, and Spiritual

Paralleling the prevalence of primitivism, the modern expressionist and abstract art movements became in vogue at the turn of the twentieth century. Industrialization and urbanization accelerated the pace of this ever-changing world as mass-produced merchandise was overflowingly satiating the materialized mind. The smoky, dragon-like train roared into the unpolluted, primitive land bringing in numerous tourists who intended to escape from the industrialized urban life and stifling civilization.

While Europeans celebrated the conquest of the savage, some of them were attracted to the barbarian's life. They were longing for reuniting with Mother Nature, being set free from social restraint, being rescued from the flooding of material greed, and retreating to an innocent, inchoate stage. As a consequence, an inclination to devastate the decaying, materialized Europe and an expectation of a new spiritual one to be regenerated from the ashes of the conflagration pervaded in pre-World War I German Expressionism (see Levine, F. S., 1979). Under this Zeitgeist, the pioneer of the abstract painting, Kandinsky, intended to inaugurate a new epoch by detaching himself from the

material world in order to approach more closely a spiritual one (see Kandinsky, 1977).

Inspired by the Romantic Operas of Richard Wagner, Kandinsky associated painting with music. Richard Wagner's drama corresponded the music score with the effects of theatrical backdrops and lighting. The harmonious blending of visual and auditory phenomena evoked a sympathetic vibration in audiences, especially, Kandinsky (see further discussion in Chapter 11). Concurrent with the psychological concept of "synaesthesia"³¹ Kandinsky established an interconnection among certain colors and shapes, sounds of specific instruments, along with sentimental reflections. Gauguin also mentioned this kind of synaesthetic-like experience: "If I go to a concert to hear a Beethoven quartet, I leave the hall with colored images that vibrate in the depths of my being" (Gauguin, 1978, p. 139).

As mentioned in Chapter 5, we detect the surrounding environment with five senses (optical, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory perception). Each sensory receptor inputs information into the brain where existing cognitive schema and idiosyncratic affection come to interact. This mingling takes place in the abysmal layer of the unconscious, as Gauguin experienced the intersensory association that vibrates "in the depths of my being," and Kandinsky described it as "a corresponding vibration is immediately set up in the heart." (Kandinsky, 1977. p. 15) However, this kind of innermost resonance is often apt to be uncertain, and ineffable; Kandinsky thus believed that only abstract visual language can describe it, as he asserted that "we should never make a god out of form" (Kandinsky, 1974, p.149).

³¹ Synesthesia (Greek, *syn* = together + *aisthesis* = perception) is an involuntarily mixing sensory experience in which the actually sensory information is associated with a perception in one or more different senses.

Congruous with Kandinsky's abstract theory, Brittain thought that earlier scribbles and marks are not just the record of visual experiences, but the mix of other perceptions. Scribble-like lines or dabs could be traces of baby's arm's kinesthetic movement, or may be the indication of a person's or an animal's continuous movement (or a gust of emotional expression, I think). For viewers, these kinds of scribbles may be insignificant or incomprehensible, but, it is meaningful for the young artist. Brittain thus suggested that if we close our eyes and try to draw our sensory experiences of touching a blanket, the result could be as abstract as the doodle of a 3-year-old (Brittain, 1979, p. 32).

Detaching from Material Reality to Reach the Spiritual World through Purification

For Kandinsky, physical sensations were transient and superficial (see Kandinsky, 1977). Analogous with Kandinsky, the Chinese Taoist precursor, Lau-Tzu suggested: "The five colors can blind. The five tones deafen. The five tastes cloy. The race, the hunt, can drive men mad, and their booty leave them no peace" (Bynner, trans. 1944, p. 31). This teaching means that if some are constantly exposed to an environment filled of bright colors, or sharp music, their visual or auditory perception would become dull. Also, some would lose their appetites for delicious food after a sumptuous banquet. In addition, while some are used to ecstatic indulgence, or contend for a prize, they no longer have control of the mind. So to say, excessive sensory pleasures often stir up emotional upheavals within the mind, and thus confuse the true feeling. Therefore, Kandinsky criticized the materialistic motives in art: "The artist seeks for material reward for his dexterity, his power of vision and experience. His purpose becomes the satisfaction of vanity and greed." (Kandinsky, 1977, p. 3) For Kandinsky, detaching from the ostensible perception was a process of

dematerialization. Through this procedure, the spiritual, innermost beings could be touched.

In addition, to retreat from the perceived reality is a way to survive human suffering. Chinese Taoists saw through the chaotic, ephemeral phenomena of the mundane world sorting out a constant law in this grand universe, called “Chang (常).” Living in seclusion among mountains and woods, Taoists resign from the crowd to seek a peaceful, ideal state of being. Chinese landscapists embodied this Taoist philosophy, “Chang,” into a perpetual Arcadia wherein they were able to accommodate themselves securely (see Syu, 1983). Consequently, the artists were often incarnated into tiny figures (such as hermit, fisherman, woodcutter, or traveler, etc.) in the landscape they created (see Figure 17). While beholders give a close-up scrutiny of the tiny figures and visually trace the artist’s imaginative path, they seem to be unconsciously absorbed into the painting to roam over the celestial wonderland. However, in order to gain a holistic view of the entire landscape painting, observers have to keep a distance from the artwork. This remote standpoint of the painter (or viewers), thus, registers Taoists’ loftiness—holding themselves aloof from the profane world, while longing for the ethereal, eternal utopia.

For Buddhists, to transcend from the physical world is to see it as a dream, a mirage. In the Buddhist philosophy, the physical world is perceived to exist only as a result of human consciousness. Also, a human’s carnal body is programmed with “the seven emotions” (happiness, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, and desire) and “the six sensory pleasures” (derived from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind). Through consciousness, these emotions and desires continuously disturb one’s peace of mind, and thus blind one’s intrinsic good nature. Therefore, people are conditioned by their vulnerable human

natures and deluded by sensory illusions. Consequently, human beings, inevitably, suffer in this grievous world. For Buddhists, if one is able to see through the vanity of life and the fleeting phenomena of the physical world to complete the entire detachment from the corporeal sensation and the material reality, then the ultimate enlightenment, namely, Nirvāna, can be reached (see Frédéric, 1995).

In “On Religion,” Hegel (1997) delineated the transition of eternalization. Departing from human feelings and desires, and the terrestrial world, Hegel wrote: “Whatever awakens in us doubt and fear, all sorrow, all care, all the limited interests of finite life, we leave behind on the shores of time.” (p. 130) Afterwards, the detachment turned into a ritual of purification while climbing up to the zenith of the spiritual mountain. Hegel thus went on to describe:

and as from the highest peak of a mountain, far away from all definite view of what is earthly, we look down calmly upon all the limitations of the landscape and of the world, so with the spiritual eye man, lifted out of the hard realities of this actual world, contemplates it as something having only the semblance of existence, which seen from this pure region bathed in the beams of the spiritual sun, merely reflects back its shades of colour, its varied tints and lights, softened away into eternal rest (p. 130).

At this stage, through the spiritual eye, the visual images, the secular world is refined into pure configuration, and sanctified into a dream-like, timeless, painless, fear-free reality. Upon this, eternity is attended, as Hegel portrayed it:

In this region of spirit flow the streams of forgetfulness from which Psyche drinks, and in which she drowns all sorrow, while the dark things of this

life are softened away into a dreamlike vision and become transfigured until they are a mere framework for the brightness of the Eternal. (p. 130)

As we realize, human beings are inevitably tormented by emotions of infatuation, jealousy, hatred, rage, anxiety, agitation, horror, sadness, greed, and frustration in life; we long for a peaceful life. However, everlasting peace and harmony cannot exist in the material world, but only in the spiritual one. Therefore, with indescribable nostalgia, human beings incessantly search for an immortal, absolute paradise wherein the suffering soul can rest securely. Hence, we can say that the tendency toward abstraction implies an approach to a more pure, simplified, refined, perfect, absolute, innocent, primordial, original, invisible, intangible, internal, free, secure, harmonious, peaceful, intuitive, timeless, boundless, infinite, eternal, ultimate, spiritual state of existence. Nevertheless, the pure state of mind gradually vanishes in adults and modern people, as children grow up, and civilization and industrialization progress.

Introspective Approach and Individual Expression

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 6, due to their egocentric approach, at the early stage, children tend to mix perceptual experiences with inner psychological functions, then spontaneously convey their conceptual reality in caricatured forms. Nevertheless, once children enter Lowenfeld's so-called "pseudonaturalistic age" (see Parks, 1994, p. 4), they tend to describe the temporal or direct impression of their visual reality. The shift from subjective to objective, introvert to extrovert approach synchronizes with the increment of the adult's influences on children, and the increase of the social values and restrictions enforced upon individuals. While extravagant materialistic appetites erode the spirit of modern people, and suffocating, civilized etiquette nullifies their individuality and intuitive creativity, some yearn for a psychological

regression into the innocent, pure, primitive, free, sincere, unpolluted, child-like, and instinctive state of mind. This ideology thus reflects on art, in particular, expressionist and abstract art.

For Hung, his perspective was as subjective as a child's. In an interview, Jang told Hung (1973, April, p. 34): "Your painting contents are not similar to nature, and seem incomprehensible; No doubt villagers criticize your paintings as graffiti, and look down upon you." Hung retorted:

"They know nothing! Attempting to make a likeness (to the superficial appearances of natural subjects) is useless. Painting is for expressing what is in mind. To paint is to express exhaustively to make myself happy. What should I care whether my paintings are understood by others or not?" (Jang, 1973, April, p. 34)

Plato (1974) dismissed a (naturalistic) painter as a secondary copy cat, since a manufacturer imitates God's work to make a bed, then a painter reproduces the bed as a copy's copy. Concurrent with Plato's logic, when a picture of a church building scene by the French artist, Maurice Utrillo (1883-1955), was shown to Hung, this uneducated painter did not know who Utrillo was, but gave a philosophical remark on the painting: "Drawing (copying) the architecture built by others is meaningless. We should paint the houses created by ourselves." (Li, 1973, April, p. 19)

Corresponding to Hung's concept, Gauguin criticized the impressionist painters' adhesion to superficial perception because "they studied color, and color alone, as a decorative effect, but they did so without freedom, remaining bound by the shackles of verisimilitude." (Gauguin, 1978, p. 139) A similar criticism also appeared in the writings of the Fauve painter, Matisse, as he said: "The impressionist painters, especially Monet and Sisley, had delicate

sensations, quite close to each other: as a result their canvases all look alike.”
(Matisse, 1995, pp. 39)

The process of abstraction is a ritual passage of purgation. Through the spiritual eye, the impurity, imperfection in the anarchistic, material world can be screened out, and the invisible, pure, and intrinsic quality under the specious surface can be immortalized. In this manner, intuitively and insightfully, scientists reason out a logical, constant, universal law, and artists extract essence out of nature arriving at perfection. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 5, if you close your eyes, you can return to the innocent state of children, then you will understand Hung's art. In other words, once the physical eye is occupied by the exterior appearance of natural objects, the spiritual eye will be blinded by "the black hand."³² It also can be said that if the working memory space is busy at inputting immediate visual information, then intuitive thoughts and innermost feelings will be less likely to break through the conscious threshold. Therefore, the immediate perception has to be disconnected (viz. detaching from reality) in order to set the mind free—free from fossilized social restrictions and the overflow of material enticements. The shift from an external reality to inner world thus allows the long term memory, divergent thought, emotion, individual cognitive mold, idiosyncratic inclination, and imagination to interact. Hegel would agree with Expressionist artists and Hung, as he spoke in “On Art” that "art liberates the real import of appearances from the semblance and deception of this bad and fleeting world and imparts to phenomenal semblance a higher reality, born of mind." (Hegel, 1997, p. 31)

Consequently, with objection to Impressionists' pursuing “fleeting impressions” from this mutable, external world, Expressionists rejected “to copy

³² The “black hand” is the term Kandinsky (1974) used in “On the Question of Form”: “The metamorphosis of the new value (the fruit of freedom) into a fossilized form [a wall against freedom] is the work of the black hand” (p.149).

nature in a servile way” (in Matisse’s words) by bypassing “the first impression” of their visual inputs. Without direct observation while portraying an object or landscape, some details of the natural look may be bereaved, but personal inclination is added, so that a more constant, perfect value can be distilled in Expressionist art. Matisse thus shed light on this fact: “Underlying this succession of moments which constitutes the superficial existence of beings and things, and which is continually modifying and transforming them, one can search for a truer, more essential character, which the artist will seize so that he may give to reality a more lasting interpretation.” (Matisse, 1995, pp. 39)

In addition, Gauguin’s innovative "Synthesis" style would be a good example for illustrating abstraction in art. During the years of 1888-1891 in Brittany, the combination of nature and imagination occurred in Gauguin’s paintings. Because the naturalistic replication was discarded, and imagination came into play, traditional modeling techniques became a leash for free expression. Hence, in Gauguin’s famous piece, "Vision after the Sermon" (1888) (see Figure 18), insignificant elements (such as shadow, facial features of distant figures, and horizon line) were ignored (or filtered out). Influenced by Japanese prints, Gauguin started to apply flat color and black outlines in his synthetic paintings. But, the use of flat color and black outline may run the risk of deadening the picture. To vitalize the whole, therefore, analogous with the expressive exaggeration and extraction in young children’s drawings, more attention was paid to the front figures whose shapes were slightly enlarged. A few touches of modeling were embellished onto the coifs and faces of the Breton women, and onto the foreground self-portrait of Gauguin himself against the monotonous red ground color. The gradually diminishing and circular arrangement of the crowd also implies the foreshortened space. The unnatural

background color, red, suggests the illusive scene of juxtaposing two divided worlds, reality (the sermon) and fantasy (the Bible story). Because in this mutable world nothing is absolute, Gauguin thus argued that "the photography of colors will tell us the truth. What truth? The real color of a sky, of a tree, of all of materialized nature. What then is the real color of a centaur, or a minotaur, or a chimera, of Venus or Jupiter?" (Gauguin, 1978, p. 141) An echo to Gauguin, Matisse claimed: "The expressive aspect of colors imposes itself on me in a purely instinctive way... My choice of colors does not rest on any scientific theory: it is based on observation, on feeling, on the experience of my sensibility" (Matisse, 1995, p. 41). Therefore, Hegel remarked: "Mind, and mind only, is capable of truth." (Hegel, 1997, p. 24), as Hung arrogantly spoke: "... Jang Da-Chyan and Picasso paint what corporal eye can see, but I paint what is going on in mind." (Chen, September 30, 1978, p. 3)

CHAPTER 10

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

In this chapter, the controversial art case caused by Hung's art in 1970s' Taiwan, which indeed represents the everlasting battle between the mainstreamers and the so-called outsiders (and their supporters) anywhere at anytime, will be examined. Also, in order to explain that Hung's art is not a threat to formal education, the deficiency of academic and mainstream art and the value of self-taught art will be discussed.

The Political and Art Climate during the 1970s in Taiwan

Prior to the end of World War II, Taiwan was under the rule of Japan for 50 years. When the Communists took over mainland China, the Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, and imposed martial law on the country. The Taiwanese grass-roots culture was suppressed for political reasons. As a result, the Taiwanese dialect was stringently banned for use in school education. With restraint, the vulgar tongue was allowed to be spoken on certain television programs within limited hours—out of proportion to the time for Mandarin. In particular, in 1970, after the Taiwanese dialect puppet theater, “The Great Scholar Warrior of the Cloud State—Shr Yen-Wen (雲州大儒俠—史艷文),” was shown on television and soon became a craze throughout the island. While people of all ages discussed the daily development of the stories and employers had to let their employees take a break from working during the puppet show hours, the authorities sensed the threat. As a result, this Taiwanese program was required to switch to Mandarin after showing on television for eight months. However, when the puppet characters were not

allowed to speak in their mother tongue, the distinctive savor of this three-hundred-year-old folk art considerably diminished, and its audiences went away. Therefore, this provincial theater was censored and indirectly prohibited.

Under the slogans such as: “to counterattack mainland China,” “to deliver the people of mainland China from extreme sufferings,” and “to reclaim lost territory,” Taiwanese children mainly learned the history and the geography of China (which was remote and forbidden for contact with in reality), but hardly got acquainted with their vernacular legacy (which closely tied in with their daily lives) from textbooks. Culturally, the mainlanders (who moved to Taiwan with the Nationalist government) identified themselves with the Chinese tradition, while the old Taiwanese generation was more orientated toward the Japanese heritage. Also, many of the elite from the new generation received higher education mainly in the United States and, secondly, in Japan and Europe. On the international stage, a small island country, like Taiwan, has been a minority with a weak status, especially under mainland China’s chronic intimidation. In the 1970s, Taiwan suffered one defeat after another. For example, in 1971, Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations, and in a decade, 32 countries severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan (see Ye, n.d.). Consequently, subordinate to the robust force of the Western modernization, the xenophilous tendency (toward the West) has been heightened, and Taiwan never got rid of its secondary status as a cultural colony.

In 1970s’ Taiwan, the development of conventional Chinese painting came to be stalemated, while the artistic climate of the art academy and art circles appeared to be over-westernized at this time. Art students and the so-called “modern” artists looked up to the contemporary art trends, and served Western art theories as a bible. Usually, according to the art media they used,

college students majoring in painting were classified into two groups—Chinese and Western painting—in Taiwan. For Chinese painting majors, they were most likely to be requested to begin with copying instructors' works or classic masterpieces. Also, artists or art professors often considered themselves as the descendants of certain orthodox schools and worked strictly within their respective traditions. As for Western painting training, it was oriented toward the conventional art academy European styles, which means that foundational training involved a sequence of realistic training (such as working from still life, plaster casts of ancient Greek and Roman busts or statues, and live models). While art students used to be trained to copy masterpieces or the outer looks of natural objects, or were restrained within certain conventional practices, their personal qualities, emotion, and divergent thinking were impeded. Hence, the outcome of academic training reflected on the 1970s' artistic climate was inevitably becoming dull and stale. It thus can be understood that in "On the Question of Form," Kandinsky made an attack on academies: "An academically trained person of average talent excels in learning practical meanings and losing the ability to hear his inner sound. He produces a 'correct' drawing that is dead" (Kandinsky, 1974, p. 176). In addition, Dubuffet (1986) believed that indoctrination enacted by the art authorities had retarded the originality of art creation. Hung was also bored by the monotonous themes of mainstreamers' paintings. When asked if he had seen the art works in the art galleries, he replied:

"See two or three times. If those are not mountains and waters, then must be landscapes—for the first year, it is mountains and waters; the second year, again, mountains and waters; the third year, still, mountains and waters. For the first year, it is landscapes; the second year, again,

landscapes; the third year, still, landscapes. Never change. Always mountains and waters, landscapes. They paint only the surface, not from 'inside'." (Yang, 1974, September 29 & 30, p. 12)

What Was Missing in Academic and Mainstream Art ?

As a counterflow to the cultural invasion from the West and on the rebound from the Nationalist coercion, the provincialism movement was prevalent in 1970s' Taiwan. Popular provincial writers emerged one after another (see Syu, 1996a, February). Hung's art showed up in a timely way, and was thus promoted to represent the arousal of the local culture. As mentioned in Chapter 9, in the process of growing, child-like innocence and instinct diminishes bit by bit . Also, while material civilization taints the soul of modern people, and stifling regulations block the gush of creative thoughts, the longing for the pristine develops stronger. Accordingly, during the Hung Tung exhibition, a taxi driver said that seeing Hung's art made him feel straightforwardly refreshed, unlike those modern abstract paintings which were too distant to be understood by him (see Tyan, 1976). Apparently, Taiwanese art appreciators felt alien to contemporary art, because they were conscious of missing of some essential elements within it—cultural identity, individuality, and creativity. Ironically, those essences omitted in mainstream art were found growing with great vitality in the art by one who sprang from obscurity.

It would not be surprising if an art student or even an artist staggers to respond or becomes speechless when asked: "Why do you make art?" Then, after attempting to search for words, he or she might reply to this seemingly simple question with learned theories which seem tangential to the inquiry. However, Hung would answer this question without hesitation, as he said: "... To paint is to express exhaustively to make myself happy..." (Jang, 1973, April, p.

34). For Hung, his motivation was as subjective and pure as a child's, so he could tell you honestly that to paint is to make himself happy as to be oblivious of the physical needs (such as hunger and sleep), and to paint is to express his individual uniqueness regardless of what others think or say of his works.

In the symposium on Hung held by the *Lion Art Monthly* on April 4, 1973, one of Hung's strong supporters, Gau Syin-Jyang (高信疆), spoke:

After seeing Hung Tung's painting, I have a thought. This thought is not on the paintings themselves, but on the wonderful process of unifying art and artist. He (Hung) remarkably absorbs the longstanding heritage which has been handed down from generation to generation, and further mingles it with the real life presenting in his works. So to say, his paintings beget a fantastic and beautiful feeling in viewers (Lyou, 1973, May, p. 117-118).

This folk-individualist painter assimilated the indigenous culture which was furthermore acculturated in his innermost psychological mold, then reflected on his paintings. This procedure of internalization made his works different from the traditional folk art. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Chinese or Taiwanese folk artists work strictly within their own traditions like the fine artists do. However, the stylized patterns in folk art were transplanted in Hung's art appearing to be freer, more organic and individualized. Besides, the personal touches and emotional inputs made Hung's art look more artistic. (see further discussion on this subject in Chapter 15) Jwang criticized some fine artists, because they did not digest what they learned through the course of inner individualization:

At present, some artists follow the Western art current blindly, and lost culture identity. In addition, under the impact of the recent folk art fashion, some painters only superficially know to cannibalize the images of folk

items, such as eight-diagram or Mammon on canvasses, and tailor ghost money in collage without life experiences or feelings (with those materials or subjects.) (Jwang, 1976, April, p 53)

In China, provincialization is a feature of folk art, and individualization distinguishes fine art from folk art (crafts). While fine artists intend to make up their deficiency by grabbing raw materials from folk art without going through internal personalization, their works not only do lack the charm of the dexterous skills and regional colors in folk art, but also do appear to be estranged due to the loss of the closeness to living and the amiableness to audiences. As Gau pointed out this disconnection among art, artist, and real life in academy:

He (Hung) never received any school education, and his paintings are rustic. However, his knowledge and life experiences can be integrated as a whole. This is what we educated people find difficult to attain.

Especially, the more we learn from books, the more we are coerced by the 'epistemological dictatorship.' Frequently, it ends up to be that living is one thing, studying one another, and doing the other. Lore and practice are totally disconnected. This is very sad... (Lyou, 1973, May, p. 117)

Hung's Intuitive Art Does Not Fit Academic Criteria As to Be Discredited

Some artists tend to work in discrete fragments, as some appreciate Hung's art in jigsaws. In the gallery of the Hung Tung exhibition, the art critic, Jyang Syun stated that: "Due to my academic training, I customarily appreciate art in the light of Western art history or Chinese literati school tradition, but I can not judge Hung Tung's paintings from either one of these two perspectives..." (Tyan, 1976, April, p. 115). Whatever one favors or disfavors in Hung's art, it is difficult for an academic-trained person to digress from routine cognitive paths,

or to break with long-term disciplines. For example, in the year of Hung's demise, paralleling with the Hung Tung retrospective exhibition, the *Artist Magazine* issued another special edition on Hung Tung. Since Hung had been neglected by the press for years before he passed away, Hung was no longer paid glorious compliments, and remarks somewhat underestimated his talents. In "The Artistic Circles' Critique on Hung Tung," Sye (1987, September) intended to present an overall perspective on Hung's art by collecting different remarks ranged from art historians, art critics, art journalists, art administrators, and artists in Taiwan, in order to understand Hung's art and to place Hung in history. Those comments were made under 11 topics: classification, subject and creative environment, form, color, style, expressive method, in comparison with the French self-taught artist, Henri Roussau (1844-1910), an accepted position, mass media and Hung Tung, the meaning of the retrospective exhibition, and in terms of the case of Hung Tung to discuss the art circles' expectation of the cultural offices. However, the editor, Sye, tailored the pedantic doctrines and disintegrated theories cited by various art people together, as if the proverbial blind men feel an elephant. Every one of them made a few touches on detecting the physiognomic features of Hung's art, but the jigsaws could not be patched up to reconstruct a living elephant with flesh, blood, and spirit. Supposedly, inasmuch as Hung neither fitted the definition of fine artist, nor had an art degree, at best, Hung only could be categorized as a self-taught or regional painter. However, in this logic, then, there would be no established aesthetic principles or scholastic creeds for them to assess Hung's art; but, they were required to do appraisal. So those confused so-called art insiders had no other choice but to use the learned criteria. Consequently, while being asked about how to view Hung's art or to place Hung after discussing Hung's art under those

pre-set categories, the respondents appeared to be uncertain and reserved, like the way some art students or artists react to the question of “Why do you make art?” As the result of sticking to indoctrinated standards, what was assembled did not even turn out to take after the specious configuration of an elephant at all—the sum just did not add up to the whole—not to mention the spirit of the elephant.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Hung’s art can not be attributed to the existing categories, and his visual language was so intuitive as to be ineffable. Sometimes, Hung’s art seemed to be unacceptable at first sight, because of its unconventional and unruly qualities. Therefore, in Chapter 5, I suggested that viewers have to discard preconception, learned principles, and indoctrinated rules, in order to set their mind free. Only if free from epistemological dictatorship can one acculturate diversities openly. However, sometimes, even if educated people may feel something in their heart, they tend to discredit their intuitive feelings. For instance, the reputable Taiwanese architect and scholar (previously serving as the President of the National Tainan College of the Arts), Han Pao-teh (漢寶德), reviewed Hung’s art in a 1976 article, “A Nonconformist Painter” (which has been repeatedly printed in some publications on Hung), and in a 1987 article, “Goodbye Hung Tung.” He also collected a number of Hung’s masterpieces. In “Seeing Hung Tung again,” Han expressed his special feelings toward Hung and his art, and spent pages citing Chinese classics, myths, and ancient art to interpret Hung’s works. His comments seemed rather favorable and sensible. However, perplexingly, he declared: “Although I like his (Hung’s) paintings, I do not recognize him as an artist. My favor on his paintings does not come from the assessment of pure artistic perspective, but a sort of instinctive reflections.” Passionately, he went on:

Facing his works is like confronting a frank heart inspiring observers with overwhelming mysteriousness and subtleness. They reveal some kind of profundity, which is not similar to the sophistication that a cultivated artist learns and forms in a civilized society, but to an abysmal world of (primitive) human mind. (Han, 1987, September, p. 79)

As we can see here, Han, on the one hand, was so deeply touched by Hung's art; however, on the other hand, was attempting to deny his true feeling and instinct. Feeling and instinct seem too intangible to be measured or to be applicable to academic regulations, especially, for a renowned scholar. Therefore, Han's mixed feelings toward Hung's art led to a paradoxical conclusion:

In all respects, Hung Tung was undoubtedly an unusual man who may not be found in every age. He will not be mentioned in art history. However, meeting him and seeing his paintings in person, are the privileges of our generation. (p. 89)

Self-taught Art Is Independent of Zeitgeist and Art Movements or Trends of Any Time Period

In the 1970s, the mass media's instigated ways of promoting Hung made him a sensational topic, and the objections from the mainstreamers further created controversy. The artist, Lin Sying-Yue (林惺嶽), alleged:

... The Hung Tung rage was not caused by Hung Tung himself, but mainly by people around him. Those people included those who feverishly promoted him and who ruthlessly excluded him. The opposition and debate between two extremes inflamed the magnificent fire of sensational news which attracted the curious audiences constantly

flooding into the gallery. In the art history of Taiwan, no artist's solo exhibition has ever drawn such a big crowd (Lin, 1978, October 9, p. 12). Lin's observation may be only half true. Actually, Hung himself was too eccentric for the mass media to ignore him, and his art was disputable by human nature. While the press added fuel to the fire, the controversy was destined to be stirred up. Some contemporary artists intentionally create controversy by manipulating the mass media, in order to gain instant fame. But, Hung was genuine, as during the Hung Tung exhibition time period, a newspaper editor complained about the mass media, but credited Hung's being true to himself that: "I don't like it all. The whole thing is like 'a farce.' Only is Hung's frankness peerless among those common artists" (Tyan, 1976, April, p. 119). Unfortunately, the propaganda and the controversy did not produce an authentic respect for the artist and his works, but a vanity reputation.

In 1999, when I was asked by a curator if any Taiwanese self-taught artists might be included in an exhibition held in the United States, the first name that came to my mind was Hung Tung. I remembered very well the craze in 1970's Taiwan and Hung's legendary stories, which I learned from the mass media. As to his paintings, my memory was very vague. I had been under the impression that his meteoric rise to fame was due to the mass media's boosting. Therefore, I did not think that his works would be creditable until I later did research on him and his art. I believe that the Hung Tung fad in 1970s must have generated such negative aftereffect on many people's minds (such as that of the aforesaid Sye's interviewees). Even Hung himself felt disillusioned in his late life, as to remonstrate that: "You are all liars..." (Lei, 1987, February 25).

In 1996, Hung's family held another Hung Tung retrospective exhibition, and published a substantial exhibition catalog, *Hung Tung (1920-1987): A Life*

With Never-Ending Passion—A Retrospective at The Tenth Year Of Hung Tung's Passing. Hung's descendants seemingly endeavored to establish a historical status for Hung. In an essay included in this exhibition catalog, "A Life with Never-Ending Passion," the writer claimed: "Hung Tung's art played a leading and original role, leading the way toward the development of formalistic aesthetics in Taiwan." (Lin, Yu-Hsiang, 1996, p. 4) Hung's youngest son, Hung Si-Bau, also asserted his father as "Maestro of an era" (personal communication, January 31, 2001). However, as the mass media's touting did not bestow Hung a true dignity, the crown enforced by Lin (Yu-Hsiang) or Hung's son could never automatically enthrone this individual artist as a reformer or pioneer within the mainstream as Hung wished. I tend to agree with Lin Sying-Yue's affirmation that

... The fine artists engage in artistic creation. As a matter of course, they start with the orthodox painting training, then depart from it to lead the tradition going further. Even anti-tradition, in a broad sense, can be said to be a style of the continuous development of a tradition, since it is derived from the base of a conventional school. So to speak, a fine artist's creation actually is part of the painting history,³³ which keeps on in the time sequence of past, present, and future. Upon this, men's history of art is able to pass from generation to generation in succession. However, the self-taught artists do not carry on the heritage. They do neither consider the inheritance and the reformation of traditions, nor involve in any art style in vogue or any art trends or groups. Their pure art creation which is driven by intrinsic talents, on the one hand, has its own position and significance; on the other hand, has its limit. The self-taught artists

³³ The orthodox history of art (fine art) in China is dominated by painting. Calligraphy is secondary. The rest (including sculpture) are attributed to craft arts.

can not become either the heir to precursors or the teacher of posterity, and their creative works will not be put in the leading position of a new epoch in mainstream either (Lin, 1978, October 9, p. 12).

After the Hung Tung exhibition, Hung thought of taking pupils as the orthodox maestros do. He also tried to teach his youngest son. Nevertheless, Hung's art is not teachable or learnable. As a matter of fact, Hung's art is independent of artistic developments in Taiwan, so that I defined him as the folk-individualist artist. He was original, because he was outside the social and traditional structures without Zeitgeist, and free from academic influences. To encase a pedantic mold on him is totally against this uncultivated artist's free spirit.

Concurrent with Lin's assertion, I do not label Hung as a leader or avant-garde artist, because in either Western or Chinese art history, a leader or avant-garde artist was a reformer departing from certain art traditions—namely, they were from inside, but not outside the mainstream. As we know, Modern Art was inspired by African art (primitive art), but no one would say that African artists were the pioneers of Modern Art. But, Hung's art can not be downplayed either, because (as mentioned in Chapter 5 that there is no relationship between the quality of art and its classification) the assessment of art should not be confined by the conditional categorization.

What Can Fine Artists and Art Educators Learn from Self-Taught Art?

Rising upon the Provincialism movement in 1970s' Taiwan, Hung's art led the Taiwanese to reconsider our folk culture (which was suppressed politically by the National party, and overly westernized due to modernization), and to reexamine the deficiencies in our education, particularly, in art. The art academies and the art circles once felt threatened by the Hung Tung exhibition,

due their fears of that promoting Hung was demoting formal art education. They did not understand that the most significant impact that self-taught artists have on art education is their spirit—their purity, freeness, cultural identity, individuality, and creativity—which exists in intrinsic human nature, but has often been lost in a civilized adult, a modernized society, or a regulated academy. It has been 15 years since Hung passed away. Nowadays, many art students and fine artists in Taiwan obsequiously fawn on Western art current in fashion as they did in the 1970s, although the political crackdown no longer exists. Hung's art might have inspired some to paint more expressively (reflecting their individualities and cultural identities). However, not many would like to acknowledge that Hung's art has a direct influence on their art, as Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) denied the impact of African Art on his works by claiming: "The African sculptures that hang around ... my studios are more witnesses than model." (cited in Rubin, 1984, p.17) It is because for educated people or academically trained artists, it is hard to fully imitate the self-taught artists' naive methods, but the self-taught artists' primitive styles often motivate the spiritual entities within their heart, their nature. When Hung was alive, he was always afraid of his artistic invention being copied. Indeed, his artistic language was too individual to be patterned after. Besides, to follow another's uniqueness makes one lose originality in oneself. Skills and knowledge can be taught. "Art" can not be taught, but, can only be inspired. Therefore, in addition to the well-built foundational training, one should always search for freeness and identity inside but not outside oneself—having a pure state of mind and inner locus of control—while being inspired by Hung's candid manifestation: "Painting is for expressing what is in mind. To paint is to express exhaustively to make myself

happy. What should I care whether my paintings are understood by others or not?" (Jang, 1973, April, p. 34)

CHAPTER 11

VOYAGE TO THE TERRA INCOGNITO

From Chapter 11 to 14, the main research inquiry will be “Why Hung’s art is so indescribable?” In order to explain the ineffability of Hung’s art, and to investigate if his works were executed in a hallucinatory state of mind, the exploratory direction is led to the unconscious realm, the terra incognito.

In Chapter 7, the relation of Hung’s hybrid imagery and intuitive cognition is mentioned. This chapter will further consider how Hung’s hybrid imagery is formed. Through Kandinsky’s statements on his artistic approach to developing from representation to abstract, the connection of perception and abstract thinking can be examined. As mentioned in Chapter 5, perceptive aesthetic experiences induce magic flashes in the mind. With an attempt to capture these kinds of thrilled moments, artists search for proper visual language to interpret them in art. Kandinsky’s statements explain that the innermost feeling (provoked by perceptive experiences) is intersensory, so that only poetic, metaphorical language and abstract image can describe it. In addition, through the statements of Galton’s research subjects, the animated mental image will be able to illustrate how intuitive, creative, divergent cognition leads to hybrid imagery in Hung’s painting.

Creative Power and Unconscious Mind

The theme of a boat with oarsmen often occurred in Kandinsky’s paintings around 1910. Congruous with Kandinsky’s stylistic transition from representation to abstraction, the navigation in the dark sea (see Figure 19) seems to be a metaphor of a journey to the terra incognito of the unconscious.

The creative exuberance lays in the unfathomable reservoir of the human unconscious. However, departing the known, the visible for the unknown, the invisible, the artist's voyage would inundate with forlornness and fear. Without a rational curb to unconsciousness, one may get lost in the obscure, abysmal land forever. Accordingly, the controllable forces come to regulate the ecstatic extravagance, as the creator commutes between the conscious and the unconscious.

In an art therapy case described by Rubin (1978), the children with serious cases of schizophrenia who tended to have poor ego boundaries consecutively shunned to select fluid materials (such as fingerpaints) among an array of painting materials provided. In another case, making finger paintings excited a blind and retarded boy due to the sensory quality of texture, but simultaneously frightened him because the edges of the paper were hard to find when covered with paint. The author also mentioned that a group of totally blind children consistently chose a tray instead of a paper to do their finger paintings, because the tray's "clearly-defined edges" helped them to stop. The need for free expression was accompanied by a desire to have a boundary or structure at the same time.

In another of Kandinsky's paintings (see Figure 20), as the title "Lyrical" signified, the galloping horse and the rider are exalted into melodious lines. In my analysis, two vantage points of view are synthesized in this 1911 painting. The front part of the horse's body and the rider are drawn from a lower angle, so the distant blue mountains fall below them. However, the rear part of the horse metamorphoses into a bird, which can be recognized by two blue wings and a bird tail. The green field on the top and a body of water on the right bottom are seen from a bird's-eye perspective. The Cubist style of the sun (which combines

two view points) emerges in the upper left corner. The color distribution was deliberately arranged in balance. The upper green symmetrically corresponds to the lower blue. Red tinges the water on the right bottom (which could be interpreted as sunlight reflecting on the surface of water) in order to create a visual equality with sun in the diagonal corner. The free strokes of bright yellow shine in the center enlivening the whole picture. The lines of two tree trunks which point to different directions accent the dynamic movement; the curved tree shape on the right side of the painting suggest the strong wind caused by the fleeting horse. By means of the most refined visual language, Kandinsky conveyed an abundance of imagery, which the realistic imitation of material appearances would be insufficient to decipher. In the essay of 1913, "Reminiscences," Kandinsky stated: "The horse carries the rider quickly and sturdily. The rider, however, guides the horse. The artist's talent carries him to great heights quickly and sturdily. The artist, however, guides his talent. This is the 'conscious,' the 'calculated' element in one's work, or whatever one wishes to call it." (1994, p. 370) The allegory of the artist (rider) controlling his talent (horse), or reason (rider) steering emotions (horse) implied that the conflation of two conflicting forces turns into extraordinary creation powers, which enable the artist to soar freely in the sky like a bird. Otherwise, there is just a fine line between genius and insanity, if they are out of control.

One adventures on the terra incognita with feelings partaking of both wonder and dread, since one is encountering what has been suppressed consciously. In the instance of Poincare's "Ideas rose in crowds" (cited in Martindale, 1989, p. 215) (mentioned in Chapter 7), the creator peeped into the suddenly opened window of the unconscious at the instantaneous moment. This kind of mental imagery is most likely to make its appearance at the state of

dreaming, fasting, physical sickness, taking a drug, meditation and so on, when ego is subject to id. One example of creative inventions mentioned by Weisberg (1988) was Samuel Taylor Coleridge's writing "Kubla Khan." In his sick bed, the writer read a book on Kubla Kahan's capital city, and after taking an anodyne (opium), he fell asleep. The vision emerged in his dream as Colendge descried (speaking in third person) in the following:

The author (Coleridge) continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he had the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the concurrent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the the lines that are here preserved... (cited in Weisberg, 1988, p. 149)

Another example mentioned by Weisberg was how Kekulé struck the ring structure of benzene. This scientist gave an account of his mental imagery:

I turned my chair to the fire and dozed. Again the atoms were gamboling before my eyes. This time the smaller groups kept modestly to the background. My mental eye, rendered more acute by repeated vision of this kind, could now distinguish larger structures, of manifold conformation; long rows, sometimes more closely fitted together; all twining and twisting in snakelike motion. But look! What was that? One of the snakes had seized hold of its own tail, and the form whirled

mockingly before my eyes. As if by a flash of lightning I awoke... (cited in Weisberg, 1988, p. 149-150)

This kind of animated visual imagery was so magical as to be unimaginable and incredulous for the step-by-step problem solving cohort like Weisberg. Indeed, it is the revelation of geniuses' superlative creative powers in relation to perception and abstract thinking. The development of Kandinsky's abstract art will be used as an example to explain the link of perception and abstract thinking thereafter.

Perception and Abstract Thinking

Intersensory Experiences and Poetic, Metaphorical Language

Overy (1969) made a connection of Kandinsky's eyesight with his development of abstraction in art. Without wearing spectacles, this near-sighted artist viewed his visual world in a haze—the outlines of objects melted away, while colors were refined shining their inner glamour. At the initial stage, perceptive information was detected by respective sensory (optical, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory) receptor. However, underneath the conscious threshold, multitudinous tributaries gradually intermerged in the deeper and deeper subliminal layers. Kandinsky was extremely sensitive to color, so he gave an intersensory simile:

Generally speaking, color is a power which directly influences the soul.

Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul (Kandinsky, 1977, p. 25).

Due to his superordinary sensitivity to color (which is propagated by light), the optical input fires up the emotional dynamics energizing the cognitive internetworking to reach the innermost terminal at the substratum of the

unconscious. Deep down inside, so to speak, all the sensory experiences are interconnected, as Kandinsky wrote on his memory of Moscow, which was brightened by the sunshine at a certain hour of a day:

... The sun dissolves the whole of Moscow into a single spot, which, like a wild tuba, sets all one's soul vibrating. No, this red fusion is not the most beautiful hour! It is only the final chord of the symphony, which brings every color vividly to life, which allows and forces the whole of Moscow to resound like the *fff* of a giant orchestra. Pink, lilac, yellow, white, blue, pistachio green, flame red houses, churches, each an independent song—the garish green of the grass, the deeper tremolo of the trees, the singing snow with its thousand voices, or the *allegretto* of the bare branches, the red, stiff, silent ring of the Kremlin walls, and above, towering over everything, like a shout of triumph, like a self-oblivious hallelujah, the long, white, graceful, serious line of the Bell tower of Ivan the Great... (Kandinsky, 1994, p. 360)

The experience of a single sense of sight, sound, smell, taste, or tactility is plainly descriptive. But, poetic diction is abstract, metaphorical, intersensory, and affective. A percept or an engram can be presented and represented in isomorphic, abstracted forms during the neural transmission or the information processing in one's brain. Therefore, when a musician composes or plays music, visions may appear in his or her mind. Also, melodies may show up in a visual artist's inner psychic as abstract motifs (such as geometric and amorphous shapes, regular or irregular patterns etc.). Kandinsky's percept was profoundly reaching the subterranean being, so that he said: "These impressions (of Moscow) were repeated on each sunny day. They were a

delight that shook me to the depths of my soul, that raised me to ecstasy.”

(1994, p. 360)

From Representation to Abstraction

Although Kandinsky's intoxicating feelings were adequately expressed in his insinuating and poetic wordings, the proper painting vocabularies were still not found then. So, he went on to state: “And at the same time, they were a torment, since I was conscious of the weakness of art in general, and of my own abilities in particular, in the face of nature.” (1994, p. 360) The solution was not worked out until the artist was able to distinguish his inner world from the outer nature, and intuitively to reflect his innermost feelings in abstract visual language, as he explained:

Years had to elapse before I arrived, by intuition and reflection, at the simple solution that the aims (and hence the resources too) of nature and of art were fundamentally, organically, and by the very nature of the world different—and equally great, which also means equally powerful (1994, p. 360).

For a traditionally-trained artist, representational art is the only logical approach, as a rationalist's belief in materialism. However, there were two events facilitating Kandinsky's invention of abstract painting. One of them was that when Kandinsky first saw the painting, “The Haystack” by the French Impressionist, Monet, he could not bear the missing of objects in this picture. Nevertheless, this painting made a long-lasting impression on his heart. Another event was that at nightfall, Kandinsky accidentally glanced a beautiful, mysterious painting in his studio. After realizing that it was one of his old paintings whose objects blurred in the twilight, he was no longer able to recapture the same touching in the daylight, because he “constantly recognized

objects” (1994, P. 370). Therefore, he inferred that “objects harmed my pictures” (1994, P. 370). In other words, reason (consciousness) inhibits intuition (unconsciousness). Moreover, concurrent with the modern scientific approach (which demolished the human’s illusion of the perceived world), this avant-garde painter invented abstract art, as objects started to dissolve in his pictures. Kandinsky accounted for the impact of the scientific discovery on the change of his view of the physical world and further on his art:

A scientific event removed one of the most important obstacles from my path. This was the further division of the atom. The collapse of the atom was equated, in my soul, with the collapse of the whole world. Suddenly, the stoutest walls crumbled. Every thing became uncertain, precarious and insubstantial. I would not have been surprised had a stone dissolved into thin air before my eyes and become invisible. Science seemed destroyed: its most important basis was only an illusion, an error of the learned, who were not building their divine edifice stone by stone with steady hands, by transfigured light, but were groping at random for truth in the darkness and blindly mistaking on object for another (1994, p. 364).

Everything in the universe is ever-changing visibly or invisibly, and the perceived world is delusive. If the truth can not be found outwardly, then one should look inwardly. Finally, Wagner’s performance, *Lohengrin*, brought this painter’s innermost synesthetic memory of his Moscow in the intensive sunlight (mentioned earlier) into actualization. Perhaps, the intangible sound and light travel so fast, so that music and color can reach and effect the deepest realm of soul immediately. As this artist saw the music was “painted” with colored lights in the space on stage, he described this staggering experience:

The violins, the deep tones of the basses, and especially the wind instruments at that time embodied for me all the power of that pre-nocturnal hour. I saw all my colors in my mind; they stood before my eyes. Wild, almost crazy lines were sketched in front of me... (1994, P. 364)

In addition to eyesight, Overy (1969) attributed another biological trait to the development of Kandinsky's abstract thinking. Kandinsky had difficulties in memorizing numbers, names, poems, but possessed unusual visual memory. He was able to recite a whole page of figures, and the stores' names in a long street, because the mental imageries vividly presented themselves in front of him. As a child, he could paint a picture from memory at home, after seeing it in an exhibition. "Later," he "was sometimes able to paint a landscape better 'by heart' than from nature." (1994, p. 371) This faculty, nevertheless, could overwhelmingly disturb his peace of mind as he described:

Quite unconsciously, I was continually absorbing impressions, sometimes so intensively and continuously that I felt as if my chest would burst, and breathing became difficult. I became so overtired and overfed that I often thought with envy of civil servants who, after work, may and can relax completely. (1994, p. 371)

This emotional turmoil inflames his inner chemistry, speeds up mechanism, and blows up creative powers. A few years before his invention of abstract art, Kandinsky was quite frightened due to his noticing that this innate capability had disappeared. Instead, however, he came to fully develop another faculty, namely, abstract thinking, which "had always existed organically within" him, "but in embryonic form." (1994, p. 371) In the course of developing from naturalistic, expressionist, to abstract art, now Kandinsky advanced from the

level of painting from personal memories (but not from the direct perception of nature), further into that of interpreting what happen in the subliminal terrain. On account of his new approach, Kandinsky stated:

My capacity for engrossing myself in the inner life of art (and, therefore, of my soul as well) increased to such an extent that I often passed by external events without noticing them, something which could not have occurred previously. (1994, p. 371)

Overy (1969) also adduced Galton's inquiries (1994) into the faculty of mental imagery of male scientists and their wives and children. Beyond expectations, Galton's research showed that the men of science were less capable of visualization than women and children. Galton thus concluded from the outcome of his research that:

an over-ready perception of sharp mental picture is antagonistic to the acquirement of habits of highly-generalized and abstract thought, especially when the steps of reasoning are carried on by words as symbols, and that if the faculty of seeing the pictures was ever possessed by men who think hard, it is very apt to be lost by disuse. The highest minds are probably those in which it is not lost, but subordinated, and is ready for use on suitable occasions. (Galton, 1973, pp. 60-61)

As concluded in Chapter 9, under the obsession of the exterior appearance of objects, the spiritual eye will be blinded, and the intuitive spring will be blocked. So to say, a too clear visual memory, like a naturalistic painting with too many details hurts the intuitive and abstract painting. The ideal situation is to transport perceptive data into the long-term memory inventory, so that the "subordinated" information can be harked back when needed.

Intuitive, Creative, Divergent Cognition and Hybrid Imagery

In addition, Galton's studies involved mentally sound people, whose visions come to life like an animated picture. In Galton's study cases, the mental animations are reminiscent of that of Herri Poincare's "Ideas rose in crowds" (Martindale, 1989, p. 215), Coleridge's dreaming "all the images rose up before him as *things*" (cited in Weisberg, 1988, p. 149), and Kekulé's discovery of the ring structure of benzene. Conversely, Galton's visionaries were awake, when their visions showed up. For example, one of Galton's research subjects, Mr. Henslow, was able to see the sharp image of a subject, which usually appeared in an unnatural form in front of him, shortly after he closed his eyes. His visions could run automatically and continuously as long as he wished to "watch" with his mental eye. Henslow gave the unusual psychological phenomenon of his a detailed description as followings:

Though I can usually summon up any object thought of, it not only is somewhat different from the real thing, but it rapidly changes. The changes are in many cases clearly due to a suggestiveness in the article of something else, but not always so, as in some cases hereafter described. It is not at all necessary to think of any particular object at first, as something is sure to come spontaneously within a minute or two. Some object having once appeared, the automatism of the brain will rapidly induce the series of changes. The images are sometimes very numerous, and very rapid in succession: very frequently of great beauty and highly brilliant. Cut glass (far more elaborate than I am conscious of ever having seen), highly chased gold and silver filigree ornaments; gold and silver flower-stands, etc.; elaborate colored patterns of carpets in brilliant tints are not uncommon (Galton, 1907/1973, pp. 116-117).

These intricate patterns may recall the folk and religious art in some ancient cultures. Also, his voluntarily vivified imagery seems to be the envisage of the functioning of the “autonomous creative complex” (Jung, 1923/1996, p. 122), which normally, is working under the conscious threshold. But, for some reasons, this instinctive mechanism was visualized revealing before Henslow. Therefore, the complicated, fleeting, and unstoppable processing can be observed (but can not be controlled by will), when a hinted input speedily activates a consecution of transfiguration, as he went on to state:

Another peculiarity resides in the extreme restlessness of my visual objects. It is often very difficult to keep them still, as well as from changing in character. They will rapidly oscillate or else rotate to a most perplexing degree, and when the characters change at the same time a critical examination is almost impossible. When the process is in full activity, I feel as if I were a mere spectator at a diorama of a very eccentric kind, and was in no way concerned with the getting up of the performance (Galton, 1907/1973, pp. 117).

The animation in full speed will be ceased, once the perfection is reached. If the visionary intended to interfere with the transforming automatism by will, then the result would be as the following:

When a succession of images has been passing, I sometimes *determine* to introduce an object, say a watch. Very often it is next to impossible to succeed. There is an evident struggle. The watch, pure and simple, will not come; but some hybrid structure appears—something round, perhaps—but it lapses into a warming-pan or other unexpected object (Galton, 1907/1973, p. 117).

Henslow's hybrid images are reminiscent of Hung's chimera- or sphinx-like amalgams, and amphibious or mutant creatures as well. In Hung's paintings, if you take a close look scrutinizing every image in detail one by one, then you will find that you are tracing the artist's creative thinking path. A thought triggers an association which continues to diverge into several potentials in an endless flow. There are always countless latent clues that ambush all over Hung's paintings. Once a fuse is touched off, a piggybacking effect may be motivated. Hung's psychological process seems concurrent with Henslow's examples. The metamorphosing sequences of one of Henslow's vitalized pictures were stated in illustrations (see Figure 21) and writing as below:

I thought of a gun. The *stock* came into view, the metal plate on the end very distinct towards the left (1). The wood was elaborately carved. I cannot recall the pattern. As I scrutinized it, the stock oscillated up and down, and *crumpled up*. The metallic plate sank inwards: and the stock contracted so that it looked not unlike a tuning-fork (2). I gave up the stock and proceeded cautiously to examine the lock. I got it well into view, but no more of the gun. It turned out to be an old-fashioned flint-lock. It immediately began to nod backwards and forwards in a manner suggestive of the beak of a bird pecking. Consequently it forthwith became converted into the head of a bird with a long curved beak, the knob on the lock (3) becoming the head of the bird. I then looked to the right expecting to find the barrel, but the snout of a saw-fish with the tip *distinctly* broken off appeared instead. I had not thought either of a *flint-lock* or of a saw-fish: both came spontaneously (Galton, 1907/1973, p. 117).

Without being regulated by reason, one change spontaneously leads to another. The welling of intuitive vagaries often occurs, as in the experience of watching erosion or water stained patterns on the wall.

For another subject of Galton's research, Mrs. Haweis, certain words always provoked specific visual imageries in her mind, as she described:

Printed words have always had faces to me; they had definite expressions, and certain faces made me think of certain words. The words had *no* connection with these except sometimes by accident. The instances I give are few and ridiculous. When I think of the word *beast*, it has a face something like a gargoyle. The word *Green* has also a gargoyle face, with the addition of teeth. The word *Blue* blinks and look silly, and turns to the right. The word *Attention* has the eyes greatly turned to the left. It is difficult to draw them properly because, like Alice's "Cheshire cat," which at times became a grin without a cat, these faces have expression without features. The expression of course depends greatly on those of the letters, which have likewise their faces and figures. All the little *a*'s turn their eyes to the left, this determines the eyes of *Attention*. *Ant*, however, looks a little down. Of course these faces are endless as words are, and it makes my head ache to retain them long enough to draw (Galton, 1907/1973, pp. 113-114).

Hung also fantasized with written characters and letters, but his imaginative associations were not rigidly concomitant to the same words. For example, his signature “洪通” (Hung Tung) was personified into diverse icons in his paintings (see Figure 22); his characters also have faces (see Figure 23); some seem to wear variegated “tattoo” (see Figure 24); some grow, expand into an unknown creature or self-contained universe (see Figure 25). It makes one wonder

whether or not Hung saw visions with his mental eye? This issue will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 12

TRAVEL AMONG THE CELESTIAL, THE TERRESTRIAL, AND THE NETHER WORLD

Hung claimed that he painted what was inside him, and it was said that Hung painted in a trance. Therefore, this chapter will consider Hung's inner images, and investigate if they were hallucinatory visions. Because Hung used to be an amateur spirit medium at the folk Taoist temple, Dai-Tyan-Fu, in his hometown, the religion of Taoism and the worship of the folk Taoist gods, Five Kings, will be introduced first. Next, the mysterious vocation, spirit mediumship, will be discussed. However, Hung was not an "orthodox" spirit medium. His arcane behaviors were seemingly affiliated with the ancient Chinese folk sorcery (the origin of spirit mediumship), which is kindred to shamanism. Accordingly, the investigation is led to the origin of art, namely, shamanistic art creation. It thus can be concluded that Hung was a shaman as an artist, so that his inner images convey spirit media's and shamans' hallucinatory visions, which occur as they take an inner journey to the celestial, the terrestrial and the nether world.

Religious Background of this Study

Introduction to Taoism

The origin of religion is inseparable from a human's holding in awe of the unknown, irresistible, invincible power of Nature. Han Chinese respond to the omnipresent spiritual existence in the universe leading to the belief of animism. Spirits or gods are imagined to govern or dwell in the sun, moon, heavenly bodies, mountains, rivers, seas, plants, rocks, wind, rain, and thunder, and so

on. They are all worthy of worship. Also paying veneration to ancestors is expanded to deifying legendary figures, fabulous or historical heroes, loyal officials, martyrs, emperors, sages, and so on. Under this inclusive pantheistic philosophy, the three mainstays of Chinese culture, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, absorb and interpenetrate each other's doctrines and scriptures, as sometimes it is hard to mark off the intermediate among them. Therefore, it is not too surprising to see Buddha and Confucianist gods, (who are originally prayed to in the ancestral temple) arrayed among the Taoist pantheon.

Taoist philosophy originated during the Spring and Autumn period (770—476 B.C.) and the Warring States period (475—221 B.C.). Through the formative period in the Han Dynasty, Taoism glided from a sociopolitical and scholastic philosophy into theosophy. Growing out of the lower classes, Taoist religion combined with folk sorcery, and finally took form in the late Han. Exorcism, secret talismanic writing, horoscope, divination, occult cult, and prophetic diagram were adopted to cater to the masses for curing diseases and consulting fortune. Folk Taoism was widespread and blended into regional customs and cultures branching off in myriad sub-sects. As a result, the intricate and excessive ramifications of folk Taoism has increased the difficulties in studying this religion. Later, the Taoist sphere of influence was stretched out into the ruling class. The aristocracies wished an eternal life or longevity in order for them to enjoy their hereditary wealth and royal prerogative forever. Meeting their spiritual and physical needs, Taoistic regimen, alchemy, pill taking, and tantric practice were favored and embraced in the uppertendom. Indeed, the high expenses for alchemical experiments could only be offered by the rich gentry. In addition, Taoist immortalization and fairy tales obviously attracted mortals, and enabled them to take imaginative flight to the land of the

eternal. Taoist's ethereal poise and nirvana characteristics were always admired by the lofty literati. Especially, during ages of anarchy and social upheavals, they secluded themselves from the mundane world and freed themselves in deep mountains (such as: the Seven Wise Men of the Bamboo Grove [竹林七賢] in the 4th Century A.D.). In addition, Taoist celestial scripts were invented for conveying the divine revelation of gods, and the renowned Taoist calligraphers were numerous in Chinese history of art, for example, Wang Hsi-Chih (王羲之) (307-365 A.D.) was the greatest of Chinese calligraphers.³⁴

The Five Kings of Dai-Tyan-Fu

The occurrence of a small boat carrying five gods that got stranded on the shore marked the preternatural origin of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu (mentioned in Chapter 2). In fact, this mysterious ship was assumed to be a “King boat (王船),” which was put out to sea from the coastal province of Fu-Jyan in mainland China. Due to the geographic barrier, the Southeast coast of China and Taiwan were developed later than the Central Plains (generally referring to the downstream regions of the Yellow River.) The high temperature and the damp weather turned this uncultivated region into the hot-bed of pestilence. The mortality from bubonic plague was innumerable. In face of the fatal catastrophe, Han Chinese attributed its cause to supernatural forces, namely, the black magic by gods or spirits of pestilence. Consequently, the worship of the gods of pestilence became a natural trend. The gods of pestilence were generally installed a title of nobility as “King;” the ceremony of the gods of pestilence was called “*Wang-Jyau* (王醮)” (*wang* means king, and the *Jyau* can be translated as ceremony referring to the Chapter 2). In addition to the copious offerings to

³⁴ The information of this paragraph is referred to in Ren, 1998.

the deities, customarily, a decorated sailboat loaded with josses and/or other items was named as King boat; the ritual of burning the King boat or releasing it into the ocean was referred to as “sending pestilence off (送瘟).” Through this send-off ritual, the residents believed that ominous spirits had been exorcised. When a King boat sailed across the perilous Taiwan Strait reaching the desolate fishing harbor in southern Taiwan, it was taken for a good omen. Many King boats (and the immigration of the 17th century) were brought by the ocean current from Fu-Jyan to southern Taiwan and Peng-Hu Archipelago (which is composed of 64 islands lying off the southwest seaside of Taiwan, and previously known as the Pescadores). Following the footprints of the pioneers, temples of King(s) starting from the city of Tainan forthwith spread out to the west seaboard of Taiwan. Closely related to the oceanic culture, next to the goddess, Ma-Dzu (媽祖), the Kings were the most worshipped Taoistic gods in Taiwan. The temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu has been the headquarters of Kings; among all the folk Taoist temples, it also deserves the tiptop prestige in the light of the splendor of its long history, and a great multitude of followers. As for the magnitude of its architecture, the temple has been officially listed as a religious memorial building of Taiwan province evaluated as a Grade II historic site.³⁵

The first king of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu was verified to be a great general in early Tang Dynasty (the early 7th Century A.D.) named Li Da-Lyang (李大亮) (Wu, 1967, June). He and the other four military officers—Chr Meng-Byau (池夢彪), Wu Syau-Kwam (吳孝寬), Ju Shu-Yu (朱叔裕), and Fan Cheng-Ye (范承業), were pledged in a sworn brotherhood. In virtue of their meritorious feats for the country, and their fidelity and rectitude as well, they were reputed to

³⁵The information of this paragraph is referred to in Lyou, 1995; and Li, 1984; Hwang, 1992; and *Taitian Temple of Nan Kun Shen*, n.d.

be an amaranthine paragon. Thus, after their mortal lives ended, they became heavenly appointed inspectors in the secular world. When epidemic was rampant, Kings of pestilence went on investigation tours by the King boat, and brought the ghosts of pestilence (which was the cause of the plague) to justice. In a state of flux and reflex, the god of pestilence had been transformed into the tutelary of a fishing village, the god of medicine, and the justice of the peace. Legends of the Five Kings's ubiquitous miraculous power and many of their divine manifestations have enriched the local colors of Nan-Kun-Shen and strengthened the followers' religious belief.³⁶

Spirit Mediumship

What has mystified Hung's art was his being a spirit medium, who was chosen by the gods of the folk Taoism to forward the gods' wills. When I visited the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu in 2001, the local people indisputably asserted that Hung could only paint while being possessed by gods or spirits. As an artist, I (having seen spirit media in delirium at the folk Taoist temple during my childhood) resisted this kind of allegation at first, since it seemed to entirely deny a painter's individual talents, and to imply that Hung's art creation was undertaken in the unconscious state of mind. The writer, Lai (1973, April), had the same reaction as mine. In his visit to Hung's house, there were two villagers talking about Hung's art in terms of Taoistic metaphysics. Especially, one of them asserted that it was impossible for a mortal to make art like Hung's; there must be assistance from supernatural beings. This commentary did not impress this intellectual visitor at all. Although Hung smiled with tacit consent, Lai did not think that it was a compliment, but a negative assessment of Hung's works. Thus, he dismissed it as a wild talk. However, I heard more and more stories

³⁶ The information of this paragraph is referred to in Lyou, 1995; and Li, 1984; and Wu, 1967.

regarding this subject with a witness; so, I thought, if it was part of Hung's life, then I should investigate it.

Nevertheless, spirit mediumship is a very covert vocation, and the documentary data are few, because the spirit media are all under a vow to be secret to the grave. Furthermore, cases of immoral Taoist priests colluding with spirit media to feign god's will to cheat ignorant followers out of money are not rare. Therefore, although in Taiwan folk Taoist temples are widely situated in urban areas and the countryside, and the folk Taoist religion is a component of daily life of the common people, how to gain access to the inside stories and insights of a spirit medium's psychological constitution is not easy. In a documentary report, "Priests and Spirit Media in Peng-Hu," Hwang (1987, September) gave an account of his observations since childhood and his recent years' field works in Peng-Hu. The folk Taoist cults in Taiwan are derived from diversified sects. Besides, from mainland China to Taiwan, and from generation to generation, they have been modified in the process of localization, as to slightly vary from one region (or even a temple) to another. Therefore, the customs of the Peng-Hu Archipelago and those of the main island of Taiwan may have some minor differences. However, Peng-Hu was the first stop of the early Taiwanese immigrants from mainland China, and the worship to the gods of Kings ranks first among other Taoist folk deities in this region. Therefore, Hwang's first-hand information gathering from the local Taoist practitioners has been very valuable for my study.

The Selection of Spirit Medium Candidates³⁷

In Taiwanese dialect, spirit media are generally called "*dang-ki* (童乩或乩童)." The majority of *dang-ki* are male. In general, the best candidates to be

³⁷ The information of this section is referred to in Hwang, 1987; and Elliott, 1981.

spirit media are those whose eight characters (which are calculated from the birth hour, day, month, and year) weigh light. In Taiwanese custom, such persons are able to see “unclean” beings—namely, ghosts—and are destined to die young. It was said that through serving gods and the community, their life can be prolonged. Referring to Hwang (1987, September), in most cases, they are summoned by gods to be spirit media involuntarily. Also, it is required that the selected candidates’ capabilities and future accomplishments will not surpass the gods, in order to ensure their being subordinate to gods. In the initial stage, at home, a selected young candidate jerks shuddering, stuporous, jumpy, and repeats these behaviors by fits and starts. Routinely, the invocatory liturgy to gods is held in the morning and evening in a temple. While the beating of drums and gongs gets louder in the temple, the candidate’s quivering accelerates at home. Eventually he brandishes and bounces into the temple in a state of trance. The priest has to burn a talisman, *fu* (符), in order to test whether this rapturous person is possessed by a deity or a demon. If it is a demon, the talisman would expel the evil, so he will quiet down; otherwise, he will react with stronger body movement appearing stern. Some priests, instead of burning a talisman, may make “hand gestures (手印),” which will effect the demon-possessed to collapse. For further confirmation, the priest burns incense sticks and throw “*jyau-bei* (筊杯)” (which is some kind of bamboo device used in divination) in order to request the god’s approval.

***The Forty-Nine Day Training Course*³⁸**

Afterward, the candidates of spirit media have to go through a seven-week (viz. forty-nine-day) course of “*dzwo-jin* (坐禁)” (meaning stay confined) training period, during which all the candidates are isolated in an enclosed

³⁸ The information of this section is referred to in Hwang, 1987.

space (usually, in the temple.) For facilitating the best cultivation of human's full potentials, the energies of the firmament and of the earth have to be impeded. Under this theory, the candidates' heads are not supposed to be exposed to the sky, and their feet should not step on the ground. Therefore, the temple doors are sealed; the widows are covered with black or red cloths; and the cement floor is covered with straw mats or wooden boards.

Prior to the training course, the purification procedure is performed on the candidates. After entering the temple, they are allowed no contact with the outside. According to Hwang's recount, in the first week, the main purpose is to remove the novices' chronic bad habits and to strengthen their patience and tolerability; their primary practices are abstinence and reading books of virtue. They fast, read, and doze off their time for 4 or 5 days, then, they are about to be ready for gods to come down to possess their bodies. In the second week, beating drums and gongs, and chanting incantations are added to the process of invoking divine spirits to condescend to the altar and to possess the novices. This rite is held once every morning. In the third week, it is practiced twice a day—one time in the morning, and another in the evening. Two ways to examine to what extent the novices are possessed are to observe their convulsive postures, and note their hiccuping and vomiting behaviors. From being conscious, half conscious, to completely unconscious, a novice exhibits the degree of being possessed by shaking his head, his head to stomach (half body), or his whole body. At the beginning stage, novices hiccup a lot. Hiccuping and vomiting indicate struggling between the conscious and the unconscious. Accompanying the crescendo of drum and gong beatings, the possessed enters an entirely entrancing state. In the fourth week, the same training continues. In the fifth and the sixth week, diverse pacing principles, *bu-*

gang (步罡,又作步綱), (see further explanation of *Bu-gang* in Chapter 13) have to be memorized and repeatedly rehearsed in the conscious and the subconscious state, until they can be performed properly and unconsciously. In the seventh week, gods will indicate an auspicious day for a graduate to “open mouth.” At the end of the seventh week of training, the graduate is supposed to be totally unconscious while being possessed. In the open-mouth ceremony, the priest burns talismans to “cleanse” the temple and a live rooster. The rooster will be held in front the new spirit medium, mouth to mouth. After the priest chants incantations, the rooster crows, and so does the spirit medium. An open-mouth talisman is reduced to ashes, then mixed in water and given to the spirit medium to drink. Then, he pounds the table announcing the beginning of his spirit mediumship.

***Gods Communicate with Mortals through Spirit Media in Two Ways*³⁹**

Spirits exist in another, invisible, dimension of world—intangible to the profane. In order to declare their actuality, and to establish credibility and veneration among worshippers, they need to make themselves perceptible in this material world in order to communicate to mankind. Therefore, by means of spirit media, they reveal their supernatural power in healing, presage, problem solving, and miraculous manifestation. In Peng-Hu, Taoist priests and spirit media work closely. But, in many places, spirit media cooperate with assistants. There are two types of methods for spirit media to deliver divine messages; one is writing, another, speaking (see Hwang, 1987, September).

In childhood, I often went to a folk Taoist temple in my hometown with my mother. Routinely, the followers burned incense sticks to pray to gods, and to tell their petitions in their minds. After offering incense, they checked the seance schedule in order for them to come to ask for advice from gods directly. The

³⁹ The information of this section is referred to in Hwang, 1987; and Elliott, 1981.

seance was often held in the evening after people's workday and dinner. There were two spirit media standing in front of the table before the main altar; one of them held the two feet of a miniature wooden chair on the right side, and another on the left. Usually, with eyes closed, they stood or leaned on the table in silence expecting the gods to come to possess them. However, sometimes, the whole-night-long waiting ended up to be in vain; sometimes, the audiences noticed that the spirit media started to tremble a little, then the shaking got violent. At this point, the two media had turned face to face. Four hands lifted the mini chair up high in the air, then jerked down. After a few agitated movements of ups and downs, the chair was hurled towards the table. The mental protrudent point at the end of one of the chair arms banged against the thick, heavy wooden board (which almost covered the entire surface of the table) several times, then started to trace characters on the board. The followers came to gather around the table to wait for their turns. First of all, the god would announce his or her identity, since there were several deities in this temple. Afterward, a name was called, and the god could always point out the intention of this follower's visit to the temple, although his or her prayer had been kept private. The worshipper could ask questions, and the god answered in writing. A translator verbally read the gods' wills one by one word, while a recorder put them in writing. If the translator made a mistake, the spirit media would repeatedly write that character until the translator got it right. It was said that one of two spirit media was real and the other was only an assistant medium, which meant that one became completely unconscious, but another was not always able to be in a trance. If a worshipper came for a sick family member, the god would make a trip to his or her home in an instant. The real medium was given a bundle of burning incense sticks. He held and moved slowly the hot sticks on

the surface of his naked upper body, which represented that the god was diagnosing. Although the flaming sticks were pressed against his skin, no trace of a burn mark was left. At the end, talismans were issued by the spirit media for worshippers to use for different purposes.⁴⁰

Another more well-known writing type of divine communication is using a “Y” shaped stick made out of peach wood instead of the wooden chair I witnessed. To operate this instrument, two media standing in front of a table hold the ends of the two branches of the “Y” shape. The bottom end of the “Y” shape facing the main altar is the writing part, under which a prong is attached for tracing characters on a sand tray, while the peach stick moves. This writing manifestation is known as “*fu-ji* (扶乩)” (see Elliott, 1981).

The vocal type media seem more interesting and favored, because followers can have immediate dialog with deities. The possessed can transform into different characters, in terms of tone of voice, accent, dialect, personality, body movement and gesture, etc. In a folk Taoist temple, there may be one to several spirit media. If there is only one medium, but with several gods in a temple, audiences can easily recognize which deity is speaking through the medium from the distinct features exhibited. For example, a King may talk fretfully and seriously; a goddess’s voice is soft and high-pitched; a very young god appears to be childish. When festivals take place, more spirit media are needed. For instance, the main gods worshipped in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu are the Five Kings. This means that at least five media have to be at service. Therefore, in addition to the regular medium, the temple will draft temporary ones. Hung was one of such amateur spirit media, and never went through the forty-nine-day training course. However, the marvelous powers presented by

⁴⁰ This paragraph is based on my memory.

the divine spirits through him were unforgettable to the audiences in his hometown.

Divine Manifestations in Spirit Media⁴¹

The effervescent festivals always vivify the whole village, and it is the time for gods to show off their miraculous powers. The physical self-torture cults performed by the entranced spirit media invariably attract a big crowd, although beholders need a strong stomach to watch them. The traditional sorcery devices are called “five treasures” including sword, bronze nail or blade club, prick ball, ax, and shark’s teeth sword. The media bloodily slash themselves on the back, forehead, tongue, chest and abdomen with the sharp weapons. Usually, the young male medium’s actions are more rapturous than those of the older ones and the female ones. Assistants follow behind them, and hold alcohol in mouth blowing out onwards the media’s bleeding wounds to prevent infections. A spirit medium I interviewed told me that it takes about two or three days for the wounds to recuperate naturally and no medicine is needed. He showed me a dent on this forehead, and explained that although the wound is sealed, his constantly hewing acts had indented the bone of his forehead and disconnected the veins running through that area. The media also undertake some hazardous acrobatics, but, without shedding blood; the most-often-seen stunts include such as lying on a nail bed, sitting on a nail chair, climbing up a sword ladder, walking across a sword bridge, walking on burning charcoal with bare feet, piercing across one or both cheeks with one or two metal skewers, etc. Some deities have more individual tricks, such as having media to chew and swallow pieces of glass or to drink boiling oil.

⁴¹ The information of this section is referred to in Elliott, 1981; Hwang, 1997; and based on my memory.

Hung's Inspiration from Gods

Hung's specialty was using an ax in annual festivals. It really made me uneasy when listening to people in the Dai-Tyan-Fu vividly describe how Hung chopped deeply into his backbones with an ax, and the wounds opened up like an infant's mouth. Usually, spirit media become entranced and self-flagellated in a temple or during a Taoist cult. However, it was not the case for Hung. Sometimes, he got possessed at home, and derangedly slashed himself with a large sickle, or, some said, an ax. One of his neighbors said that Hung's landlord used to be a coffin maker, so in his house Hung could pick a weapon, such as an ax or a saw at hand. Although hearsay connected Hung's artistic creation with one of the Five gods, a witness pointed out that it was hard to tell what spirits possessed Hung. It meant that it is not necessary to be any one of the Five gods. Furthermore, Hung's neighbor mentioned that after completing his first to fifth pictures, Hung showed him the paintings, and told him that a teacher living in the mountain behind his house came to teach him every evening after it got dark (personal communication February 21, 2001). Hung's house was located adjacent to a cemetery. No one would know whether his teacher was a ghost or a deity. In addition, Hung told the provincialist writer, Yang, that: "It does not only take me, Hung Tung, to paint the pictures. There are gods and supernatural beings coming to give me instructions" (Yang, 1974, September 29 & 30, p. 12). Analogous with Plato's calling the poets as "nothing but interpreters of the gods," and poems as "Invention of the Muses" (Plato, 1961/1996, pp. 32-33), Hung associated his artistic creation with divine power. As most modern intellectuals would do, Yang avoided accepting Hung's statement literally, but decoded Hung's immortal mentors as a metaphor of divine inspiration. Therefore, it may be rationalized that while an artistic creator

reaches a cathectic state, mind and objects are integrated as one becomes oblivious to the existence of the outer world and the inner self. Consequently, spontaneous strokes flow out of the brush as driven by the Muses, or dictated by the gods.

Putting aside attempts to judge the credibility of those talks and interpretations, undeniably, Hung's self-invented writings are reminiscent of primordial ideographs, old stele inscriptions, and Taoist talismans. If a comparison of Hung's calligraphy paintings (see Figure 23, and the calligraphy in Figures 26-29) to the earlier Chinese characters circulated around the 14th to 11th century B.C. (see Figures 30-35) is made, their similarities may surprise observers. Moreover, the big characters on the top portion of Figure 36 and in Figure 37 and 38 also remind one of the inscriptions of the 6th century B.C. (see Figure 39). Had this illiterate, rural man seen the ancient calligraphy somewhere? Or was he just revealing the collective unconscious (see Chapter 14)?

Interview with A Spirit Medium

I decided to find out how a medium makes contact with spirits. A spirit medium who was willing to talk about his professional secrets to me was discovered in a very unusual way. Chen Jin-Je (陳金哲) was an insurance salesman. After work, he voluntarily served as a spirit medium in a folk Taoist temple gratis. Since he was 8 years old, deities have always come to his dreams. Especially, he frequently dreamed about playing with a child, whom he later in adulthood identified as a deity well-known as the Third Prince (三太子爺). This young deity seemingly liked to have children's company very much. The front courtyard of a temple usually becomes a children's playground before dusk. In my childhood, I used to hear people say that the Third Prince never

came down to possess the medium before children went home for dinner. My interviewee told me that he neither knew or questioned who those people (deities) were appearing in his dreams; nor did he feel different from others, until he attended a seance in the temple where he was presently serving. Thus, he came to realize his unusual faculties and decided to serve the gods at the age of 30. During the forty-nine-day training, he was confined in a room; except for coming out to use the bathroom, he, spent most of time asleep in there. In dreams, gods came to instruct him how to decode imageries, which were like videos—one scene was played after another. As the exercise ended, he passed the test given by gods. In his spirit medium practice, he henceforth communicated with gods in his dream. Usually, gods revealed to him visions related to next day's business, such as who would come to the seance for what subjects, and how to handle these affairs. For example, to answer a worshipper's wish for healing cancer, the god disclosed visions in which clues regarding where to find the remedial herbs were hidden. He likened these visions to silent movies. He was a beholder watching scenes shifting in the air, and could think and try to interpret the metaphorical meanings in the dream. While a god came to possess him, he reacted with a fit of resistance, until he became completely unconscious. During the possession, his soul was guarded by the god's subalterns. His memory of that time period was totally in blank.

In addition, he has even been brought to Heaven and Hades, wherein he was able to meander, but unable to interact with the people or immortals because he was intangible to them. The paradise was divided into various levels; in each level, the inhabitants dress in the customs of a certain dynasty. Therefore, he concluded that each one of them presents a different time period of Heaven. Sometimes, a person's previous and future lives were reviewed. I

asked how he understood the context, since there was no dialogue or a narrator's description. He seemingly had a hard time explaining it. He could only say that it was like watching movies, so he understood. However, it can be asserted that two faculties were involved in this kind of spiritual communication. One is a spirit medium's receptivity, which decides the brightness of the received images. It can be likened to tuning in a radio. Sometimes, signals are induced strongly and clearly, sometimes, faintly. So to speak, there are individual differences in terms of a medium's sensitivity toward the messages sent from the other dimension of space. As for another factor, it has to do with a spirit medium's cognition, which determines to what extent he or she can pick up patent tips to infer the latent meaning of a whole, in terms of the ability to make sense of collected data (personal communication, February 25, 2001).

Leading to Ancient Folk Sorcery and Shamanism

Interestingly, Hung did not receive formal art education to be a painter, neither did he take the traditional forty-nine-day confinement course for spirit medium tyros. Most likely, this part-time spirit medium was extremely susceptible to metaphysical beings, and his extraordinary facility and his spiritual experiences closely tied to his individual artistic style. Did Hung see the antediluvian Chinese pictography in dreams? My spirit medium interviewee suggested the possibility, because in his dreams, he saw the gods' books written in ancient hieroglyph appearing to be intelligible to him. Moreover, the juxtaposition of Hung's calligraphy in Figure 25 and 38 with the segment of the talismanic calligraphy from the Heavenly Script (see Figure 40) noticeably utters their intimate kindred. Also, Hung's script in Figure 41 seems to be some kind of occult volume recalling of a piece from the illustrated Astronomical Chart

of the Comets and Their Forecasts in Figure 42, and a section of the magic graph with practicing instruction from the Taoistic Holy Scriptures in Figure 43.

Perhaps, Hung's mysterious behaviors during the creation process may give clues to his occult painting mode. Hung often locked himself in the studio for days when making paintings. One of Hung's relatives, Hung Syi (洪喜), once ran into this artist working in the dark (Sye, 1973). It seems that he painted with his mind, but not with a carnal eye. Moreover, many witnessed this illiterate man reciting incomprehensible verses in ancient tunes prior to writing down lines of a "poem." Hung's friend, Wu, affirmed that Hung's conduct was indebted to the rituals of archaic sorcery. The primeval Chinese sorcerers specialized in serving the invisible beings; witches were referred as "wu (巫)," and wizards as "syi (覡)." They performed ritual dancing and singing to affect and conjure up the immortals descending to the secular world. The origin of spirit mediumship can be traced back to folk sorcery in antiquity. However, the primitive sorcerers mediate between the spiritual and the material world as intermediaries (not just media) appearing to be akin to shamans.

Shamanism

A Shaman's Vocational Call & the Onset of Schizophrenia

In *Shamanism: The Beginnings of Art*, Lommel (1967) asserted that shamans are sick men. At a certain point of their life, they receive an irresistible "call" to become shamans. This call is presented with great intensity and as the only cure for their ailment, so that the need to shamanize becomes inescapable. The pathological patterns of shamans have been associated with schizophrenia. Dennis McKenna and Terence McKenna (1975) drew a parallel between shaman and schizophrene. The trigger of schizophrenia often takes place when an individual is confronted by dire difficulties in life. A feeling of

being incapable of resolving or coping with external quagmire leads to internal turmoil. Similarly, the shaman candidates, who possess a neurotic and solitary nature, take in the destiny call while undergoing illness, personal calamity, or family tragedy.

Hallucinatory Stage

In the next phase, both schizophrenic patients and shaman candidates display a tendency of detachment from outer reality. Under an abnormal obsession of inner fantasy, the schizophrenic is confined in a rigid perspective of certain subjects, and makes a conjunction with divine messages, as the future shamans believes in their arrival at the spiritual region. Then, hallucination appears in the following stage. Both schizophrene and shaman may stick with the idea of apocalypse to such an extreme extent that insomnia and spontaneous mesmerism occur in them. In virtue of this sort of sensory dispossession, the “boundaries between sleeping and waking break down, the novice shaman lives in a twilight world of hypnagogic fantasy and half-waking reverie” (McKenna & McKenna, 1975, p.23). They start to hear voices, hallucinate visions, and perceive deforming figures.

Research on LSD⁴²

In the research with the psychedelic drug, LSD (Grof, 1975), the subjects’ psychic visions at the very ostensible stage of the LSD experience is reminiscent of the works of some modern art movements. With their eyes closed, the subjects’ response to the LSD begins with “a distinct animation of the visual field and enhancement of the entoptic (intraocular) phenomena.” (Grof, 1975, p. 34) When the on-drug subjects stare at an object in their surroundings, then close their eyes, the afterimages fickle in configuration emerge on and off intermittently, and evolve into complementary colors.

⁴² The information of this section is referred to in Grof, 1975.

Sometimes, a phenomenal alien landscape phantasmagorically arises. Very often, the phantoms involve divine or cultural contents, which are perceived as intricate geometric patterns in magnificent architecture, such as temples, cathedrals, mosques, or arabesque palaces. These visions are described as parallel to the abstract paintings of Mondrian and Kandinsky. Also, kaleidoscope, firework, and scintillant fountain, and so on, are likened to their mental images.

With eyes open, the perceived world seemingly reveals its labile and organic nature, and fluctuates in flux, as subjects have a hard time securing their viewpoint. The light and color are brightened and intensified. The outlines of objects become fuzzy. The inert objects awaken and turn alive. The most typically visual phenomenon is the synthesization of decorative elements with creatures or objects, and the analyzation of creatures or objects into geometric shapes. The distortion and transformation take place. Everything seems to melt, vibrate, and satirize. The visual experiences can get to be rampageous ecstasy. Moreover, a series of progressing stages of a moving object in space can be synchronously seen. Deeply touched, many of the subjects come to identify with the emotionally expressive painter, Van Gogh, by heart. They also vicariously apprehend the exaggeration and abstraction of shapes and colors in the works of the Fauvist painters (such as Henri Matisse). In addition, the decorative style works by the Art Nouveau artists (such as: Gustav Klimt) is recalled. Picasso's Cubist and Marcel Duchamp's Futurist motifs are comparable to these hallucinatory visions.

Hearing distortion also occurs. For example, the subjects become oversensitive to sound which is hard to detect under normal conditions. Also, the subjects are deluded by tedious dripping water, which passes for pleasant

melody. Furthermore, a synesthesia phenomena happens in this stage, where music is seen, color is tasted, and so on. The sensory experiences, at times, come to be so emotion-charged and profound that the subjects express that “they *really* heard music for the first time in their life.” (Grof, 1975, p. 40) These aforesaid aesthetic experiences take place at the very early stage of the LSD experiment. They seem to reveal the basic psychological mechanisms, so the author stated:

They do not reveal the unconscious of the subject and do not have any psychodynamic significance. The most important aspects of these experiences can be explained in physiological terms as a result of chemical stimulation of the sensory organs reflecting their inner structure and functional characteristics (Grof, 1975, p. 40-42).

Shamans Gain Self-Healing Power through the Ritual of Death and Rebirth

The hallucinatory visions seems so automatic and magical that they are reputed to be divine revelations from another world. However, Lommel (1967) explains that as individuals are called by spirits (who possess them) to become shamans, this professional call, in fact, is coming from inside, but not outside. Therefore, Lommel stated: “The ‘spirits’ are, of course, not spiritual beings existing outside man and influencing him, taking possession of him, etc., but a man’s own ideas, images of his own psyche, manifestations of his own ego.” (p. 11) Yet, the psychic phenomena of being called are perceived as outer events. When the inner impulse amplifies, shamans are brought in face of peril. The distinction between shamans and the schizophrenic lies in the self-cure ability. On the outside, shamans remain blacked out (unconscious). On the inside, they travel to the firmament, a remote earth land, or the underworld to fetch a cure or

instructions for salvation. Surviving from the psychiatric chaos, they are in need of reforming themselves physically and psychologically, as Lommel puts it:

The demands of the spirits drive the future shaman deeper and deeper into mental confusion and physical illness. In many reported cases this condition becomes altogether grave; if it can be resolved, we are confronted by an experience of death and rebirth that must be taken seriously. If the condition cannot be resolved, the individual lapses into insanity or dies (1967, p. 53).

Through the ritual passage of death and rebirth, a shaman's corpus is dissected into segments; then, the skeleton is reassembled and coated with flesh and blood. A new shaman is reborn; in other words, the sick shaman is cured.

However, it does not suggest that the "healed madman" gets well forever, but that the shaman has learned to alter the negative forces into positive creation powers. The being ill and healing process cultivates the shamans' potentials, and facilitates the shifting between the conscious and the unconscious, which is spelled out in the following interpretation of the McKennas (1975):

It may be said to represent a "cure," not in the sense that the schizophrenic henceforth returns to "normal," and is no longer bothered by autonomous unconscious contents, but rather in that he manages to integrate these contents into the sphere of consciousness and learns to cope with the "expanded reality" in which he now must live. This stage may develop to any point, from a very marginal adjustment accompanied by constant relapses to an extremely pronounced state of mental acuity, in which awareness, sensitivity and creative capacity are likely to be many times greater than in "normal" individuals, as if entire areas of the brain, previously inaccessible, had been opened up by the transforming

experience. The schizophrenic who has managed to successfully complete this final adjustment is in every sense superior, for he is truly a “healed madman,” one who has not only crossed over to the other side but who has returned and hence possesses access to both spheres of reality (p. 22).

Shamans Act as Artists Carrying out the Self-Healing Process—It Is the Origin of Art⁴³

In order to conquer the ever-going inner conflicts, the healing process has to be repeated again and again. Guided by drum beats (or other musical instrument’s rhythms), shamans make body movements and chant to reach a rapturous state. In many cultures, hallucinogens are used by shamans. Once again, they conjure up the spirits to possess them. In a trance, the “mentally sick person heals himself by functioning first not as a priest and doctor but as an artist. He gives artistic form to his inner images, composes poetry, dances, mimes, and so on.” (Lommel, 1967, p. 64)

In the ancient hunting society, mankind felt impotent in face of the invisible, ubiquitous power of Nature. From the observation of killed animals, hunters noticed the loss of life forces and energies from the corpora; so they image the existence of soul, which can be separated from physical bodies. Going through physical sickness and psychological death and resurrection, the shamans’ cognition get expanded, as the inhibitory areas become excitable and susceptible in their brains. By means of the engagement in ecstatic experiences, afterward shamans are able to transcend temporal and geographic boundaries taking a journey to the celestial, the terrestrial, or the nether World, and harking back to the primeval era. They meet the spirits, and commute between two realities. In doing so, they learn to gain the infinite

⁴³ The information of this section is referred to in Lommel, 1967.

spiritual might to operate in the material world. In the entrancing ritual, shamans exercise their magnified creative powers acting as artists to transfer their inner experiences into apprehensible forms, in order to communicate with audiences who are not just passive onlookers, but active participants. By means of the collective performances, the psychic energies are multiplied, and the sick madmen not only heal themselves, but also the observers. It is the provenance of art.

Hung Fits the Shaman Profile

The eternal image of a shaman is portrayed as follows:

To be a successful shaman requires a specific predisposition that is universal. The shaman must be artistically gifted and possess a talent for improvisation, for quickly adapting himself to any given situation. For he often has to make statements on the spur of the moment regarding the weather, sickness, war, and so on, frequently even in a poetic and sometimes even in a rhythmically musical form, in order to render his statements more impressive and intensify their effect on his listeners. Furthermore, it is to be assumed that shamans are good psychologists who know intuitively how to create a suitable atmosphere of tension and receptiveness among their audience. Evidently only men of many gifts and exceptional qualities are suited to this profession. (Lommel, 1967, p. 12)

This description seems to fit Hung's behaviors of reciting and writing "poems," during his painting process. Also, the stories of the shamans' recovery from illness resonate in stories that "At age of 50, Hung's landlord forbade him to place an altar of his parents in the house. Hung's feeling of putting his ancestors to shame resulted in his psychopathic breakdown. After recovering

from his illness, he started to paint....” (Chen, 1987, March 26, p. 26) and that “...in the year of age 50, he (Hung) fell seriously ill. In his sick bed, he heard a story on the radio that a poor, jobless man had nowhere to put his ancestral tablet (altar), so that he held the tablet weeping bitterly beside a well. This story made him realize that he should devote himself to a career, in order to glorify his progenitor.” (“People from His Community”, 1976, March 11, p.3) These stories conform to the profile of the future shaman’s being sick and receiving his vocational call.

In addition, all the people who knew Hung unanimously mentioned his extremely aloof and idiosyncratic nature. Although Hung often could be found at the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, he hardly talked to people there. This is in concurrence with the statement: “The shaman is frequently a person of unstable constitution and restless, at times abstracted, behavior. He is an eccentric who frequently withdraws from the community to devote himself wholly to his visions and dreams.” (Lommel, 1967, p. 36)

Also, according to Lommel, the “shaman’s true preparation for his office is then carried out either by a real teacher or by one who appears to him in a dream” (Lommel, 1967, p. 39). This also brings to mind that Hung told his neighbor and Yang that a teacher came to teach him painting. Hung’s art mentor was supposed to show up in the form of dream.

Hung’s Inner Images Convey Spirit Medium’s and Shamanistic Visions

Conclusively, the assertion that Hung could only paint while being possessed may have uncovered the truth. Hung was a shaman as an artist; he traversed the border between the material and the spiritual, and carried back his divine visions from the other side, then conveyed them in his pictures. Many

of Hung's organic and synthetic images, geometry and elaborate designs, as well as bright complementary colors resemble hallucinatory visions. For example, the kaleidoscopic, broche patterns on the background (see Figure 44) are very typical in Hung's paintings. The monotonous and emotionless faces repeatedly popping out of the mutant creatures brings forth dreamy, hypnotic feelings. In his dreams, he fluttered up to Heaven, which was multi-storied as in the spirit medium interviewee's description and one of Hung's paintings, "The scene of Celestial Treasure." (—titled as "Gods and Temple" in the special edition on the Hung Tung exhibition, April, 1976, *Artist Magazine*—see Figure 45) He might have visited the unknown, distant earth lands or the underworld (see Figures 46 & 29), or traveled back to the antediluvian epoch seeing the oldest Chinese pictography. Those visions were from inside of his mind. Thus, he could paint without lighting, and declared: "I paint better than them. Jang Da-Chyan and Picasso paint what a corporal eye can see, but I paint what is going on in the mind" (Chen, 1978, October 1, p. 3). Also, as stated earlier, he criticized the so-called fine artists' paintings that: "Never change. Always mountains and waters, landscapes. They paint only the surface, not from 'inside'." (Yang, 1974, September 29 & 30, p. 12)

CHAPTER 13

TAOIST RITUAL AND TALISMANIC CALLIGRAPHY

In the Taoist concepts, the material, tangible and the spiritual, intangible are interchangeable. Abstract art reflects this interchangeability. As shamans act as artists commute between two realities, pathos is conveyed in various forms of art (such as painting, sculpture, music, dance, theater, poetry, and so on) to surpass the barrier to reach the metaphysical existence. The ritual music is effective in terms of touching the divine, innermost being. In the Taoistic rituals, the sacred dancing, singing, music, and poetry fuse and take shape in the form of talismanic calligraphy. Calligraphic talismans correspond with the rhythmical movement in space and time recording the airy trace of energies, emanating an ineffable supernatural aura. Influenced by the talismanic calligraphy, Hung attempted to capture the intangible in his paintings. In this chapter, two of Hung's calligraphy paintings will be used as examples for analysis.

The Spiritual and the Material Are Interdependent and Interchangeable

In the psychedelic state of mind, disembodiment takes place. The outlines of tangible matters are transmogrified, and all beings reveal their true natures. Concurrent with Taoistic belief in animism and scientific discovery of the atomic microcosm, Kandinsky stated his animated visions as follows:

Everything "dead" trembled. Everything showed me its face, its innermost being, its secret soul, inclined more often to silence than to speech—not only the stars, moon, woods, flowers of which poets sing, but even a cigar

butt lying in the ashtray, a patient white trouser-button looking up at you from a puddle on the street, a submissive piece of bark carried through the long grass in the ant's strong jaws to some uncertain and vital end, the page of a calendar, torn forcibly by one's consciously outstretched hand from the warm companionship of the block of remaining pages. Likewise, every still and every moving point (= line) became for me just as alive and revealed to me its soul. (Kandinsky, 1994, p. 361)

From the conscious to the unconscious, from the physical to the spiritual, the faces of all beings change. As the creative mechanism and imaginative cognition are galvanized in automatism, this kind of spontaneous inspiration seems so supernatural as if everything has a soul. The McKennas hypothesize that "flashes of creative insight, which are nothing more than revelation of the organization of the psyche, are found to map onto a part of reality and thus are validated as true" (1975, p. 126). However, between perceptive and phantasmic visions, which one is more real? In the following allegory told by the Taoist philosopher, Chuang Tzu, it is suggested that the shift between two realities parallels the alchemical transmutation of matters:

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Tzu, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly, I awaked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a barrier. The transition is called *Metempsychosis*. (Giles, trans. 1974, p. 32)

"As mind arises out of organism and organism out of inorganic matter,"

(McKenna & McKenna, 1975, p. 126), the spiritual and the material are actually the dualistic polarities of a unity. In the Taoist concept, the invisible energies (*ch'i*), which are composed with positive (*yang*) and negative (*yin*) entities cluster to take shapes and be perceived in the phenomenal reality; they come to disintegrate and deform in the vicissitude of birth and death, then transmigrate to invisibility. Consequently, the spiritual and the material interdependently coexist, and relatively wax and wane with interchangeability, as if the law of conservation of matter works.

Pathos

The material world is concrete and definite. The spiritual world is insubstantial and infinite. The corporeal bodies exist with restraint and vulnerability, whereas the metaphysical beings subsist in omnipresence with almighty. As the boundless spiritual energies dwell in the bounded carapaces, the latent potentials (which are conceived extraneously by shamans as being given by spirits) can be tapped to overcome the physical limitations. For instance, the physical strengths have a maximum limit, while emotional powers can be explosive. Excessive rage, greed, hatred, and jealousy can turn a moral person into being ruthlessly destructive, whereas pure love and strong will can overreach an objective barrier to create miracles. Good and evil are two faces of a coin; either one does not exist alone. If two forces are developed into at their maximum, angel and devil are equally capable of manipulating spiritual, magical powers. So to speak, affective energies are so catalytic and contagious that they are often carried in the art forms of painting, music, singing, dancing, theater, poetry, etc., to invoke the impalpable existence. For example, "Nine Songs" (*Jiu-ge*, 九歌) records ritual lyrics disseminating in the state of Chu (楚) during the Period of Warring States (475-221 B.C.) in China. Concomitant with

dancing, pathos is conveyed in these imaginative poems, either through solo songs of male and female wizards, or through a chorus that touches earthly hearts and transmits to the hearing of ethereal beings. Responsively, as described in “*Li-Sau* (離騷),” (which is a long poem by Chyu Yuan [屈原], an exiled official of the state of Chu, to expressed his sorrow.) hundreds of celestial deities come down from the firmament; only the sentient mind can envision that myriad of mountain spirits and nymphs who bow to greet the aerial descendents in splendor.

Ritual Music and Drumbeat

In shamanistic practices and religious cults, music is considered essential. The following poem excerpted from the *Book of Songs* describes the various musical instruments performed by blind court musicians in an imperial rite in honor of ancestors during the early Chou Dynasty (around 11th century B.C.).

Blind men, blind men
In the courtyard of Chou.
We have set up the cross-board, the stand,
With the upright hooks, the standing plumes.
The little and big drums are hung for beating;
The tambourines and stone-chimes, the mallet-box and scraper.
All is ready, and they play.
Pan-pipes and flute are ready and begin.
Sweetly blend the tones,
Solemn the melody of their bird-music,
The ancestors are listening;

As our guests they have come,

To gaze long upon their victories. (Waley, 1954, p.218)

Sound is able to cause vibrations on the soul. For calling down deities, drum beating is one of the main elements for conjuring up a hypnotic atmosphere in the folk Taoist temple. In the documentary report, "Priests and Spirit Media in Peng-Hu," Hwang (1987) mentioned the application of drums and gongs during the initial stage of a spirit media's trance. Also, in *Chinese Spirit-Medium Cults in Singapore*, Elliott (1981) gave a description of the environmental effects on the spirit medium (*dang-ki*):

By the time *dang-ki* has completed his preparations and is sitting in his chair, ready for the trance, it is probable that the drums and gongs have started beating. No description can do justice to the effect of the noise when these instruments are efficiently operated in a confined space. Experience has proved that one becomes highly sensitive to it when exposed frequently and for prolonged periods. The effect on the *dang-ki* must be considerable because the drummers are often standing within a couple of feet of him while he is sitting with his head bowed in meditation. To this is added the monotonous background of the invocation chanted by other assistants. Further physical effects may be derived from the smoke of incense sticks: by the time the performance is due to begin, the whole interior of the temple is usually thick with smoke... (pp. 62-63)

Similarly, shamans depend on repetitious sound effects, which are mainly generated by drum, and embark upon pulsatile body motions to facilitate their rapturous acts. The drum is one of shaman's characteristic paraphernalia. This spiritual music instrument also bore special meaning to Hung. In a newspaper account, it was mentioned that: "Most of Hung Tung's pictures are

not given titles. Only a painting called 'Sywe Ren-Gwei Quells The East (薛仁貴東征)' drawn with chariot troops and warships is more representational."

("People from his community," 1976, March 11, p. 3) "Sywe Ren-Gwei Quells The East" is a theatrical play describing a legend from the Tang Dynasty, in which Sywe Ren-Gwei crossed the sea to conquer Chau-Syang (朝鮮) (which is the old name of Korea). Hung's friend, Wu, recalled his first meeting with Hung. It was the time after the Hung Tung exhibition. He walked into Hung's studio and saw this painting hanging on the wall. In this picture, a figure who was supposed to be Sywe Ren-Gwei was beating a battle drum. Wu noticed several arms were added on this figure's upper body realizing that Hung drew the sequent actions of beating a drum. Thus, he held that Hung's paintings have been mistaken for graffiti. In fact, Hung described the invisible, sounds. He believed that the highest hierarchy of art is to catch the unconscious, which Hung has arrived at. Therefore, Wu expressed his appreciation by telling Hung: "Your painting has seized Sywe Ren-Gwei's spirit" (personal communication, June 15 & 16, 2001). Hung at once knew that he met a person very congenial to him, and they henceforth became bosom friends. In addition, before the opening of the Hung Tung exhibition, Hung showed off one of his works—an illustrated shirt, in front of which appeared a person beating the drum, and explained that he wished to paint continuously as the drum player makes endless sound: "tung, tung, tung..." which phonetically related his first name, Tung.

Furthermore, the drum is known as "the shaman's steed." The surface of the shaman's drum is often drawn with a cosmic chart. For example, on a Lapp Shaman's drum (see Figure 47) there are three hierarchical universes which resemble the conceptual structure of Hung's multi-leveled macrocosm (see

Figures 29, 45 & 46). Via the sounds of drum beatings, shamans disembody to go on a journey to the celestial realm, the terrestrial utopia, or the infernal regions. As Campbell mentioned: "In many lands the soul has been pictured as a bird, and birds commonly are spiritual messengers" (1959, p. 258). Winged horses are the symbol of the shaman's soul or the shaman's steed carrying the rider to heaven. In the aforesaid Kandinsky's painting, "Lyrical" (mentioned in Chapter 11, see Figure 20), the rider flies in the air at high speed. The rear of the winged horse transforms into a bird tail indicating the process of shamanization. Congruously, Hung once likened himself to a bird declaring that: "I am now like a lonely wild goose dwelling in a humble hut in an obscure salt village. One day, when I grow fledged, I will flap my wings soaring in the sky" (Jang, 1973, April, p. 34). When Hung first came to Taipei for his art exhibition opening, he claimed that now he was fully fledged and ready to make his debut flight. Also, as the chivalrous warrior, he launched his inaugural drumming with undaunted spirit. By the beating rhythms, he metamorphosed into a bird ascending to paradise in exhilaration.

Talismanic Calligraphy Captures the Invisible

Religious rituals are the provenance of art. Similar to shamans as artists, ancient Chinese sorcerers were adept in singing and dancing in order to perform in sorcery cults. Archaic folk sorcery was later absorbed into folk Taoism. The sacred dancing, singing, music, and poetry fused and took shape in the form of talismanic calligraphy originally called *fu-lu* (符籙), but, most of the time, simply named *fu*. Literally, *Fu* indicates talismans. *Lu* denotes the Taoistic official dispatches of the black art practice, which include a roll of the celestial bureaucracy and the immortals from all quarters, and the invocation of spirit lictors as well. The content of a dispatch is written in sanctified ideograms, and

is additionally abstracted into a symbolic diagram. Therefore, each holy dispatch, *lu*, is associated with a certain talismanic calligraphic diagram, *fu*.⁴⁴

Moreover, talismanic calligraphy is considered as the derivative of *chi*. Taoist priests believed that talismans were magical pictographs mirroring the gathering of abstruse energies (*ch'i*) at the genesis of the universe. Echoing the mutable inclination of clouds and haze (which are visibly concurrent with fluid energies), talismans are written in seal-script, *Jwan-shu* (篆書) (see Figure 48). A talismanic diagram was usually composed of the written denominations of celestial deities and terrestrial spirits. The talismanic text records magic codes, and divine Scriptures as well. Taoist priests have to memorize various talismanic diagrams and incantations, and be able to perform the ritual dance called *bu-gang* meaning “pacing the guideline.” By reciting and drawing talismans, deities can be invoked to provide protection, and occult powers can be borrowed to exorcise evil spirits. Analogously, the ritual dancing means to arouse pure, righteous energies to expel impure, vicious forces. The methodical dancing paces map up a sidereal chart; each step is coordinate to the location of a star in its constellation, and concomitant with an incantation which is vocalized to conjure up the deity abided in the star. In a Taoist cult, Taoist priests chant, dance, and draw the secret talismans. In an inhalation, energy (*ch'i*) is brimming in the Taoist calligrapher's body congregating into a force running through the wielding wrist, the fingers permeating into the tip of brush. Calligraphic talismans correspond with the rhythmical movement in space and time recording the airy trace of energies, emanating an ineffable supernatural aura.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The information of this paragraph is referred to in Ren, 1998.

⁴⁵ The information of this paragraph is referred to in Ren, 1998; and Little & Eichman, 2000.

The analysis of Hung's Calligraphy Painting I

Due to his being illiterate, Hung's calligraphic paintings seem so phenomenal to onlookers. Hung might have referred to the antediluvian Chinese calligraphy (which was seen in his dream) and his spontaneous mental visions to invent his own hieroglyphics, as the way the original demiurge, Tsang Chieh,⁴⁶ used grass to develop the prototype characters. (see Lai, 1973, April) Hung's characters (see Figure 25) are so organic and alive, as if energies in flowing motion are captured in talismanic calligraphy (see Figure 49). While being intuitively gravitated into Hung's talisman-like calligraphy, beholders visually soak up the melodious tune of lines unconsciously reflecting the spatial and temporal pulsation in mind. Like the divine ritual dancing, each turn his brush made unexpectedly evokes an imaginative spirit and triggers the mysterious magic.

The calligraphy painting showed in Figure 50 is not one of the best, but it relates to Taoist talisman. From the signature “一點紅(洪)” (“a bit of red (Hung)”) on the low left corner, it can be inferred that this picture was made after the Hung Tung exhibition (probably, in or after 1978). Hung once explained that this name conveyed many meanings. For example, a human life or a new-born baby could be “a bit of red;” also, like Hung himself, he was his parents' only child, and his parents died early leaving him alone, so he is “a bit of red.” He also accounted for the images of this signature on another occasion that the character “一” portrayed as a head on a horizontal stroke indicated a father figure with a broad shoulder; the character “點” meant a mother image; the three small heads on the left of character “洪” signified three new-born babies. As a

⁴⁶ Tsang Chieh 倉頡 was a legendary figure who was credited with the invention of the written Chinese language.

whole, the signature is presented on the border where *yin* and *yang* make contact with each other giving birth to life.

In this painting (see Figure 50), two black characters dominate the middle of this painting surface, and the three smaller ones marshal in a row on the top. The three characters are reminiscent of the talisman (see Figure 40), the writings from Heavenly script (see Figure 51), and the inscription on the Taoist ritual sword (see Figure 52). The two bigger characters incite an association with the talismanic diagram as seen in Figure 53. This architectonic diagram in Figure 53, in fact, embodies the ethereal palace in the Taoist fairy land. It is fantasied that the pneumatic phoenix energies gather and curdle into agate pavilions and jade chambers, atmospherically, appearing as an oceanic mirage. In this Hung's painting, the bigger character at the bottom reminds me of a Chinese word, 鼎. Corresponding to the symmetrical framework of this character, decoratively, two vases (one has two human legs and another fish tail) with plants are constructed in similar structures. The upper character looks like a magnificent building dividing into various chambers. In this bewitching house, the door of each chamber is open to an amazing land. Starting with the feet of the vase on the right of this upper character, the viewpoint follows the rising stem up to the top crossing the roof with two plants to connect with the upside-down vegetation. This circulating line creates an illusion that this divine abode is surrounded by a blossoming garden. If this circulating line is observed carefully, it may remind one of Henslow's mental images in the transforming process mentioned in Chapter 11. First of all, visually tracing up from the two feet coming out of the bottom of the right vase to the vase belly, beholders can find a small face. The vase pluses the human figure, two clues together suggest a man carrying the vase. Afterward there is another face on the vase's neck,

and three tufts of hair growing out of both sides of the mouth of the vase. The cognitive path transits to a head wearing a hat. However, the close-up perspective is pulled away, since the next scene shows that a tree trunk grows in the middle, a giant flower comes out the right, and a tiny figure sits on a budding twig on the left. Climbing up the central stem, eyesight meets a bird (whose tail was composed by three feather-like leaves), a flower with a human face, another bird with dry-branch-like tail, another personified flower, and a string of faced florets germinating out of a blooming flower at the top. This mutant vegetation further links with a fish head on the right wing of the architecture. Looking down toward this fish to another, the eye is directed to the bottom chamber wherein lies concealed a deep ocean. Interestingly, with two kicking legs, the reversed vase on the left is seemingly plunging into water.

The analysis of Hung's Calligraphy Painting II

Comparing the aforesaid painting to the next one, I am going to attempt to illustrate why Hung's intuitive approach might be ranked above his "rationalized" method or "conscious" approach. When I first saw one of Hung's untitled paintings (see Figure 54) in a magazine, I was instinctively attracted to it. There was something so beautiful, harmonious, and unusual in this picture that intrigued me, but it was hard to explain why. Later, I took a more careful look at it, and with resistance from my intuition, I tried to analyze and describe in words the sophisticated feelings that I conceived in Hung's abstract visual language.

It can be seen that the entire background of this painting was covered by yellowish monochrome color. At a glance, this painting is simply constructed by an array of eight figures in which monochromatic and a multi-color forms alternate with each other four times. From right to left, four black and four

colored figures line up facing viewers. Each one of these figures has a human head and near-rectangular-shaped body. The black ones can be read as male, and the colored ones as female. The females have identical faces, but are varied in hairdo, hair decoration, and dress. Also, their dresses are composed by puzzle-like jigsaws, flower patterns, repeated geometric shapes, and creatures. The males' faces and hats are more unified. Compared to the female figures' curvilinear and feminine torso contours, the male bodies have more masculine and straight linear structures.

The whole oblong painting surface is reminiscent of piano keys. Browsing the sequence of eight figures is like touching backward and forward in a series of piano keys and conjuring up a rhythmical melody. In addition, the alternating arrangement of male and female reminds me of the Taoist concept of *yin* (female, negative, lunar energy) and *yang* (male, positive, solar energy), which activates the whole cosmos to rotate in a cycle and all creatures to breed in an endless succession. Furthermore, if a closer glimpse is taken, it seems that all figures possess common elements and resemblant framework. However, these elements like generative cells proliferate constantly into countless, varied units; then, these generatrix units further wed with each other turning into a more disparate and complicated labyrinth.

As the traditional Chinese painters used to write a verse or prose on the empty space of a painting, Hung drew two groups of his self-invented characters on the left section of this picture. In the upper left end, there are eight Chinese free-calligraphy-like characters arranged in two parallel rows. Next to the eight characters, five Chinese-like, unrecognizable characters were written perpendicularly followed by three English-like letters (TEL).

In the lower left area, the vertically-oriented line of characters on the right is Hung's nickname 洪朱豆 (Hung Ju-Dou) followed by a drawn imitation of a round-shaped seal print. Unlike most of his undated works, the middle vertical row indicates "Republic year 63," namely, 1974 in terms of the Western calendar. The year, 1974, is very likely the work's creation date, because this picture resembles Hung's work done prior to 1976. The left line is the name 洪通 (Hung Tung) and also tailed by a drawn imitation of square-shape seal print. Placed above this lower left area, the symmetrical configuration of the character 甲 aesthetically coordinates with the proportionally balanced arrangement of the three lines below. In a article by You (1981, August 29, p. 8), Hung explained that the character "甲" presents "甲子" (Jya-Dz). Chinese use the Ten Celestial Stems and the Twelve Terrestrial Branches to form a cycle of sixty; therefore, 甲子 (Jya-Dz) means 60 years. However, it is unknown if Hung referred to 60s of the Republic year; but, the placement of this character apparently reveals Hung's great aesthetic intuition. It is kind of bizarre, yet also humorous that Hung absorbed traditions in format, but turned out to be so eccentric in content. As usual, the signature of 洪通 and 洪朱豆 are personalized into graphic icons. The character of 洪 (Hung) on the right was transformed into Siamese twins standing on a skate-board-like scaffold. Another 洪 (Hung) on the top of the left line has the similar structure as the aforesaid one, but the gesture of the later twins appears to be more frisky. The character, 通 (Tung), is like a person on a boat with a bird figure on its bow. Although these writings seem not totally comprehensible to observers, the eight free-calligraphy-like characters on the upper left seemingly echo with the eight

main figures. Viewed as a whole, the composition of this picture appears to be simple, perspicuous, and systematic; however, the similarities in general have nuances in details. In orderly repetitions, trivial irregularities scatter.

In front of this painting, I sense music coming out of it. In order to further examine my intuitive feelings, two art works can be used as examples. My first assumption about the linoleum print in Figure 55 was that it must have been done by a young child (probably below 8 years old), due to its naive quality. But I was surprised to find out that the author was a 6th grader. After realizing that this work was derived from this young artist's joyful experiences of a series of spontaneous dancing classes (Cole, 1966), I no longer had doubts. The curvilinear, pliable arms and the twisted bodies seemingly imply that the dancers have unified with music, dancing with their souls. In particular, the dancers' feet are transmogrified into fish tails. These dancers are gently moving about, as fishes swim freely in water. The streamlined stripes on the dancers' dresses reinforced the feeling of current-like movement. Also, the triangles and rectangles on the dancers' clothes generate a sense of repetitious rhythms. Especially, the tip of the triangular patterns on the dancer's lower body point to both upward and downward directions seeming to indicate his up-down motions. Maybe, this is why his body is more exaggeratedly tangled than the others.

In another example, the sculpture, *The Dancer*, (see Figure 56) was done by a Modern artist, Julio Gonzalez (1876-1942). Gonzalez's dancer was abstracted into a few simple lines. Her blowing hair, raised leg, climbing arms, and slightly bent torso impressively illustrate her airy prance. Although different visual languages and media are applied in the art of a 6th grader and an abstract sculptor, the quintessence of dancing is vividly conveyed in both.

If a correlation is made, the child's picture of dancers is congruent with Hung's eight figures, and the sculpture dancer with Hung's eight calligraphic characters on the left. In Hung's painting, the feet of the first female from the right evolves into two fishes, which reminds one of the fish tails in the aforesaid child's picture. Her body is wrung toward the right as her hip projects out. Like the blowing hair of Gonzalez's dancer, the pendant and feathers on her hair seemingly sway with her body movement. She dances more widely than the others. The second one twists her body slightly. The third one's movement increases, and her body is hung with more fishes than the rest of the figures. These three females differ in degrees of their body movement, but resemble each other in having both birds and fishes on their forms; these fishes and the fin-like attachments may imply free and fluid movements in the three females as the same in the child's dancers. The birds added on some association with sound effects. Besides, birds flying in the sky are always associated with fishes swimming in the water. At last, the fourth female's torso is near to be inert, whereas her tail is in motion. From right to left, a series of dancing behaviors in action are recorded.

The four male figures in Hung's painting resemble robots exposing their interior electric circuit boards or mechanical assemblages. This association further led me to Hung's old radio. In "Visiting Hung Tung in A Light Wind and Downpour," Yang (1974, p. 12) mentioned that there was a radio which had no front and back covers on Hung's painting table in his small studio. Apparently, Hung used to listen to the radio while he was working. Therefore, these male figures are like the uncovered radio showing off their inner mechanism when making sounds and music.

In addition, as Rhoda Kellogg said: “As each child proceeds in self-taught art, he gradually accumulates a visually logical system of line formations. The system is logical in the sense that one sort of line formation leads to another” (1969, p. 51). We can see that Hung was toying with line formations in these four singular-colored figures. The four females are like mechanical dancing dolls, and the males, like some type of music boxes or automatic music players. While music scores rise among the male forms, their inner strings vibrate, as well as the attached widgets (such as fin-like modules, flowers, fishes, bird wings and heads, etc.) and their little feet tap and shift with the beats. Synchronously, the female bodies, as well as their jewels and accessories, shake with tempo. When the eight figures come alive, the physical motions and the ethereal melodies seemingly function in a timeless revolution. This thus recalls one of Matisse’s paintings, “Music” (study) (see Figure 57). In this picture, males and females dance in a circle, as day and night rotate in cycle.

I showed the print of this painting (see Figure 54) to my two nieces, Grace and Sherry, who were a high school and a middle school student at the time. Their first reaction was—“what a strange painting.” As the young generation in Taiwan, they never heard of the name of Hung Tung, nor had seen his works before. Seeing his work for the first time, Sherry even laughed at this funny picture. Grace supposed it was a child’s painting or scribble. If this painting was juxtaposed with other artists’ works in a gallery, Grace said, she would probably overlook it or not want to pay any attention to it. Nevertheless, once they were guided to look more carefully, associations and imaginations started to well up inexhaustibly. Rich in figurative imagery, there were many things hidden, or things were growing endlessly in this picture. Sherry seemed

to receive the message of fertility from the figures. I am not sure if it is because that the bottom of the second male and of the fourth female cues in a sense of productivity or sexuality, so that her associations involved spermatozoa or tadpoles, and the second male figure with relatively little feet made her draw an image of giving birth—a baby coming out of the body. As a matter of fact, a Taoist concept holds that there are female elements in a male entity, and vice versa. Hermaphroditism indicates the nascence of infinite creation. Accordingly, vitality, proliferation, and procreation are strongly conceived in this painting.

Grace felt something ancient and religious in the painting. Therefore, the exotic Hindu gods came to her mind, due to these icons' bright colors and peculiar postures—Buddha looks more solemn, she explained. Also, these eight figures seemed so mysterious that she held that they were some sort of symbols conveying unexplainable meanings. In consequence of this connection, she thought about the earliest written language in China, oracle bone inscriptions (which were used to communicate with the spirits for divination). However, Hung's writings were like images, and the eight figures were akin to calligraphy. Grace's inference quite surprised me, since for Hung these two were reversible. For example, the tiny human figures were often arrayed on the margin of a painting surface, or on the border of a division in a painting by Hung (see Figures 28, 29, 58 & 59). Those line-constructed figures with countless variations can be categorized as both images and calligraphy, and are favored by art appreciators. Also, as Grace perceived, Hung's art was inseparable from religion in antiquity.

The talisman in Figure 60 are composed of twelve icons, which represent twelve gods of pestilence. Also, take a look at the talismans in the chart (see Figure 61 & 62). Comparing Hung's eight figures with these

talismans, the affiliations can be easily traced. In addition, many of Hung's effigy paintings (see Figures 28, 59, 63 & 64) can be related to the group portrait of deities (see Figures 65, 66 & 67), which are usually hung around the altar of the Taoist ritual. However, Hung's talisman-like figures are not the simulation of gods' outer appearances, but the envisage of inner spirits.

Both Western and Taoist alchemists believed in the exchangeability between the material and the spiritual. Through the outer alchemy experiment, *wai-dan* (外丹), and the inner alchemy practice *nei-dan* (内丹), Taoist practitioners intended to transform their physical substances into immortality, and to transcend the ephemeral reality to reach spiritual eternity. Elixir is the means and the end to perpetuity. The outer alchemy experiment involves the refinement and transmutation of chemical elements for the essence, namely, elixir. By means of Taoist yoga, the inner alchemy practitioners meditate to envision the inner landscape of their bodies, in order to attune the circulation of the internal *yin* (female) and *yang* (male) energies to gain spiritual purification and immortal rebirth. The conjugality of male and female (in the furnace) can be found in the illustrations of the Western and the Taoist alchemy (see Figures 68 & 69).⁴⁷

Furthermore, the regulation of inner energies in Taoist meditation practice also applies to calligraphic writings. Hence, the physiological terms, such as bone, flesh, blood, vein, tendon, and so on, are often used in Chinese calligraphy theories.⁴⁸ The talismans in the Figure 60 resembling the electric circuit boards are, indeed, the visualizations of the inner landscape.

They are also reminiscent of shaman's skeletonization. Shamans' customs are often drawn with the patterns of skeletons (see figure 70). The x-ray

⁴⁷ The information about Taoist alchemy is referred to in Little & Eichman, 2000.

⁴⁸ This subject can be referred to in Hay, 1983, pp. 74-102.

style reflects the shaman's experience of being dead and dismembered, then being reassembled to be reborn. In the shamanistic art of many cultures, the skeletons are further abstracted into scaffold-like schemata (see Figure 71). Conclusively, in Hung's talisman-like painting (figure 54), he seized the invisible and conveyed the indescribable.

CHAPTER 14

UNIVERSALITY AND MYTH

As the inner journey advances into the deepest level, the collective unconscious, in contact with the forgotten, primitive heart of all mankind, the psychic voyagers encounter archetypal images. Projecting inner animals, the archetypal images appear in zoomorphic or anthropomorphic forms in art. From time immemorial, the collective archetypes evolved into clan totem, myth, and cosmology presenting in various cultural contexts. In this chapter, through the analysis of Hung's paintings, the images of psychic archetype and biological prototype, myths, and cosmogony will be revealed.

Collective Unconscious

The semblance found in folk tales, ancient myths, and allegories from different races, cultures, or countries were explained by Jung. In Jung's theory, the stratification of the unconscious is classified into two levels; from the deep to the ostensible stratum, lies the "collective unconscious" and the "personal unconscious." The personal layer comprises individual experiences (such as idiosyncrasy, memory, as well as cultural background, etc.). However, the collective unconscious contains what is beyond personal configuration, and suggests that some mutual psychological elements are biologically installed in the human brain, as Jung put it: "It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (Jung, 1959, p. 4). So to say, the innermost beings are universal, and thus free from individual, temporal, geographical, cultural, and national conditions. Navigating deeply into the terra incognita of the

unconscious, the heterogeneous individual and cultural differences converge, while diverse sensory receptors intermerge into unity, and the cognitive processing leads to abstraction.

Archetypal Images—Animals

In addition, perceived as outwardly taking a journey to another world, it is, in fact, that in the oblivious stream of psyche, the shaman introspectively traces back to the origin of the self encountering a flow of primeval images, which have been built in since time immemorial. Since the shaman's being called by the spirits is happening internally (although often conceived as an outer event), so Lommel explained:

The spirits are inner images, ideas of a personal or collective kind that have taken on form, images from the mythology of the tribe, of the group, very old traditional ideas, the whole complex of beliefs belonging to the so-called "animal level." (1967, p. 10)

In the deepest region, or the primary level of the collective unconscious, the genetic instincts are as sharp as the animal. Also, primitive hunting cultures are indissociable from the animal. Primordial hunters kill animals for food and clothing. To cease the sense of guilt, the leader of a hunting community, the shaman, imagines the existence of "souls" which can detach from corporal bodies and live eternally. With this logic, the hunters believe that they only slay the shells of the animals' souls. In the shamanistic rituals, with the whole tribal members' assistance to create the phantasmic ambiance, the mentally ill shamans engage in trances again and again to set off a journey to the antediluvian era wrestling with their inner animals, namely, the archaic images.

To share and to communicate their dream-like inner dramas with the actively involved audiences, shamans use symbolic expression, stage props,

costumes, and masks in their theatrical performances. As animals' souls come in and out of their physical bodies, shamans shift and play as intermediaries between the material and the spiritual world. They learn to overcome their inner conflicts by turning the negative, destructive forces into positive, constructive, creative powers, while they endeavor to recapture the killed animals' souls or their inner images by portraying them in the intermediate region. Then they turn them into perpetual guardians. For example, venomous scorpions have taken countless lives in the Huichol Indians' homeland in Mexico; however, in Huichol art, the scorpion spirits are portrayed in the x-ray style as the protectors against evil forces and ominous fortune. Hence, Lommel asserted: "Shamanism is a first attempt to subdivide the environment into matter and spirit and achieve a spiritual efficacy. Painted animals are therefore 'spirit animals' and not copies of real animals" (1967, p. 70). Consequently, through artistic recreation, the inner spirits revive to gain immortality; by means of the ritual of catharsis, the sick man is cured and acquires sovereignty in two kingdoms, and the participant group is psychologically purified to survive in the terrestrial life. Accordingly, Lommel stated: "The development of the shaman from an initial illness to the overcoming of this illness is also seen in the form of animal entities which first persecute and then aid him." (1967, p. 70)

Archetypes Evolve into Clan Totem, Myth, and Cosmology

Humans are so firmly bound up with animals that they are thought to have the same ancestors. Furthermore, the fighting shaman is often represented in zoomorphic form, and the animal in anthropoid shape. Also, anthropomorphic hybrids (such as garuda, sphinx, satyr, harpy, siren, centaur, mermaid, and so on) are usually found in mythology, religion, and primitive art. Jung holds that the "archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is

altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its color from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear.” (1959, p. 5) So to speak, through psychological regression, the shaman retrieves the archaic images, then molds them artistically with individual expression and cultural interpretation. Also, Jung alleges:

Primitive tribal lore is concerned with archetypes that have been modified in a special way. They are no longer contents of the unconscious, but have already been changed into conscious formulae taught according to tradition, generally in the form of esoteric teaching (Jung, 1959, p. 5).

The collective imaginings of the entire tribe are rendered into clan totem, myth, and cosmology. In different cultural contexts, traditional structures, and time periods, the archetypes are coated with variegated coloration, and evolve into progressive versions with nebulous relics of ancient memories.

Through Mysterious Cults, Hung Reveals the Collective Unconscious

In 1968, the monumental *jyang-jyau* ceremony gathered massive spiritual energies from the mortals and the immortals. In this joint sublimation ritual, Hung might have been called to access the substratum of the collective unconscious in the ecstatic state. According to hearsay, Hung could only paint in trance. Hung’s creative process, indeed, was a shamanistic cult. Also, his private rites took place in his studio and were so mysterious that Hung was always reluctant to share his art treasure and creative secrets with others. Before his first exhibition, Hung often referred to his artistic creation as some kind of occult practice. Actually, for his devotion to painting, Hung committed himself to some occultist taboos. For example, due to his observance of asceticism, Hung and his wife had to sleep in separate rooms. In addition, Hung

once told the provincialist writer, Yang, that his paintings had to be kept away from “unclean” persons. In Taiwanese customs, women in menstruation, or people wearing mourning clothes and such are considered as unclean persons and prohibited to go near folk Taoist ceremonies. Hung said: “One time, when I was working on a picture, it was seen by an unclean person. Afterward I couldn’t paint it any more; even the ink could not be applied on the painting surface” (Yang, 1974, September 29 & 30, p. 12). Probably, the outside world dismissed such testimonies as superstitious or mad talk, so later, this kind of declaration has hardly been mentioned in literature on Hung (and Hung endeavored to act more “intellectually”), but has still circulated in Hung’s hometown.

In Hung’s days, distant from modern materialism and industrial pollution, Nan-Kun-Shen was still a geographically isolated village, wherein preternatural customs and fabulous folklore were inveterately cultivated. The whole community’s receptivity to spiritual beings were as susceptible as the primitive tribal men. Therefore, Plato’s inspiration from the Muses and Hung’s art creation cults should not be too far away from the origin of art. It can be observed that, in Mexico, when the Huichol Indian shamans undertake the yarn painting, they sing, dance, play music, and tell myths to conjure up deities for inspiration (see Berrin, ed. 1978). Perhaps, modern people have been amnesiac to the provenance and the animal instinct, since the rationalists shut down the gateway to the primeval mind. Like the spirit medium or the shaman, Hung might, in his dream, have taken a journey to the prehistoric time period seeing the ancient calligraphy in China, or Hung might have psychologically regressed into the substratum of the collective unconscious in a trance. Then he acted out the archetypal imagery on his painting surfaces, as the hoary demiurge

invented the written symbols. The collector of Hung's art, Lyau Jr-Syang, (personal communication, June 12, 2001) held that some of Hung's images (for example, the patterns at the bottom area of Figure 72 & 74, and on the top of Figure 73) can be used as totems of Taiwan.

Bird and Fish

Freud regarded myths as "distorted vestiges of the wishful fantasies of whole nations, the secular dreams of youthful humanity" (Freud, 1908/1996, p. 53). In addition to the imagery of the nation, Hung's paintings also convey peoples' archaic fables. Motifs of birds and fish are commonly seen in primitive and ancient art, so are they in Hung's pictures. A fish is thought to carry the shaman to the underworld, the sea, which also represents the human unconscious. A bird is widely believed to carry the shaman to heaven, and is often portrayed as the symbol of the spirit or deity. Moreover, the bird plays a significant role in the mythology of many cultures. For instance, in China, the progenitor and the totem of the Shang (the Shang Dynasty, c. 1600—1050 B.C.) was a dark bird. As the Book of Songs describes that "Heaven bade the dark bird, To come down and bear the Shang" (Waley, 1954, p. 275), one of the emperor's wives, Jyan Di (簡狄) swallowed a bird egg in the spring ritual of offering sacrifices to Heaven, then gave birth to the ancestor of the Shang, chi (契). This sacred bloodline thus commenced on earth with the crossbreeding of human and god. Additionally, the "Book of Mountains and Seas (山海經)" dealing with geography can be seen as an ancient Chinese encyclopedia or sorcery book, which describes many imaginative paradises, such as the country of the feathered, the three-headed, the winged and beaked, the void-chested, or the long-armed people, and so on. One of Hung's paintings (see Figure 75) seems to delineate a cabalistic utopia of the bird's offspring. In the ancient

Egyptian myths, there were Thoth, the ibisheaded god, and the god Horus in the form of the hawk or falcon.⁴⁹

Snake

In addition to birds and fishes, snakes are another frequently seen animal in Hung's works. Many have questioned why dragons never appear in Hung's paintings, since dragons are the symbol of the Chinese, and Chinese people call themselves the descendants of dragons. Furthermore, dragons are a very common theme in Chinese or Taiwanese folk art. The rationale may be that dragons are imaginative chimera-like creatures evolved from snakes. For Huichol Indians, snakes play as an intermediate between the world of the mortals and immortals, and a mentor to healer shamans. In one of Hung's paintings (see the upper left side of the left painting in Figure 76), as usual, Hung turned his name, 洪通 (Hung Tung), into an icon. The word 通 (Tung) on the upper left corner of the left scroll was transformed into a hatted Taoist priest figure with a duster on his back, and a bird, namely, a divine messenger behind him. The Taoist duster (which is attached with animal hair at one end) functions like the shaman's wand (which is often added with feathers). As the prototype of a dragon, a serpent coiling the pivot of the Taoist priest (namely, the shaman Hung himself) recalls the dragon pattern decorated on the imperial robe. His wand metamorphoses into a snake standing for his magical power in both the spiritual and the earthly realm.

Anthropomorphic Hybrid

Moreover, the rulers of China at the dawn of human civilization also appeared in the form of demigods. For example, Fu Syi (伏羲), (who initiated farming, fishing and animal husbandry) possessed a human head and serpent

⁴⁹ The information of the paragraph about Chinese myths is referred to in Wang & Wu, 1988.

body. Also, Nyu Wa (女媧), the sister and successor of Fu Hsi, who refined the five-color stones to patch the hole of the firmament saving human races from purgatory was also half-human and half-serpent. Shen Neng (神農), another king in antiquity, who introduced agriculture and herbal medicine had a bull head and human body. The anthropomorphic hybrids in Egyptian myths include Anubis, a god of the dead in the shape of a dog or jackal, and Amun-Ra, the sun god, who is usually portrayed as a falcon, or a ram-headed figure in the underworld, and so on. There are animals inside mankind, or humanities in beasts. In the primitive rituals, the shamans are transformed into animals by wearing zoomorphic masks or face paintings. The animal strengths and qualities help the shamans to ward off the evil forces in the journey to another world. In a sense, the masks confine the visual field of the shamans through the eye holes, and detach the artist shamans from the physical world expecting the spirits' coming down to possess them. Inwardly, the introspective creators look into their own souls, and outwardly, they reveal to the audiences their Janus-faced natures, as the anthropomorphous gods do.

The Analysis of One of Hung's Paintings—Psychic Archetype Images, Myths, and Cosmogony

This kind of archetypal chimera image is everywhere in Hung's pictures. Some of his paintings seemingly tell the mysterious, imaginative tales, and divulge the obscure, remote utopias. The painting shown in Figure 77 is full of folk color, religious tone, and festival aura. The erect rectangular painting surface is mainly divided into three parts—the sky, the sea, and the land. I will analyze these three sections (from top to bottom) in order.

In addition, the art critic, Jyang Syun stated: "Due to my academic training, I customarily appreciate art in the light of Western art history or Chinese

literati school tradition, but I can not judge Hung Tung's paintings from either one of these two perspectives..." (Tyan, 1976, April, p. 115) As mentioned in Chapter 10, educated persons are reluctant to break away from learned principles and indoctrinated rules, and tend to deny their intuitive feelings. I was surprised to find that my nieces, Grace and Sherry, who previously did not know Hung and his art, seemed to intuit something (which adults were unable to see) in Hung's art (mentioned in Chapter 13). Therefore, I went on to ask their thoughts on this painting. Because Grace's response to this painting really amazed me, in addition to my own analysis, I will largely cite Grace's interpretations.

The Sky (The Upper Section)

A giant ship exposing its interior scene dominates in the middle. Three long ladders expand from the deck upwards to a corridor which is composed of a row of arches. At the left end of the corridor, a stairway passing through various mini terrain leads to the celestial city. My niece, Grace, empathizes that these various landscapes present the ladder climbers' being distracted by the beautiful sideshows oblivious of their destiny. In the sky, a small figure wearing a hat and riding on a bird is probably a divine messenger, who sends down the Taoistic script or god's will from heaven. The large female figure flying into the ethereal region from the upper corner reminds Grace of the Nine-Heaven Dark Goddess (九天玄女). The Nine-Heaven Dark Goddess is derived from the first forebear of the Shang, the god-sent dark bird. This dark bird has later appeared in the myth of the crucial warfare between the Yellow Emperor and Chi You (黃帝大戰蚩尤) as a half-bird and half-human goddess. After nine battles, the goddess descends in a fog from paradise, and imparts tactics to the just emperor. He is thus able to defeat the tyrannical rebel, Chi You, and to

consolidate the country starting the long splendid history of China. The Nine-Heaven Dark Goddess, hence, has been arrayed among the Taoistic pantheon, and became a supervisor keeping the heavenly books and the holy amulets in the celestial court, and an arbiter who assists the mortal heroes by revealing secret strategies to them during the times of earthly upheavals.⁵⁰ In Hung's painting, the female figure wears two long strips of green macramé, which outstretch from her waist like two flapping wings. Her tail evolves into a fish or a bird head and contains an emerald twig in its mouth. Many myths have associated the origin of agriculture with birds who bring grains to the land. Implicitly, this angel-like female is turned into to a herald of spring.

Grace has a very strong imagination and responses to Hung's visual language intensely. She feels that the upper portion of this painting is in motion. The ship first reminds her of some explorer's boat in the fairy tales. However, after a deep thought, it seems to represent the secular world to her, because in the mutable ocean, the crescent-shaped ship rises and falls, as human life marked by vicissitudes. Moreover, she holds that people in the square space on the top of the mast are like the magistrates who uphold laws to maintain justice and order in human society. Probably, the square and the two ropes symmetrically draping from the top of the mast to the deck (forming a triangle) bring forth a sense of balance and righteousness, so she has this connection. Under the Nine-Heaven Dark Goddess, a half-shown object floating out of the painting recalls the Palm Leaf Fan (芭蕉扇) owned by the Iron Fan Princess (鐵扇公主) in the fiction, *Journey to The West* (西遊記). Grace visualizes that a fanning action incites the Uncle Wind (who appears as a diaphanous face in the sky next to the left ladder) to set the ship forward. I think that the big face can

⁵⁰ The information about the Ninth-Heaven Dark Goddess is referred to in Ching, et al. 2000; Ma, 2000; and Wang & Wu, 1988.

also be interpreted as a cloud which veils the secret path to Heaven. As for the flying machine near the right ladder, Grace pictures that it was a group of sun, moon, constellations, which rotate around the earth. The wheel-like item at the bottom of this flying object is the Polaris guiding the nocturnal sailors. In addition, in her explanation, the bird rider (on the top of this painting) stretching his arms and holding two plants in his both hands, is like a traffic police making signs.

My other niece, Sherry, links the giant ship with Noah's Ark. In the article of "Goodbye Hung Tung," Han also compares the ship in another painting (see Figure 78) to Noah's Ark. The motif of the navigating vessel frequently appears in Hung's paintings (see Figures 29 & 79), and is reminiscent of Kandinsky's oared boats advancing to the terra incognita. In addition, this subject is usually concomitant with sailing charts and atlas. For example, the dim blue background color of the Figure 29 led me to conclude that this is a picture of a journey to the underworld. This painting is compartmentalized into five divisions. Below the two upper sections of the old stele inscriptions, the first painting area seems to be a continental map, since at the central bottom, Hung wrote down China and America on the both sides of the pivotal line, and these two countries are surrounded by the Chinese character "山" (mountains). In addition, there are a number of birds in the sky. A few circles and a crescent moon connected by lines are very possibly in debt to the astronomical charts, which are often engraved in the sepulchers (see figure 80), or integrated in the Taoist talismans (see Figure 81). These kinds of plots of the heavenly bodies can be found in some of Hung's paintings (see the sky in Figure 10, and the upper left corner of the top section in Figure 58, and in the two middle sections of Figure 75). In the second painting area, a white sun is the core of this

universe. Under the vault of heaven, a rainbow crosses several bodies of waters, wherein numerous three-masted ships voyage. The lowest painting area is like a bird-eye map of the underworld centered by a white crescent moon. So to say, many of Hung's paintings are like the logs of his inner journey, or the atlas of his inner landscape. This kind of cosmic map also appears in shamanistic art (see Figures 82 & 83).

The Sea (The Middle Section)

The association with Noah's Ark can be further related to cosmogony. There are countless myths of the deluge mentioned in diverse cultures. In reexamining Hung's painting, under the ship, a grotesque vulture or an anteater-like creature bears an island on its back. Grace recalled a fairy tale about the inception of the Taiwan Island called "Five Turtles Carry Five Islands." In this story, multitudinous immortals live in five islands. However, while the storm agitates the sea, the islands get thrown up and down, and the dwellers suffer. Therefore, the celestial god solves the problem by sending five giant turtles to carry the islands. However, the turtles get into trouble, when the goliath fishes them with bait. Eventually, the goliath gets punished and the islanders regain peace. It is said that one of the five islands is Taiwan.

In my assumption, this a-bird-carrying-an-island image has something to do with the nascence of Hung's hometown, Nan-Kun-Shen. As mentioned in Chapter 2, originally, Nan-Kun-Shen was in part of a chain of shoals off shore. On the undulated surface, an illusion that the shoals were moving in the sea was created, and the early Taiwanese thus fantasized a drifting shoal as a swimming behemoth fish, called Kun. Kun (which is spelled as "Khwan" in the quoted paragraph below) is derived from *Chuang Tzu*. At the beginning of the Book I, "Enjoyment in Untroubled Ease," it is described as follows:

In the Northern Ocean there is a fish, the name of which is Khwan,—I do not know how many li (哩)(Chinese mile) in size. It changes into a bird with the name of Phang (鵬), the back of which is (also)—I do not know how many li in extent. When this bird rouses itself and flies, its wings are like clouds all round the sky. When the sea is moved (so as to bear it along), it prepares to remove to the Southern Ocean. The Southern Ocean is the Pool of Heaven. (Legge, 1959, p. 212)

The kraken transforms into a roc flying freely in the sky, since fish and bird are interchangeable. In Hung's painting, there are a temple-like buildings and an elegant, long-necked bird standing at the top of a triangle on the back of the kraken or roc. The figure of the bird on a multi-linean triangle reminds me a similar image illustrated in the creation myths of ancient Egypt (see Figure 84). The arched hill drawn with multiple curved lines is known as a "primeval mound." At the genesis, water is full of the cosmos. A self-born god called Atum standing on the primeval mound rises out of the boundless ocean. The scene of the first pile of land appearing after the deluge must have deeply impressed on the collective human mind, as it is explained below:

This primeval mound was important to all the cosmogonies and it has been suggested that it was an image that came naturally to people who were used to seeing such fertile mounds or islands reappearing after the obliterating flood-waters of the Nile had withdrawn, and that such a mound was possibly the inspiration for the building of the first pyramids. (Barnett, 1996, p. 51)

In Hung's painting, next to the bird on the pyramid, there is magnificent architecture, inside of which are two oval objects on the racks symmetrically displayed in the main hall and on the roof of which a blue-faced god grows out

of the plant. Interestingly, in the Egyptian myths, a divine rock named the Benben stone, which stands for the primeval mound is left after the ebb of the flood receiving the first beam of sun light at the dawn of rebirth. It is thus worshipped as a fetish in the earliest sun-god temple. In addition, in another version of creation myth, a lotus rises from the flood, then the sun-god, Atum, was born in the flower. Coincidentally, the Egyptian myths seem to parallel Hung's images. The two oval objects could be the sacred stones idolized in the shrines of the temple. The blue face on the roof might be the emblem of the floral baby, the sun-god.

The Land (The Bottom Section)

At the bottom of this painting, Grace sees the arched gate at the right corner as the entrance toward a secret garden or a timeless, perpetual arcadia. The human heads coming out of the blossoming land remind me the earth gods. However, Grace's imaginative rhetoric is far more figurative than mine. She brings up the world creator, Pan Gu (盤古). (see Wang & Wu, eds. 1988). According to this ancient Chinese cosmogony, in the protohuman time the universe was like an egg contained turbidity. Pan Gu was born in the void. For eighteen thousand years, the chaotic universe started to clarify, while the ethereal yang elements rose to form the sky, and the impure yin elements precipitated to shape the earth. Pan Gu stood between the firmament and the terra firma to separate them apart. When he grew ten feet longer every day, the sky was heightened and the earth thickened in the same amount. Therefore, after another eighteen thousand years, the sky was high, the earth deep, and Pan Gu tall. When this titan died, his eyes transferred into sun and moon, four limbs into the apexes of the four directions, five viscera (namely, the heart, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, and the stomach) into the Five Sacred Mountains

(including the Eastern, the Southern, the Western, the Northern, and the Central Mountain in China), as well as veins and arteries into the rivers. Furthermore, his tendons made up the terrain; his muscles turned into the field soil; his skin and hair became plants and woods; the fleas parasitic on his body were transformed into human beings. The imagination of the goliath's corpse transmuting into the topographical components seems concurrent with Taoist meditators envisioning the inner landscape. Also, Buddhists conceptualize that a grain of sand contains a universe. If one's perspective is not confined by scope, then there are no distinctions or biases in viewing between a macrocosm and a microcosm. Or if one is not deluded by the physical appearance, then constant principles can be commonly seen among a galaxy, a planet, a biological body, and an atom. With flexibility and imagination in mind, one is able to think through the exchangeability of substances, and to travel across any distance, any space in the universe in a second. It thus can be asserted that Hung's personified land and Pan Gu's metamorphosis, indeed, reflect the inexhaustible vitality and fertility of the earth.

Moreover, in this Hung painting, the blue and yellow colored face growing out of the land (next to the blooming plant above the arched gate) has a spire on top of his head. This spire looks like a satellite to Sherry. Grace associates it with a communication tower, or the Thunder Peck Pagoda (雷峰塔). The Thunder Peck Pagoda became well-known in China due to the White Snake Legend, which tells a romance between a scholar and a white snake goblin. In this story, to punish the female snake for her cross-species marriage, a Buddhist monk quelled and imprisoned her beneath the Thunder Peck Pagoda for eighteen years. Grace's association is probably because this image conjures up the impression of a person being held under a tower. I think that

very likely this image suggests a corresponding device functioning as the lantern poles for invoking the deities and ghosts (mentioned in Chapter 2). The lantern poles are usually paired (for example two poles for calling the deities in Heaven, and two poles for the ghosts in Hades) to erect in front of a temple during the *jyang-jyau* ceremony (see Figure 85). Also, the bamboo poles are hung with a “Seven-Star Lamp (七星燈)” (see Figure 86) or long streamers (See Figure 87). This kind of lantern pole can be found in one of Hung’s paintings, which supposedly describes the *jyang-jyau* ceremony of 1968 in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu (see the left bottom of Figure 88). Another head leaning horizontally on the right of the aforesaid face was topped with three short sticks. These protuberances resemble the emanative rays on the shaman’s head (see Figure 89), and the rods on the top of the Figure 90, which is the drawing of a spirit whose skeleton is abstracted into geometric structure. Lommel called these small rods “antennae,” and assumed that they are the apparatuses for communicating with supernatural beings. On the left of this face, there are nine faces drawn on a bird’s body. This image somehow reminds me of the “Water Lantern Raft (水燈筏)” (see Figure 91), which is constituted of a large number of lamps setting up on a raft. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this kind of water lantern raft and individual lamps are sent out in the ocean to guide the underworld ghosts.

Biological Prototype Images

In this painting, Hung revealed his inner psyche to the extent that the innermost level of the collective unconscious is reached. In addition to the psychic archetype, Hung’s regression also brought out the images of the biological prototype. Hung’s images frequently remind viewers of protoplast or generative cells, which arbitrarily synthesize, split, or multiply ceaselessly. They

are akin to the Surrealist's amorphous shapes and Kandinsky's biological images in the Paris period (1934-1944). Barnett (1985) pointed out Kandinsky's applying the forms of embryo, amoeba, larva, and so on to his painting (see Figures 92 & 93). Congruously, Hung's images provoke the association with zoosperms, tadpoles, or plankton (see Figures 94, 95 & 96). Through his esoteric phallism cult, Hung painted with his male reproductive organ (see the story mentioned in Chapter 15). The black-white ink works (shown in Figures 97, 98, 99 & 100) seemingly convey some sort of cabalistic procreative potency, or imply the mysterious nascence of anima. Interestingly, the illustration showing the vertebrate embryos' developing processes by stages (see Figure 101) seems to suggest that in ontogeny, human, fish, and some other vertebrate creatures originally look alike, and are even genderless. The collector of Hung's art, Jou Yu (Chyou, 1991), held that in Hung's cosmology, all living beings originate from the same source, so that chimera-like, anthropomorphous, and zoophytic creatures existed in his amazing world. Jou held that one of Hung's black-white paintings (see Figure 102) implied a life spawning in a whirlpool of the cosmos, or an embryo being fertilized in the uterus (see Chyou, 1991). It is also applicable that this picture visualized the myth of the first pregnancy in the murky, nebulous universe, wherein the world creator, Pan Gu was conceived. A small version of this whirlpool also appears in the Figure 103. In conclusion, both the biological abstraction and psychological regression lead to universality. Hence, Hung's paintings may have manifested cosmogony, anthropogeny, or phylogenesis to beholders.

CHAPTER 15

WITHIN AND WITHOUT TRADITIONS

This study intends to mark the cultural identity in Hung and his art. Accordingly, in this concluding chapter, the impact of Chinese/Taiwanese folk art and fine art on Hung's paintings will be discussed. As the term *folk-individualist artist* has been applied, tradition and individuality are blended in Hung's artistic style. On the one hand, traditions provide a framework for art creation; on the other hand, up to a certain point, creative artists depart from the established conventions and foundational disciplines to come up a breakthrough, and to exceed precursors. Therefore, how Hung's learning from the Chinese or Taiwanese folk art (in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu) and the orthodox Chinese painting (in his teacher's studio or some art galleries) resulted in an individual style in his paintings will be analyzed under three categories: the naive (primitive) style, the calligraphy paintings, and the ink paintings. Followed by a final conclusion, a general appraisal of Hung's art will explain why Hung is one of the most excellent among the world's numerous self-taught artists.

Traditions

Hung's Learning Center—The Temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu

In 1968, the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu in Hung's hometown undertook a reconstruction for the advent of the *jyang-jyau* ceremony. The bamboo scaffolds were built around the temple in order for craftsmen to get on the top of the roof to restore the clip-and-paste-up decorations (see Figures 104-107). Standing up in the air supported by a few bamboo rods under their feet, the craftsmen

needed to do this elaborate, highly skilled, and enduring job with rapture. Hung worked as an assistant to the craftsmen climbing up and down the two-floor-high scaffold handing tools and materials to them⁵¹. Perhaps, for the first time, Hung discovered a marvelous, fancy world up there. His experiences of closely encountering the colorful phoenixes, dragons, fishes, beasts, landscapes, and fairy statues on the tangerine roof, and of the monumental *jyang-jyau* ceremony led to his urge to paint in the ensuing year.

Procedure of Internalization

Apparently, this temple had an inseparable connection with Hung's life. Also, many have assumed that his art was directly influenced by this temple, which aggregated the Taiwanese folk art in its architecture and its religious rituals and activities. If you compare the statues of the gods in the parade of the temple festival (see Figures 108-110) to Hung's figures (see Figures 111-113), the characters of the Taiwanese opera and the puppet theater (see Figures 114 & 115) to Hung's beauties (see Figure 116), as well as the repetitious shapes and designs in the temple ceilings (see Figures 117-120) to Hung's decorative patterns (see Figures 9 & 44), you may agree with this conclusion. However, Hung seemingly did not entirely approve of this assumption. The provincialist writer, Yang, (1974, September 29 & 30) had a conversation regarding this subject with Hung as followings:

Yang: The reviewers said that your paintings are deeply influenced by the Taiwanese opera and the puppet theater, and your human figures are transfigured from the characters of these dramas. Fishes often appear in your paintings, because you grew up in a fishing village, and live by fishing. You always paint birds and phoenixes, due to that the same

⁵¹ This information was told by one of the staffs of the Dai-Tyan-Fu, 洪高舌 Hung Gau-She (personal communication February 21, 2001).

motifs are common in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu. In short, in virtue of your house being in the vicinity of the temple, the temple has an significant impact on your art. What is your opinion on these comments?

Hung: I deny all of them. My paintings have nothing to do with these; they can say whatever they want. I am able to paint the wooden city in the “Sywe Ren-Gwei Quells The East” (the drama mentioned in Chapter 13).

Nowadays, who would know what the wooden city look like? But, I can picture it. I am also able to draw the Tung-Chywe Tower (銅雀樓) in the “Romance of Three Kingdoms (三國演義), which is mentioned in the play of the Taiwanese puppet theater; who know what the Tung-Chywe Tower look like? But, I can visualize it to let people do research on it (p. 12).

Hung’s reply seemed not to make much sense to Yang, so he concluded that Hung’s thoughts were influenced by the popular historical novels performed in the Taiwanese opera and the puppet theater. Of course, to some extent or in some ways, Hung’s living and cultural environment had an impact on his thoughts and his art. However, as Yang mentioned in this essay, Hung placed an emphasis on painting what was inside him. Hung’s inner visions came from the unconscious mind. From individual and cultural level (personal and national memories) down to the collective and the animal level (memories of all mankind), he was able to access the genetically built-in memories back to time immemorial, as he traveled through the memory alley of the nation, or even of mankind. If folk art presents the wisdom and lore of a cultural region passing from generation to generation, then concurrently, Hung’s inner images contained the history and the heritage of his nation. However, as mentioned in Chapter 10, the course of internalization marks off fine art and folk art (crafts),

and the personal touches and emotional input made Hung's art look more artistic.

Folk art molded by traditions appears to be precisely stylized, whereas Hung's art is individualized. For example, comparing the birds painted on the ceiling of the temple (see Figure 121) to those in one of Hung's pictures (see Figure 122), despite the similarity in the subject, Hung's naive and personal expressiveness evidently distinguishes them. Detached from the physical world, Hung looked into his inner self. His answer to Yang can be interpreted as that by means of his individual mode and self-learned technique, Hung embodied the traditional content and the archetypal images in his works. Also, it can be said that he did not take the raw materials from his surrounding directly, but acted on them through the process of internalization. His inner personalization brought forth imaginative and idiosyncratic qualities and expanded to the innermost level of the collective unconscious.

Hung lived in an environment full of folk art and seemed to reach down to the root of his culture by heart and soul, although he was never disciplined within the folk art traditions. In other words, Hung's art parallels Taiwanese folk art (which is broadly embraced in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu), but is free from the conventional restrictions, territorial boundaries, temporary limitations, as to transcend the cultural and individual differences to present universality. Histories have been written with conscious mind, but Hung could see the history beyond—the obliterated, the omitted, the buried, and the forgotten. He painted the unconscious of his nation and mankind, so he denied the reviews brought up by Yang.

Traditions Provide A Framework for Art Creation

As mentioned in Chapter 12, at the initial hallucinatory stage, the experimental subjects often see geometric patterns in magnificent architecture, such as temples, cathedrals, mosques, or arabesque palaces. These kinds of universal geometric designs can also be seen in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu and Hung's art. In addition, mandalas (which were intensely studied by Jung) are commonly found in crosscultural contexts, religious symbols, and children's scribbles. The Huichol Indians tap their creative potentials by taking peyote, a psychedelic, mandala-shaped cactus. Under the influence of peyote, the radiative circles are manifested opening the gateway to the spiritual domain. Hence, mandalas usually appear in the middle of Huichol yarn paintings to capture viewers' first sight absorbing them into the metaphysical reality (see Figure 123). The kaleidoscopic wheels in one of Hung's painting (see Figure 44) is reminiscent of the ceiling of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu (see Figure 124). Also, in the mosque (see Figure 125) or the Christian church (see Figure 126), worshippers look up to these interior views of the domes passing through the doorway to Heaven in reverie.

Since infinite creative possibilities are hidden in the region of the unconscious, many have wondered if taking hallucinogenic doses increase a person's creativity? To answer this question, first of all, it should be emphasized again that what makes shamans different from schizophrenics is the shamans' self-curing power, namely, the faculties of shifting between two types of cognition (e.g. the primary and the secondary process), or two worlds (e.g. the spiritual and the worldly realms). This self-healing ability, as a matter of fact, is the ego-strength. In Rank's personality typology, the adaptive appears to be emotionally stable, but less creative. The neurotic and the artistic type (viz. the

productive type) tends to be more psychologically capricious, but more creative. However, what distinguishes between the neurotic and the artistic type lies in “will” or “ego strength.” The schizophrenics with very weak ego strength get lost in the boundless ocean of the unconscious, while the shamans commute freely back- and forward gaining creative mastery to reign in the two states. The journey to the terra incognita is replete with fears and jeopardy. The artist voyager needs a compass for navigating on the dark sea, a guideline for coping with the constant battling between them and their inner beasts (or for neutralizing inner antagonistic forces), or a curb to control their creative, instinctive impulse, so that Lommel stated:

Dealing with the “souls” of animals is dangerous and requires special ability and experience. Knowledge, wisdom, and power over souls are the most important things for man... The spiritual world, represented by “spirits,” is a world of traditional notions—images, shaped by tradition, which these people carry in their minds, with which they play and work, and which they act out in the continual, lifelong struggle with the spirits. (1967, p. 29)

Cultural traditions and social institutions usually provide a framework for art creation, and give context to the archetypal images in the process of conceptualization. For the Huichol Indians, life goes on in both the spiritual and the material existence, and unifies with art, religion as trinity. Peyote is the key agent to fulfill the completion of life. Huichol fetuses absorb peyote doses from their mothers, and the peyote education begins, once an infant is born within the Huichol tribes. Conditioned by the cultural and religious traditions, the Huichols are programmed to see expected visions in peyote trance. In addition, the peyote priesthood training prepares the shamans with the right noetic

software to enable them to memorize the sophisticated visions in delirium, and to retrieve the memories henceforth for art creation. Eventually, the trained Huichol shamans fly through the hazardous passage entering the sacred hoard to fetch the tribal lore, which has been input since pre-Columbian time (see Berrin, ed. 1978). So to say, without ego strength or a cultural framework, the psychedelic visions do not lead a person to constructive creation, but to destructive jumble or ultimate vacuum.

Institutionalization

The spiritual experiences and apocalyptic visions are so abstruse that no verbal language in this secular world can directly describe them; only the abstract vocabularies can symbolize the ineffability. As mentioned in Chapter 5, in terms of their cultural background and personal factors (such as intellectual mode, individual preference, knowledge, educational training, life experiences, and so on), artists visualize their aesthetic experiences in various art forms. If art appreciators are affected by an art work, they translate that sensed innermost sparkle (the collective archetype) into their cultural and personal context. In general, the structure provided by a society or an institution leads to the regularity and formulation in art. For example, the visually fickle and dazzling effect in the Huichol embroidery (see Figures 127 & 128) reflects the capricious nature of the hallucinatory imagery. However, the regular reiterations are designed with proportional accuracy. This tendency toward institutionalization in the discipline of art can be seen in Kandinsky's evolution from the freely expressive style of his early abstract paintings (see Figure 129) to the more systematic geometric layout in his Bauhaus period works (see Figure 130), when he attempted to encase his abstract art language and theories in a format for teaching. It is also evident in the comparison of Taiwanese Folk art with

Hung's art as mentioned earlier. In addition, due to her early training in folk tradition, the work by the Indian Mithila painter, Devi (mentioned in Chapter 4) (see Figure 6) appears to be stylized, although the painting content conveys her personal experiences.

Break Away from Old Traditions

Art creation involves contradiction and reconciliation. How to work within the traditions keeping a balance between orthodox system and individual expression, then further to break through the fossilized stylization showing ingenuity requires long-term efforts and high creativity for a fine artist to reach the highest hierarchy of art. In Hung's case, he did not have the same burden as a fine artist or a folk artisan has, but did have immeasurable resources from the long tradition to back up his artistic creation. In his paintings, on the one hand, the sophisticated aspects of his art reflects the long heritage of the Taiwanese folk art; on the other hand, his psychological regression delivers the primitive and innocent qualities.

General Analysis of Three Types of Hung's Paintings

To further analyze Hung's art, I will discuss his works under the three categories (mentioned in Chapter 4): the naive style, the calligraphy painting, and the ink painting.

The Naive (or Primitive) Style

Many of Hung's paintings can be attributed to this category. As the definitions mentioned in Chapter 4 describe, Hung shared the characteristics with the naive artists who live in the modern age. Although Hung was in some respects a man of his time, he was also firmly rooted in a much older culture. Hung's painting colors are bright. His forms are not naturalistic. All available spaces are filled without the concern of perspective. Hung's archetypal images

are primordial in an ancient way, but are not as primitive as tribal art. Also, his art conveys a feeling of joyful innocence, but is not as inexperienced and awkward as children's art. As mentioned in Chapter 12, my spirit medium interviewee described that he was able to ramble about the spaces (such as Heaven, Hades, or unknown landscape, and so on) where he was brought to in his dream. Inferentially, if art appreciators image themselves taking a tour in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu experiencing the deepest dream and archetypal images of the nation, Taiwan, then Hung's psychic perspective can be empathized.

Subjective perspective results in all-over composition.

Inside the temple, visitors soon find out that the whole building is intricately constructed by thousands of modules, which are elaborately painted with, carved into, or sculpted into beasts, human figures, plants, repetitive geometric patterns, landscapes, calligraphy and narratives, and so on (see Figures 131-135). Each one of these modules can be inspected discretely as a self-sufficient mini universe, while one can be combined with another or several ones into a macrocosm. If visitors wander in the temple, browsing the surroundings, they will be dazzled by the painted rafters, carved beams, bright-colored murals, the intricately constructed spiral ceiling, and ornate patterns. They unexpectedly discover phoenixes sticking out of the edge of the eaves, a dragon growing out of the wall, or a landscape scene hidden in a private nook, as if within Hung's amazing jungle, a bizarre face unanticipatedly pops out of a mutant plant, while an unknown chimera skulks in a concealed corner. Moreover, if visitors closely scrutinize these miniature universes one by one, they may become unconscious of spatial dimensions, because they are so concentrated on every elaborate detail. Then they may feel that this visual adventure is similar to the experience of watching Hung's painting world. This

kind of close-up observation has a subjective standpoint, and thus parallels a preschooler's egocentric perspective. As a result, there is no hint of depth in Hung's paintings. If he meant to suggest an object behind another, he simply positioned one on top of another as very young children do. Therefore, an all-over composition is often seen in Hung's works. As in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, his architecture is busily decorated, and his painting spaces are exhaustively filled.

Comparing Hung's art with the other self-taught artists.

Hung's preschooler-like perspective can also be explained by making a juxtaposition with the works of the American visionary artist, Howard Finster (1916-2001). Finster "got called by God to become a preacher" (Patterson, 1989, p. 9) at age 15. He worked as a pastor, itinerant evangelist, and handy man to feed his family until his retirement from his ministry at Chelsea Baptist Church in Georgia in 1965. For this country preacher, building his own outdoor museum, the Paradise Garden (at Pennville, Georgia), and making art were some other ways to continue his mission as a "messenger from God" (Patterson, 1989, p. 9). Hung was an amateur spirit medium and claimed to be tutored by gods. However, unlike Finster's creating art for God, Hung intended neither to serve gods with his artistic creation, nor to sermonize religious canons in his work. Probably, due to Finster's six-grade education and his aim to preach Christianity, Finster's visual language appears to be more descriptive. Compare Hung's (see Figure 77) with Finster's painting (see Figure 136), it can be seen that although both pictures have similar three-level compositions (Heaven, sea, and land in Hung; and Heaven, Earth and Hell in Finster), there is no perspective in Hung's space. Like a 10- to 12-year-old, who has learned the techniques of foreshortening and modeling, Finster painted the mountains (in

the lower part of the painting), the spherical Earth and the sky with variations of tones, and the houses (in the upper part of the painting) with three-dimensional effects. From the front mountains, the red boiling sea and seashore of Hell, to the horizon (where the sun is rising or setting), the objects are arranged in perspective; the earth globe hanging in the air with descending and ascending figures, and the layout of the buildings and roads also suggest the spacial depth. However, Finster's foreshortening and modeling techniques are not as skillful as a trained fine artists', so that his paintings convey some amateur and childish qualities. For example, one figure in the middle of the bottom of the painting is larger than those figures nearer the viewer; also, the perspectives of the outside view of the building in the middle of the upper painting and the indoor floor lines contradict each other. Nevertheless, Finster's childish qualities are different from Hung's. Hung's visual language still possesses a young child's ego-centric perspective (see Chapter 6). As a result, the exaggeration and abstraction are more obvious in Hung's paintings than Finster's. As children who enter Lowenfeld's so-called "pseudonaturalistic age" (see Parks, 1994, p. 4) (see Chapter 9) and switch from subjective to objective, introvert to extrovert approach, Finster interpreted his inner visions with more realistic perspective, more naturalistic visual language, and written descriptions, as to lose a preschoolers' naivety. In comparison, Hung's expressiveness and indirectness revealing ineffability and artistry bring forth infinite imagination in viewers.

In addition, many naive artists prefer animal images, for example, the other two Taiwanese coevals, Lin Yuan (林淵) (1913-1991) (see Figure 137) and Wu Li-Yu-Ge (吳李玉哥) (1901-1991) (see Figure 138), also, the American self-taught artists T. A. Hay (1892 -1988) (see Figure 139), and Charley Kinney

(1906-1991) (see Figure 140). The natural forms of the animals are represented in a savage or naive way, but are different from Hung's unnatural, organic chimeras, and lack Hung's abstrusity. The archetypal images in Hung's freestyle paintings have a counterpart in the painting of the American artist, Mose Tolliver (b.1915 or 1919) (see Figure 141).

Moreover, people who are acquainted with Chinese or Taiwanese folk art can easily associate Hung's art with his national folk tradition. However, if viewers have no knowledge of Hung's nationality, or of Chinese or Taiwanese folk art, Hung's bright colors, decorative patterns, and intricate composition may remind them of the other ancient cultures, such as Indian art or pre-Columbian art. This type of work by Hung is done with different materials, but in terms of its content, it might be referred to as so-called naive art or primitive art. The detailed outlining paintings in ink with all-over compositions (see Figure 4) might also be ascribed to this category.

As the head of the Western painting division of the Sotheby company in Taiwan, Wu R-Syi (吳日曦), when speaking before the Hung Tung painting auction of October in 1998, said that if Hung's paintings become popular, this does not mean that works by the other self-taught artists will be accepted, because just naive gusto is not enough. There also needs to be a unique artistic quality—which is why Hung's art was favored.

The Calligraphy Painting

This type of calligraphy painting has been discussed in Chapter 13. Hung's earlier calligraphy paintings often remind viewers of the primordial ideographs, old stele inscriptions, and Taoist talismans in China. But, for people unfamiliar to Chinese calligraphy or archaic written language, some ancient scripts or inscriptions in different cultures might be associated with them,

depending on the viewers' knowledge, their own experiences and cultural backgrounds. Hung's later calligraphy paintings no longer catch the essence and the beauty of calligraphy seen in the earlier ones.

This kind of calligraphy painting seems to be a way that Hung fulfilled his dream of being an intellectual. Also, it can be seen that Hung liked to use puns in his paintings. In one of his monochrome ink paintings (see Figure 4), Hung wrote down the title, "Hong Kong China Shoe" and drew a foot with a shoe on next to the word "shoe." Literally, this title seems like nonsense, but, if it is pronounced in Taiwanese dialect, it will come to be clear that it means "Hong Kong belongs to China." Through this title, Hung indicated that Hong Kong would be returned to China in 1997. However, Hung shifted to mainly play with the meanings of words in his later calligraphy paintings. For example, he showed a reporter, Chen, one of his new paintings in 1977. Hung pointed out that it was a gift for the American president. In the picture, two big dominant characters "美國" (America) were satirized into graphic patterns surrounded by numerous small English-like and unknown letters. Like young children or people with dyslexia, Hung mis-wrote the word "美" with an additional horizontal stroke. Also, the two feet of the word "美" were put on a pair of big shoes. Hung explained that Americans have big feet, so their shoe sizes would not be too small. The character "國" was turned into a Cubist face combining profile and front wearing a hat with a big nose. Chen thought that the decorative manner and modern vulgarity had already replaced the innocent touches in Hung's new works (Chen, 1977, February 10). However, if Hung's paintings of this sort are seen as comic (not high art), then his sense of humor and witty remarks might be appreciated. Interestingly, Hung liked to "test" his visitors on the "English"

letters in his paintings. In most cases, those being tested were speechless, because nobody could tell what the letters meant.

In addition to the ancient pictograph and the caricatured calligraphy, some Japanese- or English-like letters in Hung's works remind me of the clumsy, segmental, or reversed hand-writings in preschoolers' drawings. This dyslexic phenomenon is also frequently seen in many naive artists' works. We literate people study, understand, and memorize words with systematic methodology, then apply them with learned accuracy. However, written languages are visual symbols, and can be referred to as some kind of abstract paintings. Therefore, Hung, children, and the naive type artists perceive words in their own intuitive ways, as display the tendency to abstraction. Hung interpreted his calligraphic paintings as follows: "There are images in calligraphy, and words in painting. Calligraphy and painting unify as one. If you see it as words, then it is calligraphy. If as images, then it is painting." ("Hung Tung gets poor," 1978, April 7, p. 3) Painting and calligraphy are interchangeable, actually, derived from the same origin. Consequently, this type of calligraphy painting was often mixed with the naive type in Hung's paintings, as writings often appear in the works by the self-taught artists. However, compared to Finster's written statements (see figure 136), Hung's ancient-looking pictograph is more artistically drawn and conveys the aesthetic values congruous with those in the modern art (see Figure 142-147); this can also be attributed to the influences of Chinese heritage on Hung's calligraphic art. Also, Hung's caricatured calligraphy seems more clever.

The Ink Painting

Hung learned traditional Chinese bush painting methods in the art studio.

The Chinese ink paintings are mainly done with brushes and ink on rice papers. This type of Hung's work marks the influences from traditional fine art (painting). Hung was always longing to be part of the mainstream, and attempted to imitate the old Chinese scholars' behaviors. Hung probably became acquainted with the orthodox Chinese paintings in gallery exhibitions, and later took courses in Dzeng's (Hung's teacher) studio. Fortunately, Dzeng was a good teacher, who acknowledged Hung's unique talents, and provided Hung a free learning environment for him to learn the traditional methodology without quenching his unruly qualities. Dzeng once told an interviewer about how he treated Hung individually as one of his students:

When Hung came to see me and asked to be my student, I felt that his painting style was very special. Therefore, in every class, I always let him work alone in a separate room. As far as the instructions go, I taught him some techniques, but avoided interfering with his own style and method. (Tyan, 1976, April, p. 115)

Hung reached the breakthrough threshold.

Because Hung picked an excellent art teacher for himself, he was able to taste the fruit of the fine art tradition, then digest it, and turn out an unconventional, new brand. As academic art students do, Hung most likely started by copying examples in Dzeng's studio. The ink painting by Hung shown in Figure 148 must be one of Hung's copying exercises worked for his art classes. (see Han, 1987, September) From the adeptness exhibited in this picture, it can be asserted that Hung had the abilities to paint like a fine artist.

However, he seemed to be bored by the duplicating practices. Suddenly, a very much Hung-style branch sprouts out of the area behind the rooster and hen rampantly spreading throughout the surrounding areas.⁵² This essential painting registered Hung's breaking away from traditions. After the tedious foundational training, he finally reached the breakthrough threshold, as his intuitive drives were abruptly released. Henceforth, Hung's ink paintings were turned into unprecedented style.

Hung Came up with a new individual style.

Unlike the detailed and crowded qualities in the other two types of his works, Hung's ink paintings display the principle of simplicity often seen in Zen paintings. This type of painting is mainly monochrome, and sometimes tinged with colors. This transition from elaborate artificialness to purified artlessness in forms, colors, and composition can liken as if a country woman, who used to show off by putting on all her jewels and outfits, now learns to be more selective to present her qualitative beauty. Cultivated by the mainstream art, Hung's ink paintings convey the literati's elegance. Lai described his first encounter with Hung's ink paintings:

... From 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, seeing his (Hung's) paintings the whole day, and listening to his talks, I have already felt tired. Those works displayed in front of us are unique, but seem too busy to viewers. Although the special appearance of his paintings are shocking and unforgettable by a sight, to this kind of naive paintings by the self-taught, people may have different views. After all, whether Hung Tung can advance from "the self-taught artist" to "master" being discussed with Henri Roussau in the same breath or not, it has to see his future accomplishments... I suddenly felt so

⁵² Han (1987, September) mentioned this painting and this divergent branch in "Goodbye Hung Tung." But, my interpretation is different from his.

worn out, and waited to end this visit. Around 3:00 pm, unexpectedly, Hung Tung brings out a bundle of unmounted paintings to us. These are ink paintings on rice papers, and are his recent works. These pictures refresh my mind, and all my tiresomeness goes away immediately ! I can not help but to cheer... (1973, April, pp. 23-24)

Visually absorbing the detail and crowded all-over compositions, the naive-type works can really overwhelm observers, especially, after seeing so many pictures similar to each other. But, viewers get to pause and breathe in Hung's monochrome ink paintings. The art collector, Lyau Jr-Syang, met Hung in person four times; nevertheless, he felt that Hung's paintings were too loudish then, so that he did not intend to collect his work until years after Hung's passing. One day, he saw one of Hung's monochrome ink paintings (shown in the Figure 149) in the studio of the artist, Jeng Dzai-Dung (鄭在東). He fell in love with this painting immediately. Lyau convinced Jeng to part with this painting. Afterward Lyau fanatically collected Hung's works, claiming to own more than 170 pieces of Hung's works. I was particularly attracted to it, when I first saw this painting in the exhibition catalogue, *An Eccentric World: The Art of Hung Tung, 1920-1987*." Hung made a number of flora ink paintings similar to this one (see Figures 150-153). But, this one appeared to achieve the highest perfection in harmony. Later, I tracked Lyau down in Taiwan, and asked (over the telephone) to see this painting. When I met him in person, I got to know the reason that he agreed to see me was because he felt that my desire to see this painting led him to conclude that I had a good eye. This painting seems to have certain qualities that really charm Chinese intellectuals.

***Comparisons between Hung and the Individualist painter,
Chu Da.***

This painting is reminiscent of the works (see Figures 154-156) by the individualist painter, Chu Da (朱耷) (1625- ca. 1705), also well-known by his pseudonym, Ba Da Shan Ren (八大山人). During the late Ming and early Ching, the mainstream art world was still dominated by the Literate Painting School. While the Literate painters were conditioned to imitate old masterpieces for three centuries leading the freestyle ink paintings to the fossilized formalism, some individualist painters endeavored to break the stale cliché by splitting from the Literate Painting tradition to establish an innovative trend. Among those individualists, Chu was from the Ming royalty. In face of the downfall of the Ming Dynasty and the declination of his prominent family during his teen age years, he marooned himself on the margin of the society. Sometimes, he chose to bury his poignant melancholy and agony in silence pretending to be mute. Sometimes, he attempted to benumb his feelings in alcohol, or in excuse of alcohol, ecstatically expressed his emotions by whimpering and laughing. His swinging spasmodically between bipolar moods turned him into an insane wanderer on the street. After recovering from his sickness, he started to paint. Later, he discarded his secular burdens (except drinking) to become a Buddhist monk. In addition to painting, his extraordinary accomplishments also included poetry and calligraphy. After his country was defeated, he lived in poverty and loneliness throughout the rest of his life. However, he rejected to trade his paintings, but gave them away for free as he pleased. In his paintings, birds and fishes are frequently seen motifs—symbolized as his spirit longing for freedom.⁵³

⁵³ The information of this paragraph is referred to in Lin, 1985.

The Detail Outline Method & Zen Painting Style.

Concurrent with the two major painting methods used in the orthodox Chinese ink paintings, this type of Hung's works of art can be divided into the freestyle (also called the boneless method), and the detail outline style (also called the white sketch method). Taking a glance at Hung's painting shown in Figure 149, it looks like a terse flora painting. However, scrutinizing the details, there are happenings taking place in every part of this vigorous vegetation. In addition, every unit in this painting is intuitively positioned in such incredible balance and harmony that a slight change would impair the perfection. Also, the large unpainted area gives plenty of space for beholders to breathe. In the light of the economic arrangement and the organic implication, it is certain that Hung grasped the essence of the Zen paintings. If a comparison of this painting with Chu's in Figure 154 is made, it seems to be that Hung used the detail outline style to give personal exegesis to Chu's freestyle painting.

As mentioned in the Chapter 6, expressionist and abstract artists prefer to apply indirect visual language in communication. As a result, they give clues to allure viewers' imagination, and leave leeway for viewers' personal interpretations to work. Upon this, Gestalt psychology postulates that "the whole is different from the sum of its parts." (Goldstein, 1996, pp. 181) The Zen paintings also share some characters with the expressionist and abstract art. Take a look at Chu's painting. Placed with spontaneity on the surface of the rice paper, Chu's calligraphic strokes brim vital forces. Making several twists in one stroke, the artist wielded his brush in slow speed with rapture, ease, and uninhibited spirit—resulting in the varied shades of black with fluid nuance. In peaceful concordance, the resonance of the invisible energies floats in the organic life of the plants, the stone, and the air of the unfathomable "left

whiteness.” In terms of skills, Zen painting language is refined through the lengthy process of the stringent drill. In terms of the mental state, Zen painters have gone through vicissitudes regressing from vanity to homeliness. In this Hung’s ink painting, he preserved Zen painting’s cleanness and left-whiteness, but by means of his untrained techniques and his unique painting language, he illustrated the vitality hidden in the melodious strokes created by the well-trained hands with imagination, conveying a sense of festive innocence. In addition, Hung produced some colored flora paintings. For examples, the picture in Figure 157 should be attributed to the naive type, since the colors made it look more decorative. Also, in another painting (see Figure 158), the plant form is clean, but the background is filled with letters.

The freestyle method.

As for the freestyle of Hung’s ink paintings (see Figures 96-100, 102 & 103), they are simple in content and designs, but are not influenced by orthodox Chinese paintings in terms of motif. But, like traditional Chinese art, Hung’s abstraction did not stray far beyond representational categories.

Return to Origins

Basically, Hung’s art is more related to the folk than the fine art traditions in China or Taiwan. Nevertheless, his art developed in such an unconventional way that I call him a folk individualist artist. The orthodox artists learn methodically in the ready-made programs. However, they need to shake off shackles (caused by our rational and extraneous restrictions) to provoke that creative sparkle. Therefore, many artists or poets drink wine to loosen up their too conscious minds, and to set their muffled souls free. Also, many creative works are done between the conscious and unconscious states of mind. For example, Chu Da created the best works under the influence of wine; Huichol

shamans refer to hallucinatory visions to make yarn paintings; Coleridge dreamed that “all the images rose up before him as *things*,” after taking an anodyne (opium), and Kekulé’s discovered the ring structure of benzene while taking a nap (mentioned in Chapter 11). The Zen master, Suzuki stated:

Zen in its essence is the art of seeing into the nature of one’s own being, and it points the way from bondage to freedom. By making us drink right from the fountain of life, it liberates us from all the yokes under which we finite beings are usually suffering in this world. We can say that Zen liberates all the energies properly and naturally stored in each of us, which are in ordinary circumstances cramped and distorted so that they find no adequate channel for activity. (1973, p. 327)

From with methods to without method, from within the tradition to out of the tradition, many art maestros attempt to return to an innocent state in order to tap their innermost potentials, as Picasso spent decades to learn to paint like a child. What we are looking for, actually, is what we are born with. Therefore, Ishin’s declaration:

Before a man studies Zen, to him mountains are mountains and waters are waters; after he gets an insight into the truth of Zen through the instruction of a good master, mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters; but after this when he really attains to the abode of rest, mountains are once more mountains and waters are waters.” (Suzuki, 1973, p.336)

Hung’s psychic regression to the child-like state of mind was different from a child’s mind. In the three stages of realizing Zen, the enlightenment of “mountains are once more mountains and waters are waters” in the third stage is not equal to the innocent mind of “mountains are mountains and waters are

waters” in the first stage. Intuition and innocence exist in everyone by nature, but are too easily overlooked, especially, while one is conditioned by the immediate perception, the instant materialism, the physical limitations, and the secular restraints as well. As mentioned in Chapter 6, even though Hung’s bosom friend, Wu, was unconsciously aware that Hung aroused the child-like playfulness in his mind, it never came to his sense until my inquiry made him think it through.

In addition, Hung was a quiet person, so most people did not understand him. Maybe, it was because his innermost beings were hard to verbalize thoroughly, so he let his pictures speak for him. His paintings tell infinite meanings, but many people can not discard the learned doctrines to let their intuition play, or deny their instinctive feelings and child-like innocence as to downplay Hung’s art. Hung intended to guide beholders beyond words to an intuitive, free state of mind as he did in the following two Zen-like vignettes.

One day, the famous Taiwanese dancer, Lin Hwai-Min (林懷民), and the photographer, Gwo Ying-Sheng (郭英聲), came a long way to visit Hung. However, that day, Hung locked himself in the studio working on his painting. He refused to see his visitors, and yelled at them through the door: “Only people who have spiritual connection with me could see my art works!” Lin asked who this person would be? Hung replied that if you understand the couplet inscribed on the door, then you are the one. Lin looked at the couplet written by Hung in his self-invented calligraphy wondering how it could be possible for him to figure out the meaning? However, a learned poem suddenly hit him, and fluently slipped out of his mouth. This self-taught artist was completely pleased. Therefore, Hung immediately opened the door and ushered in the visitors, then continued to work on his paintings. But these two young men were completely

stunned, because Hung was using his penis—dipping it in black ink and then drawing on paper. (see Hwang, 1996a)

In another account, it was stated that one day Hung dressed like a high school student and carried a notebook. However, the notebook was blank. One asked if it was some kind of wordless celestial book? He gave a very philosophical answer: “Books are in people’s mind. I read books in my mind, so with or without books has no difference to me” (Shu-Shr-Chwan, 1980, October 5).

Conclusion

Answers to Research Question I: How Does Intuition Play A Role in Art Creativity?

Instinct is biologically built in. But, intuition results from the accumulation of life-long wisdom—innate characteristics interact with social and cultural factors. Sometimes, one makes a judgment or a decision based on an intuitive feeling. However, it is hard to explain this feeling in words thoroughly, because mental operations are not always processed consciously. Like an iceberg only showing off the tip of its whole, the large part of the mind, the unconscious, is obscured. The conscious territory has a boundary, but the unconscious human mind is unfathomable; under the conscious threshold, the infinite creative potentials are hidden, and the intuitive cognition works involuntarily. The creative and intuitive cognition requires a large amount of intellectual capacity and accelerated speed (analogous with computer "hardware") as well as very sophisticated cognitive facilities (similar to “software”) to complete its performance. Hence, it is normally undertaken in the unconscious cognition process, but perceived consciously as an intuitive feeling as the final result. The emergence of a creative act or an intuitive thought is likely to pop up above the

conscious threshold in a free, relaxing, or playful environment. Also, enjoyable, humorous, sprightly, witty, and spontaneous creative behaviors will occur if coordination between mind and hands of the creator is reached. However, in the field of a specific discipline, painstaking effort and years of diligent practice are needed for a certain level of accomplishment.

Making art involving a dynamic networking among the artist's inner forces (including culture and education background, philosophies, cognitive schemata, affective preferences, mental state at the moment, and so on) and personal training in art (including knowledge, techniques and psychomotor skills), art tools and materials, and the exogenous factors (including environmental and social influences) (see Chapter 5) is conducted through constant shifting between the conscious and the unconscious cognition (see Chapter 7). If art creators are able to manipulate and synthesize these elements in harmony after long-term hard work, then perfection can be attended. For example, in one of his allegories, Chuang Tzu wrote:

Cook Ting was butchering an ox for Lord Wen Hui. Every movement of his hand, every shrug of his shoulder, every step of his feet, every thrust of his knee, every sound of the sundering flesh and the swoosh of the descending knife, were all in perfect accord, like the Mulberry Grove Dance or the rhythm of the Ching-shou.

"Ah, how excellent!" said Lord Wen Hui. "How has your skill become so superb?"

Cook Ting put down his knife and said, "what your servant loves best is the Tao, which is better than any art. When I started to cut up oxen, what I saw was just a complete ox. After three years, I had learnt not to see the ox as whole. Now I practice with my mind, not with my eyes. I

ignore my sense and follow my spirit. I see the natural lines and my knife slides through the great hollows follows the great cavities, using that which is already there to my advantage. Thus, I miss the great sinews and even more so, the great bones. A good cook changes his knife annually, because he slices. An ordinary cook has to change his knife every month, because he hacks. Now this knife of mine I have been using for nineteen years, and it has just been sharpened. Between the joints there are spaces, and the blade of a knife has no real thickness. If you put what has no thickness into spaces such as these, there is plenty of room, certainly enough for the knife to work through. However, when I come to a difficult part and can see that it will be difficult, I take care and pay due regard. I look carefully and I move with caution. Then, very gently, I move the knife until there is a parting and the flesh falls apart like a lump of earth falling to the ground. I stand with the knife in my hand looking around and then, with an air of satisfaction, I wipe the knife and put it away.”

“Splendid!” said Lord Wen Hui. “I have heard what cook Ting has to say and from his words I have learned how to live life fully.” (Palmer, 1996, pp. 22-23)

From method-bound to method-free, from enslaved by the immediate perception to following the heart (intuition), the great artists reach the threshold of breakthrough arriving at the highest hierarchy of art. Therefore, in the cathectic state, cook Ting transcended the physical limitations, and his mind and outer objects were integrated as one; the mechanism among cook Ting's body movement, ox, and knife were “in perfect accord,” as he stated, “Now I practice with my mind, not with my eyes. I ignore my sense and follow my spirit.”

Reaching this state of concord, cook Ting felt a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. Lord Wen Hui realized the Way (Tao) of life through cook Ting's art. Indeed, art is the way of life.

Mankind lives in worlds of twos, the mental and the physical, the spiritual and the material, the conscious and the unconscious. Art provides an intermediate region to bridge these twos; in fact, these two poles can be unified as one in the highest art. To fulfill the unfulfilled and to reconcile such antagonistic elements as intelligence and emotion, the great artists create to survive from life sufferings. In an art creation process, usually, artists consciously or unconsciously reflect more or less their life-long wisdom (intuition). For artists who adopt an intuitive approach to art, they attempt to capture the spiritual, the intangible, and the innermost being. Also, due to their subjective and introspective approach to art, they tend to express their individuality revealing their cultural (and educational) background and personal qualities. Therefore, an intuitive approach in art creativity facilitates tapping the suppressed, buried or latent potentialities in the boundless mind.

Answers to Research Question II: Why Is Hung's Art So Ineffable?

Mirroring the intuitive, divergent cognition, the inner visions appear as hybrid images. Charged with emotions, pathos is conveyed in art works, as artists express their innermost, intersensory feelings. Accordingly, only indirect description, such as poetic, metaphorical language and abstract image can interpret an intuitive feeling accurately.

In the unconscious mind, from the deep to the ostensible stratum, lies the "collective unconscious" and the "personal unconscious" (Jung, 1959). Navigating deeply into the terra incognita of the unconscious, the heterogeneous individual and cultural differences converge, while diverse

sensory receptors intermerge into unity, and the cognitive processing leads to abstraction. Therefore, an intuitive approach leads to psychological regression (toward the beginning of a life, the innocent, and the dawn of human existence, the primitive) and a tendency toward abstraction in art. As a result, Hung's naive (primitive) type of art shares certain innocent features with the art of children. Also, Hung's visual language partakes some insinuated qualities with the art of children and modern expressionist or abstract artists.

With indescribable nostalgia, mankind strives to surpass this fleeting, ephemeral, chaotic secular reality to reach the peaceful, eternal, harmonious spiritual world. The great Chinese artists, the Taoists, and the Zen Buddhists incline toward this kind of immortalization. As a result, the traditional Chinese landscape carries Taoists' loftiness, and the Zen painting reflects refined simplicity. Hung's ink paintings were more or less influenced by these Chinese traditions.

Hung's intuitive approach resulted in the individual expression, cultural color, and abstract style in his art. In addition, as an amateur and untrained spirit medium, Hung revealed his hallucinatory and shamanistic visions in his paintings. In trance, Hung was able to access the forgotten, collective memories from time immemorial. Therefore, some of Hung's paintings convey hybrid, archetypal images and ancient myths.

Moreover, the earliest written language in China was used to communicate with the immortals for divination. Also, the Taoist talismanic calligraphy (which fused the sacred dancing, singing, music, and poetry) was practiced to invoke deities in the Taoistic ritual. Due to the association with antediluvian pictography and the mysterious Taoist talismanic calligraphy, Hung's calligraphy paintings incarnated the impalpable and visualized the

inexpressible. Intuitive feelings are something beyond language. Hung's intuitive art thus displays such ineffability.

Issues in this Study and Art Education

Due to their egocentric approach, pre-schoolers tend to view reality from their perspective, and construct their beliefs based on their own experiences and reasoning. The older they grow, the more social restrictions are enforced upon them. Also, the more advanced the civilization and modernization progress, the more human beings are conditioned by suffocating etiquette and materialistic desire and the less individuality and intuitive creativity are let out. Shifting from the subjective to objective, from the introvert to extrovert approach, innocence is lost, and the pure is polluted. The intuitive approach of adults displays the inclination to regain the pure state of freedom and wisdom after long-term hard work or a life of vicissitudes.

Usually, self-taught artists are inspired by religions or indigenous cultures, and driven by inner impulses to create art. They gather objects from their living surroundings, then manipulate and transform them into art works with personal touches, as they pick up subjects in their daily life, then internalize them turning out an individual style. Consequently, their intuitive art reflects very basic human natures, individuality, and folk culture. As Gau commented on Hung's art:

... He (Hung) remarkably absorbs the longstanding heritage which has been handed down from generation to generation, and further mingles it with the real life presenting in his works. So to say, his paintings beget a fantastic and beautiful feeling in viewers (Lyou, 1973, May, p. 117-118).

In Hung's case, within an ancient culture like Chinese, his art was inseparable from his national legacy. Therefore, the term *folk-individualist artist*, on the one

hand, places an emphasis on Hung's individual style, and on the other hand, claims Hung's art was mainly influenced by Taiwanese folk art—and was partially associated with the Chinese fine art.

However, self-taught art is independent of Zeitgeist and mainstream art movements or trends of any time period. Therefore, the art criteria or theories established for the academic or orthodox art do not always fit self-taught art. As mentioned in Chapter 4, to take the first step to appreciate Hung's art is to free yourself from social regulation and academic indoctrination to follow your intuition. Like Zen wisdom's returning to the original self and regaining truth, Hung's art leads viewers to go back to the origin of art, wherein the innocence, the primitive, and the instinctive are intact, and to think over carefully of what our hearts feel but is not rationalized or verbalized.

The controversy caused by Hung and his art during the Hung Tung exhibition of 1976 represents the everlasting battle between the orthodox artists (who believe that art should be taught with formal training or learned in an educational setting) and the intuitive type artists (and their supporters) anywhere at anytime. For people who overweigh knowledge or craftsmanship may downplay self-taught art for the reasons that it does not convey sophisticated theories or is too naive in terms of technique and skills. However, intuitive art manifests ineffable feelings and uninhibited artistry, which are often missing in intellectual-oriented academic fine art or skill-dominated craftwork. By making a comparison of Hung's earlier intuitive approach (before the Hung Tung exhibition) and his later intellectual approach (after the Hung Tung exhibition), it can be seen that a too rational (conscious) mind (caused by the influence of social standards in Hung's case) constrains creative potential and artistic expression. Also, using the modern art supplies instead of the

inexpensive materials or wastes, Hung's later works lost some local savors. In academia, the disconnection between education and real life sometimes happens. Therefore, Gau asserted:

He (Hung) never received any school education, and his paintings are rustic. However, his knowledge and life experiences can be integrated as a whole. This is what we educated people find difficult to attain.

Especially, the more we learn from books, the more we are coerced by the 'epistemological dictatorship.' Frequently, it ends up to be that living is one thing, studying one another, and doing the other. Lore and practice are totally disconnected. This is very sad... (Lyou, 1973, May, p. 117)

As an art educator, I adopt an intermediary point of view. Hence, by clarifying the correlationship of intuition and art in this study, I aim to present theories and favor the term, *folk-individualist artist*, for this type of artists, and further to reconcile academic discipline and tradition with the intuitive approach in art education.

Art is able to transcend the boundary of language and cultural difference. Especially, at the time of diversity, the attention should be directed to the collective, primary human natures in art education. The universal truth is that knowledge and skills can be taught, but art can only be inspired. Also, it is known that self-motivated students learn best. Hung was inspired by Taiwanese folk art from his surroundings (especially, the temple of Dai-Tayn-Fu), and his liberal art teacher Dzeng. Accordingly, a learning environment rich in art materials and cultural inheritance will motivate students to explore, to interact, to assimilate, and to create freely. In addition, in order for students to gain good training (so that they can use their visual language and artistic tools freely, and

express their inner feelings precisely), a constructive art curriculum should be emphasized. However, to facilitate spontaneous creativity and intuitive thoughts, a free and playful classroom atmosphere is essential. As both individual expression and traditional discipline are highlighted in art creation, freeness and constructiveness should be equally advocated in art education.

It is also suggested that academically-trained artists work within traditions to build up a good foundation, but should not be confined by pedantic theories and rigid disciplines. Fostering artistic creativity through free individual expression within a cultural framework (or in an environment rich in art materials and cultural inheritance) is what self-taught art can inspire in fine artists and art educators.

Hung's Art at the Beginning of the 21st Century

The great Enlightenment accelerated Europe's material civilization, whereas extreme rationalistic forces closed down doorways to the spiritual realm. At the turn of the 20th century, Modern artists, especially, Kandinsky, intended to reconnect with metaphysical beings through abstract art. However, overextended development in abstract art led to alienation from cultural contexts, or even to nothingness, so that the general public felt distant from this type of intellectual or elite art. Consequently, to educate audiences in today's art galleries, lengthy written text panels often overshadow art works. Also, as high-technology brought in a virtual global village, the tendency to accommodate diversity has resulted in open-ended confusion in the postmodern age.

By collecting the art of children, the mentally ill, and graffitiists, Dubuffet coined the term, *Art Brut*, and launched a remonstrance to the art conventions and institutions of the 1940s. After Dubuffet opened a door for the nonorthodox artists, especially since the late 1960s, some attention has been directed to art

by self-taught artists because sincerity and originality appeared missing in postmodern fine art. While Europeans conquered the barbarians (in terms of the Westerner's point of view) with more advanced technological forces in the 18th and 19th century, some of them were drawn to the primitive life and art. In today's postmodern age, to some art appreciators, simplicity and naivety win favor over chaos and uncertainty. Once more, some people have begun to look inwardly to their souls for truth, when the outer world has become increasingly topsy-turvy—as also happened at the turn of the 20th century in the art world of Europe.

Driven by an irresistible inner urge, in a decade, Hung industriously, near maniacally, produced more than 300 paintings, until he exhausted the last drop of the creative spring. Among those paintings, there are many master pieces. The artistic qualities in Hung's naive type of art make him a master among myriad self-taught artists. His calligraphy paintings, made with an intuitive approach, show that he was a great abstract artist. With his ink paintings (the flora paintings, in particular), the affiliation between Hung and traditional Chinese art can be established as he always desired. In general, Hung's paintings, as his teacher described, "reveal a sort of the purest spiritual account of mind, so beholders can come into contact with the artist directly" (Dzeng, 1973, p.39). As Hung strove to keep his art creation free and pure, as to live in poverty throughout his life, he would want viewers to appreciate his art by following intuition.

Among so many self-taught artists, there have been some good and some bad (as with fine artists). As time passes, sands and impurities will be washed out. Only gold remains refined. At the beginning of the 21st century, this

study has assessed Hung Tung as an example of such gold. Also, by means of the term, *folk-individualist artist*, Hung can be posited in the art world properly.

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Figure 1: A distant view of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu, Nan-Kun-Shen, Tainan, Taiwan.

Figure 2: Photograph of Hung Tung, taken by Jang Jau-Tang (張照堂), 1976.

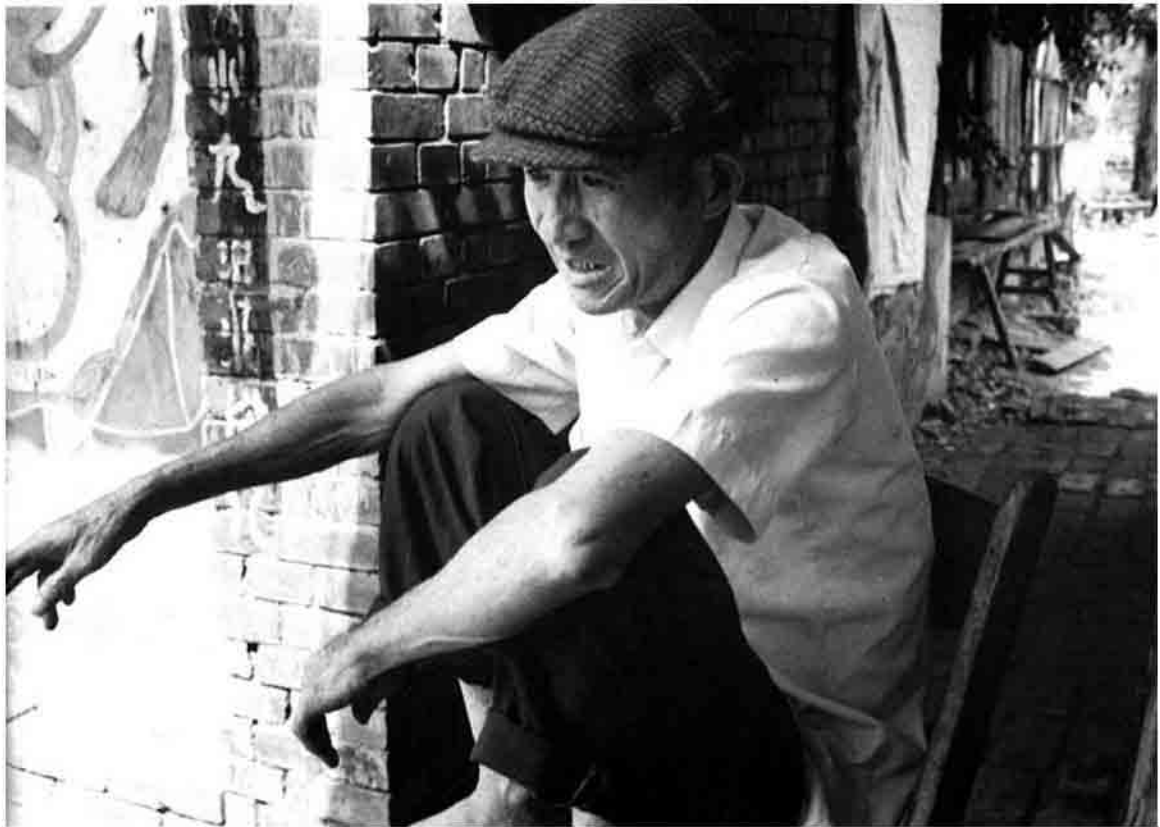


Figure 3: Adolf Wölfli. *Medical Faculty*. 1905. Pencil on newsprint. 29 1/2" x 39 1/4".



Figure 4: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper, 136 x 69 cm.



Figure 5: Ganga Devi. Detail of the central wall of a *Kohbar-ghar* at the Crafts Museum, New Delhi, India. 1989.

Figure 6: Ganga Devi. *The Cancer Series': 4; The Cancer Ward*. 1988-89. Ink on paper. 56 x 78 cm

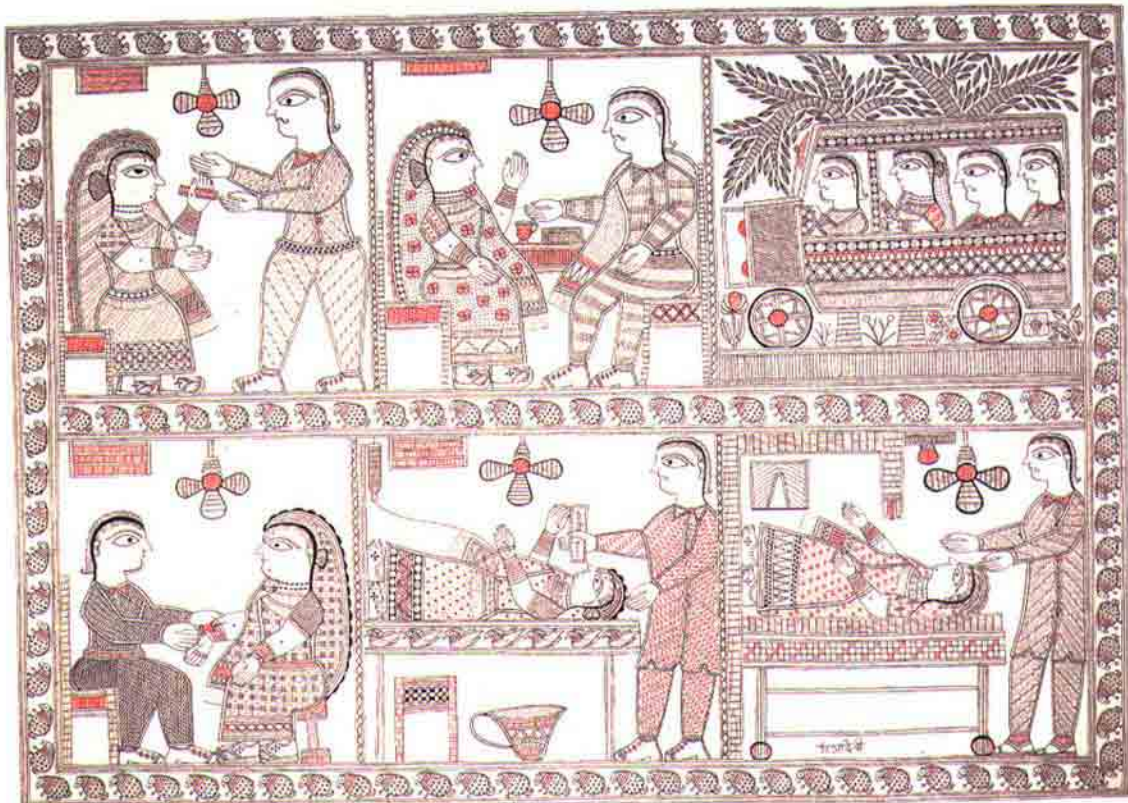


Figure 7: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 106 x 77 cm.



Figure 8: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 135 x 68 cm.



Figure 9: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Oil on board, 58 x 58 cm.

Figure 10: Hung Tung. Details of Figure 45.



Figure 11: Drawing on the subject of sleeping by a 6-year-old, from *Creativity, art, and the young child* (Brittain, 1979).

Figure 12: Drawing on the subject of eating by a child, from *Creativity, art, and the young child* (Brittain, 1979).

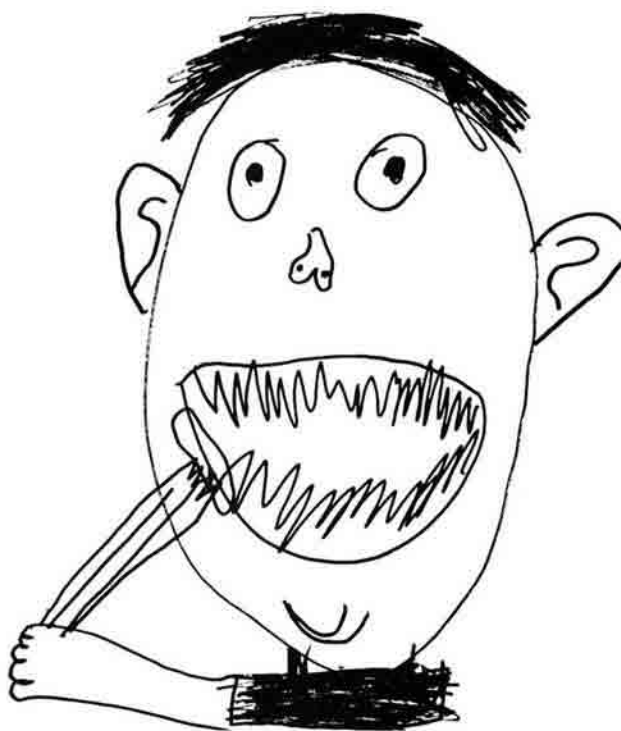
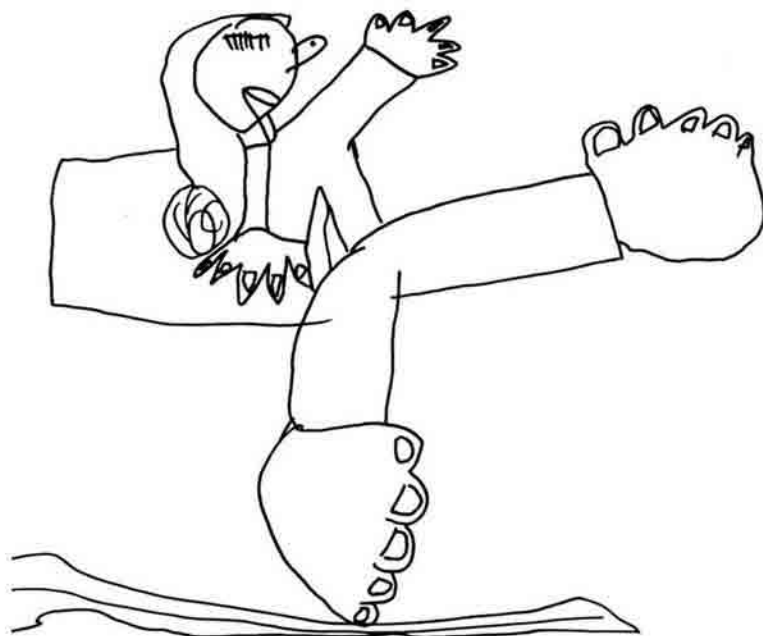


Figure 13: Venus of Willendorf, from Willendorf, Austria. c. 30,000-15,000 B.C.
Limestone, 4 1/2" (11.5 cm) high. Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Figure 14: Effigy of a male ancestor, from Cameroon by Mambila people. Semi-hard wood with black crusted patina, 45 cm high. Mueller, Geneva.



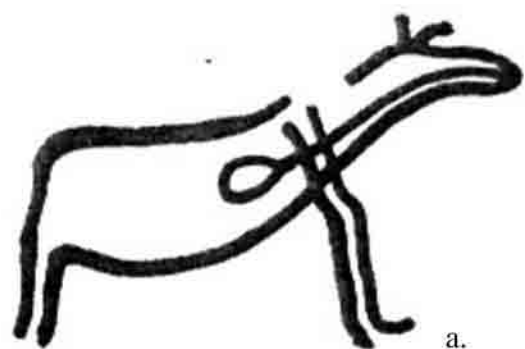
Figure 15a, b, c & d: Animals in X-ray style.

(a) Animal with “lifeline” in X-ray style, from Evenhus, Norway. Rock-engraving.

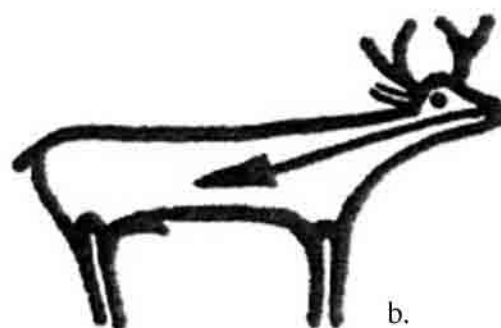
(b) Animal with “lifeline” in X-ray style, by Pueblo Indians. Decoration on pottery.

(c) Cervid in X-ray style, from Eastern Siberia.

(d) Kangaroo in X-ray style, from Goulbourn Island, northern Australia.



a.



b.



c.



d.

Figure 16: Hung Tung. Untitled, n.d. Mixed-media on paper. 165 x 48 cm.



Figure 17: 范寬 Fan Kwan (ca. early 11th century). 谿山行旅圖 [*Travelers amid Streams and Mountains*]. Ink on silk. 155 x 74.3 cm. Palace Museum in Taipei.



Figure 18: Paul Gauguin. *The vision After the Sermon (Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)*. 1888. Oil on canvas, 28 3/4" x 36 1/4". National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Figure 19: Wassily Kandinsky. *Lake (Boat Ride)*, 1910.

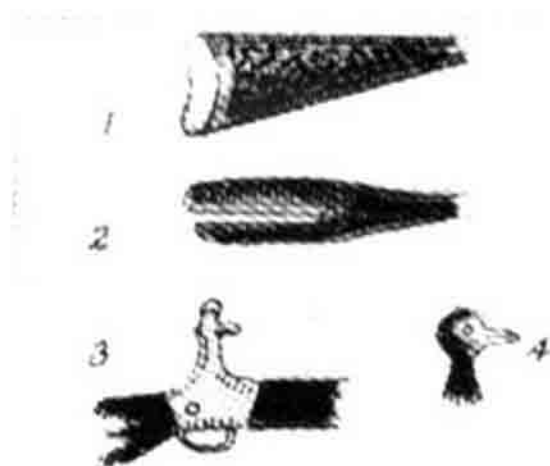
Figure 20: Wassily Kandinsky. *Lyrical*. 1911. Oil on canvas, 94 x 130 cm.

Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam.



Figure 21: Illustrations of the metamorphosing sequences of one of Henslow's mental images, from *Inquiries into human faculty and its development* (Galton, 1973).

Figure 22: Six signatures from Hung Tung's paintings.



(Left) Figure 23: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 72 x 29 cm.

(Right) Figure 24: Hung Tung. Untitled. 1972. Mixed-media on paper, 152 x 42 cm.



Figure 25: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, right scroll: 157.5 x 43.5 cm, left scroll: 156 x 43.5 cm.

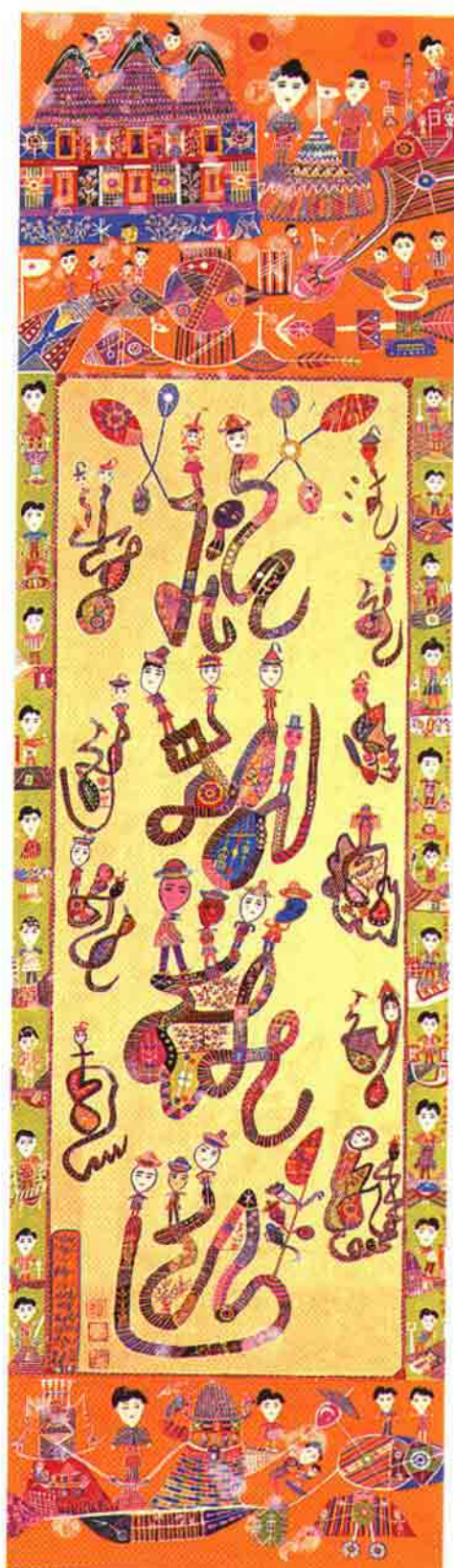
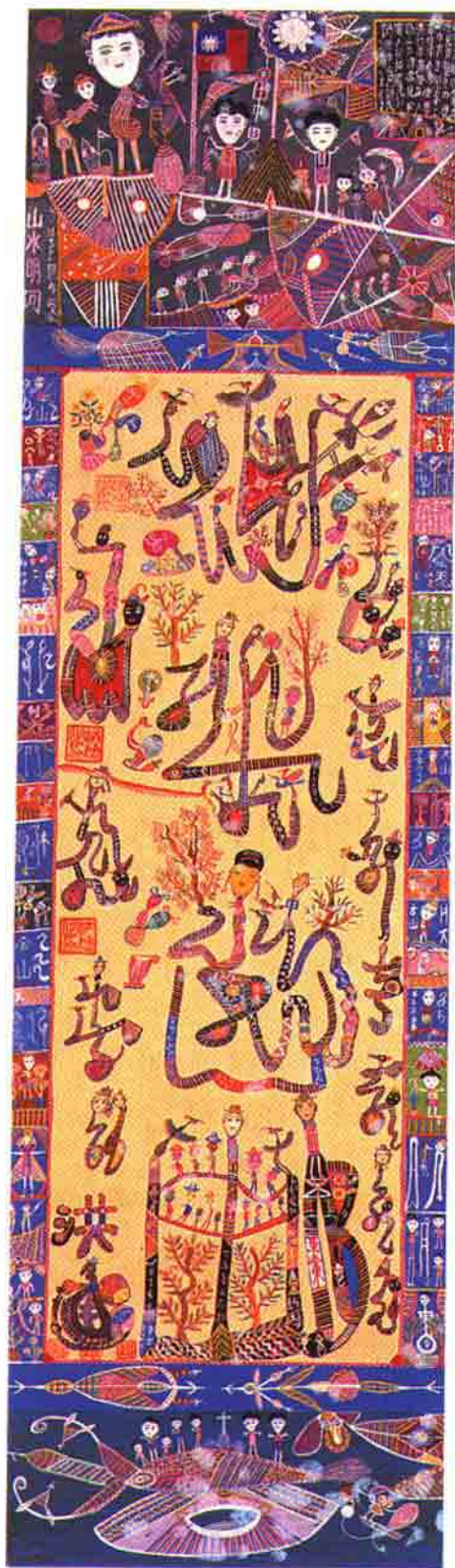


Figure 26: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 108 x 46 cm.



Figure 27: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.



(Calligraphy by Wang Meng)



John

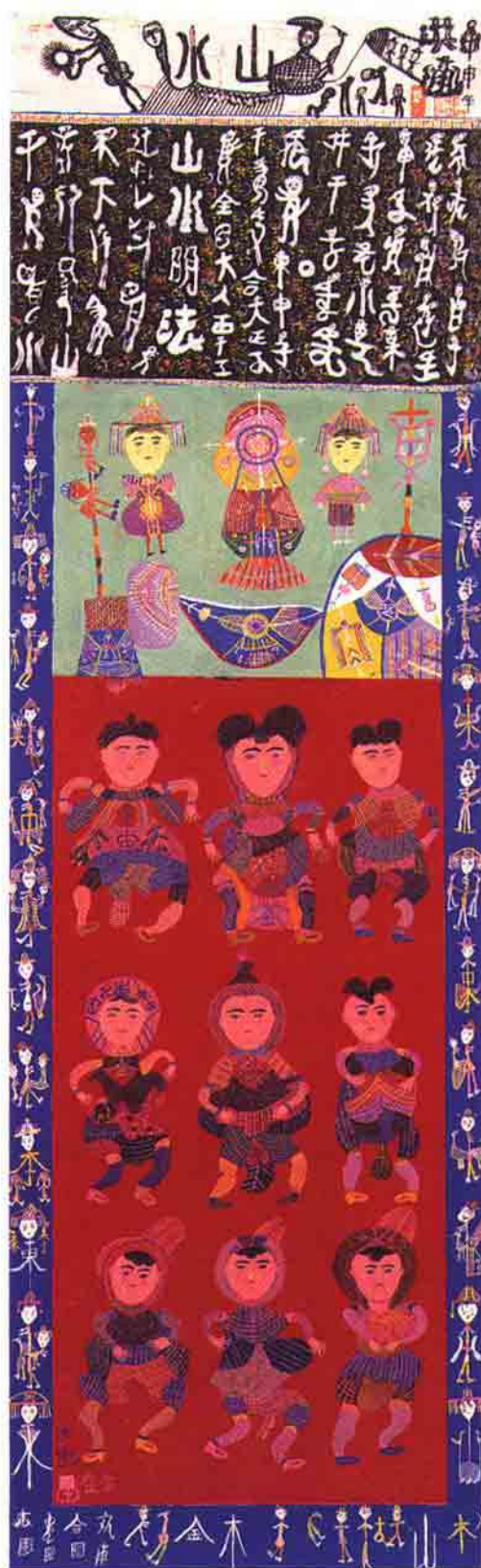
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淇



(Left) Figure 28: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 143 x 43 cm.

(Right) Figure 29: Hung Tung. Untitled. 1970 (?). Mixed-media on paper, 133.5 x 42 cm.



(Left) Figure 30: Two early Chinese words from a bronze bowl. Shang Dynasty.
Ink-imprint.

(Right) Figure 31: Five early Chinese words from a bronze round covered box.
Shang Dynasty. Ink-imprint.

(Left) Figure 32: Five early Chinese words from a bronze pitcher. Late Shang or
Early Chou, 11th century B.C. Ink-imprint.

(Right) Figure 33: Bronze inscription from a tripod. Shang Dynasty, 1226-1222
B.C. Ink-imprint.

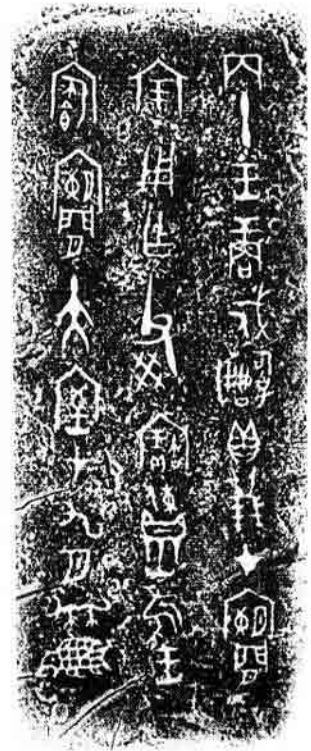


Figure 34: Bronze inscription from a vessel. Early Chou, 1104-1068 B.C. Ink-imprint. David Weil collection, Paris.

Figure 35: Bronze inscription from a vessel. Early Chou, 11th century B.C. Ink-imprint.

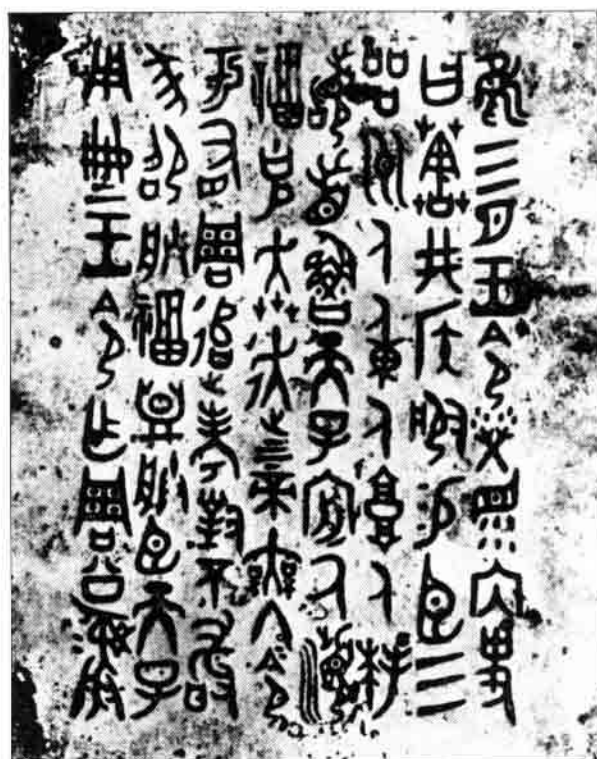


Figure 36: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 175 x 83 cm.

Figure 37: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper.



Figure 38: Hung Tung. Untitled. 1972. Mixed-media on paper.



Figure 39: Seven words from the dagger-axe of Crown Prince Yu. Late Chou,
520-530 B.C.

Figure 40: Section from Heavenly script. Woodblock print.

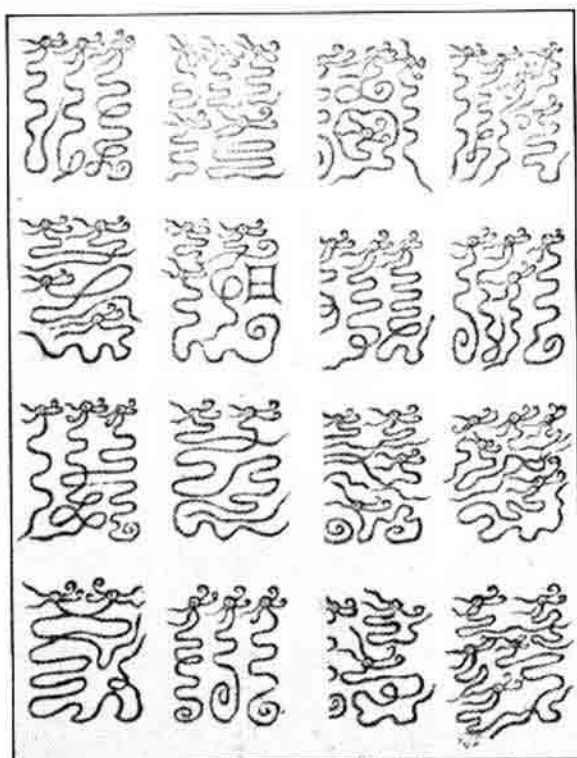
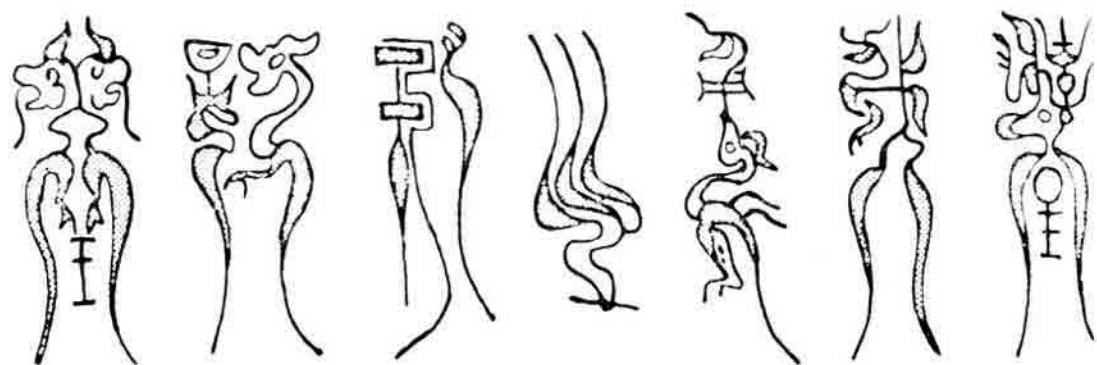


Figure 41: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper.



此山在...
 山頂有...
 山之左...
 山之右...
 山之北...
 山之南...
 山之東...
 山之西...
 山之東南...
 山之西南...
 山之東北...
 山之西北...
 山之東南...
 山之西南...
 山之東北...
 山之西北...

山圖
 山頂有...
 山之左...
 山之右...
 山之北...
 山之南...
 山之東...
 山之西...
 山之東南...
 山之西南...
 山之東北...
 山之西北...



Figure 42: Section from Illustrated Astronomical Chart of the Comets and Their Forecasts. Ink on paper. Hunan provincial Museum.

Figure 43: Talisman from *Taoistic Holy Scriptures*. Woodblock print.

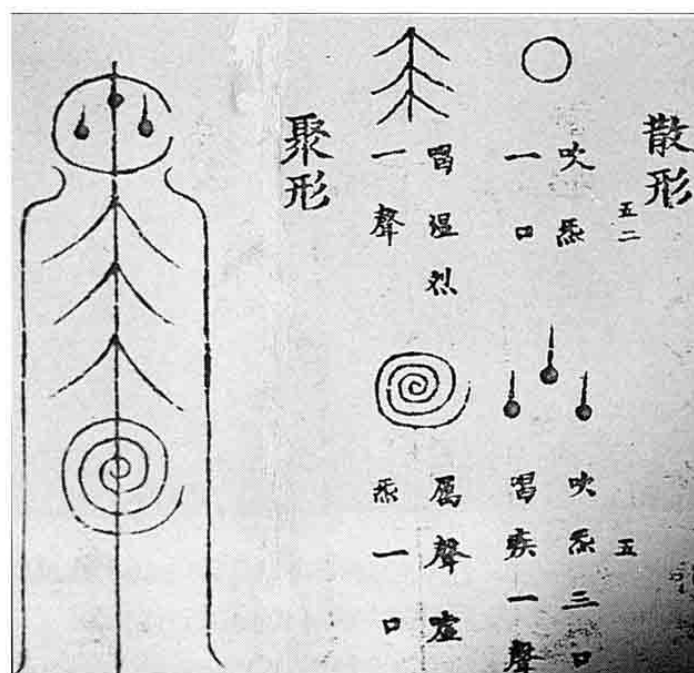
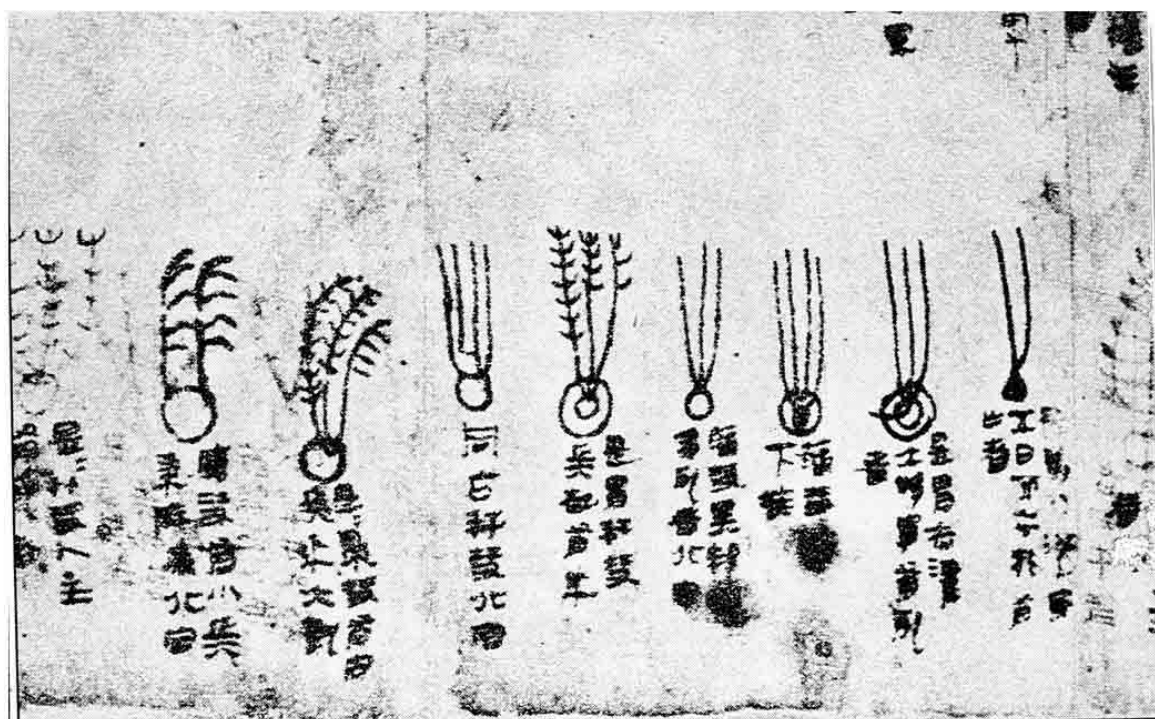


Figure 44: Hung Tung. 節日之一 [*Festival I*] (titled in *Artist Magazine* [April, 1976] & 洪通繪畫素描集 [*Hung Tung's Painting and Drawing Album*] [He, Ed., 1976]). 1972. Oil on board.



(Left) Figure 45: Hung Tung. 神與廟 [*Gods and Temple*] (titled in *Artist Magazine* [April, 1976]). 1970. Mixed-media on paper, 162 x 42.5 cm.

(Right) Figure 46: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 139 x 43 cm.



Figure 47: Lapp shaman drum. 17th century (?). Staatliche Museum für
Völkerkunde, munich.



Figure 48: seal-script, *Jwan-shu*.

Figure 49: The talisman of summoning the nine transformations of great
obscurity. Ming Dynasty, 1444-45. Woodblock print.

皇帝立國維鈔杜苦無世稱王許伏亂
評威動四極走義京方求臣青韶經時
不之滅大暴降廿山火冬上常高彌貴
趙顯明賢獻論咸方降專專廟軌護方
豐于繹山羣臣歸省咸受修氣追念
世分土畫界引屏義理珍歎曰化流正
於野自齋古棺也聯篆繫段乃五帝尊
錄禁也適今皇帝寬廓不下舜不復超
燭周滅餘紂昔蕭何帝澤安代羣臣誦

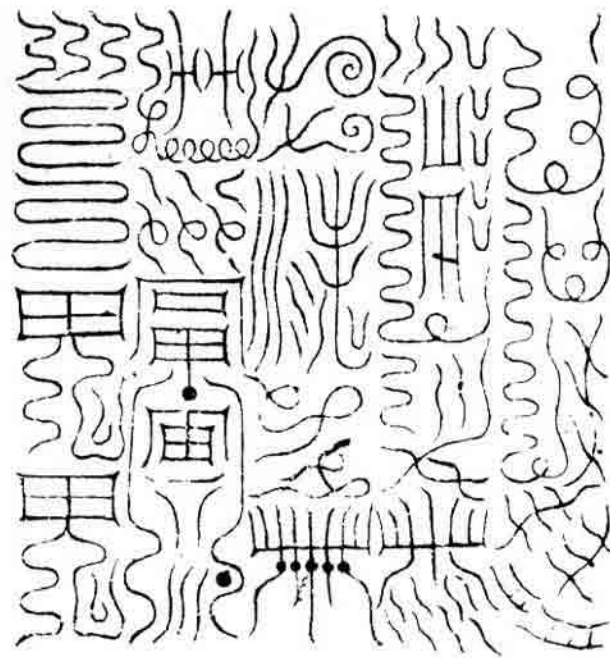
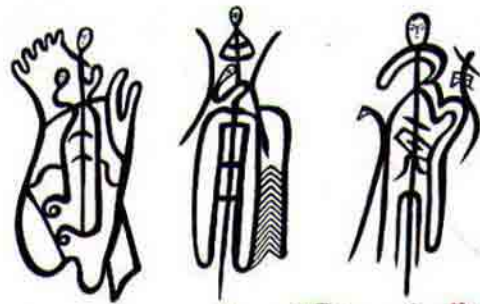


Figure 50: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 105 x 35 cm.



LLLLL
TTTTT
ARTSEN



(Left) Figure 51: Talisman from *Rarity of Good Fortune*. Woodblock print.

(Right) Figure 52: Taoist ritual sword. Ming Dynasty. Steel and brass, L. 64 cm.

Staatliche Museum für Völkerkunde, munich.

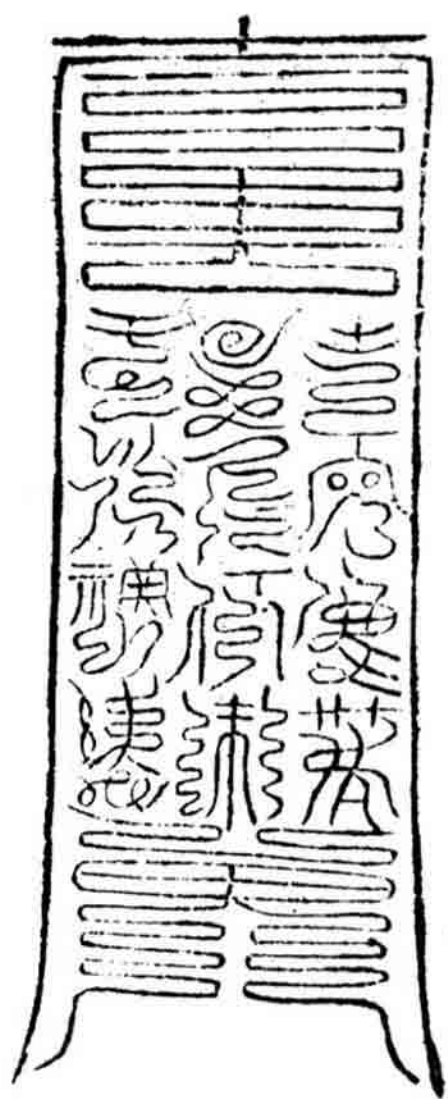
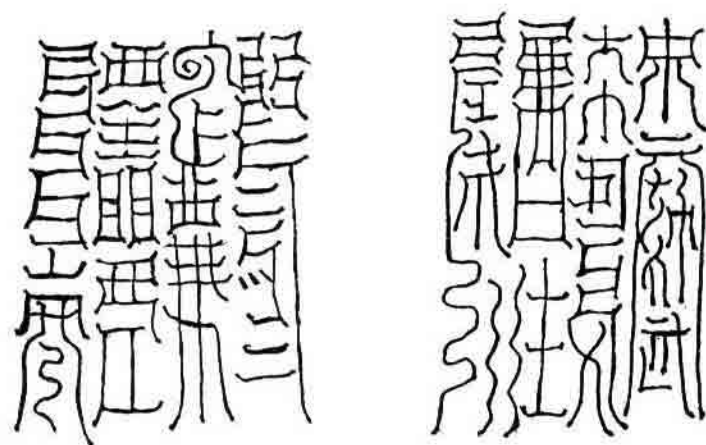


Figure 53: A talisman.

Figure 54: Hung Tung. Untitled. 1973 (?). Mixed-media on paper, 36 x 108 cm.



曲素訣辭符



Figure 55: Linoleum print on the subject of dancing by a 6th grader, from
Children's arts from deep down inside (Cole, 1966).

Figure 56: Julio Gonzalez. *The Dancer*. Iron.

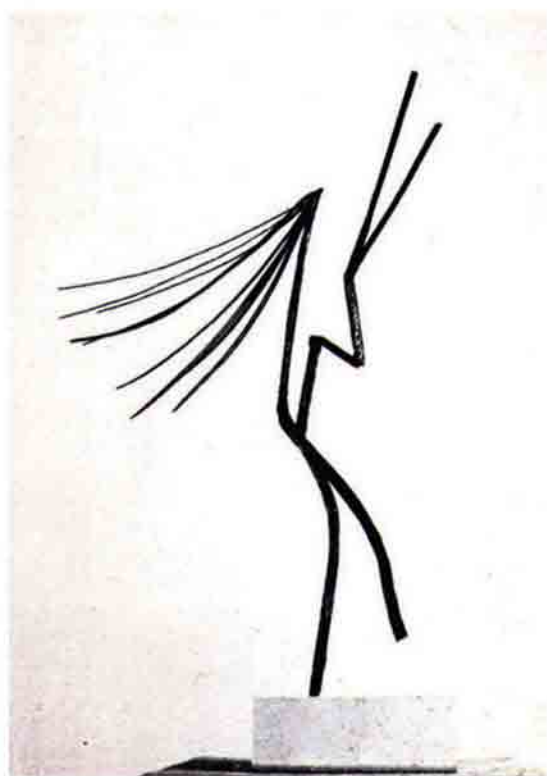
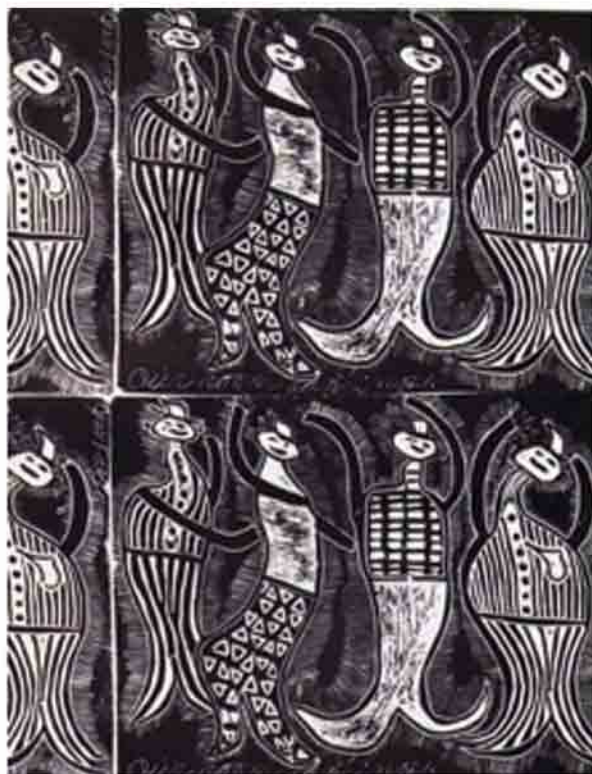
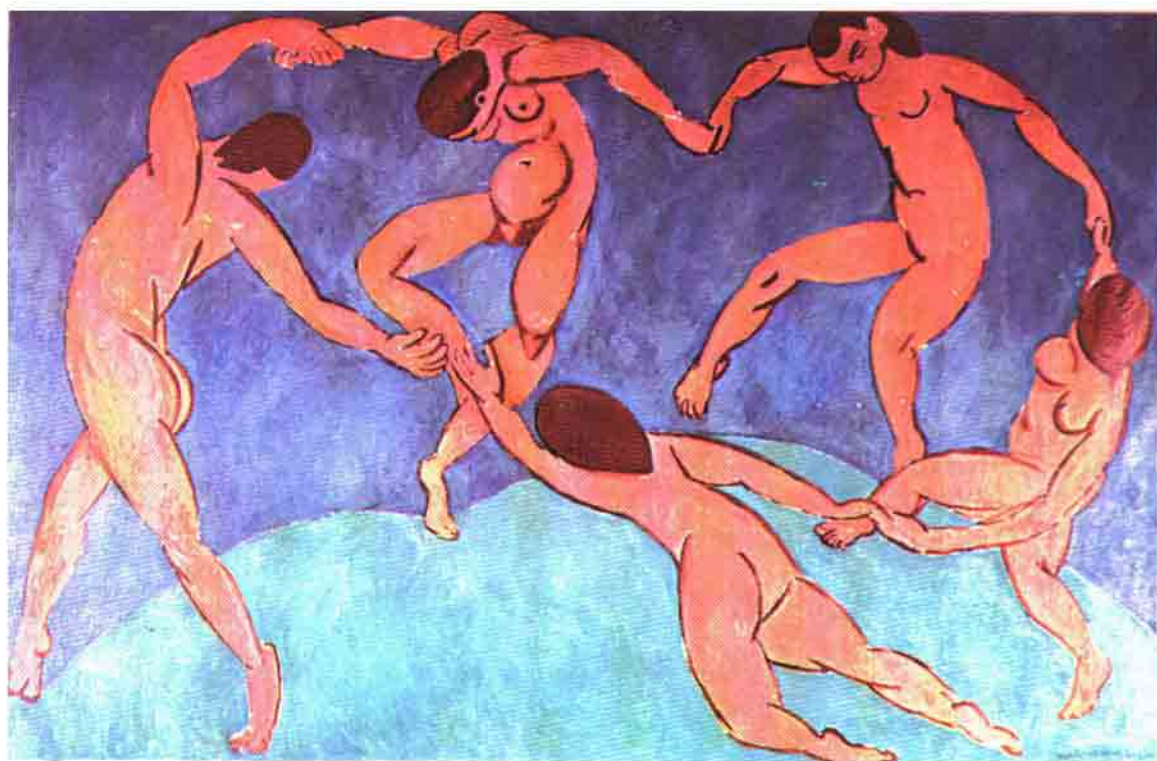


Figure 57: Herri Matisse. *Music* (Study). 1907. Oil on canvas, 28 3/4" x 23 5/8".
Museum of Modern Art, New York.



(Left) Figure 58: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 156.5 x 42.5 cm.

(Right) Figure 59: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.

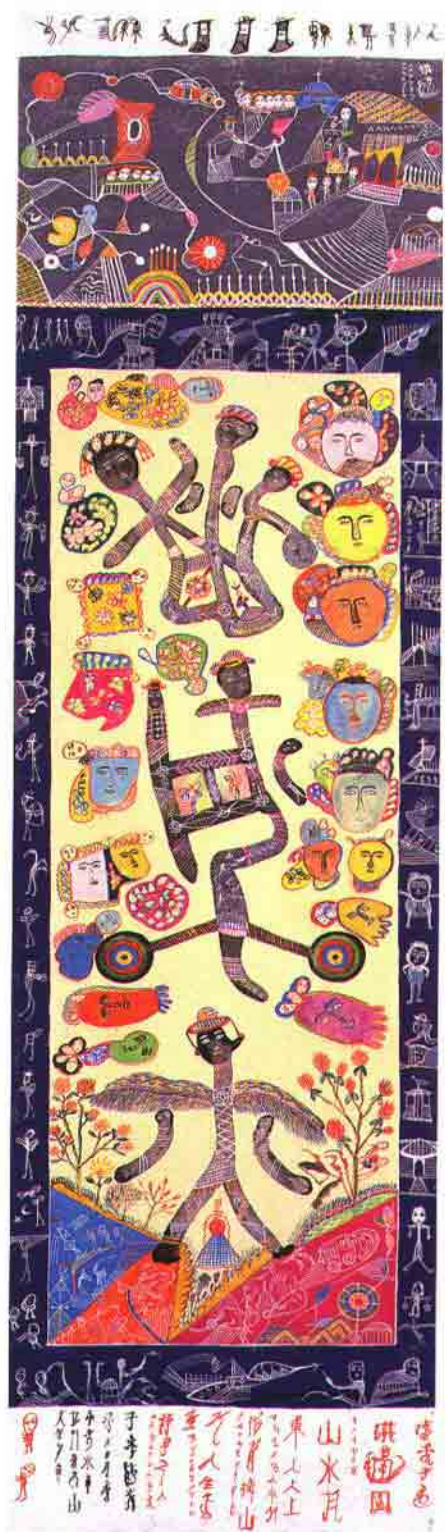


Figure 60: Talisman of 12 pestilence kings.

Figure 61: Zhenwu with the eight Trigram, the Northern Dipper, and talismans.

Qin Dynasty, 17th or early 18th century. Hanging scroll, ink, colors and gold on silk. 59.9 x 42.6 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Russell Tyson Endowment.

第一頁時發全



第二頁時全大



第三頁時依題



第四頁時依題



第五頁時依題



第六頁時依題



第七頁時依題



第八頁時依題



第九頁時依題



第十頁時依題



第十一頁時依題



第十二頁時依題



Figure 62: Section from the Taoist Canon of the Zhengtong Reign. Ming Dynasty, dated 1445. Woodblock-printed book, ink on paper. 35 x 11.3 cm (each page). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

咀呼天稱怨或自恚恨或密相獸蠱神衛散去歸天王相不復營護姦邪入其門妖怪起其室從軍不歸遠行不還困於口舌厄於縣官欲消此災解此罪者先行南稱符三十日次行東稱符九十日



老君曰西方太白星白帝少昊靈寶西稱符字通陰西嶽華山官屬千人姓周字元起直符白素玉女主之於肺於體主兩耳右手脇王西方其時秋其行金其音商其色白其數

七法七星少陰之氣其獸白虎其日庚辛諸道士欲求神仙長生不老役使萬神以白繒爲地黑筆爲文盛以白囊著右肘修德行道其神自詣諸百姓取白石黑刻符文鎮西方

也仙公曰西帝受一篇也

(Left) Figure 63: Hung Tung. 神像 [*Effigies of Deities*] (titled in *Artist Magazine* [1976, April]). 1972. Colors on paper.

(Right) Figure 64: Hung Tung. 神像 [*Effigies of Deities*] (titled in *Artist Magazine* [1976, April]). 1972. Colors on paper.

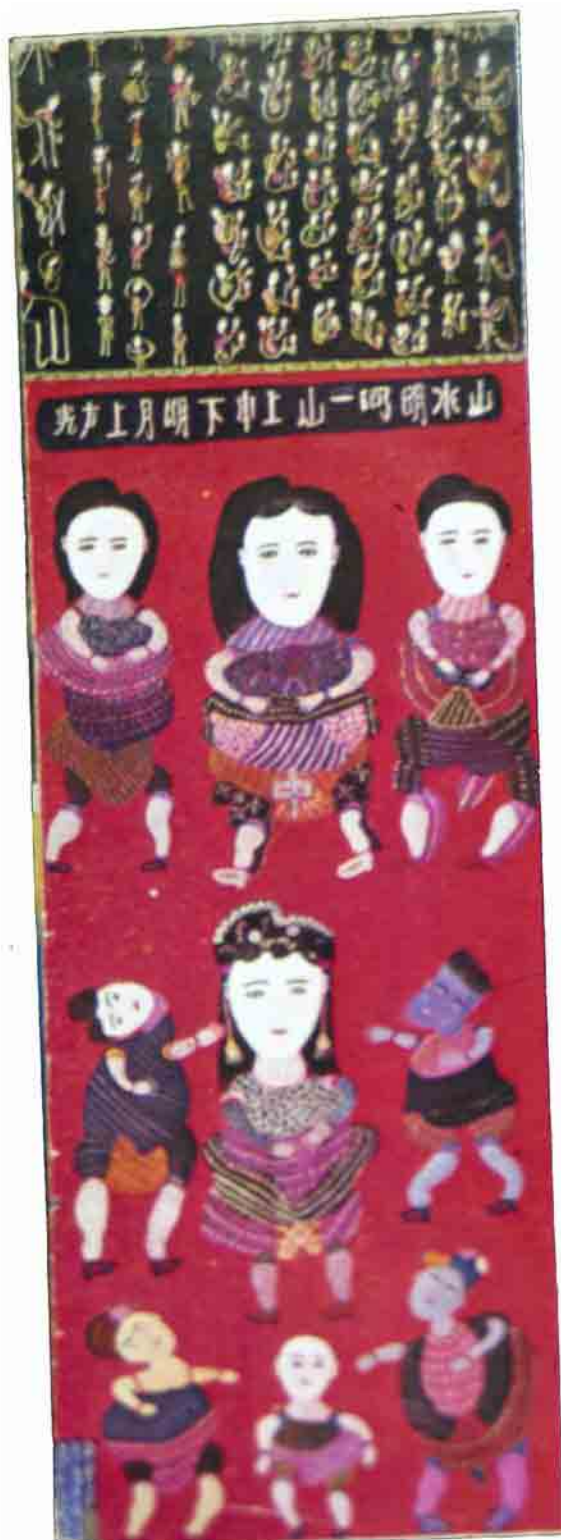


Figure 65: Effigies of deities, from Hunan province, China.



Figure 66: Two pictures of Kindness—the Great Taoist Priest Jang (left picture), and the Great Taoist Priest Ge (right picture) (功德畫—張天師, 葛天師), from Hunan province, China.



Figure 67: Effigies of deities on fabric (吊偈畫—布畫神像), from Hunan province, China.



Figure 68: The Androgyne, presenting the unification of two opposite elements (sulfur and mercury) in alchemy and (male and female) in human procreation.

Figure 69: The Illustration of the Marriage of the Dragon and the Tiger, from *Directions for Endowment and Vitality*. Ming Dynasty, Wanli reign, dated 1615. Woodblock-illustrated book, ink on paper. 30.8 x 26.3 cm (each page). The British Library, London.



龍虎交媾圖

龍呼珍虎虎吸龍精
兩相飲食俱相食併

虎在西方龍在東方
若解相吞一處神仙頃刻不勞功

白圖即虎騎白虎
青衣女子跨青龍
鉛汞向地裡見後
一時開鎖在其中



男女相須合吐以滋
養精血氣相親相愛

嬰兒從女臂臂出却被黃婆引入室
驚騰而起片時間不覺東方紅日大

Figure 70: Karagas (Tofa) shamaness. Hamburgisches Museum für
Völkerkunde, Hamburg.

Figure 71a, b, c & d: Skeletonization in shamanistic drawings. (a) Bark-
engraving from Chatham Islands. (b) Tattoo pattern from the Marquesas.
(c) Pottery decoration from Yang-Shao China (2200-1700 B.C.). (d)
Schematic representation of a so-called thread-cross from Australia...322



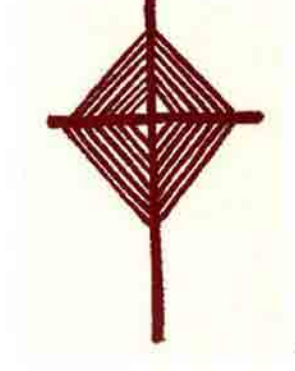
a.



b.



c.



d.

Figure 72: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 186 x 78 cm.



Figure 73: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.



Figure 74: Hung Tung. 中國人 [*Chinese*]. 1977. Mixed-media on paper. 183 x 75 cm.



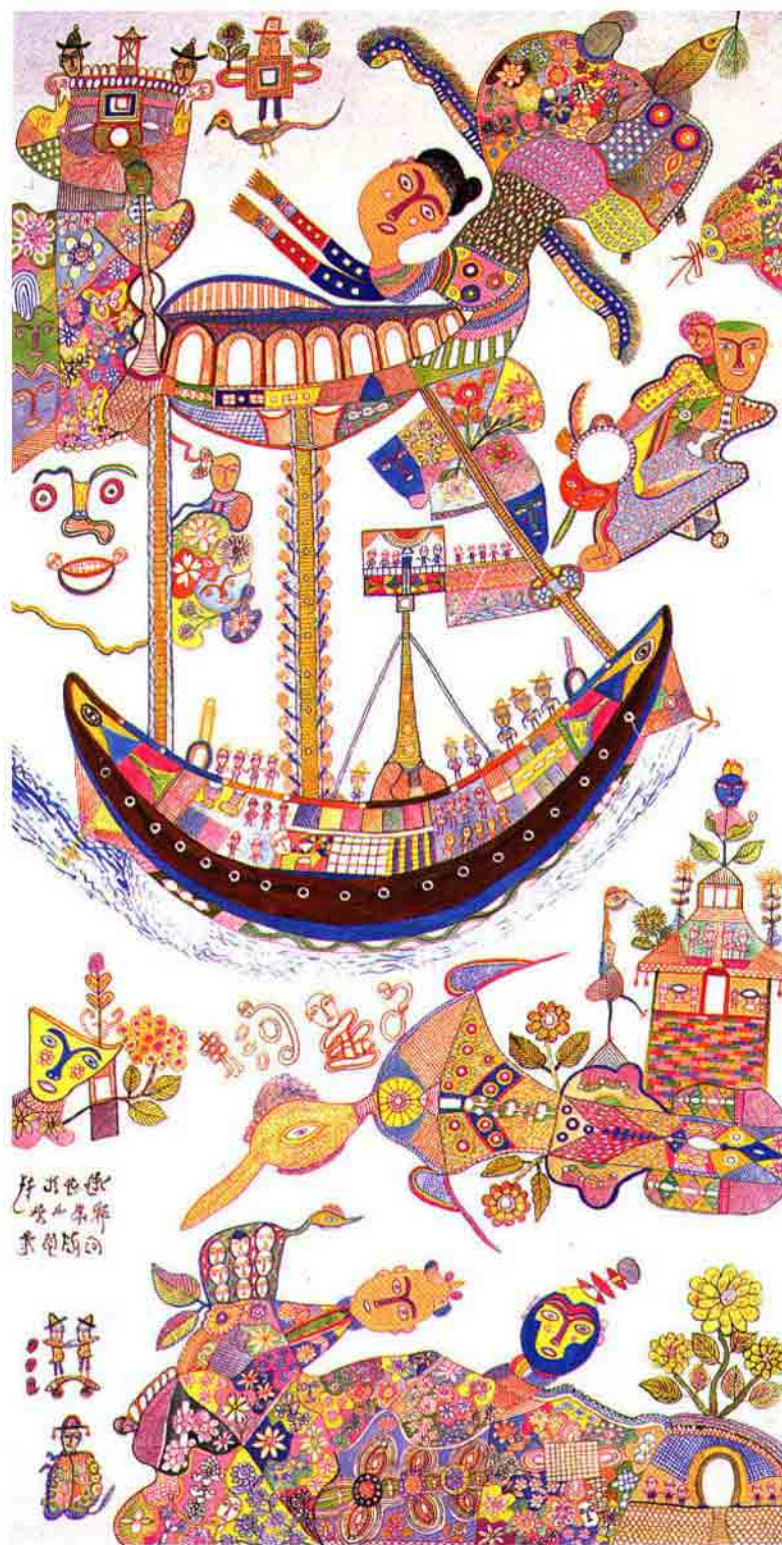
Figure 75: Hung Tung. 鳥人國 [*Bird Utopia*] (titled in *Artist Magazine* [1976, April]). 1971. Mixed-media on paper.



Figure 76: Hung Tung. Untitled. 1972. Mixed-media on paper, 102 x 34 cm
(each painting).



Figure 77: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 133 x 66.5 cm.



舟中歌
李俊卿

Figure 78: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.



Figure 79: Hung Tung. 王爺船 [*King Boat*](titled in *Artist Magazine* [1976, April]). 1971. Mixed-media on paper.



Figure 80: Constellation plan from one of the Han tombs, Nan-Yang, Honan province, China. Later Han, 1st century. Ink-imprint, 30.8 x 108 cm.

(Left) Figure 81: Talisman from *Rarity of Good Fortune*. Woodblock print.

(Right) Figure 82: Lapp shaman drum schema. National Museum, Copenhagen.

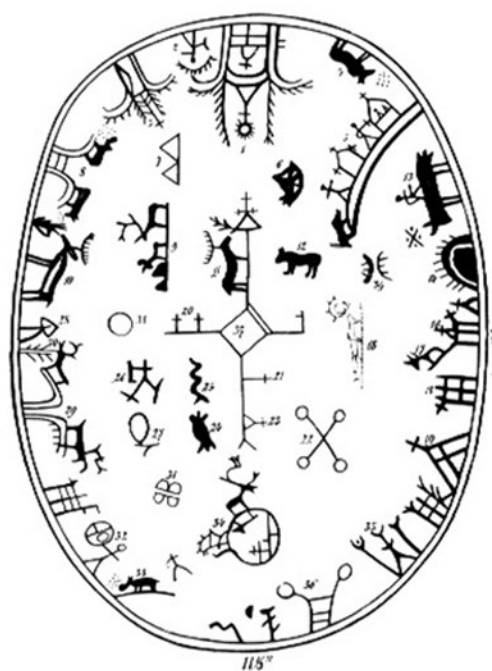
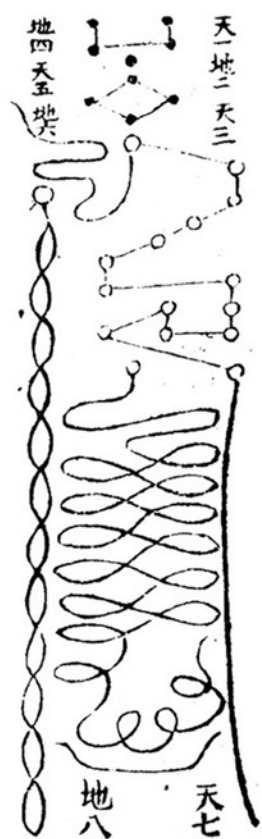


Figure 83: Chukchee drawing.

Figure 84: The dead Ani, portrayed as a swallow standing on a mound. Detail from the papyrus of Ani. British Museum.

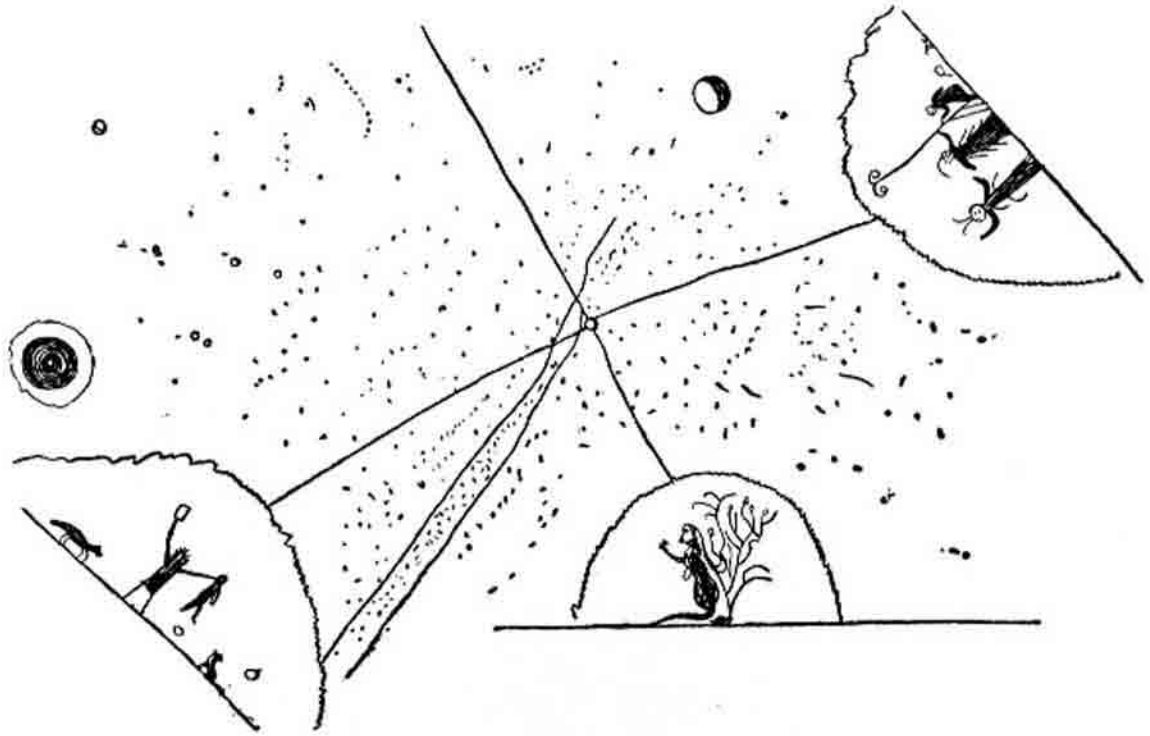


Figure 85: Lantern poles.

Figure 86: Seven-Star Lamp.

Figure 87: Streamers on a lantern pole.

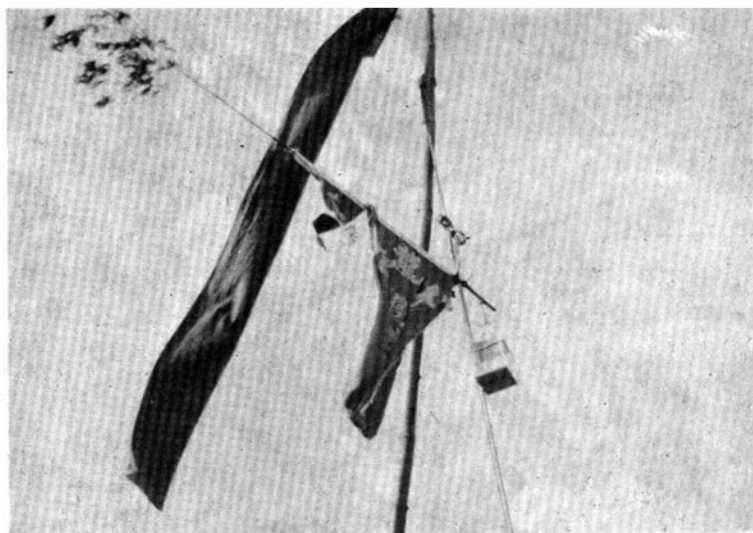
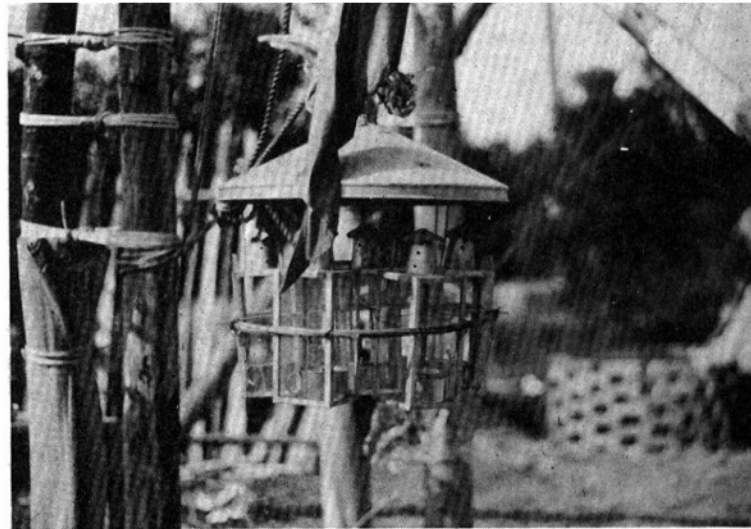
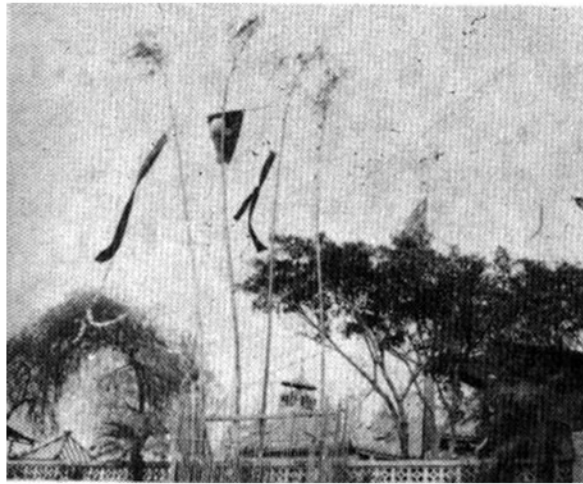
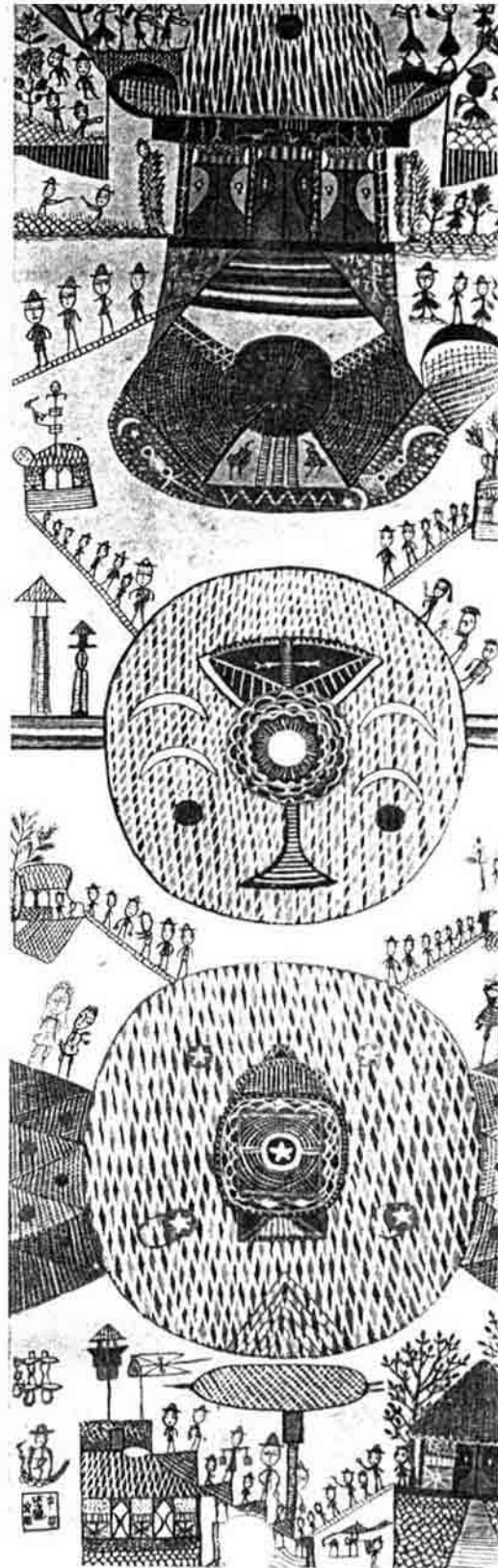


Figure 88: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.



(Left) Figure 89: Drawing of a shaman with radiant beams on his head, from a shaman's drum, Siberia.

(Right) Figure 90: Drawing of a skeletonized spirit with antennae on its head, from northwest Australia.

Figure 91: A Water Lantern Raft composed by more than one hundred lanterns is erected in front the temple before being sent out to the sea.

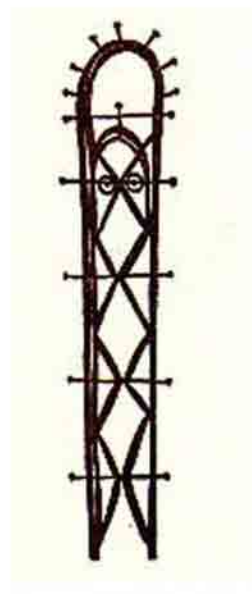
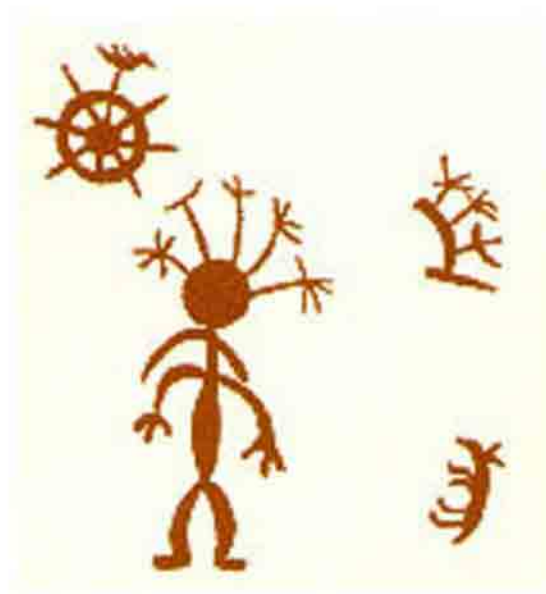


Figure 92: Wassily Kandinsky. *Each for Himself*. April 1934. Oil and tempera on canvas, 23 5/8" x 28" (60 x 71 cm.) Private collection.

Figure 93: Wassily Kandinsky. *Sky Blue*. March 1940. Oil on canvas, 39 3/8" x 28 3/4" (100 x 73 cm.) Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

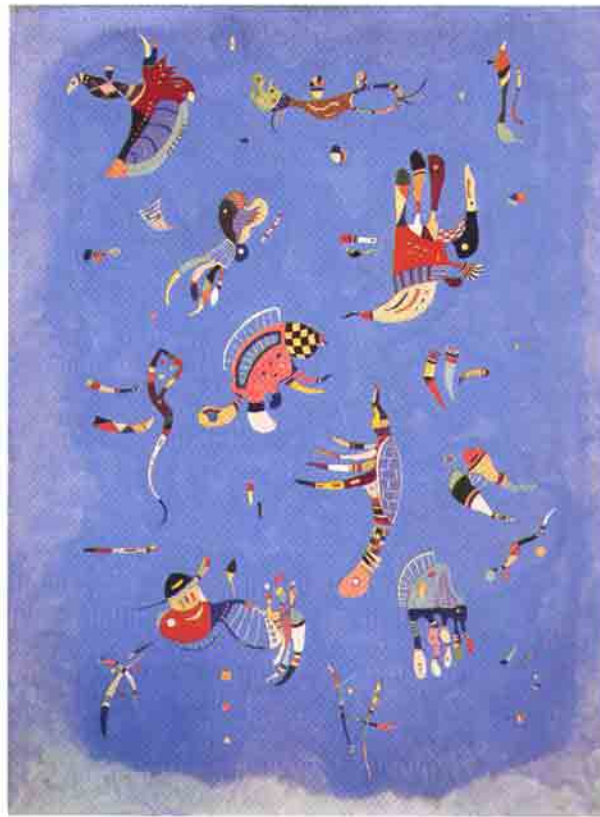


Figure 94: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 82.5 x 62.5 cm.



Figure 95: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 38 x 53 cm.

Figure 96: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.



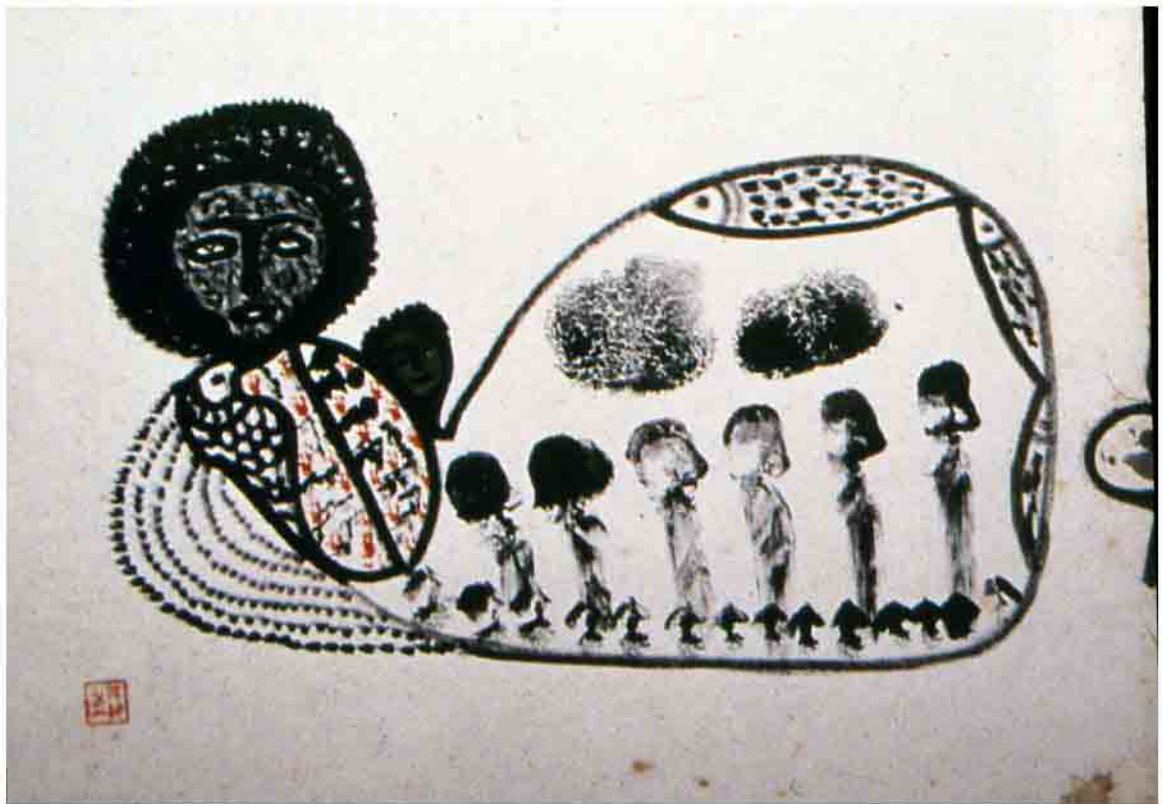
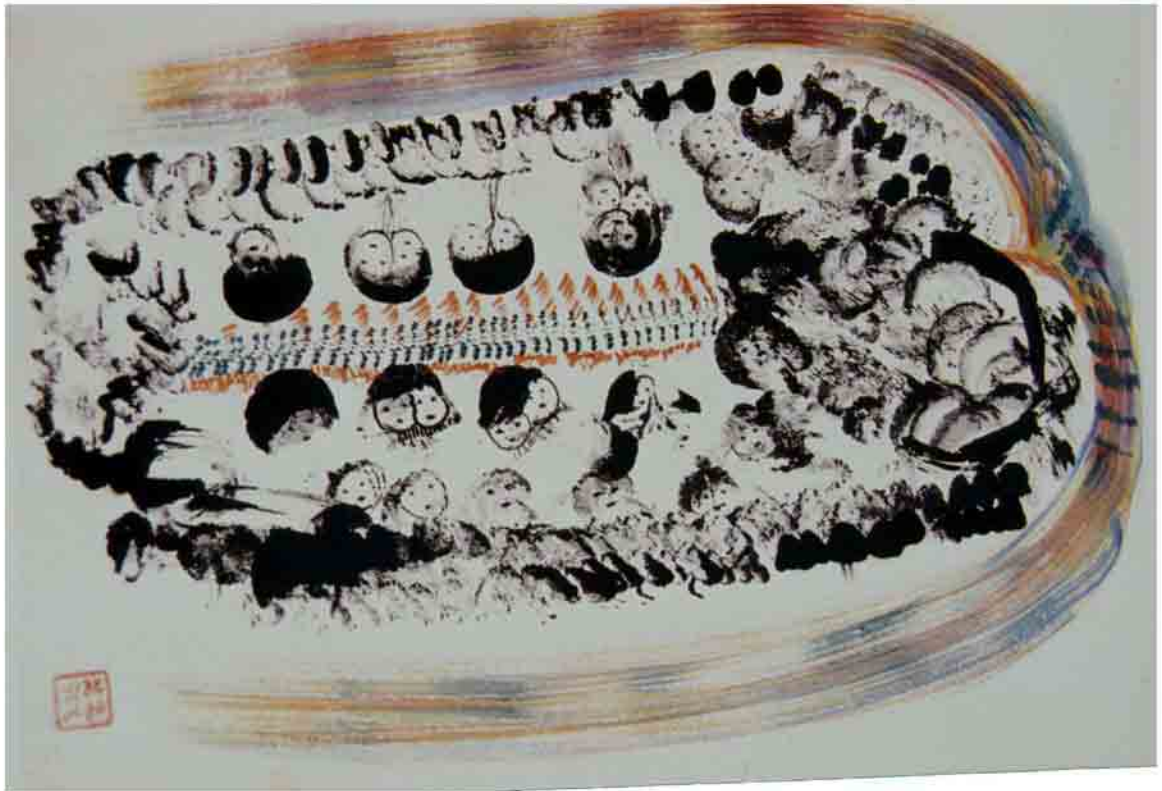
Figure 97: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.

Figure 98: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.



Figure 99: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.

Figure 100: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.



(Left) Figure 101: Progressive stages in the development of vertebrate embryos.

(Right) Figure 102: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper.

Figure 103: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper, 39 x 53.5 cm.

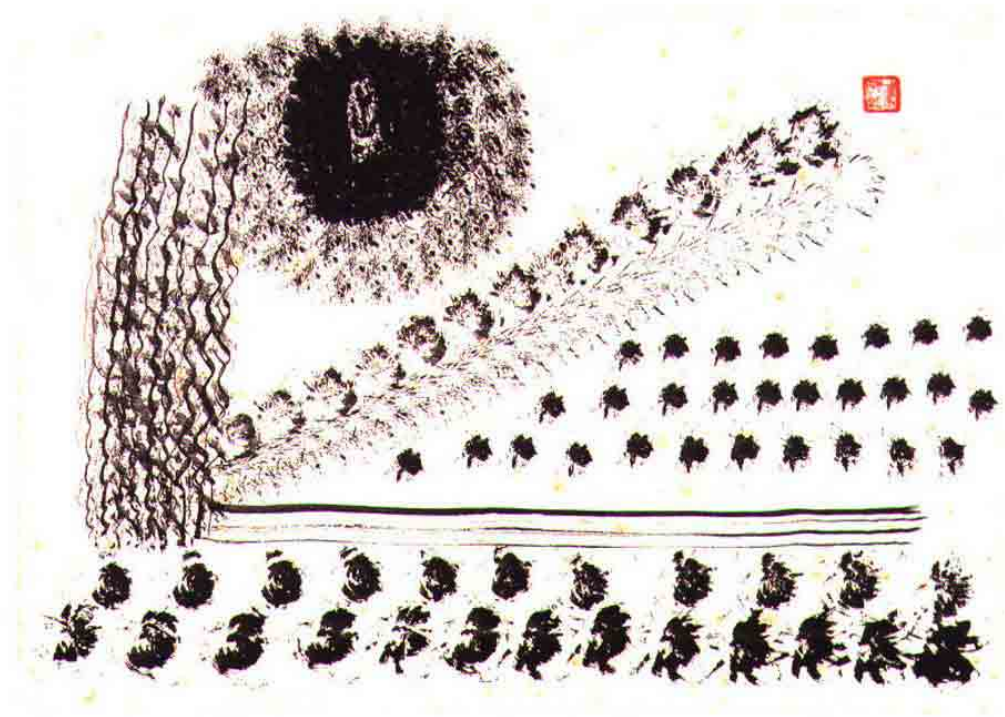
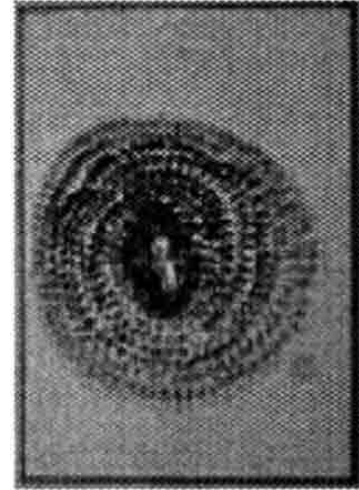
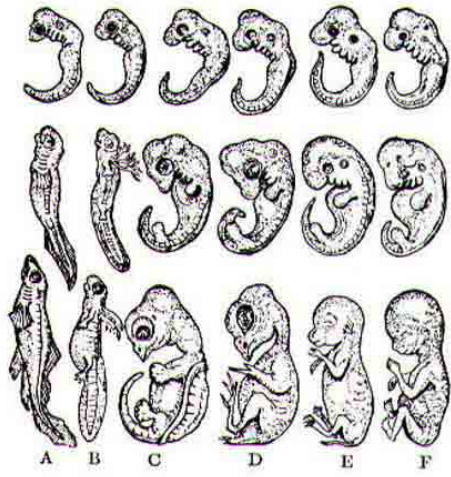


Figure 104: The clip-and-paste-up decorations.

Figure 105: The roof of the building of Dai-Tyan-Fu.

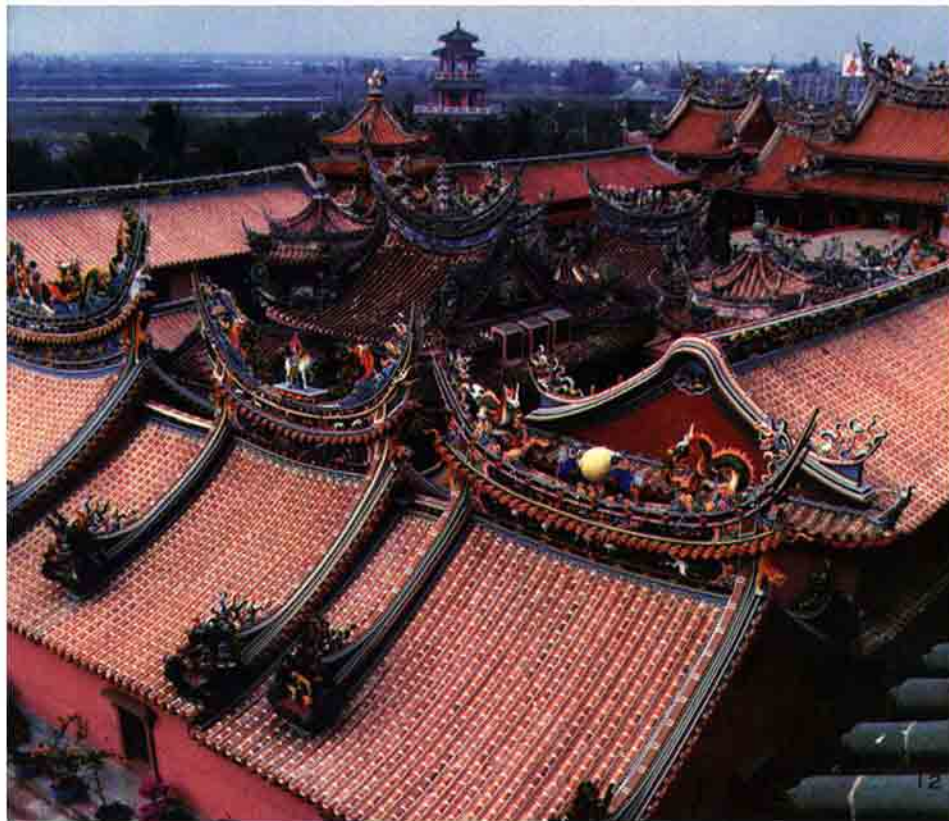


Figure 106: The clip-and-paste-up decorations on the roof of the building of Dai-Tyan-Fu.

Figure 107: The clip-and-paste-up decorations on the roof of the building of Dai-Tyan-Fu.



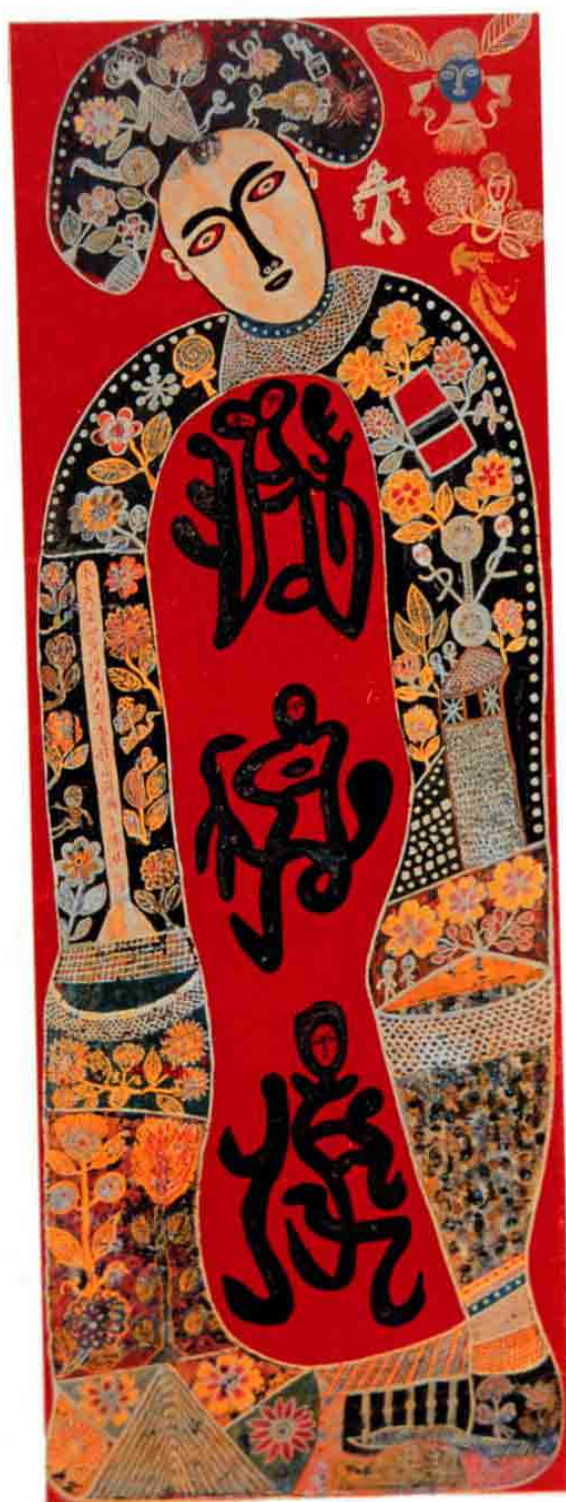
Figure 108: Parade of temple guardians in a Taoist festival.

Figure 109: Er-Lang-Shen, the god with three eyes, guard of the Heavenly Palace, rests on the ground after a parade.

Figure 110: Parade of Taoist deities in a Taoist festival.



Figure 111: Hung Tung. 門神 [*Door Gods*]. 1974. Mixed-media on paper. 106 x 38 cm (each painting).



(Left) Figure 112: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.

(Right) Figure 113: Hung Tung. 做一個開心快活人 [*Be a happy person*]. 1974.

Mixed-media on paper. 127 x 46.8 cm.



Figure 114: Puppet theater performance.

Figure 115: Taiwanese opera performance on the open-aired theater stage in front of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.



Figure 116: Hung Tung. 鄉下姑娘 [*Country Ladies*] (titled in *Artist Magazine* [1976, April]). 1973. Mixed-media on paper.



Figure 117-120: Repetitious designs on the ceiling of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.

Figure 121: Birds painted on the ceiling of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.



Figure 122: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper, 122 x 69 cm.



Figure 123: Huichol Indian yarn painting by Mariano Valadez.

Figure 124: Mandala pattern on the ceiling of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.

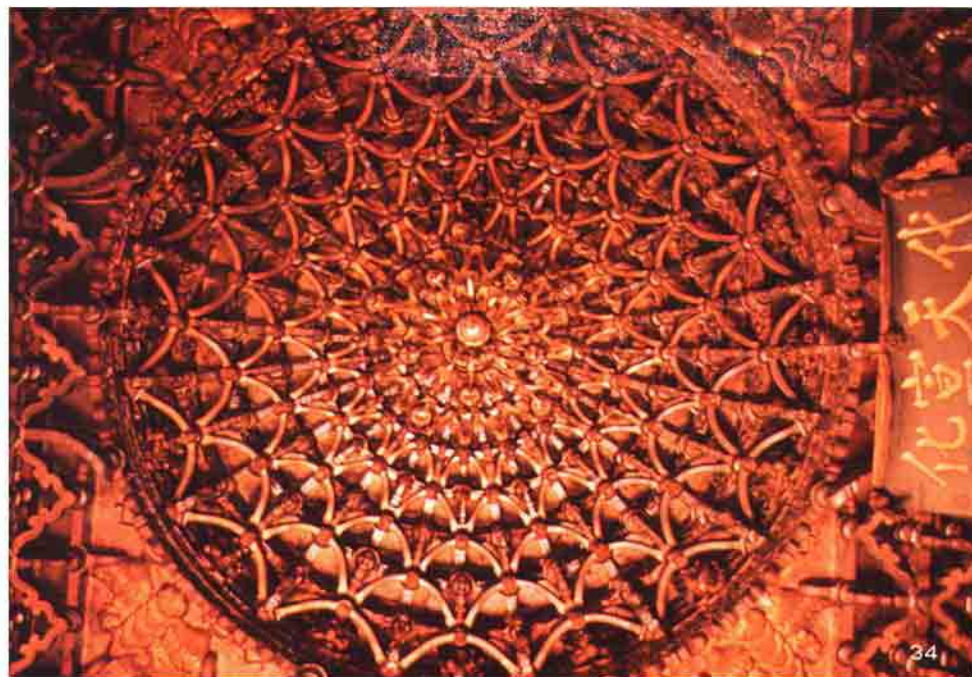


Figure 125: Dome interior, Great Mosque, Córdoba, Spain. c. A.D. 961-976.

Figure 126: Dome interior, Cappella SS. Sindone. Turin. 1667-90.



Figure 127: Huichol Indian embroidery, collected by Susan Eger in San Andrés (1976-77).

Figure 128: Huichol Indian embroidery, collected by Susan Eger in San Andrés (1976-77).

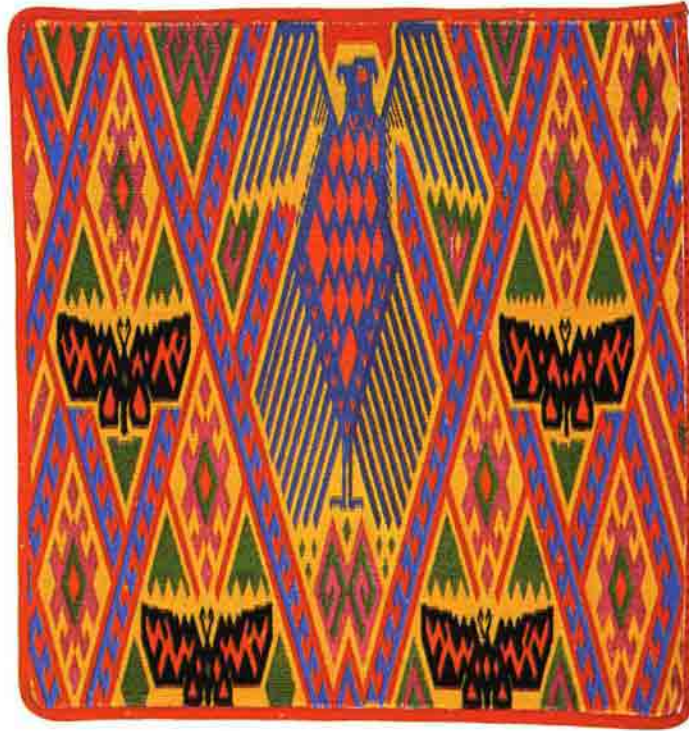


Figure 129: Wassily Kandinsky. *Sketch 1 for Composition VII*. 1913.

Figure 130: Wassily Kandinsky. *Black Accompaniment*. March-June 1924. Oil on canvas, 166 x 135 cm. Private collection, Switzerland.



Figure 131: The front of the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.

Figure 132: The elaborately painted and carved decorations in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.



Figure 133: The elaborately painted and carved decorations in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.

(Left) Figure 134: The elaborately painted and carved decorations in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.

(Right) Figure 135: A sculpted illustration from a narrative (in the square) surround by decorations and inscriptions in the temple of Dai-Tyan-Fu.



Figure 136: Howard Finster. It's a pity for Our Beautiful World to Perish. 1981.

Enamel on wood. 63" x 27". #1,794. Private collection.



Figure 137: 林淵 Lin Yuan. Untitled. 1980. Oil on paper, 110 x 79 cm.

Figure 138: 吳李玉哥 Wu Li-Yu-Ge. 柿子與老虎 [*Persimmons and Tigers*]. 1985.

Color on paper. 72 x 88 cm.

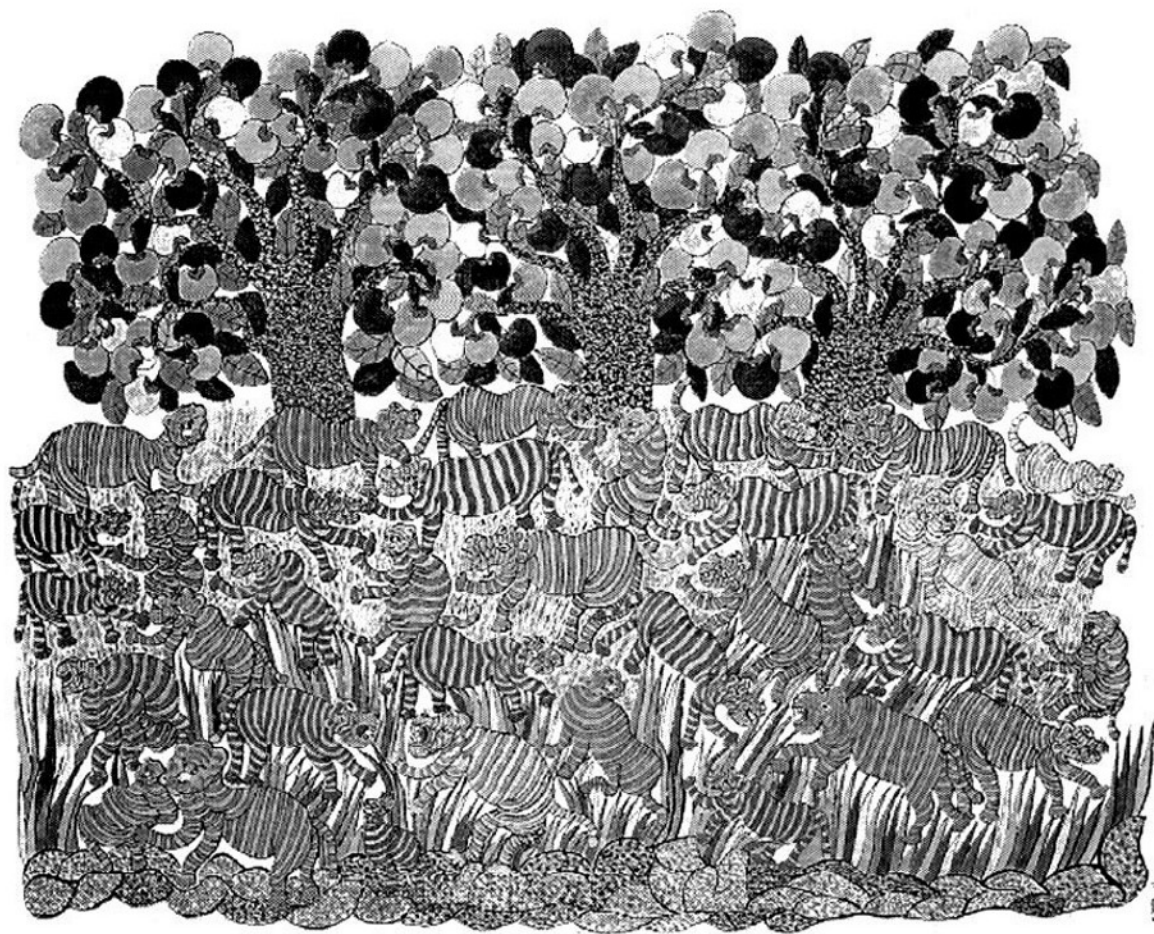


Figure 139: T. A. Hay. *Pig*. Paint on paper. 1982. Collection of Arthur F. Jones.

Figure 140: Charley Kinney. Untitled. 1987. Acrylic and poster paint on board.
22" x 28". Collection of Arthur F. Jones.

Figure 141: Mose Tolliver. Untitled. Latex paint on board. 14 3/4" x 14 1/2".
Collection of Arthur F. Jones.

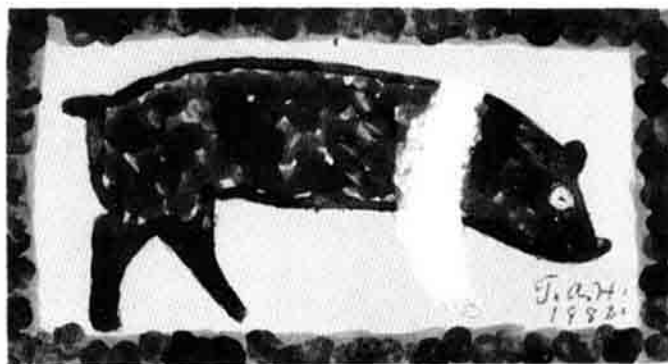


Figure 142: Taiho Yamasaki. *Alone through Heaven and Earth*. 1959.

Calligraphy. 53 3/4" x 53 3/4".

Figure 143: André Masson. *Kabuki*. 1955. Gouache.

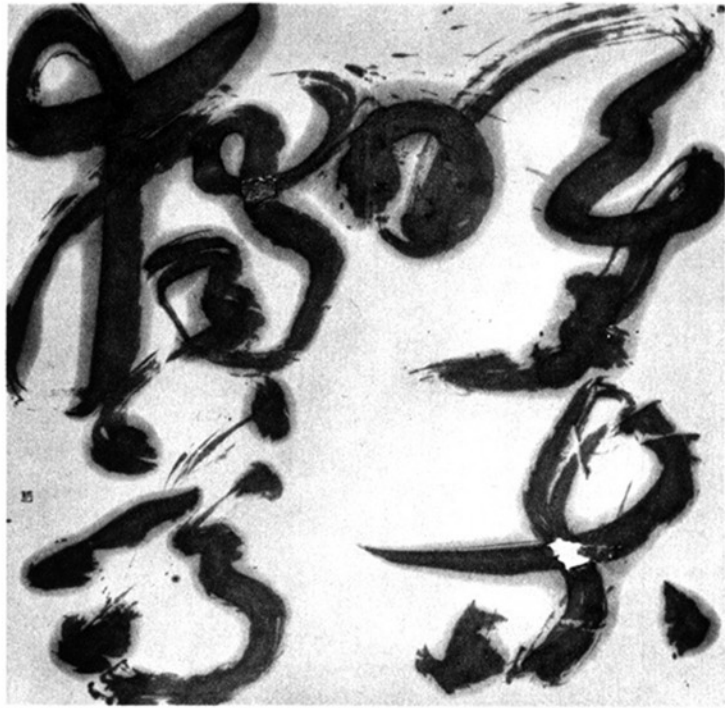


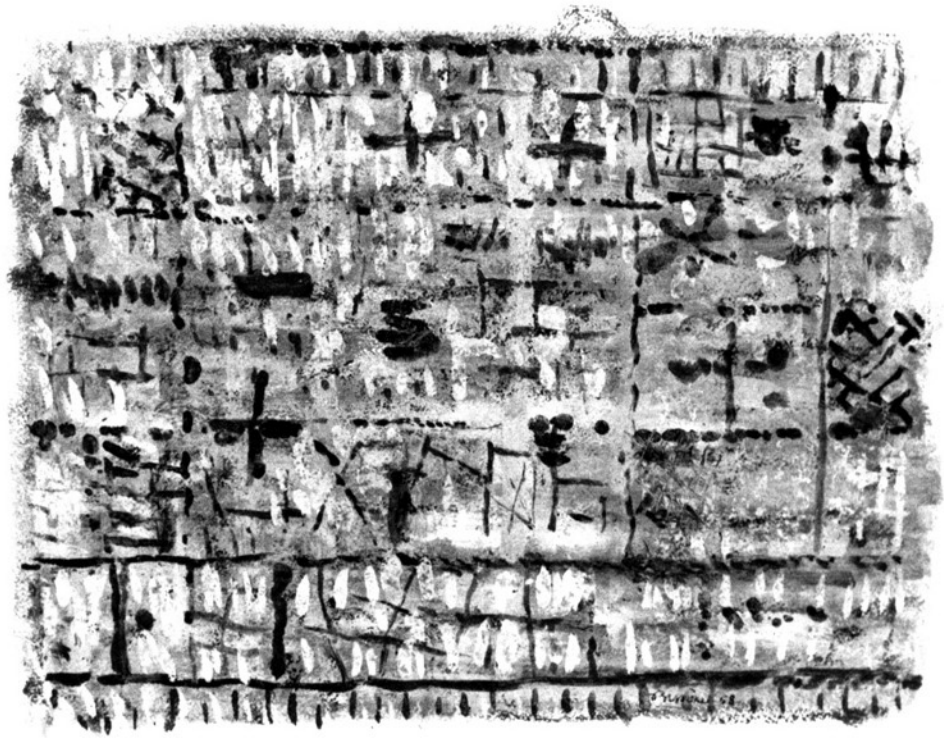
Figure 144: Gakiu Osawa. Page from a calligraphic sketchbook.

Figure 145: Henri Michaux. *Chinese Brush Drawing No. 4*. 1958.



Figure 146: Mark Tobey. 1951. Tempera. 43 3/4" x 28". Joseph R. Schapiro collection, Oak Park, Illinois.

Figure 147: Roger Bissière. *Painting 1958*. Oil on canvas. 15 3/4" x 19 5/8". Dr. Gran collection, Oslo.



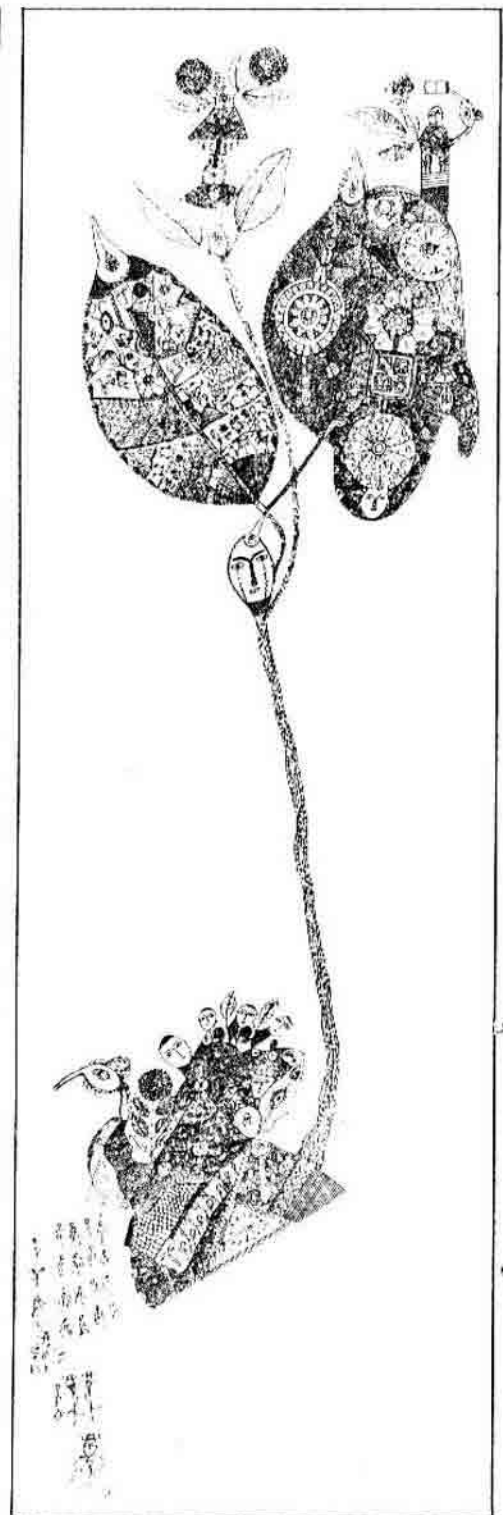
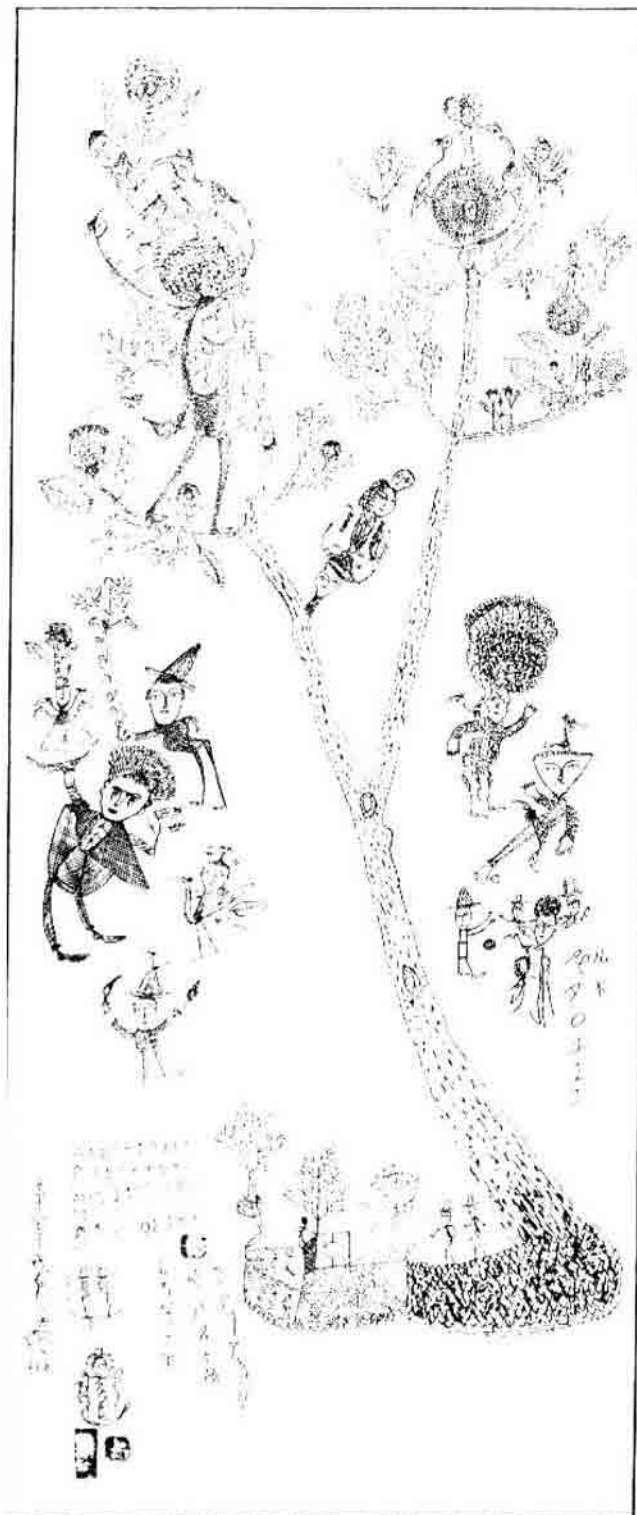
(Left) Figure 148: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.

(Right) Figure 149: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper. 43.3" x 13.4".

Collection of Lyau Jr-Syang (廖志祥).

(Left) Figure 150: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper.

(Right) Figure 151: Hung Tung. Untitled. 1975. Ink on paper.



(Left) Figure 152: Hung Tung. Untitled. 1976. Ink on paper.

(Right) Figure 153: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Ink on paper.

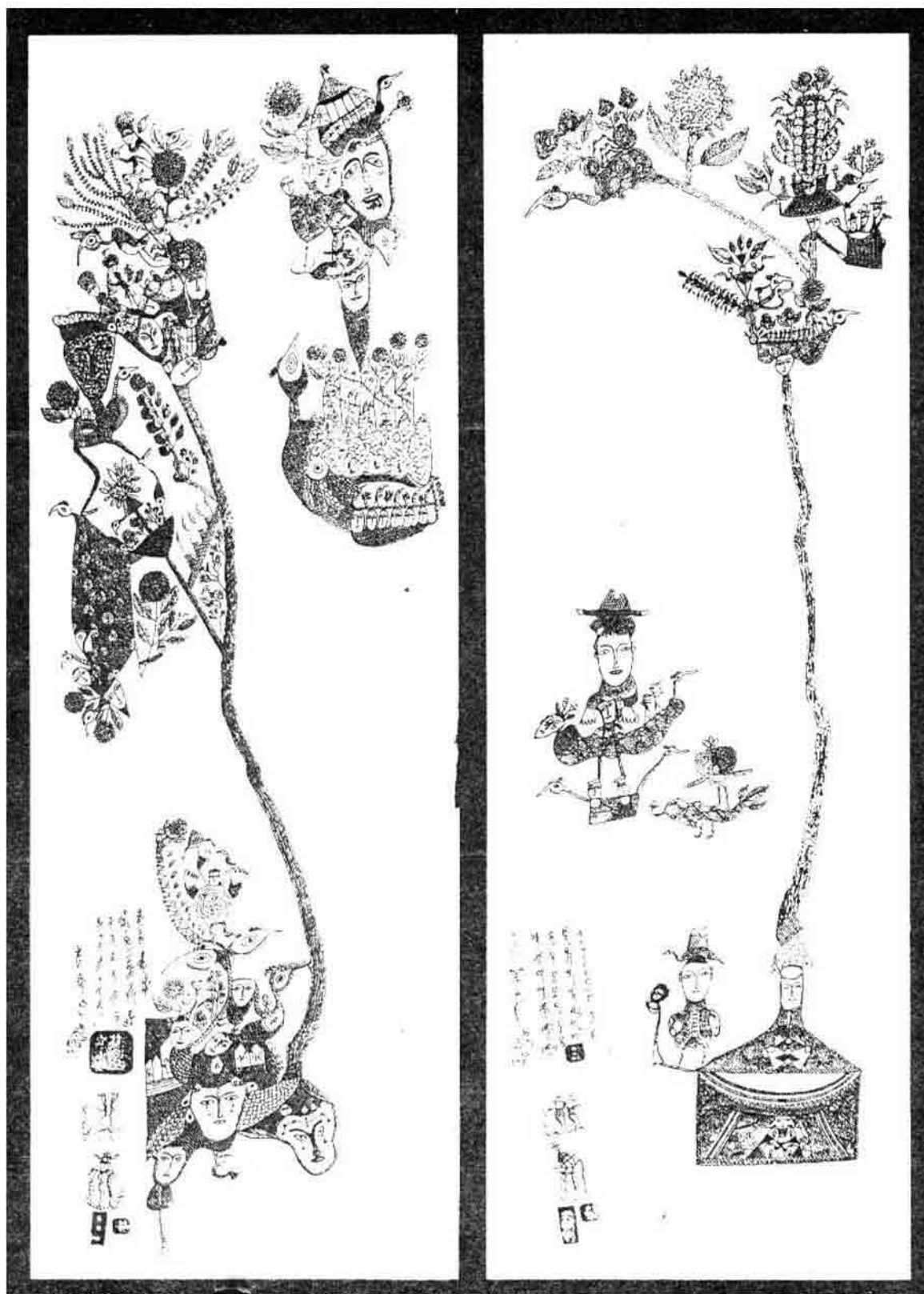
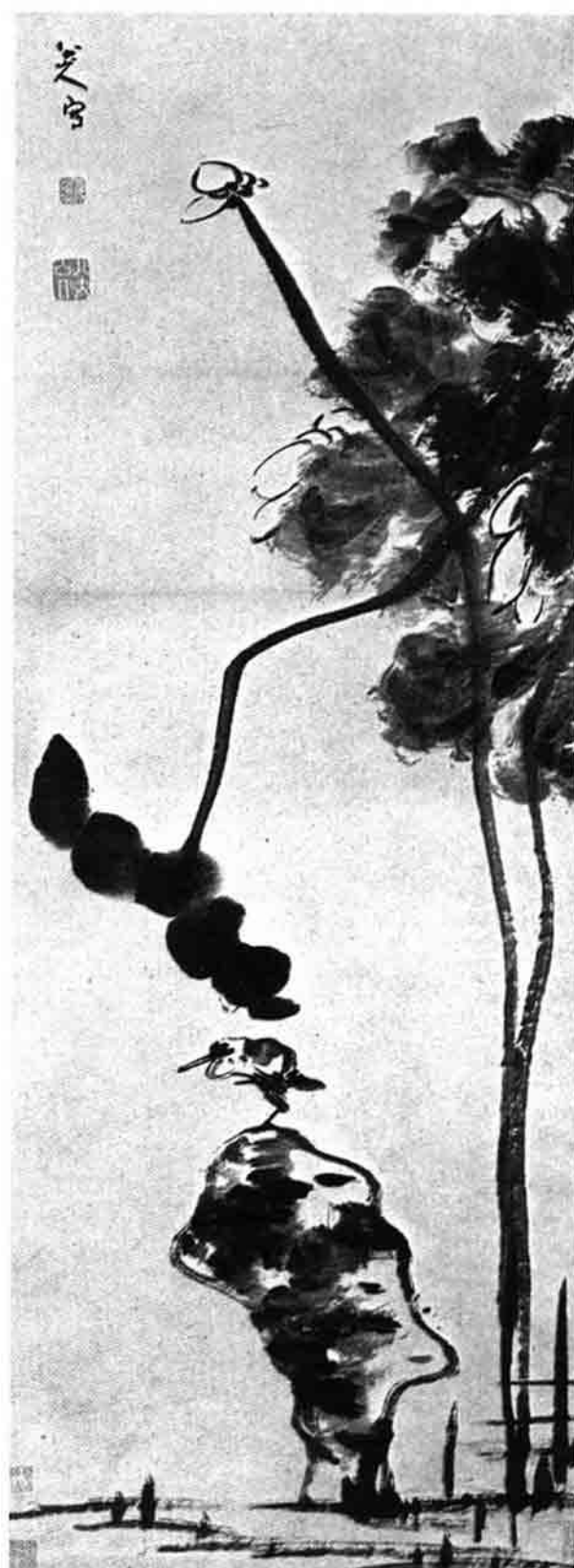


Figure 154: 朱耷 Chu Da (1625- ca. 1705), from 安晚冊 [*Painting Album An-Wan*]. Ink on paper.

Figure 155: 朱耷 Chu Da (1625- ca. 1705), from 安晚冊 [*Painting Album An-Wan*]. Ink on paper.



Figure 156: 朱耷 Chu Da (1625- ca. 1705). 荷花水禽圖 [*Lotus and Crane*]. Ink on paper.



(Left) Figure 157: Hung Tung. 生命之樹 [*Tree of Life*]. 1975. Mixed-media on paper. 131 x 50 cm.

(Right) Figure 158: Hung Tung. Untitled. n.d. Mixed-media on paper.

