

## 我的藝術生活觀 — 潘玉良

### Views on my artistic life - Pan Yuliang<sup>1</sup>




Translated by Wenying Pan

藝術的「藝」字，解釋起來，很有意味的。在我國最古的殷墟龜甲文上，此像人持木之形，又杻像人持禾之形，周朝文，種也，從廾持木插入土也。我國以農立國，凡能以一木，一禾種入土中，而使之長大，有益於人生，皆曰藝。故孟子曰：「樹藝五穀」。可見人而無「藝」，不能有木而居，有禾可食矣。人類要生存，必要有生存的能力，故釋藝，為才能。周禮天官正「會其什伍而教文道藝（注），『藝，』即六藝也。曰禮、樂、射、御、書、數是也。這六種學問，禮、為人倫法典，樂、為陶養個人的工具；射、御、二者為自衛保國的本領；書、數、為接物治事的技術；缺一不可。故聖人教民必先以六藝，為起碼做人的基本能力，至後世，人文日進，學問廣博，學者必須分門別類以求之。而藝術之範圍，因而廣大，參觀清代，第一大書，曰欽定古今圖書集成之分類，凡農、圃、魚、樵、牧、御、戈、獵、醫、蔔、星、相、畫、堪輿、選擇、術數、投壺至博戲，射覆至拆字，商賈至娼妓，都歸諸博物編內，藝術典焉。而所謂古之六藝，除御尚歸藝術典內，其他禮、樂、射、書、數、五藝，皆為獨立門類。近世歐洲美術學校，設雕刻，圖畫，音樂，建築等科，其範圍縮小，而研究則愈加精進。我國女子自古以桑、織、女紅、為女子必習之藝，而今之女子學校，有烹調，縫紉，刺繡，等科目，而鄉村舊式家庭，有釀造，薰、鹵、蜜、酵、等天然化學工藝，以及園藝，牧畜，等副業，莫不躬自練習操作。其城市仕宦之家，有以琴棋，書，畫，彈，唱，歌，舞，諸藝術，教其子女者，以上所述，皆我國女子藝術的生活。我自幼生長城市，桑麻種織之藝，是不會的，且身體多病，不能任勞，家庭井臼未能習練，于歸之後，曾發奮自強，入滬上女子中學校，凡關於家政各科，稍事學習，而對於刺繡，尤感興趣，因刺繡畫本，每不合意，始知刺繡之美與不美，純在畫本之善惡，因而專心習畫，就學於同鄉洪野先生之門，中學畢業，投考上海美術專門學校，專攻寫生。我夫子以政治影響，亡命海外，先後幾十餘年，江海漂流，不遑甯處。九年吳穉暉先生，在申招考留法里昂大學學生，我正在美專讀書，投考錄取，與同學男女百五十人，航海西渡，始在里昂學習言語年餘，既轉學巴黎國立美術大學，專攻油畫，兼習音樂四年，復到義大利皇家畫院，研究油畫，雕刻，又三年，前後計八年，於民國十七年回國，即在京滬各大學，擔任教授，每於假期，則遍游我國各處名勝，寶地作畫。曾在國內外，舉行個人作品展覽會四次，參加國內外團體展覽出品約二十餘次，此為我平生藝術之生活的梗

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<sup>1</sup> Pan Yuliang 潘玉良, "Wode yishu shenghuo guan" 我的藝術生活觀 [Views on my artistic life]. in *Dangdai funü* 當代婦女, October 1936, 177-79.

概。現年過四十，薄負微名，而自問所得，實屬寥寥，我常說：「時無古今，人無高下，苟無藝術，則必不能生存，可以說人生為藝術，亦可說藝術為人生。」我常思：「吾國婦女，在鄉村者，多自食其力，所謂桑，織，女紅，家庭工藝，皆可自給；惟城市女子，讀書不成，學藝不精，徒從事於讀博，歌舞之藝；新時代知識，不能應用，舊家庭工作，不會操勞；既無問世之能，又無治家之力；豈不太可憐嗎？」餘在家，每作一得意之畫，望一傳神之像，故能令我心神安慰，欲制一襲合式的衣服，雇人縫紉，非數元，或數十元不可，而我每於課餘，自出心裁，一二日即可成就，更覺快活無比。且於教室中，勞心焦思，藉以養息。家人親故聚會時在外用餐，非十數元不辦，而自家烹調，清潔可口，用費不過數元耳，而人情尤覺厚。此等家居瑣事，有藝術則生活感覺興趣，無藝術則感覺枯燥，吾人有高尚之「藝」，復能做通常操作，則更見重於人矣。忘我國同胞姐妹，認定藝術之性質，即人生之原理，各盡所能，各取所需，不一定外國新學的是藝術，我國舊有的不是藝術，不一定學校所學的是藝術，家庭固有的不是藝術，毋怠毋荒，克勤克儉，人人有藝術，人人得生活，又何患乎身之不修，國之不治。僅將藝術生活一得之愚，以應當代婦女之徵文，言辭鄙俚，不足以登大雅之堂，請讀者諒之。

The “*yi*” (藝) of art (*yishu* 藝術) contains various information which is quite interesting. In the oldest Chinese script, oracle bone script (*guijiawen* 龜甲文) which founded in the Ruins of Yin (*yinxu* 殷墟),  (*yi* 藝) is shaped like a person holding a piece of wood while another form  looks like a person holding a seedling. And in the characters of the Zhou Dynasty,  meant planting and was written with a shape of a person inserting a piece of wood into the soil. Mencius used the character *yi* when he stated that one should “Plant Five Grains” (*shuyi wugu* 樹藝五穀). China was built on agriculture. We called all things that we can plant and benefit from their growth as *yi*. Living without *yi* would mean that people must live without a wooden residence and grains, and human must have survival skills. Therefore, *yi* can be interpreted as “skills”. In the Officials of the Heaven (*tianguan* 天官) chapter of *The Rites of Zhou* (*zhouli* 周禮), the *gongzheng* (宮正)<sup>2</sup> said: “Gathering the children of the officials in the palace according to the Shi Wu (什伍)<sup>3</sup> establishment and teaching them knowledge (*wen* 文), morality (*dao* 道) and art (*yi* 藝).” The commentary on this sentence explained that art (*yi* 藝) refers to the Six Arts (*liuyi* 六藝) of rites (*li* 禮), music (*yue* 樂), archery (*she* 射), charioteering (*yü* 御), calligraphy (*shu* 書) and mathematics (*shu* 數). These six kinds of skills are all indispensable. Rites are the codes of human relations; Music is a tool of edifying sentiment; Archery

<sup>2</sup> Translator’s note: *Gongzheng* (宮正) is an official title in ancient China.

<sup>3</sup> Translator’s note: *Shi Wu* (什伍) is an army establishment in ancient China. A *Shi* (什) composed by ten people while a *Wu* (伍) composed by five.

and charioteering are the skills to defend oneself and the country while calligraphy and mathematics are the techniques of contacting the objective things and dealing with affairs. Therefore, the sages always teach people the Six Arts at first as the basic necessities to be a human. With the humanities (*renwen* 人文) advancing day by day and knowledge extending further and further, scholars must be divided into different categories in future generations. Therefore, the scope of art is vast. Referring to the largest book (*diyī dashū* 第一大書) in Qing Dynasty which was regarded as the imperial (*qinding* 欽定) collection of ancient and modern books in all categories, the knowledge of universe (*bowu* 博物) section and the category of art involved farming (*nong* 農), horticulture (*pu* 圃), fishing (*yū* 魚), woodcutting (*qiao* 樵), herding (*mu* 牧), charioteering, weapons (*ge* 戈), hunting (*lie* 獵), medicine (*yi* 醫), divination (*bu* 蔔), astrology (*xing* 星), physiognomy (*xiang* 相), painting (*hua* 畫), geomancy (*kanyu* 堪輿), selection (*xuanze* 選擇), shushu<sup>4</sup>, pitch-pot (*touhu* 投壺), gambling (*boxi* 博戲), *shifu*<sup>5</sup>, *chaizi*<sup>6</sup>, business (*shanggu* 商賈) and prostitution (*changji* 娼妓). Five of the Six Arts were all independent categories while charioteering was involved in the category of art. The Modern European art schools set up subjects such as sculpture, drawing, music, and architecture, which means the scope of each subject has narrowed but research is more sophisticated. Mulberry planting (*sang* 桑), weaving (*zhi* 織), and needlework (*nǚ gong* 女紅) were compulsory skills (*yi* 藝) for girls in China since ancient times. Nowadays, the girls' school has cooking, sewing, embroidery, and other subjects, while girls of the old-fashioned families in the countryside practice natural chemical crafts such as brewing, smoking, red cooking (*lu* 鹵), sugaring (*mi* 蜜), and fermentation, as well as side lines like horticulture and herding. In the city, girls in the families of officials learn instruments (*qin* 琴), chess, calligraphy, painting, playing, singing, dancing, and so on. All of which are the artistic life of women in China. For me, I grew up in the city so I do not know how to plant mulberry and weave, and I am too weak to do any chores. I made a great effort and enrolled in the Shanghai Girls' Secondary School after marriage<sup>7</sup>, where I studied a little on household subjects, and I was particularly interested in embroidery. Because I was usually dissatisfied when embroidering, I realized that the beauty of an embroidered work is determined by the quality of the patterns. Therefore, I started to concentrate on painting and learned under Hongye 洪野, who comes from the same county as me. After graduating

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<sup>4</sup> Translator's note: The ancient Chinese used *shushu* (術數) to reason that the various changes observed in nature is connected with human, policy and social changes. So *shushu* is used to infer the fate of individuals and even nations.

<sup>5</sup> Translator's note: *Shifu* (射覆) is a game in ancient China. The rule is that an object (or several of its kind) is covered and one need to divine what is hidden.

<sup>6</sup> Translator's note: *Chaizi* (拆字) is a way of divination in China by adding or removing the strokes, splitting or disrupting the structure of the character.

<sup>7</sup> Translator's note: For literal meaning, “于歸” in the start text refers to “back home”, which implies marriage is the final destination for women. Therefore, the translator modified it to a more neutral word “marriage”, but in order to let the reader understand the unequal meaning of the word, hereby add a note to explain.

from high school, I enrolled in the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, where I specialized in sketching (*xiesheng* 寫生). My teacher had been in exile for decades due to political reasons, moving around without any leisure time. In 1920, I was studying at the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts when Wu Zihui 吳穉暉 was recruiting students in Shanghai for the Institut franco-chinois de Lyon, and after successfully being accepted, I sailed to the west with 150 classmates. At first, I studied languages in Lyon for more than a year, then transferred to the École des Beaux-Arts, specializing in oil painting and minoring in music for four years. Next, I went to the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma (The Rome Academy of Fine Arts) to study oil painting and sculpture for another three years. After eight years of study, I returned to China in 1928 and was hired as a professor in various universities in Beijing and Shanghai. During the holidays, I travelled around the country and painted in various places of interest. I have held four solo exhibitions and participated in more than 20 group exhibitions at home and abroad. This is the outline of my artistic life. I am over forty years old now with little reputation. When I asked myself, I realized that my achievements are but a few. As I always say, there is no distinction between ancient and modern (*shi wu gujin* 時無古今), there is no superiority or inferiority among humans (*ren wu gaoxia* 人無高下). One cannot survive without art. Life is art, or art is life. I often think that in my country, most women in the countryside are able to earn their own living by mulberry planting, weaving, needlework and handicrafts while women in city excel in neither study nor skills. All they can do is gambling, singing and dancing. Not only, but also. They are not only incapable of applying the knowledge of the new age, but also unable to work in the traditional family. They have neither the ability to serve society nor the power to govern a family. Is this not pathetic? A satisfied painting drawn at home or an expressive status can always comfort me. Hiring someone to make a well-fitting outfit costs many *yuan*, if not dozens, but if I make it myself in spare time, it only takes one or two days and I will feel pleased. Besides, I also can take a break from thinking in the classroom. Dining out with families and friends costs many *yuan*, if not dozens, while home-made, clean and delicious cuisines only cost a few, and moreover, we are much closer to each other. Such household chores are interesting with art but also can be boring without art. I have studied “noble” arts and I also can do these ordinary works, which indicate that *yi* should be valued by everyone. I hope women in my country can understand that art is the same as the principle of life. From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. There is no definitive statement that foreign and modern things are art while domestic and traditional things are not; or what you studied at school is art while what you learned at home is not. If we are industrious and frugal, everyone will understand art and life. As a consequence, we need not worry about cultivating our moral characters and administering the country. These are my humble opinions on my artistic life as a response to the call for papers of *Dangdai Funü*. I beg the reader’s indulgence for this unrefined article.



