

Renewal of Sino-Indian Artistic Discourse: The Journey of an Artist

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Introduction

Art is not gorgeous sepulcher; immovable brooding over a lonely eternity of vanished years. It belongs to the procession of life.

--Tagore

Sino-Indian cultural/artistic relations have had a long history. But in spite of this, Sino-Indian artistic discourses remain limited. In the early twentieth century, these two major Asian countries in the early 20th century witnessed the arrival of western-style realism, after which it became the mainstream art practice. The resulting polemics on tradition, modernity, verisimilitude, vision and reality should be studied on the basis of our own “ways of seeing.” The lack of awareness is seen not only in the visual arts but also in the performing arts and film movements. Generally, to Indian artists and critics today, modern Chinese art still revolves around the utilitarian, propagandist socialist-realist official paintings and the tired, stale copies of mountain, water, bird, bamboo and flower paintings.

Regarding modern Sino Indian artistic discourse, we need to go back to the early 20th-century scenario in Bengal, India. It is considered as a primary foundation where one could trace a new artistic quest and emergence in Calcutta. This was followed by a similar emergence in Santiniketan, Vswa Bharati University, West Bengal. Sino-Indian artistic interaction diminished after 1949 because of socio- political reasons. Despite this, a few artists and critics from both countries continued to frequent each other’s countries with unflagging enthusiasm. They have tried to understand each other’s art in whatever way possible. But there has been no effort to string all these ventures in a cohesive manner for research, publication, and collaboration

Artistic Scenario in Bengal, India in the late 19th century

In the 19th century, the British had initiated a new art education program in India just when the traditional art genres were suffering from banality and listless patronage. The new art education taught some mechanical conventions in the form of a complete utilitarian theory that produced craftsmen. New art colleges were founded in Calcutta in 1876-77 and then in Madras and Bombay. “The object of the institution was to give the young people an idea of men and things in Europe both present and past, not only that they might learn to produce feeble imitations of European art, but rather that they might

study the European methods of imitation and apply them to the representation of natural scenery, architectural monuments, ethnical varieties and national costumes in their own country” (Director of Public Instruction 1876-77: 12).

Through the newly adopted curriculum, western-style realist art practices took hold. “Our new class was more obsessed in believing that without the application of anatomical detail, perspective and cast shadow, a painting cannot be worthy. This infatuation with cast shadow not only affected the newly educated people but also...scholars, historians, and archaeologists” (Mukherjee, et al., 1943: 250). This scenario created confusion on how to cope with such “bland and awkward naturalism.” The artists “worked against the background of European realism, although realism of the European kind never became a confirmed attitude among Indian artists. It may be because the new education did not quite succeed in converting the educated Indian to scientific materialism. It may be because at the time the realist attitude sought a perch on the Indian art scene, its image on the western art scene itself was a little mixed up” (Subramanyan, 1973: 34).

Late 19th-century India witnessed a positive art movement intertwined with a nascent nationalist movement that propelled a positive quest to renew the entire eastern art tradition as a single, definite category. The leading proponent of this was the artist and aesthetician Abanindra Nath Tagore (1871-1951). He felt the cultural crisis and clarified the theory of beauty, nature, tradition and creativity. E. B Havell, a British scholar and official, working as a principal also inspired the artists in this new search.

Abanindra Nath’s concept of art was modern in the best sense of the word. Compared to some extent to that of the Imagist poets, the image was to lead you on to something beyond it, the form was there to intone formlessness [but seen] in the light of familiarities with the principle of Indian and Chinese aesthetics. He gave the search the air of [a] sacrament. You go close to things in nature to put your ear to their heartbeats” (Subramanyan, 1973: 34). Abanindra Nath’s paintings established a new hybridization and eclectic codes incorporating many elements from Mughal, Chinese, Persian Japanese and western art.

Since 1900, a new art movement witnessed a fervent artistic discourse facilitated by many noted scholars and encouraged by the growing interest in South East Asian art. A new society, the Prachya Sava, later renamed the Indian Society of Oriental Art, was founded in 1907. Many important artists like Abanindra Nath and Gagendra Nath joined the society. The poet Rabindra Nath Tagore himself was not against the society, but he was critical of its over-emphasis on the method and style of Eastern art tradition only. And probably, he did not like the over enthusiasm shown towards “Oriental art” by the few British official members who had tried to curb Indian freedom struggle at the same time.

New Indian Art and Far East Asian Contacts

Many noted scholars played a vital role in formulating the theoretical basis for this new art movement. They include Sister Nivedita from Scotland, A. Kentish Coomerswamy from the United States and leading Japanese scholar Kakaju Okakura who came to Calcutta in 1901-02 through the invitation of prophet and nationalist Swami Vivekananda. Certainly, Okakura played an important role in promoting artistic interest in Far East Asian art through his scholarly explanations of the artistic and aesthetic significance of Chinese and Japanese traditions. This period saw Japan's emergence as a major force in Asia and since 1853-54, its new exposure to Europe and America. Okakura believed that Japan had preserved the cultural heritage of China and India, the two major sources of Asian culture. He was the founder of the Kangukai Artist Association in Japan. Okakura came to India to establish his idea of 'Asia is one.' He was the bearer of a pan Asiatic mission to unite Asian countries against occidental imperialism (Dutta: 116-117). Okakura's famous book, *The Ideals of the East*, was written in Calcutta and many artists responded positively to it. *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, written by Prof. F.F Fenollasa of the Tokyo imperial University, was published in London in 1912. According to Sister Nivedita, "Asia is a united living organism, each part dependent on all the others, the whole breathing a single complex life that Asia, the great mother, is forever one" (Sister Nivedita, 1973). She and a few other proponents were more inclined to define Indian art as well as Eastern art from a spiritual and transcendental matrix with an esoteric meaning. Meantime, Okakura's lucid explanation on the artistic, aesthetic, stylistic and construction mode in Eastern art played a seminal role in the new Bengal art. Okakura clarified the significance of the Chinese and Japanese ink brush tradition and its structural correlation to the entire composition of pictorial space and rhythmic vitality. "Art is no less than interpretation of nature than nature is a commentary on art" (Sister Nivedita, 1973).

Okakura invited many Japanese artists like Simamura Kanjan and Taikan to Calcutta. Okakura was not only eager to discuss Japanese art in India but also was very ardent in establishing relations with Chinese artists. He requested Rabindra Nath to experience the treasures of Chinese art as Tagore recalled his visit to Okakura in Boston in 1913: "He asked me to visit China, promised that he would take me over that country himself personally and show me the real China" (Tagore, n.d.: 136-41). The untimely death of Okakura disrupted the future Indian cultural discourse with the Far East. However, we first evidenced new Chinese art as a result of Rabindra Nath and artist Nandalal Bose's visit to China in 1924, and then through Binode Bihari a scholar painter in Santiniketan who visited China in 1937. Later there was also Xu Beihong's stint in Santiniketan in 1940-41. It is important to note that in the early 20th century, Indian artists had more interaction with Japanese artists who were in search of modern sensibilities that privileges a renewal of tradition to offset the strong current of realism pouring from the west. In the early years of the Republic of China, many artists went to Japan for training in western art methods

The Artistic Scenario in early 20th century China : The New Realists

*A painting a child judges by its likeness of form
A poet is not a poet if he seeks a topic first*

--Shu Shi, Song Dynasty

The major transition in post dynastic Chinese art started after 1911(the Qing period ended in 1911) initiated by influential thinkers like Chen Duxu, Hu Shi, Lu Xun, Li Dazao and others. The key issue was to revitalize art as a social tool (*yishu gongjiu*) entailed accepting western realism.

The Literati's ink brush paintings were accused for its passive (*jing*) and transcendental nature, escapist ideal and failure to depict reality. For many reasons, this progressive argument was pertinent. Painting more or less became an elegant play, an act of leisure, an object of connoisseurship cramped by its conventional reiterations. The Qing dynasty failed to overcome the stagnation. "...so that period had come down, because we didn't have any traditional thing in paintings. Artists could only copy the four Wang paintings--Masters in orchid, flowers and mountain" (Prof. Xu Qingping, interview, January 8, 2004).

Between 1920 and 1930, many Chinese painters came back after their training in the west. The leading exponents were Xu Beihong, Liu Haishu, Lin Fengmian and Wu Daoyu from France and Germany, Li Yishi from Japan. Xu Beihong (1895-1953) was the most influential realist painter and the only known Chinese painter in Indian art circle even today. Xu, after his rigorous training in academic oil painting in France, came back to China. "He studied Europe very comprehensively but there had to be a criterion that can be used by us to learn from nature. That was a tradition in Chinese art but we had abandoned it during the 1930s" (Prof. Xu Qingping).

Xu witnessed radical change in the modern art movement while he was in Europe in 1917-1925 but he was against its introduction in China. "Xu sent his students to Europe to learn *Guidian yishu* (classical art) but inevitably many of them were attracted by western modern art practices"(Prof. Ma Hongdao, interview, April 2004). Later, Xu was a key person to formulate an academic realist method in the new art education. Xu was ardent in reanimating existing Chinese traditional painting, taking it away from stiff mechanical conventions through study and observation of nature. But he did not notice the basic difference in the conception of space and form between a calligraphic painter and a European visual realist. Traditionally, many artists and scholars had offered interpretations of naturalism and reality but these were quite opposite to those of European realism. The interaction between the western visual realist and Chinese painting has a long history, beginning in the middle of the 16th century to the end of the 18th century, but these hybridizations hardly produced satisfactory stylistic results. We see this in the Ruyi imperial academy under the Kongxi and Qianlong regimes. This genre tried to mix the minute detail and physical realism of the western style with traditional ink brush paintings. The Ruyi academy continued for a long time but did not have any positive impact on Chinese painting.

The new polemics born during May fourth 1919 continued for a long time. But apart from the realistic tenets, we find two other trends and creative practice in the following decades. The first one was advocated by the Modernists and the second one was supported by the Synthesizers. Major artists Lin Fengmian, Liu Haishu, Pan Xuqin and later Wu Daoyu suggested adopting the stylistic components of western modern art instead of sticking to the outmoded components of western realist art. But the dominant realist art became a most singular practice and became the forerunner of a long span of Maoist revolutionary realism during the 1960s and onwards. The incorporation of western realist art happened through a different issue and context in China, it was as if “a codified realism rather than modernism served as a master trope”(Xiao, 2000: 51). And “this marked an important watershed in the development of modern Chinese art; the aesthetic and ideological hegemony of realism meant that autonomy in artistic development had lost out in China. Instead, the dominant social reality selected a mode of art that met its ideological needs that certainly would not be met by either literati or modernist concerns” (Li 1992).

The Role of Synthesizers Towards East West Artistic Integration

There are intense debates between the realists and modernists regarding the choice of models. The few traditionally trained painters such as Chen Hengge, Ni Yide and Huang Binghong felt the limitations of the Literati’s escapist ideal and distance from life but indeed they also criticized the new realists for following European realism and its practice as vernacular painting in China. Instead, they emphasized the sublime technique of the Literati’s ink brush in the light of key tendencies during the transition period of the 20th century western modern art movement. These tendencies in modern art began to retreat from narratives and representational objective form to explore the independence of pure form, colors and free brush work to express the subjective. They intended to depict authentic form on the basis of its ability to reveal the inner vitality of life instead of mere outward verisimilitude and surface rendering. Their standpoint regarding western style realism and “ways of seeing” nature is significant not only in Chinese modern art discourse at that time but also to a larger extent, in Eastern art and pedagogy too.

We find some similar attitudes among the other painters responding to western realism in India. Nandalal Bose (1882-1966), prime symbol of the new Indian art movement in Bengal, had always mentioned that inner rhythmic vitality is more important than thoughtless verisimilitude. “Nadalal became a compulsive nature painter, not a landscapist in the usual sense of the word who blinked at a scene from a respectable distance, but someone who sought the inner rhythm of its parts as well as its panorama” (Subramanyan 1992: 65). This attitude is also not distant from the opinion of Qi Baishi (1866-1957), a most respected ink brush painter of Qing period: “When I paint a real object, I don’t really aim at close resemblance in their outward form, only when I capture verisimilitude without trying hard to imitate the configurations there is the moving rhythmic spirit in my works”(Qi Baishi quoted in Catherine Woo 1989).

Sino-Indian Artistic Contacts: 1924 onwards

Rabindranath was invited by a Chinese lecture association in 1924 to visit China as a Nobel Laureate poet in Asia. Tagore took along Nandalal Bose who was the head of the Kala Bhavan art institute in Santiniketan. This journey was an important event in Sino-Indian cultural relations. They visited Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Peking and received wide response from many intellectuals like poet Shu Zhimo, Dr Hu Shi and many painters. "In Hangzhou, Nandalal and Tagore met three major artists, Qi Baishi, Chen Banding and Yao Mengfu. Nandalal used Chinese brush and painted on betel nut papers and offered them as a gift to the famous opera singer, Mei Yanfang"(Wang 1993: 20-29). He had executed plenty of sketches and watercolors and wrote many letters to India on his artistic experiences.

There are many experts on utilitarian art, but the western insects have entered here, leading to the deterioration of the taste of common people. The people are hanging Japanese or American almanacs beside their good quality paintings. But the effort of preventing the country's art from going abroad by building museums like those in America is indeed praiseworthy. Everything is being copied from America, even the looks of houses are being changed (Nandalal Bose cited in Viswa Bharati 1984). Nandalal Bose assessed the new situation: "The modernists are trying to ignore tradition vehemently but the traditionalists are against anything new...but I found that many followed tradition properly, they created a society like our Oriental Society. I need to invite them to India"(Nandalal Bose cited in Viswa Bharati 1984). It is not clear to whom Nandalal was referring, but he definitely was not referring to the realists or the modernists.

What Nandalal Bose hoped did not happen. However, his Chinese and Japanese experience made an impact on his prolonged experiments in ink brush. He had mastered the original handling of brush strokes. Now a great teacher, Nandalal Bose in his famous book, *Shilpa charcha* (Art in Practice) lucidly clarified that the common quality of rhythmic essentials and its tension in form is a reigning characteristic in all Eastern art traditions. This is what he had imbibed from Chinese and Japanese aesthetics.

Xu Beihong came to Santiniketan as a guest in 1940-41 as the first official painter in India to publicize the anti Japanese war to win the understanding and sympathy of the Indian people "Tagore had a worried concern for China's war of resistance, and repeatedly stressed to Xu the lasting friendship between the people of India and China"(Liao 1985: 150). Xu also met Gandhi in Santiniketan. He produced plenty of traditional paintings. Xu's exhibition was organized by Tagore in Calcutta and all the funds raised at that show were sent to help Chinese refugees during the war.

Incidentally, one of his famous paintings, “the foolish man removed the mountain,” was done in Santiniketan. In this work, he used a cook in the refectory as his model. This painting is described as a major political painting and this style, in fact, is said to be the early foundation in the development of official academic ink wash painting. Despite its political utility, this work shows a stiff illustrative manner, lacking the crispness of brushwork. Prof K G Subramanyan feels that “in his ink paintings the representations had too much flesh or body to surrender themselves to spatial interplay with the blank ground around, in his oil paintings they were too linear and intangible and had little chromatic palpability. However, some of his most impressive and memorable paintings fall undoubtedly into the former category”(Subramanyan 1992: 39).

In fact, Xu’s idea on tradition and modernity was not very congenial to existing Indian artists under discussion. In Santiniketan, noted scholar painter Binode Bihari Mukherjee brought up the topic of Chinese traditional art in a long discussion with Xu. Xu dramatically thrust his legs forward--with shoes on--and said, “These traditions have ruined China and should be kicked out of the country. Artists study these art treatise and try to figure out which side of a tree should have one and which should have two branches, they do not look outside.” Binode Bihari writes: “If I had not seen the government exhibition in Shanghai in 1937, I would have thought this comment as an exaggeration.” Xu told him that he had been working to revive Tang dynasty figurative art. But Binode Bihari wondered how Xu, a Paris trained oil painter, could bring back the Tang traditional heritage. (Mukherjee 1943: 48).

The Indian artist circles of that time understood new Chinese art only through the practice and lectures of Xu but was not exposed to many alternative practices such as those of the Lingnan school in Guandong led by Gao Jianfu and Gao Shuren, new experiments in free splashing ink on non-absorbent paper which is an innovation on Southern Song masters, and the paintings of Li Keran, Li Kuchan and migrated painter Zhang Daqien during the 1940s. Both Li’s had developed their own free hand style (*Xie Hua*) and found a harmonious solution between the visible stimuli from nature and the calligraphic structure which produced essential formation of figures with effortless archaic lines spiced with wit.

Indian Sinologist and literary critic Amitendra Nath Tagore, a former Professor in Santiniketan, in Pennsylvania and Oakland University from 1964 to 1987, made a good documentation of paintings while in China as a first Government of India scholar in 1947. He was participating in an established, respected tradition of intellectual exchange between the two countries (Coppola, 1989). He says, “I remember with deep gratitude those moments when artists like Qi Baishi, Qi Gong, Zhong Qi Xiang, Xu Beihong and others would talk to this greenhorn on the basic philosophy of Chinese art and aesthetics, strengths of expression in Chinese calligraphic lines, the difference between the traditional symbolic approach and the quick, personal innovation of contemporary Chinese art” (Amitendra Nath Tagore in Coppola, 1989). In 1956, artist N.Choudhury visited China and Prof K.G.Subramanyan painted a series on his China experience in 1985. Prof Subramanyan feels that “our institute and artists had lost their earlier

direction to have continuous artistic interactions with China and other Far Eastern countries”(Subramanyan, interview, March 16, 2003).

Shi Lu’s Journey to India: A Stylistic Expansion

Women’s heads with high and round water jugs like old Indian Basilica tops. Although in moonlight seeing the big Jumha tomb tops gives a sense of sanctity. But women at dawn with water jugs on their heads are splendor like pagodas.

--Shi Lu

Shi Lu (1919-1982) of Shichuan, a highly innovative painter in post revolution China and one of the few painters who had transformed himself as an extremely original ink brush painter, played a major role in reforming Chinese painting in the 1950. “The debate centered on the ‘wild, strange, chaotic and black ink brush technique of Shi Lu, the painter who perhaps best represented the Chang’an style. Continuing into the 1960s, the debate resulted in resolving the question on how modern ink brush painting should evolve”(Pi 1988-89: 89) and Shi Lu is highly respected by the contemporary young ink brush painters. “Shi Lu contributed enormously to the development of modern art from the traditional stage”(Liu Guohue, interview, April 2004). He visited India as a Chinese representative in 1956. Unlike Xu Beihong he had successfully imbibed some Indian artistic components in his later experiments. “He created many sketches and paintings after his return based on his remembrance. He was highly charged by Indian folk art which was quite different from that of the Chinese. After this period he became more involved in ink brush painting, his works drawn from his travels to India and Egypt. These experiences made him on focus on Chinese painting until he formed his own style”(Shi Tan, interview, April 2004). Shi Lu mixed (as in his “Oriental beauty, supernatural king of India,” 1970) many intricate decorative linear treatments from Indian murals, geometric motifs and compositional structure from Indian miniature paintings with little Persian under tones. “His style is based more on feeling with some impressionistic manner, unlike his earlier works where we see more emphasis on painted shadow; then he used to apply more lines”(Shi Gu, interview, April 2004). Shi Lu was a painter with an extremely eclectic mind. Although he was a major contributor to the formation of the cultural intelligentsia during the revolution, he was still persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. “My father had special respect for Indian and Egyptian art traditions. However he suffered a lot and was condemned during that period for denying the banality in art practices. And during that time, many of his paintings were preserved by many American museums”(Shi Gu, interview, April 2004).

Survey of New Expressions in Ink Brush (*Shuimo Huar*): Background, Tendencies and Criticism

This genre has been transformed with a wide range of artistic off shoots with unique hybridizations of conventional ink brush and western modern concept and technique. The Post Cultural Revolution period witnessed the demand for artistic freedom. There was also interest in western

modern art by the 'New Wave' movement in 1985. In the heavy bent on western art movements, we find a nascent trend to re-explore the ink brush play of Literati painters (*wen jen*) and to revisit Eastern mysticism, especially in the form of Daoist and Zen philosophies. Eminent critic Li Xiang Ting categorized the late 80s phenomenon as a "back to the roots movement" and a "search for a purified language. "The rediscovery of the aesthetic language of traditional literati painting in a way satisfied the psychological loss experienced by some artists as a result of the onslaught of western modernist and avant-garde art"(Li Xiang Ting 1992). 'Neo Literati' is an important genre among the various experiments in ink brush expressions such as Literati abstract ink, experimental ink wash and conceptual ink painting. This new generation was searching for an alternative art to official National ink painting (*Guo Huar*) which is being maintained for cultural purity, as what has been done to the Beijing opera and modern ink painting (still an uncomfortable mixture of ink technique and western realistic approach). Ren Jie, a young painter, believes that "traditional intelligentsia painting practice in the academy is not a future direction, it was formed by Chinese politics, which only emphasized the technique"(Ren Jie, dialogue, March 2003). In modern ink brush experiment, the common tendency is to change the traditional scroll and album format using strong personal imagery, rediscovering carefree, flamboyant mode of ink play and the interrelation between the brush and the spirit pervading the traditional eccentric individualists. Zhao Chunxiang, a Taiwan based veteran artist, formed his own style correlating the Literati's brush spirit and western abstract art where the splash ink manner reveals a spiritual experience and clarity of form and harmony without applying traditional narratives. The Literati's prime tenet 'picture with cultivation' received mixed reaction from scholars.

Few critics like to categorize all contemporary ink expressions as one single category, *xien dai shuimo huar* or modern ink expression. Critic Wang Lu Xiang finds that this trend "argues against the traditions of past scholar painting, focuses on nature and the purity of life which was destroyed by the industrial civilization, and their art is the modern embodiment of the spirit of Zhuang Zen." Noted scholar Pi Dao Jian has said that the "new scholar paintings do not belong to one of the modern culture missions, it only represents a kind of 'unorthodox culture' in China" (Pi, 2001). Critic Li Da Cheng feels that "modern ink paintings have scholar painting's tendencies" (Li, 2001). Du Juemin (born in 1957), a figurative painter, shows the sufferings of common folks which he himself experienced as a coalmine worker in 1973. He renewed the ink wash spontaneity with distorted contour lines in his eclectic interaction with German Kathe Kolitz. He describes the works of Zhu Ta as the "works of an angry soul, long repressed" (Du, 2003). Unlike Du, Ren Jie deals with traditional ink play without any thematic preoccupation. When paints he feels "the energy of Taichi and Gongfu in his brush and ink which seeks a natural growth of image in pictorial space" (Ren Jie, interview, April 2004). Xian based painter Shi Gu (born in 1953) is re-exploring literati ink brush from a different angle and prefers the term *shi yan shuimo* or experimental ink brush instead of *literati*. His works contain mountain-like organic form with heavy layering of ink tones and textures using the traditional scroll format. Shi Gu often depicts the one leg odd bird of Zhu Da's painting on top of erected an stone: "When I paint stones, they contain human, missiles and animal elements" (Shi Gu, interview, April 2004).

Song Zhuang Artist's Village: A Peripheral Garden

During my stint in Beijing, I had an opportunity to visit and work with artists for ten days in Song Zhuang village in Tong district around 25km east of Beijing. It is a growing artist village, began in 1966, a place rich with alternative art practice but with a down to earth way of life. Song Zhuang is not recognized by the official art circuits but many fortune-seeking artists from all parts of China reside there and nearby Beishi, Baimiao and Xindian villages where they enjoy lower rent and bigger spaces, a welcome change from the rapidly changing and expensive city life. A few years ago, Songzhuang began to receive international attention. The collective mode of living and emotional nature of Shongzhuang -- its hardships and challenges as it aspires for creative freedom—reminds one of the Yuanmingyuan artists village in Beijing in the 90s where I spent several days in 1993-1994, However the villagers were evicted by the police in 1995. I enjoyed warm hospitality there as I joined a wood cut workshop and worked with a few painters using ink and suan paper. Three ink brush painters, Chen Guangwu, Zhang Dong and Bian Hong, were active in Shongzhuang. Guangwu's (born in 1967) big scrolls both in vertical and horizontal format deal with the different issues regarding seeking an art language distant from the conventional mode of calligraphy and painting. He paints soothing repetitive calligraphic brush strokes that are thread-like, while maintaining the scroll format. "And this kind of repetition takes away the feeling that this is art; his works give a sense of nothingness"(Li Xianting 2003: 8). Zhang Dong's crisp lines, blobs and performing nature remind one of some traditional 'eccentric' literati painters.

My Work Experience and Activity in China: A Brief

In my six months in China, I was more occupied with the field trips and documentations. I did not take any formal training in calligraphy which needs time to cope with systematic work stages. However, many centers offer short courses for a month and even for a week for foreigners. Instead, I got better results in working with many painters and contemplating their method of handling suan paper and control of spreading ink. I visited Xian, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Shungzhuang. For a few days, I trained in *Biao Huar*, traditional framing with a technician in Xu Beihong museum in Beijing. This method is most applicable for my long format painting display in my next exhibition based on my artistic journey to China.

Exhibition and Feedback

Through the sponsorship of a small gallery and cultural activity center HART in Beijing run by Ren Jie a painter and Sohu.com in China, I resolved to organize a show of a few black and white drawings by eleven Indian painters based in Calcutta and Santiniketan, West Bengal to dialogue with the Chinese art circuit instead of making a tacit exhibition space only. This event

got a positive response, especially the interactive lecture sessions involving a number of critics and young artists and scholars from the Academy of Social Sciences and the Fine Arts Research Academy. This event has created possibilities for future collaborations.

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Courtesy for Plates

Amitendranath Tagore Calcutta India
 Chen Guangwu, Songzhuang Beijing
 Kala Bhavan Museum, Santiniketan, India
 Kai P Yang, Gallery Creation, Beijing
 Li Xiangting, Songzhuang
 Prof Liu Guo Hui, Hanzhou Art Inst
 Ren Jie, Hart, Beijing
 Shi Gu, Shi Tan, Xian
 Xu Qinqing, Guo Mozhong, Xu Beihong Museum, Beijing
 Xu Tu, Beijing.

Plates:

1. 1 Huang Binhong
2. 2,3,4 Xu Beihong,
3. 5,6,7 Nandalal Bose.
4. 8 Ramkinkar Beij.
5. 9 Gaganendranath Tagore.
6. 10 Nihar Choudhury.
7. 11 K.G.Subramanyan.
8. 12,13 Shi lu.
9. 14 Li Keran.
10. 15 Zhang Heyuan.
11. 16 Lin Song
12. 17 Zhang Dong.
13. 18 Song Gang.
14. 19 Chen Guanwu.
15. 20 Lin Feng.
16. 21 Ren Jie.
17. 22 Du Juemin.

18. 23 Zhao Chunxiang.
19. 24 Shi Gu.
20. 25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32 (ink brush) Amitava Bhattacharya.
21. 33 Exhibition Catalogue, Indian Art Exhibition---Eleven Artists, Beijing 2004.