

Seeing and Transcending Tradition in Chen Shuren's Guilin Landscape Album

by

Meining Wang

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Department of Art and Design
University of Alberta

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Abstract

In 1931, the Chinese Lingnan school painter and modern Chinese politician Chen Shuren 陈树人 (1884-1948) went on a political retreat trip to Guilin, Guangxi China. During his trip in Guilin, Chen Shuren did a series of paintings and sketches based on the real scenic site of Guilin. In 1932, Chen's paintings on Guilin were published into a painting album named *Guilin shanshui xieshengji* 桂林山水写生集 (The Charms of Kwei-Lin) by the Shanghai Heping Publishing House. By discussing how Chen Shuren's album related with the past Chinese painting and cultural tradition in the modern context, I interpret it as a phenomenon that unified various Chinese painting concepts in modern Chinese history. I argue that by connecting the landscape of Guilin with a past Chinese cultural tradition and foreshowing a modern aesthetic taste, Chen Shuren merged Guilin into the 20th century Chinese cultural landscape.

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Introduction:

Chen Shuren's *Guilin shanshui xiesheng ji* 桂林山水写生集 (The Charms of Kwei-lin) was a publicly and massively released book consisting of 22 watercolor paintings and eight beautifully drawn landscapes and wonder-sights of Guilin, a city in the Guangxi Zhuang region of China. The album's length is a sizable 25 cm and its width is 37.5 cm (Fig.1). This album was published by the Shanghai heping she 上海和平社 (Shanghai Heiping Publishing House) in 1932.¹ In the 1920s-1930s, Shanghai was regarded as a cosmopolitan center in China, and lots of missionaries, foreign visitors, and businessmen resided there. Shanghai was perceived as the most open-minded city in China, and people in Shanghai during this time faced a flourishing modern publishing industry. Various landscape photography albums, landscape postcards, and landscape periodicals were vigorously produced then.² Additionally, these works promoted Chinese national pride and dispelled misunderstanding of China that was created by foreign visitors during this time. Chen Shuren's Guilin album encompassed these same social and cultural issues.

Chen Shuren 陳樹人 (1884–1948) was a politician and painter with a hybrid style of combining Chinese and Japanese characteristics who seemed to have many political and patriotic intentions, much like Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927). As a budding politician in the 1920s, Chen Shuren wanted to pursue the modernization of the newly established Chinese government. This idea came from Kang Youwei. Kang's theory of *Shiye jiuguo* 實業救國 (material salvation) was quite original at the time. Material salvation was an ideological belief that encourages a

¹ Shuren Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji = The Charms of Kwei-lin* (Shanghai: Heping she, 1932), 1.

² Shouqian Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan: Dong Ya Shi Jie Zhong De Shan Shui Hua (The Moving Peach Blossom Land: Landscape Paint in the East Asia World)* (Taipei: Yun Chen Wen Hua, 2012), 33.

nation to go beyond political and spiritual self-strengthening and to move forward to concentrate on progress in commerce and manufacturing. This theory was very nationalistic, and strong traces of it could be seen in Chen's art. Chen also has traits from a more realistic style that could be seen from Song-dynasty (960-1279) paintings as well as in Japanese realism.³ It seems as if Chen used a realistic style combining Chinese and Japanese characteristics in order to express his patriotic and political ideas. For his works, he often considered the potential for their commercialization and distribution. As a result, he used watercolor and modern methods of printing and selling.

This thesis argues that Shuren's album was a fascinating work that combines Chinese traditional art with more modern-era art that one sees today, and Shuren's album was likely a part of the transition between traditional art and modern art. This study discusses how the style and medium of this Guilin painting album displayed the new artistic trend, the artist's pursuit, and the social background of the early 20th century. This project serves as an example of how the creation of an artwork was deeply influenced by the social context in a rapidly changing era, and how the arts presented the painter's political anxiety and hope.

Chen was born in 1884 in Mingjing, Puyan, Guangdong, China. Before Chen Shuren became widely known as one of the three Lingnan School Masters,⁴ Chen learned to paint from Ju Lian 居廉 (1828-1904) around 1900, a Lingnan-based birds and flower painter in the late Qing dynasty (1636-1912). Later, Chen studied abroad in Japan on two separate occasions. The first of them was from 1908 to 1912 at the Kyoto Municipal School of Fine Arts and Crafts (

³Aida Yuen Wong, *The Other Kang Youwei: Calligrapher, Art Activist, and Aesthetic Reformer in Modern China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2016), 120-122.

⁴ The other two masters were Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng.

Kyoto shiritsu bijutsu kogei gakko 京都市立美術工藝學校). Once he graduated, he went back to China on March 25th, 1912.⁵ Upon his return to China, he worked as a newspaper editor as well as a graphic teacher in Guang ya shu yuan 廣雅書院 (Guangya College) and Guangdong gaodeng xuexiao 廣東高等學校 (Guangdong Advanced School). Shortly thereafter, Chen took a second opportunity to study in Japan in September of 1912. He enrolled at Tokyo Rikkyo University 日本東京私立立教大學 from 1912 where he majored in English and graduated in 1916. Chen's painting theory book *Xin hua fa* 新畫法 (The new painting method) was translated during Chen's second stay in Japan.⁶ Li Weiming has written that Chen was the only one of the three Lingnan Masters to have been officially enrolled at a Japanese fine arts college and to have attained a diploma.⁷ Therefore, Chen's youth and education in Japan left a great impression on his works and political views. These influences were then combined and melded together with more traditional Chinese ideas later in his life for political and social reasons and greatly impacted his art.⁸

In the late 1920s, Chen was influenced by his failures concerning his political ventures within the China's central government. Chen went to Guilin with the other members of *Gaizu pai* 改組派, a loosely-bonded political group following Wang Jingwei's 汪精衛 (1883-1944) policy and standing in opposition to Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石 (1887-1975).⁹ It was just during this period

⁵ Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan*, 4-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁷ Li, *Chuantong yu gexin*, 98.

⁸ Yang Chen, "Zhenxiang huabao yu shijue xiandai xing" (The True Record and Visual Modernity) (PhD diss., Fudan University, 2014), 70-75.

⁹ In the late 1927, Wang Jingwei got lost in the political incident of reunifying the Nanjing government and Wuhan government, and he was forced to resign and relocate to France. Wang was the spiritual leader of the political group 中国国民党改组同志会 "Gai zu pai". As a branch of the Chinese Nationalist Party, its political agenda was to confront the National government that was under Jiang Jieshi's rule and also the Chinese Communist Party. It tried to revive Sun Yat-sen's government and ruling policy. In the Gai zu pai's peak period, it had up to 10000 members

when the paintings in this album were painted. Wang Jingwei's inscription on the Guilin album reflected the negative situation of Chen's political career, and it expressed the ancient literati's pursuit of exiling oneself in nature during a downturn in one's life.¹⁰ Chen Shuren again traveled to Guilin in the winter of 1931, when he was forced to resign from his political position due to his political bond with Wang Jingwei, a close friend of Chen, when Wang lost a power struggle. In all, Chen's politics and life experience strongly affected his work. Chen was a loyal member of Sun Yat-sen's alliance for democracy and constantly upheld his Three Principles, a revolutionary guide to reforming China into a modern country. In Chen's poems, he often expressed his loyalty and patriotism in the constructing of a modern nation.

I. Overview and Other Scholarly Works in Regards to Chen Guilin's Album

This thesis will use visual analysis as well as a more fully transnational, comparative approach to interpret Chen's painting album in relation to twentieth-century mass printing visual culture and to address how the visual representation of this album fit into the political situation of the 1930s. Before undertaking this task, it is important to review other scholarly works that are useful to understanding Chen's Guilin's album.

Research on Chen Shuren has discussed the artist and his work within the broad context of Lingnan School art. In general, there is little research on individual artworks by Chen Shuren or on how his works go beyond the art of the Lingnan School, with which he is typically associated. Additionally, scholars do not analyze his work as having a more modern approach to Chinese art. In contrast, my research will examine Chen Shuren's work in the context of modern

and established local office in eighteen provinces of China, like Nanjing, Shanghai, Beijing, etc and overseas offices in France, Japan, Vietnam, and Hong Kong, etc.

¹⁰ Because of confronting Jiang's branch of the Nationalist Party, a lot of Gai zu pai members were either forcedly resigned or were dismissed from their original position in the Nationalist Party. Both Wang Jingwei and Chen Shuren were examples of this.

Chinese art revolution embodying various style changes as well as the mass printing technique in modern China.

Professor Li Weiming of the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts is a prominent scholar who has done considerable research on Lingnan School art with respect to artists' biographies, the formation of the school's style, and the artists' networks and activities. Li Weiming's papers have discussed in detail the involvement of Chen's political career in his artistic pursuits and Chen's student experience in Japan.¹¹ Li based his ideas on historical facts and primary materials that document Chen Shuren's life experiences. Li only used biographic analysis, and his studies of Chen Shuren are broad and general.¹² His work serves as a basis for understanding the chronological development of Chen's artistic and political careers; however, while focusing on the Japanese influence on Chen's artistic career, Li's studies of Chen Shuren have not addressed any of Chen Shuren's artworks individually as a particular phenomenon in the turbulence of Chinese art in the early twentieth century, nor have they put Chen's individual works in the lineage of Chinese traditional representation and also modern Chinese printing techniques. My work, in contrast, breaks new ground by using visual analysis as well as a more fully transnational, comparative approach to interpreting Chen's painting album in relation to twentieth-century mass printing visual culture and addressing how the visual representation of this album fits into the political situation of the 1930s.

¹¹ Weiming Li, "Zai jieru yu chaotuo zhijian-Chen Shuren jianlun," (Between Intervention and Detachment: A Short Discussion of Chen Shuren) in *Tuxiang yu lishi (Image and History: Text on Twentieth century Chinese Arts)*. (Beijing: Renmin University Publishing House, 2005), 186-213.

¹² Weiming Li, "Bimo yinyuan: Chen Shuren yu Riben meishu de guanxi buzheng," (The Corrections on the Relationship between Chen Shuren and Japan) in *Tuxiang yu lishi (Image and History: Text on Twentieth century Chinese Arts)* (Beijing: Renmin University Publishing House, 2005), 214-235.

Aida Wong's book *The Other Kang Youwei: Calligrapher, Art Activist, and Aesthetic Reformer in Modern China* provides a useful model for studying a modern Chinese politician's art theories and shaping of twentieth-century Chinese art. Similar to Kang Youwei, who was a politician who contributed to the modern art revolution in his intense debate with painters and art theorists, Chen Shuren also expressed his political views by the vehicles of the visual representation and the medium of this album. Wong studied Kang Youwei's artistic identity and concluded that he was a "modern ancient" and that the "East-West Synthesis" concept was achieved in Kang's painting theory.¹³ By comparing Kang Youwei to Chen Shuren, we can see Chen Shuren also as a "modern ancient."

Another point of interest is Kang Youwei's theory of "material salvation," which was quite original at the time. Material salvation means to ask a nation to go beyond political and spiritual self-strengthening and to move forward to concrete progress in commerce and manufacturing.¹⁴ Kang displayed skill and innovation by embracing realism that was rooted in Song-dynasty painting traditions for its detailed depiction of landscape. The mediation of Japan, which Kang and many of his contemporaries saw as a powerful model, played an important role in this process, and the reverberation of Japanese art in China could also be understood in similar terms as enlightenment and national salvation.¹⁵ Chen also took the detailed depiction of landscape, a trait from Song-era paintings, and mixed it with Western art techniques he picked up from Japan. Western realism has more distinct and established perspectives as well as greater use of light and shadow. Therefore, traits of both Chinese and Japanese and Western techniques were combined to make Chen's work more hybrid.

¹³ Wong, *The Other Kang Youwei*, 99-101.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 101-110.

Wong found Kang Youwei's artistic identity to be that of a "modern ancient," and she believed that the "East-West Synthesis" concept was prevalent in Kang's painting theory. The term "modern ancient" is a term to describe something that encompasses elements of both traditional Chinese ideas and more progressive, modern notions.¹⁶ "East-West Synthesis" is likewise true to its name. The term means that something consists of both Eastern and Western ideology and aspects. Kang has stated, "he zhong xi yi qiu bian, kai tuo zhong guo hui hua xin ji yuan. 合中西以求變，開拓中國繪畫新紀元 (combining China and the West for change opens up a new era of Chinese painting). Because Kang Youwei embraced both these conceptions, he was distinct from his peers. Wong claims that in an age when graphic technologies of different kinds (photography, lithography, technical drawing, etc.) were being developed in the service of science and industries, Kang Youwei felt that the fine arts, especially painting should be made more central to material advancement and national strengthening.¹⁷ In this context, Kang promoted Song realism based on scientific viewing in pursuit of truth and civilization as a necessary means to achieve national salvation. Kang's views were revolutionary and gained many followers to pursue this different path.

One such follower was Chen Shuren. Chen Shuren was shaped by Kang's influences and even shared many common friends.¹⁸ Chen and Kang were near mirror images of each other. Both were prominent and important politicians and artist of the era. They both used different approaches and different values towards "realism" compared to their contemporaries. They both believed in the importance of incorporating "ancient-modern" and "East-West Synthesis" in art.

¹⁶ Ibid., 120.

¹⁷ Ibid., 153-180.

¹⁸ Li, *Bimo yinyuan: Chenshuren yu riben meishu de guanxi buzheng*, 3-4.

Therefore, because of their similarities, Aida Wong's study and methodology on Kang can also be useful for analyzing Chen and his works.

Another article that provides useful understanding on Chen is by Zhu Wanzhang 朱萬章.¹⁹ This article discusses the close relationship between Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895-1953) and the Lingnan School, providing textual proof of Xu Beihong's modern realistic artistic influence on the Lingnan School. This book provides useful background information of the artistic style of Chen Shuren. Chen Shuren's colleague, Gao Jianfu 高劍父 (1879-1951), was one of the patrons of Xu Beihong before he studied in France. The relationship between Chen and Gao continued after Xu came back from France; therefore, the realism pursued by Kang Youwei and Xu Beihong seems to have informed the naturalism pursued by Chen Shuren because of these ties.²⁰ The interactions between Xu Beihong and Chen Shuren, as inspired by Kang, show that Chen Shuren chose an eclectic realism that combined the Western realistic painting style with the Chinese realistic past tradition rooted in art of the Song Dynasty.

Another work of importance is Chen Yang's dissertation *Zhenxiang huabao yü shijue xiandaixing (The True Record and Visual Modernity)*, published by Fudan University in 2014.²¹ His dissertation examines the visual modernity represented in *The True Record* by illustrations produced according to the new painting theory. *The True Record* was a series of pictorial newspapers founded by the Gao brothers. These newspapers showed new visual expressions of photography and incorporated techniques from Japan and the West.²² For the social context

¹⁹ Zhu Wanzhang, "Lun Xu Beihong yu Lingnan huapai zhi guanxi-yi wenyi yinyuance weili meishu yanjiu," *Meishu Yanjiu* 111 (March 2003). ("Discussions on the Relationship between Xu Beihong and Lingnan School Art") in *Meishu yanjiu* (Art Research Journal), 25-30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 28-31.

²¹ Yang Chen, "Zhenxiang huabao yu shijue xiandai xing," *Fudan University*, 2014: 2-30.

²² *Ibid.*, 2-5.

during that time, Chen Yang declared patriotic support was the urgent need of the country during the Gao brother's time. In other words, Chen states that a revitalization of the industrial and commercial market to support the masses was necessary for China during the 1910s and 1920s. This suggests that there was a greater need to reach the public. Therefore a popular and convenient art medium, such as watercolor, was perfect to achieve nationalistic agendas for the sake of China. As a result, Chen likely chose watercolor techniques because of its ability to be mass-produced to represent the sceneries of Guilin.²³

In the fifth chapter of Chen's dissertation, Chen especially examines the topographical photographs of several main cities in China during this time, such as Wuhan and the West Lake in Hangzhou.²⁴ He first introduces the concept of "geographical and topographical significance" represented in the topographic paintings. By comparing traditional Chinese topographical paintings representing these sites with the photographs representing these same sites, he argues that the topographical photography published on *The True Record* was a synthesis of Eastern and Western culture. In the landscape photographic illustrations, viewers could feel a nostalgic sense of China's past glory and be inspired by the revolutionary faith in reviving the glories of China's history. Chen concludes that use of topographical photography in *The True Record* suggests a metaphor for searching for the nation and the modern country. By using this modern visual representation and media, *The True Record* conveyed a revolutionary, nationalistic ideology of modern China. Chen Yang's work provides a cultural context of the mass produced artworks in the modern era for analysis of Chen Shuren's album.²⁵

²³ Ibid., 5-15.

²⁴ Ibid., 73-80.

²⁵ Ibid., 75-81.

In terms of the genre of landscape paintings and famous sites paintings, Elizabeth Kindall, Kenneth Ganza, and Kathlyn Liscomb are the representative scholars in this field and provide influential insight into such paintings in Chen Shuren's time period. Kindall's paper "Visual Experience in Late Ming Suzhou 'Honorific' and 'Famous Site'" examines two types of landscape painting based on real sites in late Ming Suzhou.²⁶ Kindall's paper examined the functions of these landscape albums. Although Chen's Guilin album was largely based on the format and genre of these late Ming landscape albums, Chen's Guilin album functions differently compared with the late Ming Suzhou albums that were examined by Kindall.²⁷ Kindall's book *Geo-Narratives of a Filial Son: the Paintings and Travel Diaries of Huang Xiangjian (1609–1673)* interprets the paintings representing Huang Xiangjian's painting of Southwestern China within the well-established Suzhou landscape painting tradition.²⁸ This is important because this is a model method for studying a landscape album focusing on the largely neglected Southwest China. This is relevant to the thesis because, like Huang Xiangjian, Chen Shuren adopted a shared "cultural memory" of a site through the shared experience from a historical perspective. The cultural values represented by Chen's Guilin album through its genre were based on an established tradition in the pre-modern Chinese art history. Ganza has explored the history of landscape album and traveling painting in his article "A Landscape by Leng Ch'ien and the Emergence of Travel as a Theme in Fourteenth-Century Chinese Painting," and Chen's Guilin album can be discussed within similar context.²⁹ Finally, Liscomb studies the individual case of

²⁶ Elizabeth Kindall, "Visual Experience In Late Ming Suzhou 'Honorific' and 'Famous Sites' Paintings," *Ars Orientalis* 36 (2009): 137-77.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

²⁸ Elizabeth Kindall, *Geo-narratives of a Filial Son: The Paintings and Travel Diaries of Huang Xiangjian (1609-1673)*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016. 17-80.

²⁹ Kenneth Ganza, "A Landscape by Leng Ch'ien and the Emergence of Travel as a Theme in Fourteenth-Century Chinese Painting," *China Review International* 1, no. 2 (1994): 193-98.

the traveling painter Wang Lü in her book *Learning from Mount Hua*.³⁰ All these scholar's work provides essential background knowledge and comparison examples for analyzing Chen's Guilin album as part of a genre that expresses shared cultural values.

Previous studies have done excellent research on Chen Shuren's biography, Chen's stylistic similarities with others of his time, and the visual modernity of the Lingnan School; however, there are no works deeply studying Chen Shuren's individual artwork with consideration of his hybrid style, the cultural and political context of his time, and the cultural value that he shared with the past. This thesis will attempt to address each of these issues as an attempt to gain greater understanding of Chen Shuren and his work.

II. Methodology and Organization for Analyzing Chen's Album

Chen's Guilin album is relatively unexplored in terms of its function and place in Chinese art history. Also, there are questions in relation to Chen's work and its Chinese and foreign influences, as well as ones about the purpose of the album. As a result, this paper aims to provide context and thus articulate that the album was a hybrid work that employed a modern style and reflects important patriotic endeavors.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces Chen Shuren's Guilin album, the main work analyzed throughout the paper. Chapter one will discuss how there was a difference in Chen's album from other contemporary art of its time in terms of format, genre, and other direct visual information presented and that Chen's album takes a more modern approach. The chapter will also focus on the album's genre and explore its place and function in

³⁰ Kathlyn Maurean Liscomb, *Learning from Mount Hua: A Chinese Physician's Illustrated Travel Record and Painting Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2011), 45-57.

the history of premodern Chinese landscape albums. The second chapter focuses on the stylistic similarities between Chen Shuren's painting style and both ancient and contemporary artists as well as with foreign works. The album was a book comprising a variety of different styles and characteristics. The third chapter will discuss the reactions to the Guilin album that the public had after its mass production and the use of colotype printing and photography.

Overall, I hope to show that Chen's Guilin album was an important work that incorporated elements of traditional Chinese art and modern art. One can see this by examining the formal characteristics of traditional Chinese paintings and a modern cultural taste and by looking at the modern method of dissemination. Additionally, Chen's Guilin landscape album addressed the taste and viewing experiences of Chinese and foreign readers in China in the 1920s. In this way, Chen posed Guilin to be a representative city located at the southwest boundary of China that could be integrated into China's cultural landscape in the 1930s by its viewers' perception.

Chapter One

Chen's Guilin album was distinctly different for other works from artists from similar backgrounds. This chapter will examine in close detail the visual aspects and subject matter of the album and its place and function in China's pre-modern art history compared to other works of art from that era.

I. Landscape and Other Art Similar to Chen's Album, Their Functions in Chinese Art History, and How Chen's Album Compares:

Comprised of thirty-six pages (including the cover page and the back cover) and published in 1932, this Guilin album contained twenty-two colorful pictures and eight sketches representing the specific sites of the natural landscape of Guilin.³¹ Guilin had been a famous tourist destination on the Southwest frontier of China since the Song dynasty.³² This album was in a modern book format and published by the Shanghai Heping she 上海和平社 in 1932 with the collotype printing technique. In the West, *Guilin shanshui xiashengji* only exists in three libraries' collection, and these are: UC Berkeley Libraries, Yale University Library, and University of Central Florida. For my thesis, I am using the digital version of the album that was requested through the interlibrary loan services from the UC Berkeley Libraries. Most of the text in this album is in Chinese. Interestingly, the table of contents and the title for each leaf in the album were in English. This bilingual book format attracted domestic Chinese viewers and was a sign of modern innovation for its time.³³ Three vertical lines from right and left read “Chenshuren huaji di si ji” 陳樹人畫集第四輯 (Chen Shuren's paintings, series IV), “Guilin

³¹ Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji*, 2-3.

³² Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan: Dong Ya Shi Jie Zhong De Shan Shui Hua*, 4-6.

³³ Li, “Zai jieru yu chaotuo zhi jian-Chen Shuren jian lun”, 5-6.

shanshui xiesheng ji” 桂林山水寫生集 (The Charms of Kwei-lin) and “Wangzhaoming ti” 汪兆銘題 (Wang Zhaoming inscribed). It was written on the cover of this album in cursive style by Wang Jingwei, who was a Nationalist party politician and once a friend of Chen Shuren. On the bottom of this cover, three horizontal lines of text were written as “The Charms of Kwei-lin” “By” “Chen Shu-Yen”.³⁴ The first page of the painting album is the preface written by Wang Jingwei, which expressed the political purpose of Chen. Additionally, it described how the beauty of nature consoled Chen’s failed political pursuit, just as the traditional literati conveyed their depressed feeling through the nature. The second page was the table of contents of this painting album, which was written in both Chinese and English. The third page was the preface written by Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), who was a modern Chinese educator and reformer. The preface written by Cai showed Chen’s virtuous values that made both Sun Yat-sen and Wang Jingwei trust Chen as a politician. Cai also claims that he shares the high literati tastes with such traditional literati as Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427), Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107), and Cai Xiang 蔡襄 (1012-1067).³⁵

After Cai Yuanpei’s preface, inside the album, every picture leaf represents a specific site or spot of Guilin’s natural landscape, and it is presented with its own title written in both Chinese and English below the painting leaf; within the painting, there was a poem about the scene depicted inscribed.³⁶ In premodern China, images of nature played an important role in the Chinese literati’s writing and painting, and personal thoughts and feelings were often conveyed in unbiased images representing nature.³⁷ Thus, the genre of combining the poetry and scenic

³⁴ Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji*, 5-6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

³⁷ Li, “Zai jieru yu chaotuo zhi jian-chenshuren jian lun”, 23-25.

views painting showed how literati comprehended, envisioned, and constructed nature. One should particularly consider this genre because printed images and poems of sets of scenic views became a standard category in local gazetteers and were disseminated to almost all cities and towns of late imperial China. Composing poetry or painting images for a set of scenic views was a literati challenge based on fixed rules for composition. It was an agreement and acknowledgment inside circles of literati to follow this style. That is to say, it was the existing format of sets of scenic views that local literati had to use, that led the way for representing the frontier landscape. In other words, under the limitations of the genre, such as the composition of a set of scenic views, “Guilin” was converted into familiarity and a unifying sense was established.³⁸ With the publication of literati officials’ poems in local gazetteers, the “unusual beauty” of ten views shaped and continually influenced later people’s impression of the scenario depicted. As a consequence, Guilin was represented as part of the unified imperial landscape that had belonged to the empire for a long time.³⁹ Undoubtedly, Chen’s album fits into this genre of poetry and scenic painting. This provides a practical function for viewers, working like a local gazetteer, and it is connected with Chen’s nationalistic pursuits in modern China.⁴⁰ In particular, it is valuable to use this visual strategy to transfer the frontier location Guilin to the Chinese cultural system.

Each of the twenty-two leaves has an aesthetic title with several characters that capture the iconic moment of the scenic spot. This layout of the painting album and the division of the painting leaf was based on the ancient “*sheng jing*” 勝景 (scenic view) album format; to better

³⁸ Fei Huang, "Ten Views," *Reshaping the Frontier Landscape: Dongchuan in Eighteenth-century Southwest China*: 56-65.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 90-92.

⁴⁰ Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan*, 20-24.

understand the direct visual information and cultural tradition represented by Chen's Guilin album, it is important to discuss the scenic genre and the traveling theme of this Guilin album in the cultural context of the premodern Chinese landscape painting history.⁴¹ The famous site scenic view paintings in the pre-modern Chinese art history provides background knowledge for understanding the cultural values represented by Chen's Guilin album.

The scenic views of a specific site were rooted in Chinese Daoist culture. The scenic views can be understood as selected scenic spots or iconic views of a famous site. Common expressions such as "*ba jing*" (eight views) appeared in both literature and artworks in premodern China. "Eight" is the standard number in sets of scenic views, and other numbers may vary from six, ten, or twelve.⁴² The earliest record of scenic views was from the Song Dynasty, the most famous scenic views of landscape paintings were Song Di's 宋迪 *Xiaoxiang bajing* 瀟湘八景 (*Eight Scenes of Xiao and Xiang*) as recorded in Shen Kuo's 沈括 *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (Dream Pool essays).⁴³ Each view has an aesthetic four-character title showing the object in a captured moment to be appreciated. The unspecific spot of the *Xiaoxiang bajing* suggested the beauty of imaginary sites that is not restrained by the specific spot rather than the practical function for travel tours compared as the later Ten views of Xihu.

Although the Eight Views of Xiaoxiang were not referred to as specific sites, they inspired later paintings of iconic views of a specific site, such as Ma Lin's 马麟 (1180-1256) *Ten Views of Xihu* (*Xihu shi jing*) 西湖十景 in the Southern Song dynasty, Wang Fu's 王绶 (1362-

⁴¹ Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji*, n.p..

⁴² Kathlyn Liscomb, "The Eight Views of Beijing": Politics in Literati Art," *Artibus Asiae* 49, no. 1/2 (1988): 127. doi:10.2307/3250048.

⁴³ Kuo Shen, *Meng Xi Bi Tan*. (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu, 1988), 168-185.

1416) *Eight views of Beijing* 北京八景 (Beijing bajing), and Dong Qichang's 董其昌 (1555-1636) *Eight Views of Qiuxing* 秋興八景 (Qiuxing bajing).⁴⁴ The eight scenes of Guilin were established in the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) by Lü Sicheng 呂思成 (1293-1357) in his series of poems there were made when he took a governmental position in Guilin. Later, the Qing scholar Zhu Shude 朱樹德 extended Lü's model to sixteen views of Guilin in his pictorial record *Guilin bajing tushuo* 桂林八景圖說 (Guilin Eight Views).⁴⁵ Some of Chen Shuren's selections of the Guilin landscape in his painting album were based on the real scenic views of Guilin that were defined in the Yuan and Qing dynasties, like "Duxiu feng" 獨秀峰 (Peak of unique charm) and "Diecai shan" 疊彩山 (Sparkling mountains one upon another). They also represented some sites that were out of the premodern Guilin scenic view tradition and were still real sites of Guilin, such as "Liangfeng qiao qiuse" 良豐橋秋色 (Liangfeng bridge in autumn) and "Yangshuo jianbian" 陽朔江邊 (River-side at yang-suh). Additionally, the album has some other unidentifiable and generic places, such as "Jiangshang qingfeng" 江上青峰 (Blue peak overlooking a river) and *Jiangan diaoting* 江乾釣艇 (An angling boat at river-side). Specifically, some album leaves were named with unidentifiable places like "Ji tan" 急灘 (A rapid flowing beach), "Pingjian luanshi" 平澗亂石 (Disorderly stones in a flowing stream), and "Jialing song tao" 夾嶺松濤 (Whizzing wind from mountain afar).⁴⁶ These places could be regarded as imaginary views of places in China that had widely-known, significant meanings. Another thing interesting to note was that Chen depicted individual objects as important subject

⁴⁴ Liscomb, "Eight Views of Beijing", 155-165.

⁴⁵ Li, "Zai jieru yu chaotuo zhi jian-chenshuren jian lun", 39-51.

⁴⁶ Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji*, 1-7.

matter of his work. This was a trait for the picturesque landscape photography practice that was popular at this time.

II. Direct Analysis of Chen's Album and How It Differs from Other Topographical Painting of that Time Because of Differing Motives and Purposes:

Chen Shuren went to Guilin on a personal trip in the winter of 1931, and these paintings were done during this travel in Guilin for spiritual retreat for self-reflection.⁴⁷ Later these paintings were collotype printed and compiled together in a modern book format and were published by the Shanghai heping she in 1932.⁴⁸ Chen's Guilin Sketching album can be understood better in the art historical traditions of traveling paintings and topographical paintings. This thesis argues that Chen Shuren purposely adopted the literati genre of combining a picture with a poem and also synthesized painting styles showing a modern visual taste within the traveling and "famous site" painting genre to connect the frontier southwest city with a typical Chinese cultural tradition. In this way, Chen Shuren both culturally and historically claimed Guilin as a legitimate part of the modern Chinese state.

In *Geo-Narratives of a Filial Son: Huang Xiangjian's (1609–1673) Paintings and Travel Diaries*, Kindall considers Huang Xiangjian's Yunnan paintings in the well-established Suzhou landscape painting tradition. She claims that Huang Xiangjian "represent(s) a seventeenth-century Suzhou citizen's expectations and perceptions of the colonial southwest."⁴⁹ In Kindall's opinion, Huang Xiangjian was not seeking to exemplify a new view or location or an exclusive perspective on a particular site, but he aimed to create a familiar scene that could offer "inclusion

⁴⁷ Li, "Zai jieru yu chaotuo zhi jian-chenshuren jian lun", 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 4-5.

⁴⁹ Kindall, *Geo-narratives of a Filial Son*, 99.

within the ‘cultural memory’ of a site via the shared experience of a historically sanctioned view.”⁵⁰ Thus, the meaning of the painting was derived from the experience entirely through the lens of Han culture and history via established Suzhou tradition. Similar to Huang Xiangjian’s reconstruction of Yunnan by imposing the Han culture lens on a frontier land, Chen Shuren also used a nationalistic and Han lens on Guilin, Guangxi province by visually connecting the Guilin album with the traditional travel and topographical painting genre.

In the history of Chinese landscape painting, art depicting identifiable geographic sites with poetic inscriptions has enjoyed popularity since the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The inscriptions provide the viewers a sense of the when, where, why, or for whom the traveling and painting was done. The inscriptions, together with the depiction of a known geographical location, created a new genre---one where viewer can experience the artists’ journey to that location.⁵¹ This was unprecedented in Chinese landscape painting. Before the late Yuan and early Ming dynasty, *wo you* 卧游 (dream journey), was a common theme of Chinese landscape paintings. This kind of topographical painting always included the actual process of travel, which provided the artists with the direct experience at a specific site. The ultimate goal was to not only create a likeness of the physical details, but also to convey the landscape as a microcosm of the universe of the natural order and the harmonious correspondence between humans and nature.⁵² The poems written by Chen Shuren and Cai Yuanpei’s inscriptions in Chen’s Guilin album show the harmonious correspondence between human and nature. For example, in the Guilin album, Chen Shuren wrote: “How could I expect more than having peace of mind; besides it, I am trying to travel far away to escape from the secular world” 心安理得更何求，又避塵鞅試遠遊，攜取

⁵⁰ Ibid., 102-130.

⁵¹ Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan*, 53-73.

⁵² Ibid., 80-83.

一直清勁筆，桂林山水好全收。^{53 54} This showed Chen's desire to explore nature through actual travel to Guilin.

Chen's Guilin album should also be considered a "famous site" painting. Because Chen's album was likely a famous site painting, it means it was created for the mass public and for dissemination. Elizabeth Kindall categorized the Ming dynasty Suzhou place paintings into two types, honorific paintings and famous site paintings, and she examined in detail the visual experiences of both types.⁵⁵ While honorific paintings were made specially for local celebrities, they present a unique physical and intellectual visual experience. This unique experience enables the recipients to place themselves in the same shoes as the governing official's as they examine the topographical view themselves. Honorifics were specially made and costly, because they were customized for individual governing representatives.⁵⁶ The subject matter is easily identifiable in honorific paintings, as they only depict the most remarkable features of each site. Furthermore, honorific paintings also always have laudatory and commemorative inscriptions eulogizing the recipients, who were mostly officials or the elites.

On the other hand, famous site paintings, according to Kindall, were based on the painters' inclusion within the 'cultural memory' of a site via the shared experience of a historically sanctioned view.⁵⁷ While the recipients were the most important component of the honorific painting, the famous sites paintings concentrated on the opposite problem of honorific paintings. For the famous site paintings, the lack of personalized documentation on these works implied that they were produced not for people with official positions, but for local gentry,

⁵³ Li, "Zai jieru yu chaotuo zhi jian-chenshuren jian lun", 6-7.

⁵⁴ "Xin anlide geng he qiu, you bi chen ji shi yuan you, xie qu yizhe qing jing bi, guilin shanshui hao quan shou."

⁵⁵ Kindall, "Visual Experience in Late Ming Suzhou," 134-136.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 136-140.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 140.

educated local elites, and visitors, who valued more the cultural capital of the famous sites than a description of their own personal circumstances. In the famous site paintings, the focused perspective, seasonal references, populated compositions, codified topography, and conceptual presentations offer viewers an experiential encounter with the illustrated sites.⁵⁸ For Chen Shuren's painting, the recipients of the paintings were not mentioned, and for each of the painting leaves inside, Chen chose the most featured and representative view of each spot he painted, such as “*Duxiu feng*” 獨秀峰 (Peak of unique charm) (Fig.2) and “*Xiangbi shan*” 象鼻山 (Elephant's trunk hill) (Fig. 3).⁵⁹ Those places also represent the real sites accurately, which stressed the topographic features of the site, compared with the photos of the real sites. (Fig.4 and Fig.5). In the inscriptions on Chen's paintings, such as “The best traveling time is the early winter, the new frost dyed the old maple leaf, this adds some cool and refreshing feelings, the white clouds and the red leaves overtop the blue mountains” “清遊最好及初冬，新得微霜染舊楓，添我幾多清峭氣，白雲紅葉聳青峰,” the poems all conveyed a past literatus's feelings towards nature, and they praised the grand beauty of nature. From this, one could see Chen purposely adopted and established the Han culture lens of the Suzhou famous site paintings in his album.

Chen's Guilin album also depicted some seasonal themes, such as “*Liang feng qiao qiuse*” 良豐橋秋色 (Liangfeng autumn bridge), “*Xiao wu zhong zhi Yao Shan*” 曉霧中之瑤山 (Yao Shan in the Morning fog), “*Hua qiao wei yu*” 花橋微雨 (Raining over the flower bridge), “*Ranpo zansetsu*” 亂峰殘雪 (Melting snow on rugged mountains). These generic seasonal

⁵⁸ Ibid., 140-150.

⁵⁹ Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji*, n.p.

scenes brought memories back to the viewers of the traditional literati albums that were themed with seasonal scenes.⁶⁰ The universal nature of these seasonal themes sparked memories within viewers of their visit to the sites, and it also presented the recognizable colors and related personal, seasonal activities and experiences.

Additionally, famous sites paintings were also related to an established visual experience of certain codified elements. Their pre-established components of the trip they illustrated would appeal more to buyers seeking to remember their visits to the historically or religiously sanctioned light of the past.⁶¹ Chen's Guilin album contained pictures showing the most remarkable sites of Guilin, such as Duxiu feng 獨秀峰 and Xiangbi shan 象鼻山. The perspective and composition of the pictures realistically resembled the viewers' first impressions of the real sites, even in terms of the textures on the mountain (Fig.6). This reconstructed memories of the viewer's actual travel experience to Guilin. In this way, Chen Shuren's Guilin album appealed to tourists and pilgrims to Guilin. In contrast, honorific paintings required more time and thought than famous sites paintings, because they show unique views and more detailed compositions. They were created for a singular person in official positions and thus given a custom and unique view. This contrasts with the general audience that the famous sites paintings appealed to.⁶² From this comparison, one can see Chen Shuren's strategy for the Guilin album was closer to the famous site genre by using an established tradition to appeal to a bigger targeted buyer group. The portable size of Chen Shuren's modern book format album that was made for unknown and unspecific recipients, the established visual components, the featured and

⁶⁰ Ibid., 9-12.

⁶¹ Kindall, "Visual Experience in Late Ming Suzhou," 137-139.

⁶² Ibid., 165-168.

representative spots of Guilin, and the generic seasonal scenes all showed that Chen followed the established “famous site” genre to paint this Guilin album.

III. Other visual representation of Guilin by Chen’s peers and how Chen’s album compares:

After discussing the genre and format of Chen Shuren’s Guilin album, it is important to explore the subject matter of Chen Shuren’s work; however, before interpreting Chen’s visual representation of Guilin in the second chapter, there must be a detailed introduction of how Guilin was visually represented by other painters in premodern China and how Chen’s album was representative.

Located far away from the economic and cultural center of either Beijing or Nanjing in pre-modern China, Guangxi Province was usually regarded as a province bearing primitive and barbarian culture. The major population in Guangxi is composed by various groups of minorities, such as Zhuang 壮, Yao 瑶, and Miao 苗. They were famous for making a living by fishing or being bandits. These groups of people were stereotypically considered less civilized than Han people.⁶³ The city of Guilin was located in the northeastern part of Guangxi (Fig.7), and it has been famous for the beautiful scenery since it first appeared in the written records in the Six Dynasties (222-589).

Chen Shuren’s Guilin landscape album was the first work in which the scenes of Guangxi were depicted and widely disseminated via modern print technology in modern China. Although the scenes of Guangxi as the main subject matter had been depicted in pre-modern times, the

⁶³ Huang, "Ten Views," 90-91.

visual materials are now hard to come by. Still, it is important to explore visual representations of Guilin in Chinese painting history, because it provides a more dynamic and modern perspective on Chen Shuren's representation of Guilin. As early as the Song dynasty, Mi Fu painted the Yangshuoshan tu 阳朔山图 (Yangshuo mountain map) when he spent five years serving in a governmental position in Guilin from 1070-1075, as recorded in the *Juanyou lu* 倦遊錄.⁶⁴ This is the earliest recorded painting representing the beautiful scene of Guilin in history. In the Ming dynasty, Zou Diguang 鄒迪光 (1550-1626) made a copy of Mi Fu's Yangshoushan tu, which was currently in the Guilin Museum. In the Qing dynasty, the famous individualist painter Shi Tao 石濤 (1642-1708) was born in Guilin. Although he did not directly paint Guilin as a subject, his paintings were inspired by his impressions of the Guilin local scenery, as stated in Jonathan Hay's *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China*.⁶⁵ Another Qing painter Luo Chen 羅辰 (1771-1838) once made a series of 33 woodblock prints of the famous mountains of Guilin in 1831 named *Guilin mingshantu* 桂林名山圖 (Guilin famous mountain map). This particular work had a deep influence on the later paintings representing Guilin by painters such as Zhang Bao 張寶 and Zhu Shude 朱樹德 in the Qing dynasty. Luo Chen's paintings, however, are now all gone, and there are no detailed written records of them.⁶⁶ In the late Qing Dynasty, Chen Shuren's teacher, Ju Lian 居廉 (1828-1904) and Ju Chao 居巢 (1811-1865) had gone to Guilin and sketched there. Chen Shuren, Qi Baishi 齊白石 (1864-1957), Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 (1864-1955), Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡, Xu Beihong, Li Keran 李可染 (1907-1989), and Bai Xueshi

⁶⁴ Kindall, *Geo-narratives of a Filial Son*, 150-173.

⁶⁵ Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan*, 124-153.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 126-145.

白雪石 one after another went to the site of Guilin and sketch the scenery there.⁶⁷ Chen Shuren's sketching painting album can be regarded as a transition between tradition and modernity, and it continues the artistic heritage of pre-modern Guilin paintings as well as representing new China visually and politically.

The poems and texts that praised Guangxi or Guilin in pre-modern times left more than the visual materials representing them. The earliest Han person to have taken an official position in Guilin was Yan Yanzhi 颜延之 (384-456) in the Six dynasties. He was a scholar official and a famous poet who is usually mentioned together with Xie Lingyun 谢灵运 (385-433). Yan wrote the earliest poem on Guilin “Wei ruo du xiu zhe, e e fu yi jian” 未若独秀者，峨峨郭邑间 (There never has been a mountain as beautiful as Duxiu Mountain, and it rises up in between the cities.). Guilin has been regarded as a location of iconic scenery of China since the Tang dynasty (618-907). In 822, the famous poet Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824) wrote the “Jiangzuoqing lu dai shan ru bi yuzan” 江作青罗带，山如碧玉簪 (The river is like a piece of blue silk, and the mountain is like a jade hairpin), which later became the most famous poem for praising the beauty of Guilin. The fantasies of Guilin also have been written in the Song dynasty scholar Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126-1193) “Guihai yuheng zhi” 桂海虞衡志. In the Ming dynasty, Guilin also has been traveled by Xu Xiake 徐霞客 (1581-1641) as stated in his traveling record *Xu Xiake youji* 徐霞客遊記 (Xu Xiake's Travels).⁶⁸ From these, we can see that Guilin and Guangxi have long been taken as subject matter visually depicted in pre-modern China. In modern China, Chen Shuren

⁶⁷ Li, *Bimo yinyuan*, 12-19.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 220-223.

fitted himself into this lineage of the traditional scholar official's representation of Guilin based on both his paintings and poems in this Guilin landscape album.

Chapter Two

This chapter will concentrate on establishing that Chen's album was a phenomenon of its time because it encompassed a wide-variety of styles. By examining the similarities between Chen's features in his album with the styles of pre-modern artists, contemporaries of his times, as well as with Western and Japanese artwork, one can see how representative Chen's album was in Chinese art history.

This chapter is divided into five parts, the first part introduces the political circumstance related to Chen's album and studies Chen's political drive to paint Guilin and how it impacted his choice of style. The second section focuses on interpreting the stylistic similarities from pre-modern Chinese painters that were present in Chen's own works. The third section examines the modern artistic discourse that affected the concept of painting Chen's Guilin album. The fourth part recounts and analyzes Chen's study experiences in Japan and relates Chen's visual style with Japanese art circles as well as the features he got from them. The fifth part discusses the stylistic similarities with modern media such as photography and watercolors. Overall, Chen's life experiences in Japan, political ventures, modern Chinese art discourse, pre-modern Chinese influences, modern watercolors, and photography together shaped and defined the visual styles the Guilin album incorporated.

I. Chen's Political Experience and Effects on His Album

The political and social circumstances that affected Chen were complicated because of the intertwining integration of foreign ideas stemming from Japan, from his large network made of his contemporaries, and from pre-modern Chinese artists. As a result, Chen's Guilin album

encompassed a host of different ideologies. In particular, ideas such as nationalism and realistic style came together in Chen's artistic style and album.

In the late 1920s, Chen was impacted by failures of his political ventures within Jiang Jieshi's central government. Chen went to Guilin with the other members of *Gaizu pai*, a loosely-bonded political group following Wang Jingwei's policy.⁶⁹ It was just during this period when the paintings in this album were created. Wang Jingwei's inscription on the Guilin album reflected the negative situation of Chen's political career, and it expressed the ancient literati's pursuit of exiling oneself in nature during a downturn in one's life.⁷⁰ The inscription said,

Life cannot be without work, and work cannot be without rest. After a long period of work, a temporary rest: life should be like this. This is the highest joy of life. My poems are done in this situation.⁷¹

人生不能無勞，勞不能無息，長勞而暫息，人生之所宜然。亦人生之至樂也，而余詩即成於此時。

The "temporary rest" here used by Wang Jingwei was a euphemistic way of saying that due to his political failure, his political position was suspended, and he was forced to rest. This showed that Chen's travel to Guilin was a way to recover and "rest", and it could also be regarded as a form of spiritual recuperation. Additionally, another inscription further supported Chen's intention to use the trip to Guilin for recovery.

In the middle of a long route under a burning sun, occasionally we put down our burdens and rest a bit under a tree. Stretching out together, friends recite poetry and laugh, thus forgetting our sufferings in a flash.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid., 7-9.

⁷⁰ Because of a confrontation with Jiang's branch of the Nationalist Party, a lot of *Gaizu pai* members were either forced to resign or dismissed from their original position in the Nationalist Party. Both Wang Jingwei and Chen Shuren were examples of this.

⁷¹ "Rensheng buneng wu lao, lao buneng wu xi, zhang lao er zan xi, rensheg zhi suo yi ran. Yi rensheg zhi zhi le ye, er yu shi ji cheng yu ci shi."

⁷² Chen, *Guilin shanshui xiasheng ji*, n.p..

烈日行長途中，偶弛擔就樹下小憩，相與箕踞歌吟笑乎，以忘痛苦於須臾耳。

Wang Jingwei also stressed the easiness of Chen's work and his praise of natural scenery. Wang said in his inscription:

Fan Xiwen had a saying, "never taking pleasure in the external gains." At the moment, I cannot separate the external world and me, not even to have the tragedy and happy feelings.' But I feel relieved and pleased. Among the myriad things in nature, there is benevolence but no anger or disgust. There is nice and kind but no crimes or evil. So, you just enjoy life and have fun, and there is no trap or trick. This short moment of comfort is more than sufficient for forgetting hundreds of years of sufferings and labor. Feeling stirs in the mean, and I want to express it by singing and painting it in detailed forms. For someone that did not expect this enjoyment but met the enjoyment, they do not hope this unexpected and short enjoyment pass away. They intend to always go back to the beautiful countryside. This is Shuren's personality and opinion.⁷³

范希文有言，不以物喜，然當此之際，已不知我之為物，物之為我。又與所用其悲喜乎。但覺釋然曠然。天地萬物之間，有慈悲而無嗔厭。有良善而無罪惡，嬉戲自若，虞詐不生。此一剎那之慰藉。足以忘百年之勞苦而有餘。情動於中，發而為歌吟，形之而為圖畫。有不期然而然者，蓋不欲此剎那之瞥然而逝。而謀有以流連鄉往於無窮也。質之樹人，以為如何。

Fan Xiwen (989-1052) is Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹's courtesy name. He was one of the most prominent statesman, educators, philosophers, and writer in the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Fan was a progressive reformer, and he was exiled from his position three times because of his disagreements with other conservative governors.⁷⁴ Fan's political failure and exile experience

⁷³ Ibid, n.p..

⁷⁴ "Fan Zhongyan" 范仲淹. *Wikipedia*. last modified March 16, 2019, <https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E8%8C%83%E4%BB%B2%E6%B7%B9>

reminded the readers of Wang and Chen's failed political situation in 1920-1930. Wang referred to Fan's failed political experience and expressed his and Chen's desire to enjoy nature through the painting medium. The prosperous economical and educational construction in Guilin sharply contrasted with Chen's depressed psychological status, and the bland color and plain depiction adopted in the Guilin album evoke Chen Shuren's complicated and unhappy political career.

Chen Shuren again traveled to Guilin in the winter of 1931, when he was forced to resign from his political position due to his political bond with Wang Jingwei, a close friend of Chen, when Wang lost a power struggle. Chen conveyed concerns towards the political upheaval he met then in the Guilin album by saying,

Mandarin ducks swimming in the river makes it is hard to tell where clear stream is, and the mandarin ducks feel worried to see the flowing water becoming mixed. At first I do not think the original source of the water would get mingled, but later the muddy and clear streams are not be able to be separated.⁷⁵

鴛鴦江水難辨真,也為臨流一愴神。不信本源能混去,到頭清濁漫無分。

In this poem, Chen used the river as a metaphor for Republican political circumstances, and the mix of the clear water and muddy water implied that good and evil people were mixed up in the political climate he was in at that time.

The reasons Chen chose Guilin as his traveling sites were various. In the 1930s, the economic and political situation shifted in Guangxi, as it was one of the two exemplary provinces in China. As Levich has stated,

The government of Guangxi during the 1930s was in most respect a good government. It suppressed banditry and disorder. It stabilized and developed the

⁷⁵ Chen, *Guilin shanshui xiasheng ji*, n.p..

rural economy as well as provided mass education to children and adults at low cost to taxpayers.⁷⁶

Guangxi was controlled by the local warlords Li Zongren 李宗仁(1891-1969) and Bai Chongxi 白崇喜(1883-1966) from the 1930s. They were political companions and were both locally born in Guilin. In 1921 Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866-1925) stayed in Guilin for six months to stress the political importance of Guilin, and he called for a need to revitalize Guilin by the Republican revolution. Sun's Three Principles led Sun and his followers to construct a successful government.⁷⁷ From the poems written in the Guilin album, Sun's followers also warmly welcomed Chen Shuren when he traveled there. It was likely that Chen's Guilin travel was intent on secretly building up power to develop the anti-Jiang organization.⁷⁸

In addition to Chen's life and political experiences, he also had strong respect for much older Chinese ideology. In the preface of this Guilin album, Cai Yuanpei wrote:

Mr. Chen Shuren is a pure fine artist, and his artworks are characterized with elegant individuality. He also devotes himself to a revolutionary career, and he especially believes in Sun Yat-sen and Wang Jingwei. Particularly, he believed in Sun Yat-sen's personality and the Three Principles of the People, and he believes in Wang Jingwei's morals and literature.⁷⁹ Regarding him as a fine artist, he believes in Wang Mojie 王摩詰 (699-761) and Mi Xiangyang 米襄陽 (1051-1107).⁸⁰

陳樹人先生，純粹美術家，而具優美之個性也。彼之從事革命，由其對於孫中山先生與汪精衛先生之信仰。彼信仰孫先生之人格與主義，信仰汪先生之品性與文學。直以美術家前輩視之，猶其信仰王摩詰、米襄陽也。

At this time, Chen Shuren was a loyal follower of Sun Yat-sen. Chen Shuren and Wang Jingwei

⁷⁶ Eugene W. Levich, *The Kwangsi way in Kuomintang China: 1931-1939* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 1993), 219

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 220

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 207

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 223-225.

⁸⁰ Chen, *Guilin Shanshui xiasheng ji*, Preface.

were in opposition with the then Nationalist party president Jiang Jieshi, who was regarded as an opponent to Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles and political pursuit after Sun was dead. The Guilin warlord of Li and Bai claimed they were the legitimate lineage of Sun Yat-sen, and they highly promoted Sun's Three Principles, which was also Chen Shuren's political nationalism.

This all ultimately accumulated into Chen's desire to visually promote Guilin as an exemplary province of China and to impress the viewers with Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary pursuit through Chen's Guilin album. Levich also concluded that Guangxi's reconstruction under the Three Principles could be used as a mode to reconstruct a modern China in the 1930s. He stated that, China could have had a successful Sun Yat-senist government in the 1930s if chance had allowed it. Guangxi was not exceptional compared to other provinces of China. The reforms carried out in Guangxi could have been implemented in most other areas of the country.⁸¹ The developing mode of the Guangxi Province as a regional model to spread to the nation was in response to the developing strategy of the Lingnan School's agenda, which also started as a regional painting style and later spread its influence to the nation.⁸² Painting the regional scenery of Guangxi additionally symbolized Chen's desire for constructing and imagining a new modern nation as a revolutionary artist.

In all, Chen's politics and life experience strongly affected his work and was one important part that makes his album stand out from his times. Chen was a loyal member of Sun Yat-sen's alliance for democracy and constantly held up the Three Principles as a revolutionary guide to reform China into a modern country. In his poems, he often expressed his loyalty and patriotism in the constructing of a modern nation. In the politician Wang Jingwei's inscription on

⁸¹ Levich, *The Kwangsi way in Kuomintang China: 1931-1939*, 221.

⁸² Ralph C. Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: the Lingnan (Cantonese) school of painting, 1906-1951*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 5

the Guilin landscape album, he also praised Chen's great efforts on behalf of the revolution: "Chen worked so hard as a revolutionary, and he can even sacrifice himself for the nation. For other people, it truly not a happy career. 以劳苦为生平，以牺牲为究竟，诚非对于人间之享乐".⁸³ The tension between art and politics has always been a focus of art historians in traditional Chinese literati paintings. In the pre-modern age, painters could serve in the imperial court to hold an official position, just like Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322). Meanwhile, politically driven painters were experienced at using metaphoric objects, scenes, or poems to indirectly or subtly convey their political ambition or appeal to the nation. Comparatively, in the modern age, art and politics were bonded even more tightly by means that ranged from realistic visual representation to the medium of dissemination, and Chen Shuren's Guilin album could serve as an example of the tension between art and politics in the modern age. In Chen Shuren's case, the bonded relationship between art and politics was expressed by the Japanese realistic style and the mass printing in the modern age, and Chen's choice for the style and the subject matter of this album showed a modern artist using a new method to search for his new art identity. Chen Shuren's position as both a politician and a painter offered the possibility to interpret this album in the political context of 1930s Guangxi; meanwhile, the aesthetic value conveyed by this album showed one kind of the artistic taste formed in the process of modernizing a nation when China faced the characteristics from Japan and other Western countries. This was achieved through combining his life experiences from Japan, political beliefs, and pre-modern Chinese ideology.

⁸³ Chen, *Guilin shanshui xiasheng ji*, n.p..

II. Pre-modern Characteristics within Chen's Artistic Style and Beliefs:

Chen Shuren's Guilin landscape album identifiably showed the topographical features of specific scenery in Guilin, as shown by photographs of the same site depicted. Standing out from the Orthodox painting school that was canonized in the Qing dynasty, a realistic style was one of the distinguishing features of Chen's representation of Guilin. The next sections will look at the works and traits from individuals or group of individuals that Chen's Guilin album share characteristics with. By analyzing these traits in comparison to others' works, one can see how Chen's Guilin album fits into the discourse on the realistic style in the Republican era, how Chen's painting combined old and new aesthetics during the Republican era, and why he chose an eclectic realistic style that was rooted in both the East and Japanese and Western tradition in completing his work. As a result, Chen's album stands out because it also has pre-modern Chinese, modern Chinese, and Japanese characteristics.

In its visual effects, Chen's painting resembles that of the Ming individualist painter Hongren 弘仁 (1610-1664): both their paintings' outlines were clearly tracing the shape of the mountain, and neither used much of the Chinese *cun* 皴 brushstroke (Fig. 8). Hongren was a Ming loyalist painter living in the late Ming and earlier Qing time.⁸⁴ His unsuccessful political career mirrored Chen Shuren's own political career in Jiang's Government. Similarly, the dilemma in the painting practice in each of their time that was faced by Hongren and Chen Shuren was also very alike. Hongren faced the orthodox literati painting rule founded by Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) in the late Ming dynasty. He was one of the "four monks"⁸⁵ who aimed to use their individual painting styles to reform the unlively literati paintings produced

⁸⁴ Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan*, 31-39.

⁸⁵ Hongren (Jiang Tao), Kunca (Liu Jiejiu), Bada shanren (Zhu Da), Shitao (Zhu Ruoji), 13-14.

during this time. Likewise, Chen also rejected old Chinese painting stereotypes and instead used art as a vehicle to reconstruct a modern nation. *Shenzhou guoguang ji* 神州國光集 and *Zhongguo minghua* 中國名畫 were two collotype-printed Chinese painting catalogues that were edited by Huang Binhong, who was in Chen Shuren's friends' circle. Huang Binhong, Chen Shuren, and Huang Huiwen 黃晦聞(1873-1935) once together established the art society named "Zhenshe" 貞社. Huang was a traditional Chinese art theorist and organized traditionalist art societies, and he also conducted research on "the national essence" in cultural expression.⁸⁶ Both of the two painting catalogues published Hongren's painting. As a result, it was likely that Chen's album would show similarities to Hongren's own works from working and researching Hongren's art.

Cahill said that Hongren learned Tang painting's finesse but removed its poor shape, and he has also learned Song painting's boldness but left out its austerity. He also managed to travel among famous mountains, including Wuyi shan 武夷山 and Mount Lu 廬山, and indulged himself in the waters and mountains of Mount Huang. Hongren studied both ancient masters and nature, and he may also have applied the plein-air painting practice in his paintings as stated by Cahill.⁸⁷ This was similar to Chen's own experience in Guilin.

Huang Binhong, in his own writing, highly praised the Anhui master Hongren as a brilliant new star in the literati tradition, going beyond most Ming scholar amateurs and the "Four Wangs". He said,

⁸⁶ Jane Zheng, "Transplanting Literati Painting into the Modern Art School System: "Guohua" Education at the Shanghai Fine Arts College, 1924-1937" *Studies in Art Education* 52, no. 1 (FALL 2010): 36

⁸⁷ James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese painting* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), 67-80.

Master Hongren first studied Northern Song painting, then Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301-1374), and he surpassed Ming masters and became the top painter^[11] of all ages. Not only was he qualified to be the patriarch of all Anhui painters, but he had also become the best since the Yuan dynasty in the orthodox lineage of the Dong Yuan 董源 (ca. 934-962) and Juran 巨然 (fl. 10th century) School of Jiangnan landscape. It is because he achieved the great synthesis of the styles of Li Cheng 李成 (919-967), Fan Kuan 范宽 (fl. 990-1020), Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1020-1090), Jing Hao 荆浩 (ca. 855-915), Guan Tong 關仝 (ca. 906-960). His nature was noble and pure, and elegant as Ni Zan.⁸⁸

Besides Huang Binhong's comments on Hongren, Cahill also argues Hongren's landscape paintings were rooted in the Northern Song as shown by the meticulous outline applied to represent the accurate shape of the real object and also the monumental composition. Moreover, he also used the featured dry and clear style of the Yuan Literati painter Ni Zan to advocated his literati spirit. As an individualist painter or a painter in the "literati tradition," Hongren's desire to turn down the orthodox Ming literati painters was achieved by combining the realistic style first used in the Tang and Northern Song time and also the literati tradition that flourished in the Yuan Dynasty.⁸⁹ In this way of combining realistic style and the literati taste, Chen Shuren's synthetic painting practice, as shown in the Guilin landscape, resembles that of Hongren.

Although Chen's Guilin album appeared similar to a visual revival of the Song academic realistic style by the monumental composition applied, by the meticulous outlines, and by the adoption of the Chinese way of painting to depict the accuracy of the real world, the album's way of landscape depiction had distinct differences with the philosophical landscape that was promoted in the Song landscape paintings. From the viewing experience, the use of vibrant

⁸⁸ Yanfei Zhu, "Transnational Canon Formation: The Rediscovery of Ming *Yimin* Ink Painting in Modern China, 1900-1949" (Ph. D diss., Ohio State University, 2013), 89.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 89-105.

colors, the clear contour, and the portable media, Chen's album did not offer the vicarious travel offered by the Song landscape paintings. The striking accuracy and the vibrant watercolor-like pigments draw the viewer's attention, and they began to "leave the room" and to pay attention to the real scene visually represented on the paper rather than mentally traveling through it. These suggested the practical use of this album, and from the visual effect, Chen's Guilin visual representation more looks like the photos in a modern gazetteer or tour guide (Fig.9). For example, the painting leaf *Xiang bi shan* 象鼻山 (Elephant's Trunk Hill) delicately represents the mountain's scenery, its space relationship with the surroundings, and the moments that Chen painted it. Everything in the painting was recorded in detail as a real-life scene. Even the poems on the painting said,

The miracle worker used his knife to split the wonderful river and mountain, whose atmosphere was heavenly pretty but not arbitrary. Yet all the immortals went back home after the mountain and river were split, they left there an elephant as the performers.

神工劈出妙江山，氣帶英靈不帶蠻。可是諸仙歸洞府，留將馴象舞朝班。

This was a realistic depiction and representation of the Xiang bi mountain. For pre-modern landscape paintings, the poems inscribed on them mostly showed a focus on the expression of the crown of the landscape with some Taoist characteristics. The realistic visual and textual elements in Chen's Guilin album were contrasted with the philosophical Tao beliefs or joy gained from the dream wandering of the Chinese pre-modern typical landscape paintings.

Chen's hybrid and rarely seen style of combining the old with the new and the East with the West could be regarded as a visual experiment with similarities through various stylistic changes and aesthetic ideologies that circulated in China. The painting history of Guilin from pre-modern Chinese history and the topographical painting albums painted in the Ming dynasty

not only showed how Chen's idealized style in this album was based on Chinese tradition but also transcended it in terms of function and visual expression. By comparing Chen's work with Ming dynasty topographical painting albums done by Zhang Hong 張宏 (1577-1652), one can see how Zhang's realistic style visual style was similar to Chen's painting style, and how Chen's visual expression both visually and ideologically connected with the painting ideology of Zhang Hong when Chen Shuren faced a *guohua* standard that was established by the "Four Wangs" under the influence of Dong Qichang (Fig.10).⁹⁰ The individualized painting styles of such Ming *yimin* 遺民 painters as Hongren and Shitao in the transitional age between Ming and Qing could be regarded as another source of Chen's stylistic choice. In a period of upheaval between the Ming and Qing, painters like Hongren and Shitao, with a strong political appeal, were similarly using an "idealized" and highly individualized visual style to express their anxieties and hope for the future. The reasons behind their stylistic choice has been studied by James Cahill in *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in the Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting*, and the art historical context met by Shitao and Hongren was similarly met by Chen Shuren in the modern age. Studies had been done on the revival of Ming *yimin* paintings in the Republican era (1912-1949) by means of the mass printing materials, such as *Shenzhou guoguang ji* 神州國光集, which Chen Shuren could easily access.⁹¹ In this hybrid way of linking a glorious Chinese past with a modern Western aesthetic, Chen Shuren visually reconstructed Guilin as an idealized landscape that was both tinted with pre-modern Chinese civilization and also with modern visuals and ideological tastes.

⁹⁰ James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in the Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 11.

⁹¹ Zhu Yanfei, "The Rediscovery of Ming *Yimin* Ink Painting in Modern China, 1900-1949" (PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2013), 79.

Other old Chinese ideas such as *xiasheng* 寫生 (sketching from life) and *xie shi* 寫實 (depicting the real object) had originally existed in Chinese painting history, but neither showed the institutionalized technical training that came to be associated with these terms until the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To convey the technical skill worthy of the Song heritage, modern Chinese artists, such as Chen, investigated not just the Song paintings but also imitated Japanese art with Western influences. Chinese art theorist Yu Jianhua 俞劍華 (1895-1979) also stressed that the striking Tang and Song Chinese paintings were founded by sketching from the real life. He claimed that sketches based on real life were the only method for Chinese painting to learn about and depict nature, which was a common view for the artists and art theorists at the beginning of 20th century.⁹² This soon made Chen and many of his contemporaries believe that adopting Western techniques and ideology was necessary to advance Chinese art. Chen's own Guilin album encompasses this, making it more notable among its peers.

III. The Contemporary Characteristics within Chen's Artistic Style and Beliefs:

Chen's work exhibits many of Cai Yuanpei's ideas. They were art theorists and painters who represented a mixed Chinese and Western cultural background based on their educational experiences and artistic expressions. Their synthetic and idealized perspectives on reforming Chinese art could be seen in Chen's artistic expression. One could see the hybrid stylistic choice as a negotiation between a pre-modern Chinese tradition and Western taste. The visual expression of this album could be regarded as a synthetic negotiation between the East and West. More specifically, since the style and aesthetic taste conveyed by this album were not exactly the

⁹² Li, *Bimo yinyuan*, 53-56.

“realistic style” understood in the traditional semantic study, which leaves out the concepts of light, volume, and spatial recession and paid more attention to convincing shape. Chen Shuren’s realistic style was an “idealization” that was constructed under Chen’s political and artistic ideology at the time of this album. The “idealization” not only could be understood as a compromise negotiation between the East and the Japanese paintings styles with some Westernized characteristics, but it could also be understood as a compromise visual strategy well planned to cater to various viewers in China so as to visually propagandize the album’s subject matter—Guilin.

Kang Youwei and those that he influenced thought China had possessed the technical ability to represent the real world and had achieved technical superiority over the West in the past. They believed that a return to a time when their art was superior to the West may be a solution to revolutionize Chinese art. Chen Shuren was one of these revolutionary artists. Even in the Shanghai Fine Arts College, whose main feature was its Western art curriculum, there were classes in traditional Chinese painting. All these showed how traditional Chinese art, especially Northern Song School paintings, were valued in modern China. One subtle trait of Song painting was that, for the mountains and sceneries depicted in the album, it all adopted a monumental scope of the landscape by depicting the far and tall feeling of the mountain, such as Fan Kuan’s (Fig.11). Although the paintings in Chen’s album did not apply the Song landscape painting texture styles, the realistic feeling of the full and grand Guilin scenery in the album could be from the realistic Song landscape paintings. Meanwhile, a voice of integrating scientific viewing methods into traditional Chinese painting also was present.

The adoption of European realistic style to reform Chinese painting was an achievable method. Kang’s opinion inspired a new generation of painters such as Xu Beihong, another

painter whom Chen resembles. Xu Biehong also repeated Kang's opinion that before the fifteenth century, Chinese painting was the best in the world. In Xu Beihong's 1918 lecture, he stated that Song painting was the national representation of Chinese art. Xu Beihong regarded Chinese painting as superior to that of Europe before the fifteenth century, and he thought China won the cultural competition between the West and East at the turn of fifteenth century. He also believed that the rise of European painting in the Renaissance and the decline of Chinese painting after the Yuan reversed the standing of Chinese and Western paintings in his global perspective.⁹³

Studying abroad first in Japan and later in France, Xu Beihong was an example of implementing Kang's academic realistic style, and he also claimed the superiority of accuracy and the realist techniques in his works, as shown in his portrait paintings. In Chen's paintings, one does not see any *cun* "texture strokes", which was a feature of the Orthodox paintings targeted by Kang; instead, Chen applied the watercolor pigments in washes to show the real light and shadow effect of the mountains. He also drew meticulous lines following the accurate shape of the mountains as the outline of the mountains, just like the method applied in a Ming dynasty woodblock gazetteers (fig.12). From a technical aspect, Chen completely eliminated the Orthodox painting tradition and chose a realistic style to represent Guilin's scenery, a revolutionary artistic choice.

Another contemporary to have displayed significant similarities with Chen was Cai Yuanpei, who was a modern philosopher and educator in modern China. Cai graduated from the University of Leipzig in Germany and likely had great impact on Chen's beliefs and art work.

⁹³ Lang Shaojun and Shui Tianzhong, *Ershi shiji Zhongguo meishu wenxuan* (Selected Literary works on 20th Century Chinese Art), (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1996), 95

Cai had been appointed as the minister of education in the Republic of China in 1912. As a contemporary of Chen's, Cai had thought to integrate aesthetic education into a modern curriculum and educational system that would reflect the values and ideals of the Republic. In April of 1917, Cai Yuanpei delivered a speech titled "Aesthetic Education as a Substitute for Religion" to more than a thousand listeners at the Shenzhou scholarly Society in Beijing. The speech was later published in the August 1917 issue of *New Youth*.⁹⁴ Cai Yuanpei's aesthetic philosophy was based on a concern for social progress and improvement as part of his political ideals. Cai believed that aesthetic education was a powerful and effective means to implement ethical education and to improve the national character, which was believed to be the true path to the building of a new society and a better China.⁹⁵ Cai initiated the idea of using art to reform society in modern China, and art should serve for the masses and also the nation, an idea, as mentioned, was of great importance to Chen.

Cai had been seen a lot of European museums and art schools when he was in Germany. The major content of Cai Yuanpei's aesthetic education was devoted to importing European art. He gave public support to Liu Haisu 劉海粟 (1896-1994) on the founding of the Shanghai Art Academy, which was a modern fine arts college with innovations on its curriculum. Two practices show this innovation: the regular field trips for plein-air sketches and the use of nude models in the classroom. Scholar Wan Qingli writes that "Cai Yuanpei promoted the transformation of Chinese art education from learning from Japan to learning from Europe." Cai believed that even *guohua* (traditional Chinese painting) painters should study Western-style

⁹⁴ Xiaobing Tang, *Origins of the Chinese avant-garde: the modern woodcut movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 34.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-40.

painting first.⁹⁶ The cultural atmosphere led by Cai Yuanpei could be seen in Chen's painting ideology. The several sketches at the back pages of Chen Shuren's album showed a relationship from the plein-air practice that were rooted in Europe, although Chen also picked up this skill when he studied in Japan.

Additionally, Cai Yuanpei connected Chen Shuren with the past literati masters Wang Wei 王維 (699–759) and Mi Fu, because Chen's poem showed the scenes depicted on his painting, and Chen's painting also showed the resonance of his poem. However, Chen Shuren applied a realistic representational way to promote the values of literati paintings. In this way, his hybrid realistic style of Chinese and Japanese could also express his emotions and literati thoughts.⁹⁷ This stands in contrast with the more traditional literati painting, which has to be painted with the spontaneous brushstrokes, and therefore more likely definite form. From this, one could see in Chen and Cai's definition of the literati painting in the Republican era, that they turned down the ancient stereotype of literati painting that was represented by the hidebound Orthodox school. Instead, they were more open-minded to combine the realistic style with the emotional expression of the painter's heart to launch a new taste and definition of the new literati painting in the new era.⁹⁸ From a newspaper report in *Shen Bao* 1932 (Fig. 13), one could see that this kind of representational way strongly catered to the viewer's taste, and it was fashionable. Chen's new literati visual representation even lifted up the commercial value of Chen's painting. This was another way the new Literati taste in the Republican era differed from traditional literati painting. For traditional literati paintings, they had to be cut off from the

⁹⁶ Jane Zheng, *The modernization of Chinese art: the Shanghai Art College, 1913-1937* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2016), 97.

⁹⁷ Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji*, n.p..

⁹⁸ Jane Zheng. *The Modernization of Chinese Art: the Shanghai Art College, 1913-1937* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2016), 145-172.

market because anything related with money would degrade the true value of the artwork. In the 1932 *Shen Bao* report, Chen Shuren said,

Solo Fine Arts Exhibition (Title) In the last year, I have opened my solo fine arts shows in Guangzhou. It totally opened up for five days, and about 50,000 visitors came to the exhibition. They not only visited my paintings, but also showed an active desire to buy them. I so treasured my works that I cannot tolerate selling them as commercial products. But the art lovers show a tendency of must buy and acquire them...in this situation, I had to sell twenty of the paintings exhibited, and the approximate value was 10,000 yuan. The best works were not chosen to be sold. The Guangzhou ambassadors and foreigners especially paid attention to my works, and some of them even required the exhibition to be specially opened for one hour (for them). The major newspapers in Hong Kong and Guangdong all reported this. This adequately showed the domestic visitors and foreigners have formed a strong appreciation of modern Chinese art...After the rainy days, all my hundreds pieces of work are going to be shipped to Shanghai and Beijing for future exhibitions. The works in this group were basically my paintings and sketches on our nation's mountains and rivers, and the Guilin landscape of them are my favorite. All my activities for promoting my paintings were not for achieving my personal reputation, but I want to inspire love for studying arts through my paintings. I am looking forward to seeing if these paintings could play a crucial role for this. The paintings are going to be shipped to European countries and America. (The reason for this is that) fine arts can propagate the national spirit and show our nation's culture.⁹⁹

個人美術展覽(標題) 餘去年曾在廣州、舉行個人美術展覽、計開會五日、參觀者逐五萬餘人、展覽盡品、觀者都欲爭購、餘雖以不願割愛與婉卻、而愛好者大有非購不可之勢、乃於無辦法中、擇售二十餘幅、價值約及萬元、內中最佳者、則概未出售、當時廣州各國領事及外人尤為注意、甚至有臨早前來要求特別開放一小時者、港粵各報、均出特刊、專載此項消息、具見中西人士對中國現代美術、已有極濃厚之欣賞興味、現為普遍介紹計、擬待黃梅雨天過後、即將個人全部作品百餘件、由粵運京、先在首都正式舉行展覽後、再赴上海轉北平、每地展覽五日、此項盡品、係餘連年歷經黃河長江珠江三大流域、對於當地山川風物、盡入繪意、尤以廣西之桂林山水蠻為最、餘之此舉、初非邀譽求名、良欲因此以引起國人藝術研求之興味、至效果與評價如何再將運往歐美分期展覽、因藝術一項、足以發揚民族之真正精神、及表出國家之固有文化也。

⁹⁹ Ibid., 201-210.

From this passage, one could see that Chen's work had drawn the attention of foreign visitors, and his works were taken as a commercial product to spread the national spirit and culture. The English-language Table of Contents and the title of the painting leaves of this Guilin album also showed that the wide variety of people were targeted as the readers of this album. The diverse taste of both the domestic and foreign viewers during this time shaped the reform of artistic style during this time.

Finally, there was a Japanese art history professor by the name of Omura Seigai 大村西崖 (1868-1927) who visited Beijing in 1921, and whose traces can be seen in Chen's work. Chen Shizeng 陈师曾 (1876-1923) likely had some relationship with Omura, because he translated Omura's writing and published his essay "On the value of Literati Painting."¹⁰⁰ In the essay, he traced the history of literati painting to the flourishing Taoist practice in the Six Dynasties (222-589), and he identified the amateur as the genius sources for artistic creativity. He also argued, "Western painting has always emphasized verisimilitude, but the new schools have broken all established rules and brought forth futurism and cubism." He suggested that the modern Western art was similar to Chinese literati painting in its form, but he did not reject the calls for representational realistic style in the visual arts.¹⁰¹ Chen's Guilin album showed his desire for promoting the literati spirit by writing the poems and expressed his personal emotions on the

¹⁰⁰ Ōmura Seigai was not trained as an art historian, but rather graduated in July 1893 from the first class of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (TSFA) specializing in sculpture. However, even as a student Ōmura had excelled in the study of history and aesthetics rather than art production, and within a few years after graduating had become a lecturer in sculpture and history at the TSFA, being promoted to professor of "Oriental Art History" (Tōyō Bijutsu Shi) in 1902, under the school's new director Masaki Naohiko (1862–1940). He went on to teach there for almost thirty years. Ōmura's decades of research culminated in a concise yet encyclopedic reference work, aptly titled Tōyō bijutsushi, published in 1925.

¹⁰¹Shizeng Chen, *Zhongguo huihua shi-wenrenhua de jiazhi* (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2017), 13.

plate, which was a literati tradition founded from Wang Wei. For example, he showed his failed political ambition through poems as,

My paintings do not know that I am going to be senior, and I treat the material wealth as the vague cloud. I have already put my political career into dusk and smoke, and I am light for desire and loving the nature. These several Guilin paintings were newly painted, and I hope they can last as long as the real mountain and river.¹⁰²

丹青不知老將至, 富貴於我如浮雲, 早將勳業付埃煙, 淡泊生涯性自然, 幾幅桂林新畫本, 可期同壽與山川。

This matches with Chen Shuren's personality that Cai Yuanpei stated, and it also shows the psychological state of Chen when he painted these Guilin paintings.

Overall, by not aiming to fulfill the philosophical function of the landscape that was promoted by the Song aesthetic, Chen's selection of the realistic style was conceptually related more with the European realistic style that was advocated by Cai Yuanpei and the knowledge he learned in Japan. Cai commented on the preface of the album,

Chen's painting has a light and bland taste that causes an aloof feeling of the landscape. Although Chen depicted both the objects like walls or long bridges and animals as birds or wild beast, he seriously followed the perspective and the rules of painting from real life. Yet, his paintings were not feeling rigid or dull, and there was a clever spirit coming out. By his way of painting, he transferred the rough depiction to an elegant and aloof feeling, which was absolutely from his graceful personality.¹⁰³

其所為畫, 極輕微淡遠之致, 雖所取間亦有峭壁長橋, 或鷺鳥猛獸, 且極守透視實寫之規矩, 而一出手, 無不化板滯而為靈雋, 轉粗獷而為秀逸, 是誠徹底出於優美的個性。

This once again was consistent with that idea that there were Japanese features and perspectives within the Guilin album. The mountains and bridges receding into the distance were

¹⁰² Chen, *Guilin Shan Shui Xie Sheng Ji*, n.p..

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, n.p..

characteristics of Western and Japanese perspective, like the top of the arch in *Elephant's Trunk Hill* (Fig.3) and the recessed road depicted in *Returned from Hunting on Table-land* (Fig.14). The realistic style in Chen's painting cannot be identified clearly as coming from the East or coming from the West. Despite their very different backgrounds and perspectives, Cai Yuanpei and Chen Shuren agreed that there was a need to update Chinese painting with Western technologies. The synthesis of East and West has been perfectly mingled in Chen's paintings in the Guilin album, making it a representative phenomenon.

Furthermore, some features of this Guilin album contrasted with the conceit of dream wandering. Chen Shuren's Guilin landscape album also has some traits from the literati painting traditions, and there were other possible sources that may have characteristics in Chen's Guilin album. By this analysis, Chen's work could be seen as a synthesis of Chinese and Japanese, and he also naturally combined the Song realistic tradition and the new literati taste for the modern era. This serves as a model for Chen's eclectic way of reforming the Chinese painting in the Republican era. In this popular way of representation, this album catered to the public's tastes at this time. This impression of Guilin as a part of the Chinese territory was not only connected with the Chinese tradition but also with the modern aesthetic discourse. This all resulted from a wide range of features from premodern Chinese ideology as well as from his contemporaries such as Cai being included in Chen's album.

IV. Japanese and Western Characteristics within Chen's Works:

As mentioned earlier, Chen's album showed features from entities outside of China. Besides the Chinese modern discourse on art and Chen Shuren's art circle in China, his study experience in Japan also contributed to the hybrid painting style that can be seen in the Guilin

album. Chen Shuren's painting style was much influenced by his Japanese learning experiences. While Chen studied at the Kyoto Municipal School of Fine Arts and Crafts, Takeuchi Seiho 竹内 棲鳳 (1864-1942), Yamamoto Shunkyo 山元春舉 (1877-1933), Kikuchi Hobun 菊池芳文 (1862-1918), and Taniguchi Kokyo 谷口香嶠 (1864-1915) held teaching positions there. Besides these people's influences, the Japanese Chikkyo School was developed for pursuing Western realistic style, and the watercolor like pigments adopted in the Guilin album resemble those of the Chikkyo School.¹⁰⁴ This section brings a much closer investigation of these more Western ideas because of their importance to Chen and his Guilin album.

Chen was in the Nihonga painter circles that originated at the Kyoto Municipal School of Fine Arts and Crafts, represented by Takeuchi Seiho (Fig.15), Yamamoto Shunkyo, and Ono Chikkyo 小野竹橋 (1889-1979).¹⁰⁵ This was in contrast with the "morotai" 朦朧體 (vague and indistinct style) that dominated in Tokyo art circles, which was represented by Yokoyama Taikan 横山大觀 (1868-1958) of the Japan Art Institute, during Chen Shuren's first time studying in Japan from 1908 to 1912. These above artists were distinct from Tokyo art circles, and they all drew inspiration from Western art. Additionally, they were all skilled at using lines and realistic style in visual representation.¹⁰⁶ From the visual features of Chen's Guilin album, one can see how delicate his lines were, and in some specific paintings, Chen mostly used lines to define the shape and create the space recession. For example, in *Blue Peak Overlooking a River* (fig.16), the mountain shape was basically defined by the delicate lines. Moreover, when viewers moved their view from front to back, the variety of the lines in tones

¹⁰⁴ Zheng, *The Modernization of Chinese Art*, 122-128.

¹⁰⁵ Imao Keinen (1845-1924) and Mudao Yinggu (1877-1938) were also active painters in Kyoto when Chen Shuren studied there. *Ibid.*, 123-124.

¹⁰⁶ Li, *Tuxiang yu lishi*, 169.

from heavy to light created a feeling of recession. The use of line was based on those of the Maruyama-Shijo School. Takeuchi Seiho was a Kyoto painter who first studied under the Shijo-school painter Kono Bairai 幸野棹嶺 (1844-1895). At the age of 36, Seiho went to Europe and was influenced by the work of J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851) and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875). Upon his return to Japan, he tried to incorporate what he saw in Europe and fuse it with a traditional Chinese landscape style.¹⁰⁷ Seiho's traveling experience in China in 1920 and 1921 as well as his sketching on Chinese landscape also has traits that could be seen in Chen's work.

Maruyama-Shijo School 圓山四條派 was a name collectively referring to the Maruyama School founded by Okyo Maruyama 圓山應舉 (1733-1795) and the Shijo School founded by Matsumura Goshun 松村吳春 (1752-1811), which later became famous in Kyoto from the late Edo Period. The modern Kyoto artists all stressed the use of lines, which showed that the traditional taste of using lines still held emphasis over the shadow and color (Fig.17). The use of lines on the mountains and stones in Chen Shuren's Guilin album all showed this feature. For example, in *Jiangcun qingxing* (Fig.18), all the mountains and shores are defined by iron thin lines, and the iron thin lines accurately were modernistic traits that showed the shape of the objects Chen depicted. Another reason for using these distinct lines was because the works from the album are based on sketches made during Chen's travel in nature, and Chen reorganized these rough sketches into paintings in his studio. This showed the modern update of the tool Chen used for painting. The lines in the painting leaves are similar to the lines of the sketches (Fig.19, Fig. 20). This iron thin line visual representation departed from the spontaneous lines of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 170-177.

traditional literati paintings. It also imitated vivid and detailed landscapes and mountains of the Japanese paintings, which constructed a refreshing visual feeling together with the watercolor inside the contour.

Just like the other two Lingnan School Masters Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889-1933), Chen came back to China with a desire to revolutionize Chinese art with the skills and experiences he learned in Japan.¹⁰⁸ In 1912, Chen graduated from the Kyoto Municipal School of Fine Arts and Crafts under the supervision of Yamamoto Shunkyo (Fig.21). Shunkyo's success as an artist made him a popular teacher. He was one of the first of the *Nihonga* artists who was interested in Western-style oil painting (*yoga*) and in photography as an art form. From Shunkyo, Chen learned about perspective and about the rendering of light and atmosphere. He completed a series of landscape paintings (Fig. 22 and Fig.23) that visually was similar to Chen Shuren's hybrid style choice in the Guilin album. From the visual comparison, one can see the color use and the "folding belt texture" used in Shunkyo's painting directly visually affected Chen's use of the same style choice. Besides the characteristics from Shunkyo, Chen's Guilin paintings also visually resemble the painting of Kawamura Mansyu 川村曼舟 (1880-1942), who was a student of Shunkyo.¹⁰⁹ Chen's *A Rapid Flowing Beach* (Fig.24) and Kawamura's *Horaisan* (Fig.25) depiction of the mountain arch, the arrangement of the color, and the using of the lines and dots all show Shunkyo's traits in them. The "folding belt texture" was a distinct visual style used a lot by the Kyoto artist circle when Chen studied there, and Chen seemingly directly brought this Japanese style into his Guilin painting.¹¹⁰ Shunkyo also valued the

¹⁰⁸ Wong, *The Other Kang Youwei*, 74-81.

¹⁰⁹ Kawamura was a Japanese-style painter born in Kyoto. He studied under Yamamoto Shunkyo. He won the prize at the Bunten Exhibition. He later became a judge of the Teiten Exhibition. What's more, he was also a professor and principal of Kyoto City Specialist School of Painting. *Ibid.*, 82-85.

¹¹⁰ Li, *Chuantong yu biange*, 51.

observation of nature through sketching (*shasei* 写生). What is more, the traditional brush method played an important role in Shunkyo's art, and he investigated brush techniques associated with Chinese landscape paintings of the Song dynasty. Xu Zhonghua commented on Chen's painting technique,

When he drew the Mountain and river, he first used the sketches to draw the outline of the objects, such as the mountains, rivers, grass, and tree. He also noted the colors of the objects, and then he filled the colors of each part in his studio,"¹¹¹ which was consistent with the colorful visual effects that he got from Shunkyo.¹¹²

他绘山水时，先拿速写簿勾就了很正确的轮廓，一峰一涧，一草一木，多有注明画色，然后回到画室中把该画放大敷上彩。

During Chen's second session in Japan at Rikkyo University, he studied literature and translated *Xin hua fa* 新畫法,¹¹³ which was published on *The True Record* from vol.1 to vol.16 (1912-1913). Later in 1914, it was published as an individual book called *Shenmei shuguan* 審美書館. This made Chen the first painter in modern China to have systematically translated Western art knowledge for China.¹¹⁴ *Xin hua fa* was originally a Japanese book that discussed art history, art theories, and basic painting techniques of composition and color coordination that were rooted in the Western realistic style. Its intended readers, as stated by the author, were amateurs or just simple art enthusiasts. Another notable thing was that Chen Shuren replaced all the "Japanese painting" with "Oriental paintings", which shows Okakura Tenshin's 岡倉 覺三 (1862-1913) idea of the "Asia as one". This also shows his determination to revive the Chinese

¹¹¹ Ibid., 52-55.

¹¹² Peng Lü, "Ershi shiji zhongguo yishu shi-Chen Shuren and Fang Rending". *Dangdai yishu yu touzi* (2008), 70-73.

¹¹³ Chen Shuren translated *Xin hua fa* from *Hui hua du xi shu* that was published in March 1909 by Dongjing guomin shuyuan. *Hui hua du xi shu* was written in Japanese, and it was a painting guidebook designed for the beginners to introduce the European painting skills and perspectives. Ibid., 4-10.

¹¹⁴ Li, *Tu xiang yu lishi*, 8.

painting from the national perspective and to make his revision on Chinese painting to be more acceptable to the Chinese readers and even to people outside of China.

In the seventh chapter of “The Future of Painting,” Chen attributed the lack of precision in “Oriental painting” to an arrogant confidence in the artistic imagination, and he argued that studying nature was far superior to simply emulating a past master. The pencil sketches he did at the site of Guilin showed his precise depiction of nature. This way of observation is different from the orthodox Chinese painting tradition. The only way to revive “Oriental painting,” according to Chen, was to apply the Western method, such as employing the wide range of color choice utilized in watercolor and oil painting.¹¹⁵ Chen ultimately asserted the idea of “education of the eye”, which means painting is a training of the eye observation skills. Chen stressed the importance of “nature” in modern paintings, and in the *True Record*, he wrote, “A talent and wonderful painter uses nature as his teacher, his emotion as instruction, and old masters as a consultant,”¹¹⁶ which promotes the superior role of nature. In Chen’s perspective, he defined the different roles played by nature, emotion, and old masters in his paintings. Chen’s Guilin album was in fact a practice of this guidance, and his album was a harmonious combination of these three painting methods. The vibrant colors used in the Guilin landscape album were visual representations and implements for the realistic painting method promoted by Chen. Later, Huang Binhuang 黄宾虹 (1865-1955) republished an updated version of this called *Xin hua xun* 新畫訓.

¹¹⁵ Dongyang “jianglai zhi huihua dang yi xishi yan jiu fa wei jichu” (xin hua fa), 19.

¹¹⁶ Jun deng you caiqing, qing yi ziran wei shi, ganqing wei zhinan, guren wei guwen. Chenshuren yi: “Yishujia jinyan lu”, *True Record*, no.12, (1913), 72-85.

Other Japanese sources for Chen Shuren's stylistic choice for his Guilin album likely came from Ono Chikkyo. Ono studied in the same school as Chen Shuren, and he graduated from there in 1911, which was just one year ahead of Chen's own graduation. Both of them were in Kyoto Nihonga painting circles and shared many traits with Takeuchi Seiho.¹¹⁷ The "Chikkyo School" (竹橋畫派) was termed as a way to describe landscape paintings by artists pursuing Western-style realism with Nihonga's mineral pigments. Chikkyo's traveling experience in Europe and appreciation of the art by William Blake and Joseph Mallord William Turner at the National and the Tate Galleries enabled him to combine elements of romantic style within his landscape painting. Chikkyo once claimed his painting style was a kind of "systematic realistic style" and "a more decorative kind of beauty."¹¹⁸ It is meaningful to note that Chikkyo's way to achieve a realistic style with Nihonga pigments was through the studying of "systematic" or mannered realistic style of such artists as Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), one of the Italian painters of the early Renaissance periods. A turning point for Chikkyo's career happened in 1926 and can be seen in *Chomon Ravine (Chomonkyo)* (Fig.26), which publicly demonstrated a level of engagement with the line-based painting aesthetics of the Nanga style. Through visual comparison with Chen's Guilin album, one can see how the lines of these two artists are similar. *Chomon Ravine* was based on sketches Chikkyo made the previous year of the famous ravine on the Abugawa River in Yamaguchi prefecture. While Chikkyo was enthusiastic and even energized about exploring anew the painterly possibilities of calligraphic ink line, *Chomon Ravine* used only the light and water-based pigments that were employed by traditional painters. This is analogous to Chen Shuren's approach and ideology.¹¹⁹ Besides the lines, the color pigments in

¹¹⁷ John Szostak, *Painting Circles: Tsuchida Bakusen and Nihonga Collectives in Early 20th-Century Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 35.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 35-44.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 40-49.

Chikkyo's painting also resemble the feeling in the watercolor of Chen Shuren's Guilin album. For example, in the painting, *Rising Sun Above Ping-loh River* (Fig.27), the color for the mountain resembles the *Late Fall* that were painted by Chikkyo. The pink sky used resembles the sky and color arrangement in Chikkyo's *Mount Hiei*. Through these analyses, one can see how Chen's media and various inspirations together formulated an idealized visual production that was representative of the modern cultural reproduction in Shanghai.

Overall, Chen Shuren's hybrid painting style in the Guilin album is an example of how these three opposing methods of approaching painting—learning from literati tradition, learning from nature, and learning from the Western and Japanese styles—could be successfully combined. At the turning point of Chinese art history at the beginning of the 20th century, Chen Shuren was one of the examples of artists who searched for an eclectic method of negotiating between tradition and modernity to update Chinese paintings. Chen Shuren's Guilin landscape album was one example of this phenomenon. By synthethizing the East and the West, the eclectic realistic style and the literati tradition, a new pictorial language was constructed for him to represent the Guilin scenery. As a result, this synthetic way of representation catered to the general public's taste. Finally, in the visual sense, the scenery of Guilin connected with past Chinese culture, and the impression of Guilin as a part of Chinese territory was emphasized for the viewers. These characteristics allow the Guilin album to stand out in Chinese art history.

V. Stylistic Characteristics from Modern Media such as Photography and Watercolor:

This part analyses Chen's stylistic similarities from the perspective of modern media. The material features of watercolor and visual resemblance to photography are the two major aspects investigated in this part. By exploring the effects of modern media on Chen's album, this thesis

presents how Chen's Guilin album can be understood in the modern social context of national patriotic ideology by promoting a regional frontier place, making it stand out by combining it with many other characteristics.

Chen intended his album to be mass distributed for the sake of conveying a political message. The style that he used for the album supports the idea that he wanted his Guilin album to be mass produced and widely disseminated. He used a cost-efficient art medium, watercolor that was a popular medium at that time, and he also used a painting style that reflected realistic photographs. Photographic painting appealed to a broad spectrum of people and attracted viewers domestically and internationally.

Chen chose watercolor as his medium because it was popular and effectively expressed his artistic method. Additionally, it made it easy for mass printing and for distribution. Bourdieu claimed that art was "produced in a particular social universe endowed with particular institutions and obeying specific laws." For Bourdieu, art was produced by the meeting of a habitus, which reflected the social origins and personal trajectory of a given artist, and a field.¹²⁰ Around the same time as the upheaval in modern Chinese art history, the trend of commercial culture and patriotism in the country was also promoted and advocated by such modern art theorists and philosophers as Kang Youwei and Cai Yuanpei. The watercolor-like medium of this album, which showed a commercial taste, responded to this social context, and in the 1920s to 1930s Shanghai, the art institutions all included watercolor courses on their curriculum.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Iside Carbone, "Glimpses of China through the Export Watercolours of the 18th-19th Centuries: A Selection from the British Museum's Collection," (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 2002), 43-49.

¹²¹ Ibid., 72-80.

The rise of Chinese watercolor landscape paintings runs parallel to the fascination that Westerners and the Chinese had for each other. Early interactions between the cultures saw not only a mixing of ideology but also of artistic nature. Defying the protectionist policies of the Qing Dynasty, traders and merchants from both sides managed to exchange goods and art from the 16th to the 19th century. These interactions mostly occurred in Canton because of the lack of control that the Chinese central government had over the area. Exotic oil paintings were brought from the West and introduced with other forms of art. Due to the popularity of oil painting, Canton artists also adopted the techniques and were even commissioned to paint using the same style as Westerners. These paintings were in high demand by both Westerners and the Cantonese, because they depicted scenarios of their respective cultures. The Westerners and Cantonese were most curious about the lives and sights of their counterparts. As a result, landscapes of Chinese scenes became a popular commodity because they displayed the exotic sights of China for Western eyes. Oil painting, however, was expensive and there was a need for a substitute. Therefore, the first use of watercolor landscapes can be traced to paintings that were easy to create, reproduce, and disseminate. Watercolor was easier to carry around during travels especially for Chen's Guilin trip. Further increase in instances of watercolor landscapes occurred when the watercolor techniques from the Rococo period reached the Canton area. Watercolor allowed for more free flowing expression and retained the benefits of portability across the continents.¹²²

In this case, Chen also chose to use watercolor, as an alternative from oil painting, for its cost-benefits advantages for mass reproduction and dissemination. The advantages of watercolor lie in the ease and quickness of its application, in the transparent effects achievable, in the

¹²² Ibid., 37-39.

brilliance of its colors, and in its relative popular taste.¹²³ By using watercolor, Chen intended for his works to be easily replicated by the technology of his time such that his work can be distributed widely. This choice of watercolor for depicting the scenes of Guilin showed a strong commercial taste to integrate Guilin into a modern commercial culture. The use of the watercolor medium, because of its cost-efficient nature, shows an acceptance of the nationalist movement. Citizens were highly encouraged to use great resources and efficiency for the greater benefit of the country. This also means developing the modern industry and commercial market in domestic China. The goal was to build up the national strength of modern China by developing the industry and the market economy.

Also, watercolor looked appealing and trendy, and itself had a strong commercial taste for attracting people to purchase it. For the album using the mass production and in book format, watercolor was a way of meeting the commercial taste and market. Because mass printing could make the book accessible to more people, it could disseminate the frontier landscape. The book format could also be sold and circulated in the market and could promote the Guilin local pride through the commercial culture. This also helped to achieve Chen's political motive because nationalistic propaganda was valuable in expressing one's platform. The effects of this movement can easily be traced in today's China.¹²⁴ Therefore, because Chen chose to use the cost-efficient technique of watercolor, it showed his acceptance of a policy of the industrial salvation for the country and the roots of modernity. Thus, Guilin, as one of the most famous cities in the exemplary province of Guangxi in 1930s China, was commercially promoted through watercolor, which was consistent with spreading nationalistic ideology.

¹²³ Ibid., 43-49.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 40-45.

Resemblance to photography was another strategy used by Chen in his visual agenda. Since the modern era, more and more intellectuals and politicians have traveled all around China, especially the frontier places, such as the Northwestern and Southwestern areas, to visually and authentically represent the regional beauty of the frontier places.¹²⁵ Photography was and still is used as a tool to accurately record the scenery. The third chapter of this thesis will provide in-depth study of Chen's Guilin album in the modern photographic context to argue that Chen's Guilin photography mimicked modern photography's visual effects to present a modern taste in representing frontier Guilin. Here, it is important to address how Chen's Guilin album could be discussed in the context of modern photography as well as Liu Tizhi's 劉體志 (1893-1974) *Mei ying ji* 美影集 representation of local scenery in southern China.

Mei ying ji was published by Shanghai Liangyou Publishing House in 1934, slightly later than Chen's Guilin album. This enables us to compare Liu and Chen's works in modern visual culture at that time. This photography album contained 45 pictures, that were A4 size. To show a fashionable and cosmopolitan taste at that time, like the popular magazine *Liangyou*, the titles of this photography album were written in English and Chinese. Liu Tizhi was born in a family expert in photography arts, and later he got his Doctor of Dental Science degree at the University of Pennsylvania. At the beginning of the 1920s, after he went back to China, he opened a famous dental clinic in Guangzhou, and he even once pulled a tooth for Sun Yat-sen in 1923. After Sun passed away in 1925, Liu donated Sun's teeth to the Nationalist Party Historical Document

¹²⁵ Yajun Mo, "Itineraries for a Republic: Tourism and Travel Culture in Modern China, 1866-1954" (PhD. Dissertation, University of California Santa Cruz, 2011), 25-37.

Committee. This close personal kinship showed Liu was a follower and supporter of Sun's governing, including the Three Principles, just like Chen Shuren.¹²⁶

On May 5th, 1931, Guangzhou jingshe 廣州景社,¹²⁷ founded by Liu, organized the Wuwu Traveling Group (Wuwu lüxing tuan) 五五旅行團 to take photography in Guilin and Yangshuo of Guangxi province. The other two Lingnan School masters, Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng, were among the Wuwu Traveling Group.¹²⁸ As mentioned before, this Wuwu Travel Group used their travels as cover. Their actual purpose was to secretly discuss the expansion of the anti-Chiang organization. This was also related to Chen's travel to Guilin, which was to revive the Three Principles that were well practiced in the exemplary province of Guangxi. It was not hard to associate Chen's travel to Guilin with the other two Lingnan School Masters, and all three depicted Guilin through different forms of media. During this travel, Liu Tizhi took lots of landscape photos, and these photos were exhibited in the Shanghai photography exhibition that was held by the Hua She 華社. Moreover, the pictorial *Liangyou* also published Liu Tizhi's Guilin and Guangxi photos, and the photos received awards in photography competitions that were held in United States, Britain, France, and Japan. As a result of such popularity, Shanghai Liangyou Publishing House published the photography album *Mei ying ji* in 1934. After *Mei ying ji* came out, it caused a big response and inspired a new generation of photographers.

¹²⁶ “Sun Zhongshan diao ya cang yu Guomindang shiguan bei cheng gai dang she li zi 孙中山掉牙藏于国民党史馆被称该党舍利子”, Fenghuang wang 凤凰网, last modified Sept..9, 2013,

http://news.ifeng.com/history/zhongguoxiandaishi/detail_2013_09/09/29442970_0.shtml

¹²⁷ In 1923, Liu Tizhi, Pan Dawei, Fu Bingchang, and Li Song together found the photography community named Guangzhou Jingshe.

¹²⁸ The 25 members were including Liu Tizhi, Luo Zhi, Fu Bingchang, Gao Qifeng, Gao Jianfu. See Weilin Huang, ““五五旅行团”游广西”, last modified June 13, 2016, <http://www.ddgx.cn/html/2016/0613/9209.html>

Comparing Chen's Guilin photography and Liu's Guilin painting album, one can see many similarities, for example, the objects in focus, the scope of the composition, and the light and shadow effects. These similarities with photography made Chen's Guilin album modernistic, and they may even have attracted photography lovers.

First, for the objects, they both choose iconic and natural sites of Guilin, such as *Xiang bi shan* and *Water moon Cave in Kwei-Ling* (Fig. 3, Fig.29), *Cormorant raft at Hillside* and *The Kwei River* (Fig.30, Fig.31). From these comparisons, one can see that their composition and scopes were exactly the same. Besides this, for the representation of the mountains in Chen's Guilin painting album, the folding belt texture adopted authentically reflected the real scenery, and it was just like a painting version of Liu Tizhi's photography.

Second, besides the famous Guilin natural scenery in traditional sense, Liu and Chen both included the specific artificial scenery of Guilin. For example, the ox cart in both *An Ox-cart* and in the *Shepherd* (Fig.32, Fig. 33), the flower bridges in *Raining over a Flower Bridge* and in *Flower Bridge and Sister Stone in Kwei-ling*(Fig. 34, Fig.35), the boats in *Rising Sun above Ping-lok River* and in *Floating Alone*, the folding roads in *Returned from Hunting on Table-land* and in *The Byeway Beyond The Old Temple* and in *The Curved Path*, all were subjects chosen by Chen and Liu. This life objects showed a real life feeling, and it made the pictorial content more accessible to common people.

Third, the light and shadow influences represented in both Chen's Guilin painting album and Liu's Guilin Photography album showed their acceptance of Western perspective. The edge of the mountains painted by Chen appears deeper than the middle parts of the mountain that face to the lights, such as in *Returned from hunting on table-land* (Fig. 36) and *Blue Peak*

Overlooking a River (Fig. 37). This exactly resembled the real mountains' light and shadow effects in Liu's photography of the Guilin mountain. Also, in Chen's Guilin paintings, the mountains at the back were blurred and recessive compared with the mountains at the front. This was another feature of the photography visual features, such as showed in *Beautiful Sky* of Liu's Guilin photography. By this analysis, one could see that Chen purposely painted Guilin scenery with the visual effects inspired from the Western photography, which suggest modern taste and appreciation of his Guilin paintings.

From the above historical evidence and visual evidence that connected Chen's Guilin album with the modern photography, there seem to be Western and modern aspects of Chen's Guilin album. This, together with the traditional East ideology and taste, conveyed the hybrid style of Chen's album, which constructed Guilin as an accessible site to attract more viewers and made this album noteworthy from its combination of many characteristics.

Chapter Three

This chapter will concentrate on how Chen wanted his work to be mass produced in order to convey a political message widely. The idea of material salvation was achieved through Chen's choice of medium (a modern book format and watercolor) and through the method of circulation for this album. Based on both the domestic people's and foreigner's reception of this album, this chapter also discusses how Chen had patriotic motives in promoting the southwestern frontier of China. Furthermore, this section studies the media adopted in this album, specifically collotype printing, which was a new and innovative form of mass printing during Chen's time. The watercolor-like colorful pigments conveyed a commercial taste, and with the printed modern book format they worked as a vehicle to express the aesthetic values and idealized taste conveyed by the hybrid painting style of this album. This enables the album to be analyzed in the context of modern cultural reproduction of the Republican Era. This technology itself was a practice of commerce and manufacturing for the betterment of China. Also, the collotype printing of Guilin paintings could also act as a propaganda for the "Three Principles" raised by Sun Yat-sen. The collotype printing helped the images of Guilin album exhibit and circulate nationwide, which raised up a local patriotism that in turn changed the national culture and integrated Guilin into the modern Chinese territory.

I. Chen Sought Mass Production Through Mass Printing, Landscape, and Language Choice.

Chen intended his album to be mass distributed for the sake of conveying a political message. There were many characteristics of the album that support the idea that he wanted his Guilin album to be mass produced and widely disseminated. First, he used printing techniques

that were revolutionary for mass production of his time. Second, the subject matter of his work was generic landscape in order to attract general audience members. Finally, he included both Chinese and English in his album, signifying that he wanted to appeal to many people.

First, Chen's use of a new and innovative medium for his Guilin album signified his intent for the work to be mass produced. In China, various new media of visual expression were being developed, such as photography, posters, and calendar paintings. Chen's colorful renderings of Guilin could be regarded as an idealized path merging these new visual media. When discussing the realism of Xu Beihong's painting *Kang Nanhai liushi xingle tu* 康南海六十年樂圖 (Pleasures of Kang Nanhai at Sixty), 1917 (Fig.38), which is based on a photograph of Kang's family (Fig.39), Aida Yuen Wong argues that the high level of physiognomic specificity could easily have been derived from photographs.¹²⁹ In fact, the figures appeared to be unnaturally superimposed onto a more painterly, stage-like backdrop. This mode of *zhaopianhua* 照片畫 or "photographic painting" could also have inspired Chen Shuren to produce a quasi-photographic visual result in his interpretations on Guilin, especially when many landscape photography albums were being produced at that time.¹³⁰ This trait could also be seen in Chen's own work.

As mentioned previously, Chen's Guilin album used collotype printing for mass reproduction. The collotype process was a screenless photomechanical process that allows high-quality prints created from continuous-tone photographic negatives. Therefore, its application to produce near indistinguishable copies of the original was revolutionary for the arts of its time.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Wong, *The Other Kang Youwei*, 17-20.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 40-61.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 55-65.

Collotype printing was therefore adopted for mass production of art. In this case, Chen's album was one such work that used the new collotype process. As a result, because Chen used state-of-the-art collotype printing, his album was likely meant for mass production and stood out in his time.

Second, Chen chose the album to display the landscape of Guilin for the general audience. Therefore, it showed his intention for the work to be widely disseminated. From the perspective of contemporary art historian, Elizabeth Kindall, this album was well fitted into the tradition of the "famous site" landscape album, which refers to the landscape albums painted without specific recipients. This is in contrast with the landscape albums that were painted for the specific recipients as the honorific landscape albums. As argued by Kindall, for the painting albums without specific recipients, the scenes depicted in the album were usually representing a generic style to cater to the public's taste, ensuring it to be popular between any recipients. In this way of thinking, Chen's Guilin landscape album was a "famous site" work meant to cater to and educate the populace with an acceptable taste and served the goal of reforming society by its educational function. Following the Chinese people's aesthetic ideology and traditional culture values of literati genre and painting style, Chen's revolutionary goal on spreading the ideology of the beautiful Guilin landscape as a part of China's territory and a modern aesthetic taste were achieved through this album. In other words, Chen intended his work to be distributed to the general population, therefore, he drew a generic landscape of Guilin, China.

Finally, Chen's Guilin album used both Chinese and English language text in order to appeal to more people. Thus, the album was further meant for general distribution. Within an international scope, all painting leaves in this Guilin album have both Chinese and English titles. This is a sign of catering to foreigner's attention and interest. In the 1930s, there was a surprising

amount appreciation for Chinese painting in Europe in the 1930s. Multiple exhibitions across Europe displayed Chinese work. For example, a 1930 exposition held in Belgium showcased Chinese art and was curated by Liu Dabeī 劉大悲 (1894-1984). Liu's art attracted 4,000 viewers in just three days. The art was well-received by the European media and by those who saw it. According to Xu Beihong, the popularity and acceptance of Chinese art in Europe “gradually built up the confidence of the nation's (Chinese) people”.¹³²

Then in 1933, Xu Beihong launched an ambitious project: the Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Painting. This was a famous traveling exhibition that traveled throughout Europe. The requirements were that the “works should be pure and representative Chinese art, not Westernized or influenced by Japan.”¹³³ The enthusiastic reception of the exhibition led to a fifteen days extension of the event, and the exhibition catalogue was even reprinted twice. The project was not only to display art but also functioned as propaganda in support of China. Therefore, this Chinese cultural propaganda project in Europe was of great success. As a result of Xu's exhibition, there was an even greater trend of appreciation for domestic Chinese art outside of China. Many Chinese people aimed to take advantage of this new wave of fascination and therefore created art catering to that fashionable.¹³⁴ Chen's Guilin album also rode this wave by incorporating a watercolor and other modern book formats. The patriotic ideology of promoting the Southwest frontier of China that conveyed by the album was disseminated among the foreign viewers of the Guilin album in China of this time in this way.

Overall, the mass printing technology, the choice of landscape format, and the inclusion

¹³² Li, “Zai jieru yu chaotuo zhi jian-chenshuren jian lun,” 19-23.

¹³³ Shi, *Yi Dong De Tao Hua Yuan*, 20-24.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 25-30.

of Chinese and English in the album modernized Chen's work. All of these factors also enabled the Guilin album to be accessed by wide variety of viewers, which helped propagate Chen's political message. Another important idea raised by Gillian Rose is that as an audience to a photograph, a person brings the individual's own ways of seeing as well as other knowledge.¹³⁵ The mass distribution for the visual materials of a regional place that vigorously carried out the "Three Principles" that was raised by Sun Yat-sen and upheld by Chen's faction helped to demonstrate the "Three Principles" to the whole nation. This was also in response to the Lingnan School's strategy of revolutionizing Chinese art from a regional district for a national purpose.

II. Chen Intended His Album to be Mass Produced in Order to Deliver a Political Message of Chinese Patriotism:

Although already alluded to many times throughout this study, Chen's purpose for creating his art to be widely produced and distributed was to convey a political message and promote the pride of Guilin to China and to the rest of the world. During Chen's time, Guilin was considered a largely underdeveloped area of China and was often neglected by China. Chen's album of Guilin was created to bring more attention and to raise support for Guilin. The political and patriotic nature of Chen's album makes it stand out within its time and among its peers. This section of the thesis will therefore provide an in-depth look at why Chen decided to create an artwork for mass production and how that message or purpose was conveyed. Additionally, the chapter will look at the impact that his work had.

In the early 20th century China, various mass image production techniques, which were

¹³⁵ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 4-6.

introduced to China through Japan, visually helped institutions and artists promote the beauty of the regional towns as expressions of national pride. Chen's album was a part of this cultural production phenomenon. Inscribed by Cai Yuanpei and Wang Jingwei, who were modern aesthetic reformers and Nationalist party leaders, and adopting the modern book format with both Chinese and English tables of contents and titles, this book well fitted into the East Asian modern visual culture of using the modern printing medium to promote the regional beauty at this time. This painting album was similar to other modern mass-produced visual materials, such as photography albums published by the pictorial periodical *Liangyou* and the *Guangxi Yilan* in terms of format, function and motives, and similarities of visual presentation. Additionally, compared with the mass-produced woodblocks prints representing particular landscapes in the pre-modern China, such as *Tianxia mingshantu* 天下名山圖 (Pictures of famous mountains of the realm) and *Fancha tu* 泛槎圖 (Pictures of the floating boats), this collotype-printed album served a strong political function on a national stage in the modern era.

During this time, traveling became more common place in modern China. As a result, the tourist industry developed such that there was a need for mechanical reproductions of visuals. These included prints and photos that propagated the beautiful scenery of China during this time. Besides the historically famous scenes, such as the Western Lake and Mount Huang, which were reproduced by modern media, a lot of scenes at the boundary of China, such as ones in Gansu 甘肅 and Xinjiang 新疆 in China's northwest, were reproduced in various pictorial publications in China during this time but have been largely overlooked by scholars. Thus, Chen Shuren's work could be discussed in similar veins of cultural context for modern traveling. Therefore, the use of landscape art to support the budding tourism industry of Guilin was a hybrid characteristic of Chen's album.

Travel, travel writing, and travel painting have often been connected for expressing and conveying political messages. Steven Clark, in *Travel Writing and Empire*, states that travel and travel writing were systematically involved in “imperial meaning-making ” process.¹³⁶ Anderson argues that travel and travel writing were also consistently included in the process through which the community of the nation was imagined.¹³⁷ Mo examined the travel activities in travel and travel writing and how they shaped and reshaped the imagination of a Chinese nation state from the late Qing period to the early Republican era.

During the Republican era, travel writing was vital in creating the collective imagination of a Chinese nation-state. The Republic was a fragile entity that was under continuous pressure from external and internal threats. The Republic was both politically fragmented and economically weak. Still, the idea of a territorial nation-state, based on a map of the Manchu Empire, continued to deepen despite consecutive nation regimes failing to control the territories following the fall of the Qing state.¹³⁸

Expedition literature about China's western frontiers also became an important sub-genre in commercial travel writing throughout the Republican period. Academics, government officials, and other amateur explorers did travel writing and took photographs of China's northwestern and southwestern frontiers. These works frequently appeared in the popular press throughout China and around the world. These travel narratives redefined the open space of the frontiers into a territory with secure borders.¹³⁹ In contrast to the high Qing moment, where the

¹³⁶ Steven H. Clark, ed., *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit* (London; New York: Zed Books, 1999), 255-273.

¹³⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 162-179.

¹³⁸ Yajun Mo, “Itineraries for A republic: Tourism and Travel Culture in Modern China, 1866-1954” (University of California, Santa Cluze 2011), 78-82.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 82-90.

Qing dynasty's conquest integrated the Mongols, Tibetans, and other ethnic groups residing in central Euro-Asia into its empire, the Republican period witnessed varying degrees of alienation from the nation-state as well as separatism among the ethnic minorities.¹⁴⁰ When the Japanese invaded the northeast and set up a state of Manchukuo ruled by the remnants of the Manchu monarchy in the early 1930s, the Nationalist regime and urban Chinese reacted drastically. They developed a strong feeling of impending crisis in other frontier territories. While the weak central governments of the Republican era had limited capacity to extend state control into these regions, travel narratives created by different Republican explorers helped tame the vast territories that had been the Qing frontiers, maintaining an imagined cohesion and collective geobody of the nation.¹⁴¹ This idea of a larger united China continued through the imagination of a fully integrated and united Chinese nation post-1949. While writing about their different trips, Republican-era authors considered the troubled Chinese "self" in an unbalanced world, in which China was struggling to consolidate its national borders while facing foreign threats.

Many scholars have shown how technologies and ideas were popularized in Shanghai through publications and the ever-prosperous printing culture. Shu-mei Shih argued that there was more than a direct appropriation, positing a bifurcation between cosmopolitan and colonial consciousness in Republican China.¹⁴² As a vital part of modernity, early twentieth-century travel writing complicated this image of urban modernity even further, by indicating the multidirectional movement of goods, people, and ideas in a transnational network of "circuits of contact." Here, Chinese intellectuals traveled to remote regions of China due the threat of

¹⁴⁰ Ralph Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: the Lingnan (Cantonese) school of painting, 1906-1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 85-91.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 91-95.

¹⁴² Kuo Shen, *Meng Xi Bi Tan*, 168-185

Japanese invasion in Manchuria and Mongolia.¹⁴³ They teamed up with rival foreign explorers to explore unmapped territories populated by "barbaric" minorities. Chinese urban travelers viewed their journeys as a way to claim Chinese sovereignty over the new borderlands. This idea was not unlike imperialism and colonialism. This suggests that nation-building was a traveling process in which the center and the margin were intricately interlinked.

Chen was also caught up in this movement to strengthen China. As mentioned before, his works held political motives, aiming empower China. He emphasized Guilin, a frontier part of China far removed from the center of power, and highlighted it as a place of pride for the nation. This was in cohesion with the overall movement to unite China and strengthen the idea of unity especially in the face of impending foreign threats.

Liangyou quanguo sheyingtuan 良友全國攝影團 (Liangyou National Photography Group) was subordinated to the Liangyou book company and was also another entity that followed the movement to explore China and affected Chen. The Liangyou photography group was led by the chief editor of Liangyou, Liang Desuo 梁得所. The major photographers were Ouyang Pu 歐陽璞 and Zhang Yuanheng 張沅恆. They went on a trip to Northwestern China, to Gansu and Ningxia 寧夏, from 1932 and later published a photography album named *Xibei yipie* 西北一瞥 (A glance of Northwest). In the preface of *Xibei yipie*, Liang Desuo stated the purpose of exploring the scenes of the Northwestern China:

Our people have long overlooked the Northwestern part of our country. However, Russia and England were anxious for it for a long time. If our Chinese people did not explore and discover it soon, the Northwestern provinces of China would follow

¹⁴³ Ibid., 180-186.

the Northeast China's fate, which was conquered by Japan and became a colonial land.¹⁴⁴

國人對於西北都很漠視，但是蘇俄和英國已經垂涎虎視，國人若不急起自謀開發，不久之後，這西北數省也許會步東北的後塵而淪為異域。

This shows their concern, once again about European and Japanese imperialism as well as the need to find a unified identity for China. Other notable explorers of this movement included Zhang Yuanheng, who also went to Guilin and took photographs that were published in an album named *Guilin shanshui* (Fig. 40), and Huang Binhong, another painter who traveled to Guilin and painted its scenery in Republican China 疊彩山.

In June 1912, *The True Record* 真相畫報 was founded in Shanghai by the Gao brothers. The primary purpose of *The True Record* was to provide a political forum for them to disseminate their revolutionary goal and new knowledge. Moreover, it also promoted the Gao brother's revision of new Chinese paintings. On *The True Record*, there were topographical photographs representing the Chinese cityscape and natural landscape, such as the Great Wall (Fig.41), the city of Wuhan, and the West Lake. As a companion of the Gao brothers, Chen must have seen these photographs as an inspiration for his topographical painting album of Guilin. Another pictorial reproduction representing the regional scenes related with the Gao Brothers during this time was the *Guiyou banyue ji* 桂遊半月記 (A record of traveling to Guilin for half of a month) which was completed by The Wuwu Traveling Group (Wuwu lüxing tuan) 五五旅行團.¹⁴⁵ This group was composed of 25 scholars and politicians in Guangdong province in the

¹⁴⁴ See the preface of *Xibei yipie*. Translated by the author. 1.

¹⁴⁵ The 25 members of the Wuwu lü xingtuan actually were all indirectly or directly supported Wang Jingwei. They pretended their travel to Guilin as a merely enjoyable trip, but actually they discussed how to split from Jiang Jieshi's control when they arrived in Guilin, which was far away from Jiang's power in 1930s.

1930s, and Gao Qifeng was one such member. They entered into Guangxi on May 5, 1932 and later published the photos of Guilin shot during their trip. Additionally, they published their travel experiences in that book. In this modern context, Chen Shuren's representation of Guilin fits into the trend of using mechanical reproductions to propagate the regional scenery of China.

Finally, it is important to note that art worlds consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works defined as art. Members of art worlds coordinated the activities by which work was produced by referring to a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and infrequently used artifacts. The same people often cooperated repeatedly, even routinely, in similar ways to produce similar works, so that society should think of an art world as an established network of cooperative links among participants.¹⁴⁶ By understanding artistic production as a collective action rather than individual activity, one regards works of art as a joint product of all the people to collaboratively bring them in to effect. Artistic production in modern China can be seen as a collective action. Therefore, it is important to view the exploration and traveling art movement for a greater China as well as those that took part in the movement as vital to understanding Chen's Guilin album. This opinion allows people to understand the process of production circulation and consumption.

Considering the album's three sites of meaning, under Chen Shuren's desire to search for his own artistic identity and express his political message, this album helps to integrate Guilin into Chinese cultural geography and national territory in the modern era. In 1908, Chen Shuren partially translated *The Fine Arts* while he was studying in Japan. Chen translated it because he believed that Chinese art had not been revitalized for a long time. He said:

¹⁴⁶ Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1982), 18-21.

Ever since the Song and Yuan dynasties, the customs of Chinese painting have been failing gradually. Now its reputation has become even worse and cannot be accepted. Although our nation's painters of the past are now called fine artists, they were just poets and literati leisurely enjoying themselves in the natural landscape and flowers and bird. They did not care about the world or society at all. Therefore, in terms of the arts and crafts making, it was completely a different approach for them. This is why our nation's art has been gradually decaying. This kind of bad practice was okay during the period of isolation; however, in this era in which industrial and trade warfare between countries is most intensive, if the country fails, then it cannot compete with other nations on the world stage. China should be vigilant and scared with the decaying and poor situation of the nation and should not let it continue this negative trajectory. China was the earliest enlightened, civilized, and advanced ancient country. The people are intelligent, and have an abundance of resources. China was regressing just because of following the rules of the past. China has spent over hundreds of million for importing foreign goods in one year; if they did not stop leaking national wealth to other countries, how can this disaster finally turn to an end? Only if a person with ambition started doing research on and pursued the commercial, practical arts and craft, by either studying abroad in Europe or Japan, could a strong, rich, and promising country be expected.¹⁴⁷

震旦美術之風，不振久矣！宋元以降，其道日墜。迄今日益不可聞。雖然吾國前者之所謂美術家，不過一騷人墨客，寄情於山水花鳥，問世之心，絕無有也。故於工藝製作，判然兩途；因之吾國藝術，日淪腐敗，亦良有以。似此習氣，處閉關時代猶可，以今日工商戰最烈之時代，苟其國之劣敗，則不能立足競爭於舞台。國之貧弱，忘滅隨之，可不儆懼。吾支那以開化最早、文明先進之古國，民族聰睿，土地富饒，而因循退化，陷於此時之悲觀，痛矣！綜計年中外國工商進口之額，何止百億，漏卮不塞，禍水詎有涯乎？然日者有志之士，研求商業，講習工藝，或赴西歐，或赴東瀛，是則將來吾國富強前途，或有可望。

These were Chen's strong feelings and testimony. While damning the past literati's practices, Chen's Guilin album combined the literati taste with a concern on the arts and crafts, which used to be two opposed side. Chen's passionate sentiments showed that he embraced the idea of political nationalism and the exploration and expansion movements. As a result, he conveyed these feelings for his nation through the Guilin album.

¹⁴⁷ Li, *Chen Shuren* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 42.

Linking the visual styles from the Chinese past and responding to the trend of pursuing realism in the 20th century, which was promoted by such leading art critics as Kang Youwei and Xu Beihong, the hybrid style of Chen Shuren's album reflected the tension between modernity and tradition in the turning point of Chinese art history in the early 20th century. Produced in the context of mass image production in modern China, Chen Shuren's Guilin album fitted into the category of using the mass-produced images to promote regional pride on a national level. Thriving through its resemblance to modern landscape photography, the modern gazetteer, postcards, and exhibitions, this Guilin landscape album testifies to the power of mass-produced media in modern China. Through both its visual expression and the modern medium it adopted, Chen's Guilin album helped Guilin be integrated into China's cultural and geographical territory for the early 20th century through cosmopolitan tastes and through both style and media.

Conclusion:

Chen Shuren was a representative politician-artist who sought an eclectic way of revolutionizing Chinese traditional arts with a modern method in the beginning of 20th century. The Guilin album contains 22 watercolor painting leaves and eight pencil sketches depicting representative local scenes of Guilin, as well as two preface pages written by Cai Yuanpei and Wang Jingwei that both conveyed Chen's literati interest and political hope. Each album leaf adopted the ancient Chinese "scenic view" genre and modern collotype printing technique. The leaves were also titled with either the place name or followed the literati landscape naming tradition, and there were handwritten a four-sentence poem made by Chen Shuren related to the scenery on the leaves.

The visual and social evidence of Chen Shuren's Guilin album comprehensively show the multiple possibilities of literati arts in the early Republican China that were combined with a hybrid, realist style and a more practical function. There were five distinctive features that make this Guilin album stood out and easily appreciated by a broad audience: First, it was a collection of topographical landscape paintings depicting the local scenery of Guilin, which was a Southwest frontier area of China. Like real-life Guilin photography, the Guilin album represented the characteristic places as recorded by Chen's depiction of the iconic sites and specific topographical elements. In this way, the regional scenic views were accessible to general audiences and were novel in China at that time.

Second, the Guilin album included narrative illustrations through poetry inscribed in the album. Chen's painting leaves faithfully represented verbal imagery and enriched the poetry with their vivid portrayals. Chen's landscapes magnified the poetic and emotional experience, and

they also supplemented the imagery for a less educated audience to experience the scenery. This was consistent with premodern literati belief that landscape paintings had to carry qualities of poetry, spirituality, and philosophy, and in the way of appropriating a past genre, Chen linked his modern depiction of Guilin with a glorious Chinese cultural lineage.

Third, formal analysis reveals that Chen's individualized and hybrid visual style was sourced from both China's past, Japan's modern influence, and modern photographic features. This shows a cosmopolitan taste that attracted more potential viewers to achieve big circulation. Especially, by rearranging, simplifying, and objectifying recognizable characteristics of the old masters' styles, Chen made the pictures more easily transmitted and recognized, and more accessible to the general public.

Fourth, Chen Shuren's descriptive painting style provided an additional way to appreciate the landscape subjects of his Guilin album by learning from tradition and learning from nature (the realistic style). Both were on display in his Guilin album. This reflected the tension between modernity and tradition at the turning point of Chinese art history during the early 20th century. Inspired by many individuals through traveling cultural context and by innovative ways of painting that also show the realistic needs of "material salvation" at the beginning of 20th century China. The adoption of watercolor as a medium was a byproduct of this movement.

Fifth, produced in the context of mass image production in modern China, Chen Shuren's *Guilin shanshui xiasheng ji* fits into the category of using the mass-produced images to promote regional pride on a national level. Chen's work was the direct result of the technical and artistic achievement of the Republican-period publishing business. The wide circulation of the Guilin album with illustrations made a great influence on the dissemination of beautiful Guilin

scenes as an expression of national pride for a large audience of Chinese people. Thriving through its resemblances to modern landscape photography, modern gazetteers, postcards, and exhibitions, this Guilin landscape album testified to the power of mass-produced media in modern China. Through both the visual expression and the modern medium it adopted, Chen's Guilin album helped Guilin be integrated into China's cultural and geographical territory in the early 20th century, thereby making its stand out in Chinese art history.

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Appendix: Figures

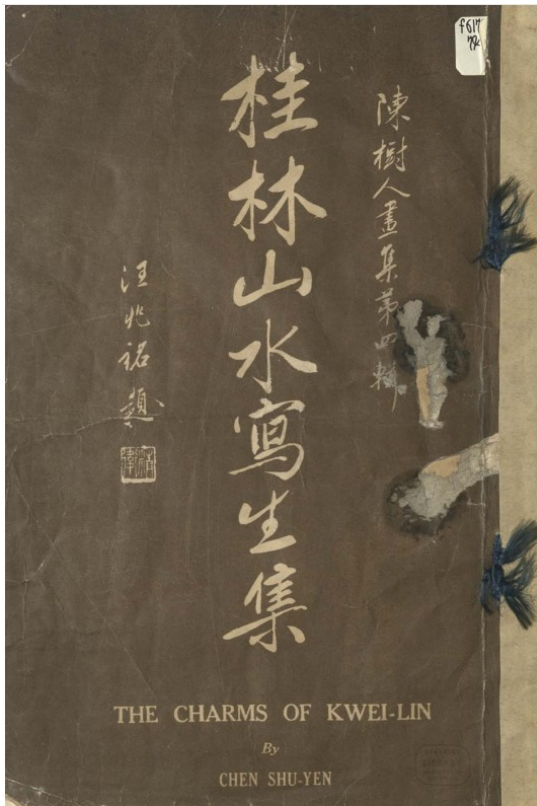


Fig.1 Chen Shuren, *Guilin shanshui xiasheng ji*, 37.5x25 cm, University of Berkeley Library, (Shanghai: Heping chubanshe, 1931), cover.



Fig. 2 Chen Shuren, *Duxiu feng* 独秀峰 (Peak of unique charm), medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.



Fig.3 Chen Shuren, *Xiangbi shan*” 象鼻山 (Elephant’s trunk hill), medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

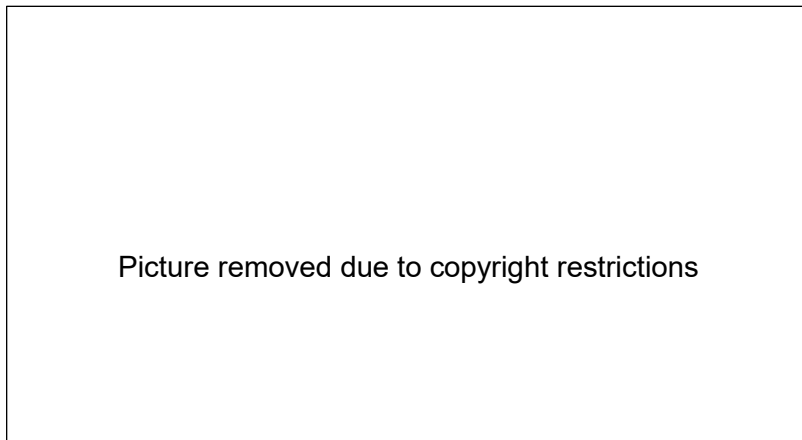


Fig.4 Photograph of *Du xiu feng* 独秀峰 (Peak of unique charm). As reproduced on the website of “Du xiu feng · Jingjiang wang cheng jingqu 独秀峰·靖江王城景区”, accessed March 15, 2019, http://www.travelchina.gov.cn/sitefiles/gjly_zh/html/meijing/237.shtml

Picture removed due to copyright restrictions

Fig.5 Photograph of *Xiang bi shan* 象鼻山 (Elephant's trunk hill). As reproduced on website of "*Xiang bi shan* 象鼻山", accessed March 15, 2019, <https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E8%B1%A1%E9%BC%BB%E5%B1%B1>



Fig.6 Details of "*Xiangbi shan*" 象鼻山 (Elephant's trunk hill), medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

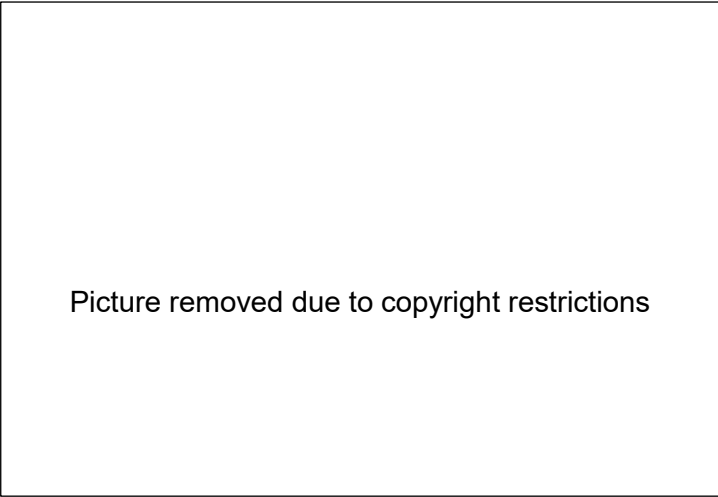
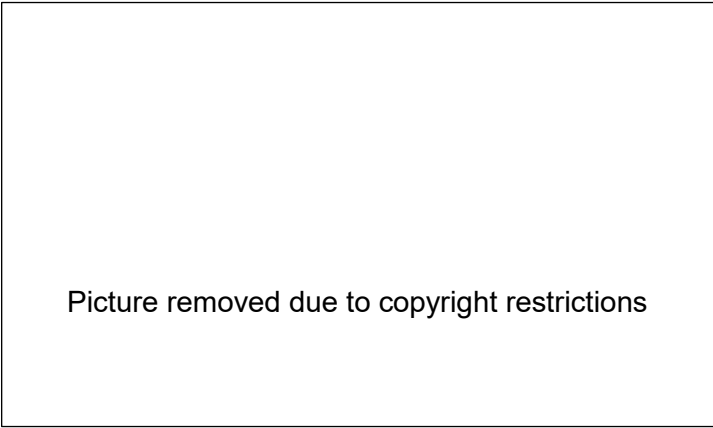


Fig.7 Location of Guangxi and Guilin in China.

Above: As reproduced on website of “Guangxi sheng (zhonghua minguo) 广西省（中华民国）”, accessed March 20, 2019,

[https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%BB%A3%E8%A5%BF%E7%9C%81_\(%E4%B8%AD%E8%8F%AF%E6%B0%91%E5%9C%8B\)](https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%BB%A3%E8%A5%BF%E7%9C%81_(%E4%B8%AD%E8%8F%AF%E6%B0%91%E5%9C%8B))

Bottom: As reproduced on website of Canghai sangtian shihai chengou 沧海桑田史海沉钩, “Jian guo chu, Guangxi sheng jin you de si zuo shengxiashi, san ge xian wei lie Guangxi si qiang 建国初，广西省仅有的四座省辖市，三个现位列广西四强”, accessed March 20, 2019, <https://kknews.cc/zh-my/history/51ea9e2.html>

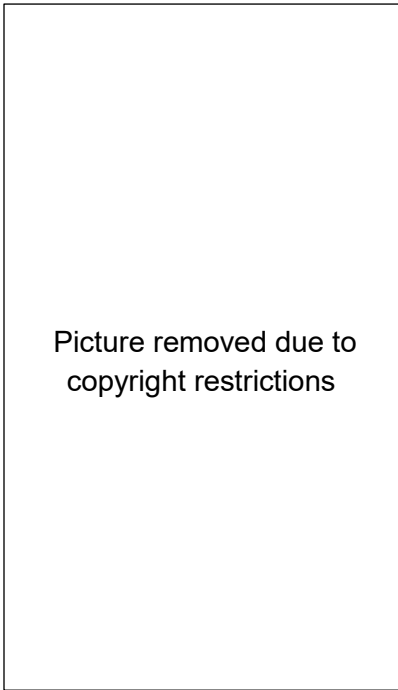


Fig.8 Hongren, *Tiandu feng tu* 天都峰. Hanging scroll, 307.5×99.6cm and Nanjing Palace Museum, unknown date. As reproduced on the website of “Qing, Hongren, Huangshan jue ding <Tiandu feng tu > 清, 弘仁, 黄山绝顶《天都峰图》”, accessed March 26, 2019, <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/41221850>

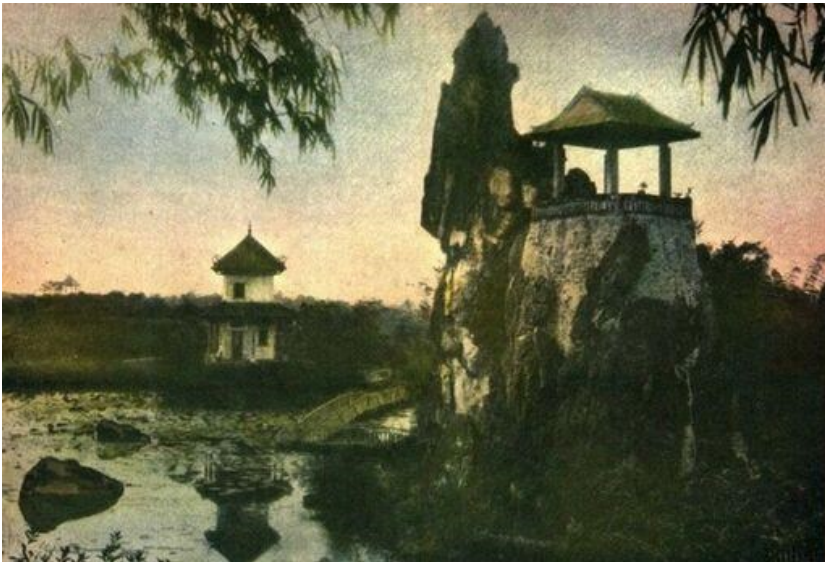


Fig.9 Guilin in modern Gazetteer. As reproduced in Lai Yanyu ed., *Guangxi yi lan*, (Nanning: Guangxi Printing House, 1935), 67.

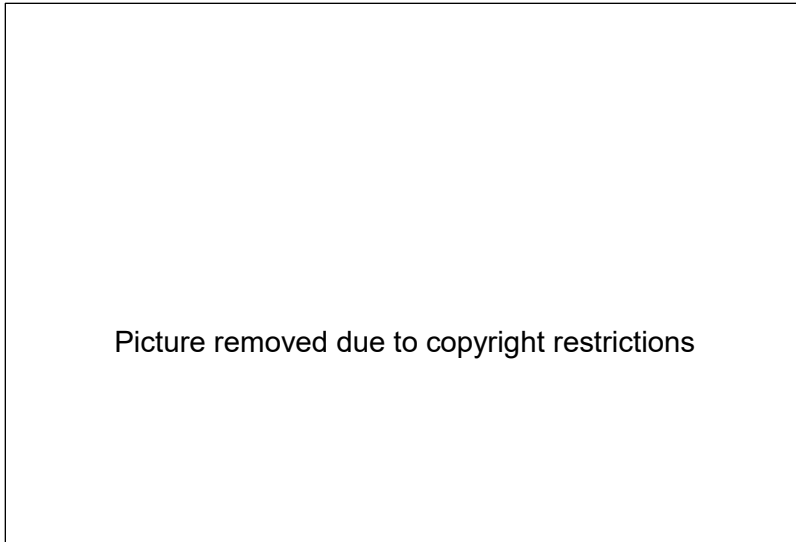


Fig.10 Zhang Hong, *Jing du tu zhou* 競渡圖軸. Hanging scroll, 65.4 x 60.4 cm and National Palace Museum, 1648. As reproduced on the website of “Ming Zhang Hong Jing du tu zhou 明张宏競渡圖軸”, accessed March 26, 2019, <http://catalog.digitalarchives.tw/item/00/10/8d/5d.html>

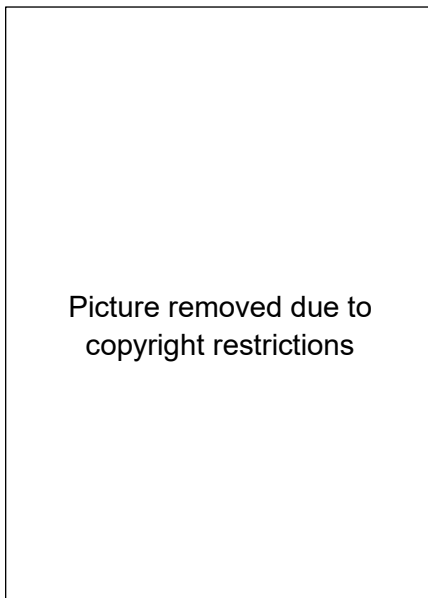


Fig.11 Fan Kuan, *Xishan xinglü tu* 溪山行旅图 (Travelers among Mountains and Steams). Hanging scroll, 206.3 x 103.3 cm, ink and light color on silk, National Palace Museum, Taipei, early 11th Century. As reproduced on the website of “Travelers among Mountains and Streams”, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.comuseum.com/painting/masters/fan-kuan/travelers-among-mountains-and-streams/>

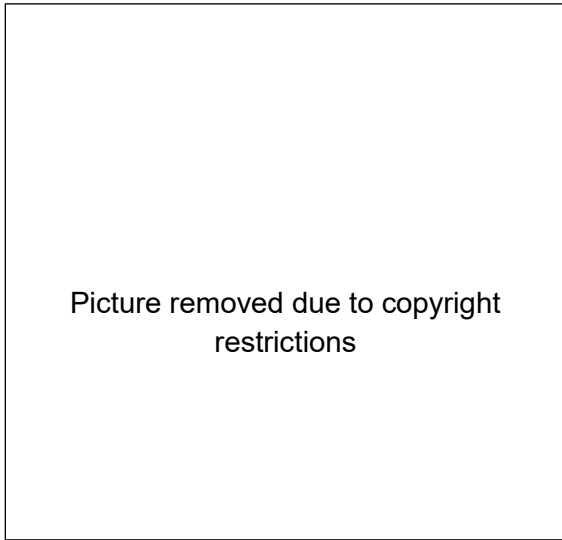


Fig.12 Guilin in the ancient woodblock gazetteers. As reproduced on the website of “Digital Collections”, accessed March 30, 2019,

<http://www.kb.dk/books/ortsam/2011/mar/ostryk/object69447/en/#kbOSD-0=page:63>

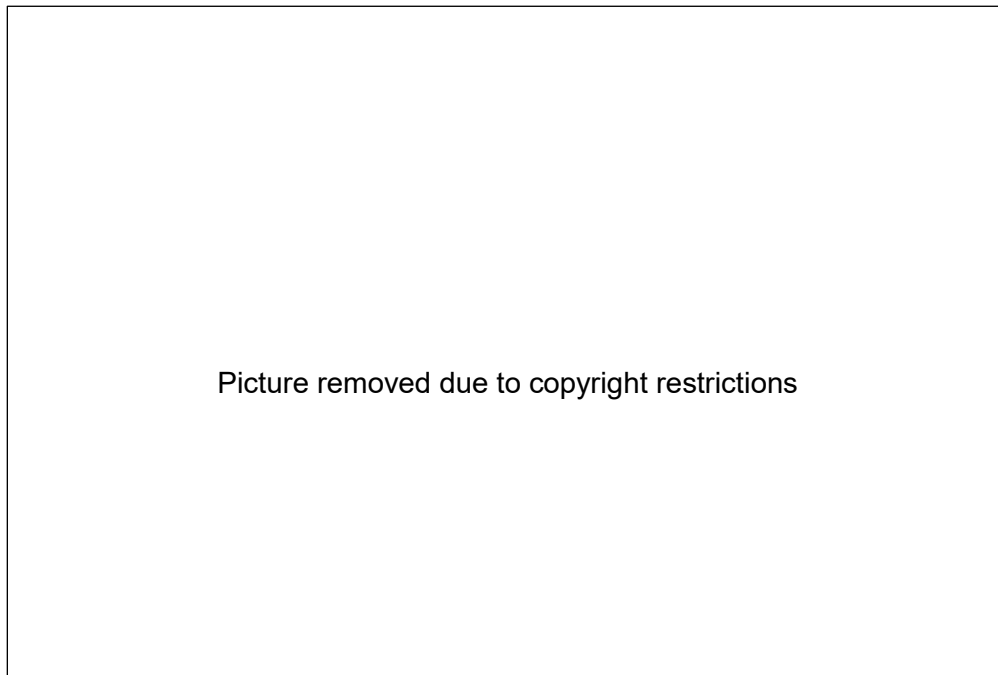


Fig.13 Chen Shuren's news on *Shenbao* 申报, 1932. As reproduced on the website of “Chen Shuren zhanlan 陈树人展览”, accessed April 1st, 2019, <http://www.sbsjk.com/>



Fig. 14 Chen Shuren, *Gaoyuan guilie* 高原归猎 (Returned from Hunting on Table-land), medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

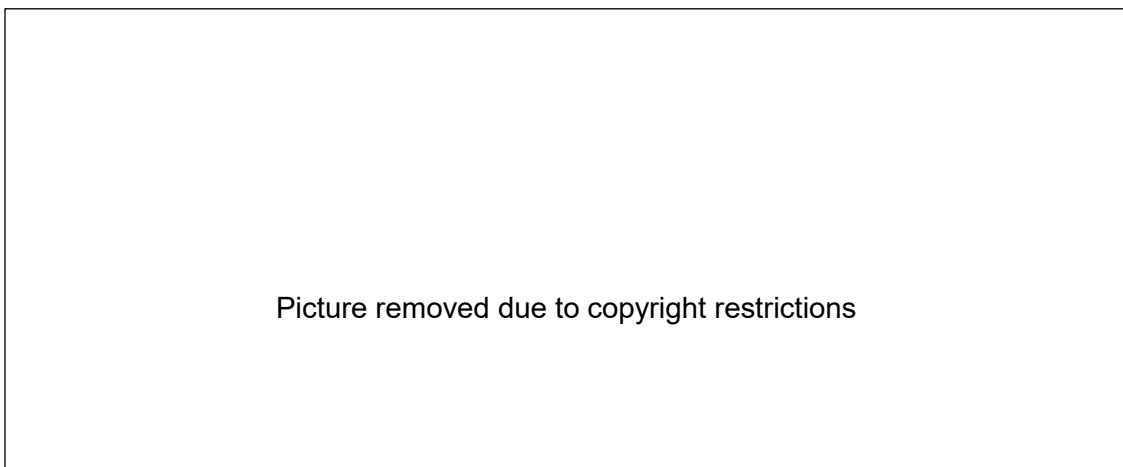


Fig. 15 Takeuchi Seiho, *Historic Spot of Rome*, unknown medium and dimension. Umi Mori Art Museum, 1903. As reproduced on the website of “Travelers among Mountains and Streams”, accessed March 28, 2019, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Historic_Spot_of_Rome_by_Takeuchi_Seiho_\(Umi_Mori_Art_Museum\)L.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Historic_Spot_of_Rome_by_Takeuchi_Seiho_(Umi_Mori_Art_Museum)L.jpg) [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Historic_Spot_of_Rome_by_Takeuchi_Seiho_\(Umi-Mori_Art_Museum\)L.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Historic_Spot_of_Rome_by_Takeuchi_Seiho_(Umi-Mori_Art_Museum)L.jpg)



Fig. 16 Chen Shuren, *River Jiangshang qingfeng* 江山青峰 (Blue Peak Overlooking a River), medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

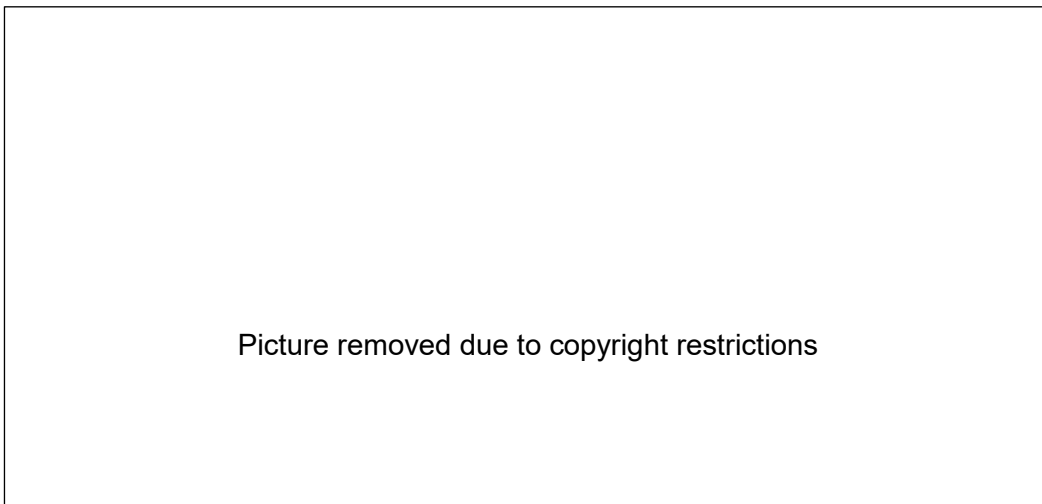


Fig.17 Yamamoto Shunkyo, *Good Omen*, color on silk, pair of two-panel screens 213.7 x 224.8 cm. Adachi Museum of Art, 1932. As reproduced on the website of “File:Yamamoto Shunkyo - Good Omen - Google Art Project.jpg”, accessed March 18, 2019, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yamamoto_Shunkyo_-_Good_Omen_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg



Fig. 18 Chen Shuren, *Jiangcun qingxing* 江村清兴 (Pastime in a river side village), medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.



Fig. 19 Chen Shuren, *Xiang bi shan zhengjing* 象鼻山正景 (The front view of Elephant's trunk hill), pencil and paper, location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

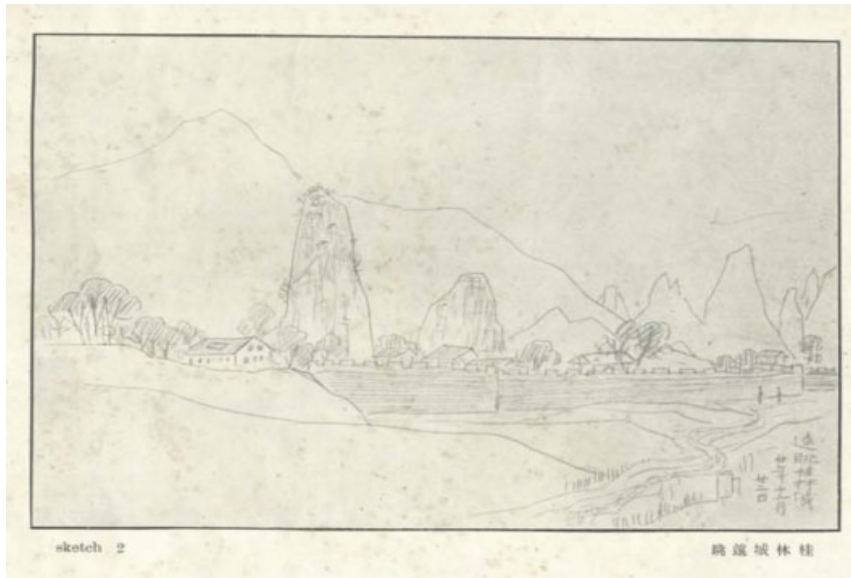


Fig.20 Chen Shuren, *Guilincheng yuantiao* 桂林城远眺 (Far view of Guilin), pencil and paper, location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

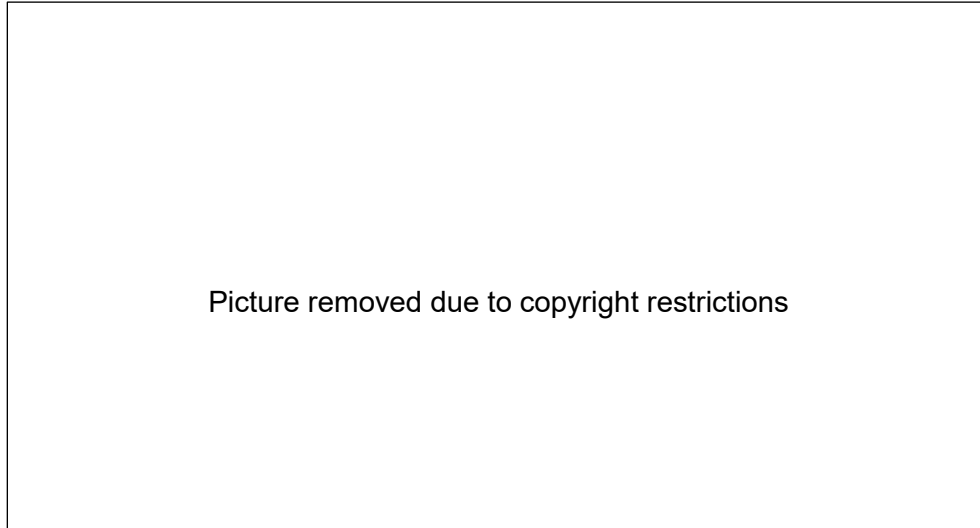


Fig.21 Yamamoto Shunkyo, Details of *Good Omen*, color on silk, pair of two-panel screens, 213.7 x 224.8 cm. Adachi Museum of Art, 1932. As reproduced on the website of “File:Yamamoto Shunkyo - Good Omen - Google Art Project.jpg”, accessed March 18, 2019, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yamamoto_Shunkyo_-_Good_Omen_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

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Fig.22 Yamamoto Shunkyo, *Recess of Shiobara, (4 of 4)*. color on silk, and 41.2×359.0 cm. National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo,1909. As reproduced on the website of “*Fuairu フェイル*: Recesses of Shiobara (Autumn) by Shunkyo Yamamoto ”, accessed March 18, 2019, [https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%83%95%E3%82%A1%E3%82%A4%E3%83%AB:Recesses_of_Shiobara_\(Autumn\)_by_Shunkyo_Yamamoto,_4_of_4,_1909,_color_on_silk_-_National_Museum_of_Modern_Art,_Tokyo_-_DSC06643.JPG](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%83%95%E3%82%A1%E3%82%A4%E3%83%AB:Recesses_of_Shiobara_(Autumn)_by_Shunkyo_Yamamoto,_4_of_4,_1909,_color_on_silk_-_National_Museum_of_Modern_Art,_Tokyo_-_DSC06643.JPG)

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Fig.23 Yamamoto Shunkyo, *Recess of Shiobara, (1 of 4)*. color on silk, and 41.2×359.0 cm. National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo,1909. As reproduced on the website of “*Fuairu フェイル*: Recesses of Shiobara (Autumn) by Shunkyo Yamamoto ”, accessed March 18, 2019, [https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%83%95%E3%82%A1%E3%82%A4%E3%83%AB:Recesses_of_Shiobara_\(Autumn\)_by_Shunkyo_Yamamoto,_1_of_4,_1909,_color_on_silk_-_National_Museum_of_Modern_Art,_Tokyo_-_DSC06643.JPG](https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%83%95%E3%82%A1%E3%82%A4%E3%83%AB:Recesses_of_Shiobara_(Autumn)_by_Shunkyo_Yamamoto,_1_of_4,_1909,_color_on_silk_-_National_Museum_of_Modern_Art,_Tokyo_-_DSC06643.JPG)



Fig.24 Chen Shuren, *Jitan* 急滩 (A Rapid Flowing Beach), medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

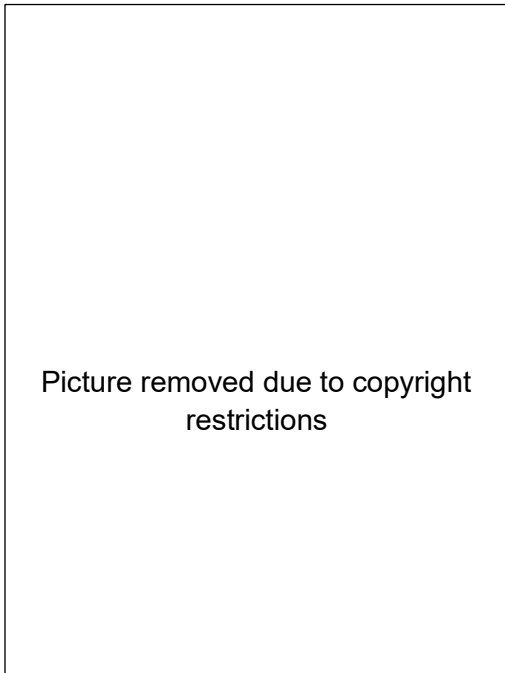


Fig. 25 Kawamura, *Horaisan*, color on silk, 125×36cm. location and date unknown. As reproduced on the website of “[Kawamura Mansyu](https://www.kawamura-mansyu.com/)”, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.matsumoto-shoeido.jp/collections/120?lang=en>

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Fig. 26 Ono Chikkyo, *Chomon Ravine (Chomonkyo)*, hanging scroll, 1931. As reproduced in John Szostak, *Tsuchida Bakusen and Nihonga Collectives in Early Twentieth Century Japan* (Leiden: Brill,2013), 56.



Fig. 27 Chen Shuren, *Rising Sun Above Ping-loh River*, medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

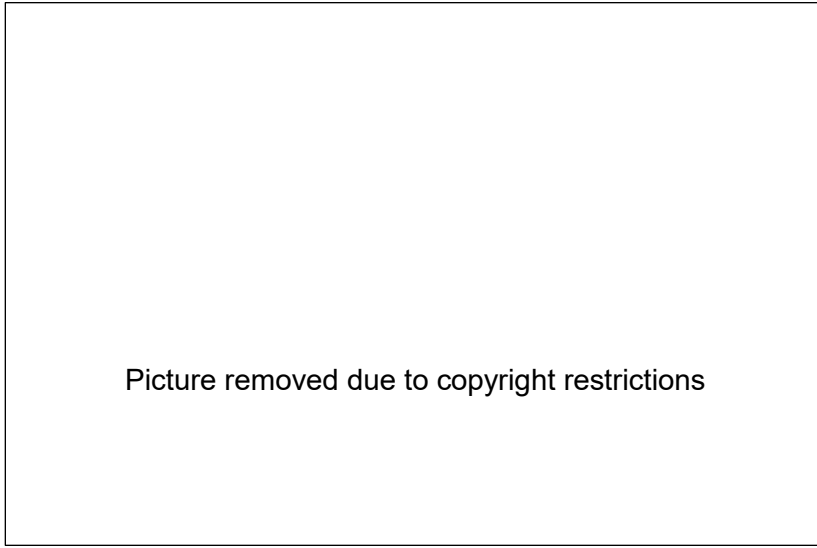


Fig. 28 No.3 *The Three Moonlight Shadow, West Lake, Hangchow. San tan yin yue* 三潭印月, watercolor and postcard. As reproduced on the website of “Minguo jiu ying-yi zu Hangzhou xi hu mingxin pian guanshang 民国旧影-一组杭州西湖明信片观赏”, accessed March 28, 2019, <https://www.weibo.com/ttarticle/p/show?id=2313501000014233370509918809&mod=zwenzhang%3Fcomment=1>

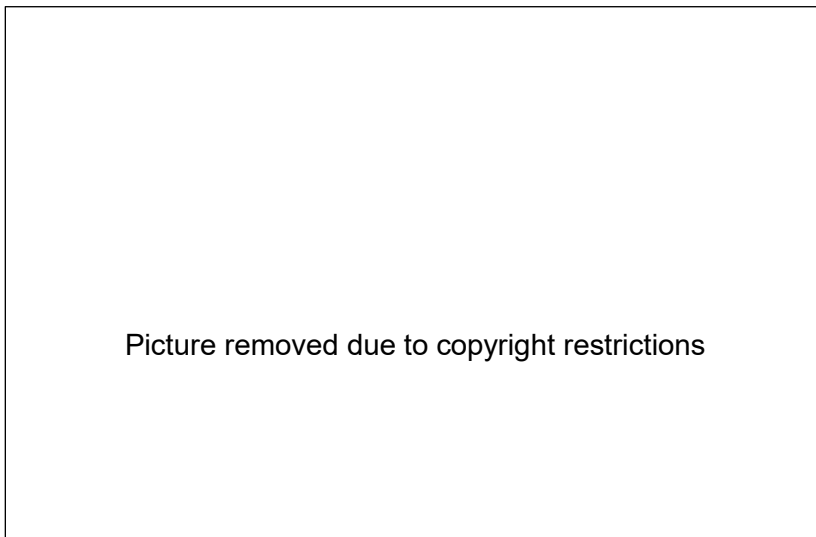


Fig. 29 Liu Tizhi, *Water moon Cave in Kwei-Ling*, photography, medium and location unknown, 1920-1933. As reproduced in Liu Tizhi, *Pictorial Photographs*, (Shanghai: The Liang You Publishing Co., 1934), n.p.



Fig.30 Chen Shuren, *Cormorant raft at Hillside*, medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

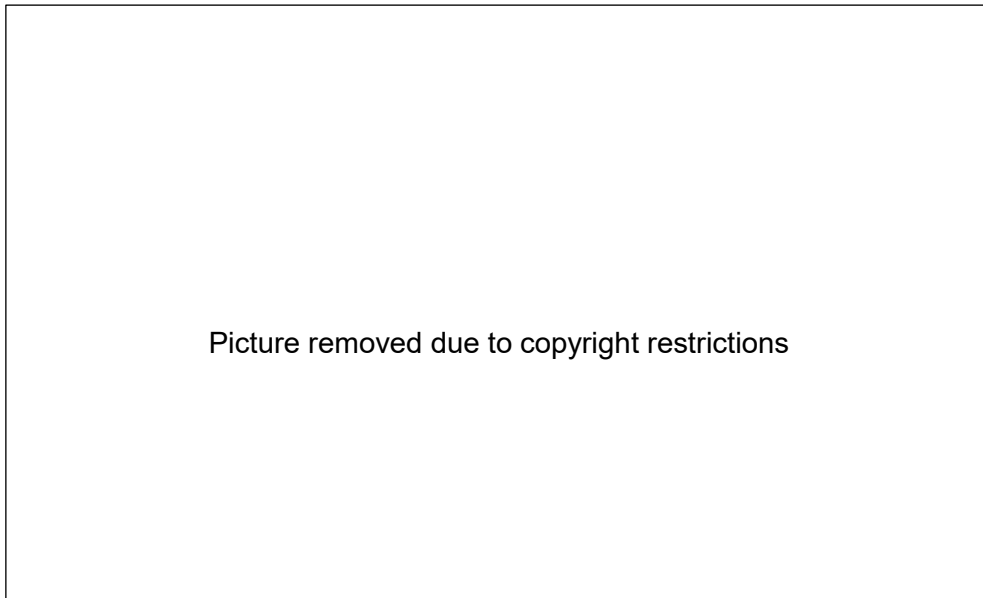


Fig.31 Liu Tizhi, *The Kwei River in Pictorial Photographs*, photography, medium and location unknown, 1920-1933. As reproduced in Liu Tizhi, *Pictorial Photographs*, (Shanghai: The Liang You Publishing Co., 1934), n.p.



Fig.32 Chen Shuren, *An Ox-cart*, medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

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Fig.33 Liu Tizhi, *Shepherd*, photography, medium and location unknown, 1920-1933. As reproduced in Liu Tizhi, *Pictorial Photographs*, (Shanghai: The Liang You Publishing Co., 1934), n.p.



Fig.34 Chen Shuren, *Raining over a Flower Bridge*, medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.

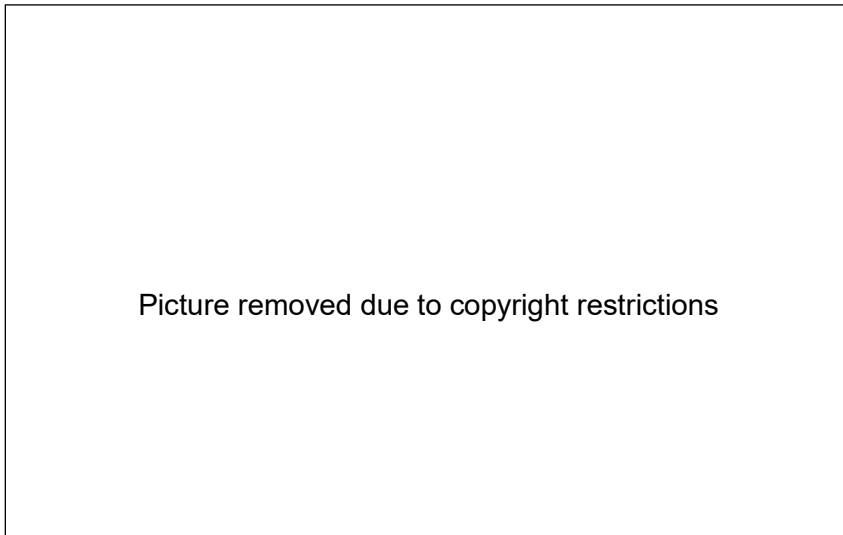


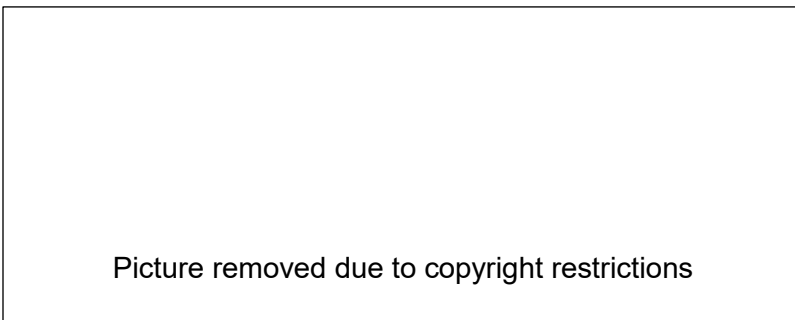
Fig.35 Liu Tizhi, *Flower Bridge and Sister Stone in Kwei-ling*, photography, medium and location unknown, 1920-1933. As reproduced in Liu Tizhi, *Pictorial Photographs*, (Shanghai: The Liang You Publishing Co., 1934), n.p.



Fig.36 Chen Shuren, *Returned from hunting on table-land*, medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.



Fig.37 Chen Shuren, *Blue Peak Overlooking a River*, medium and location unknown, 1931. As reproduced in Chen Shuren, n.p.



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Fig.38 Xu Beihong, *Kang Nanhai liushi xingle tu* 康南海六十行乐图, gouache, 86×121 cm, 1917. As reproduced on the website of “Xu Beihong < *Kang Nanhai liushi xingle tu* > 1300 wan lu chui 徐悲鸿《康南海六十行乐图》1300万落槌”, accessed March 16, 2019, <http://collection.sina.com.cn/pmzx/20120603/222669976.shtml>

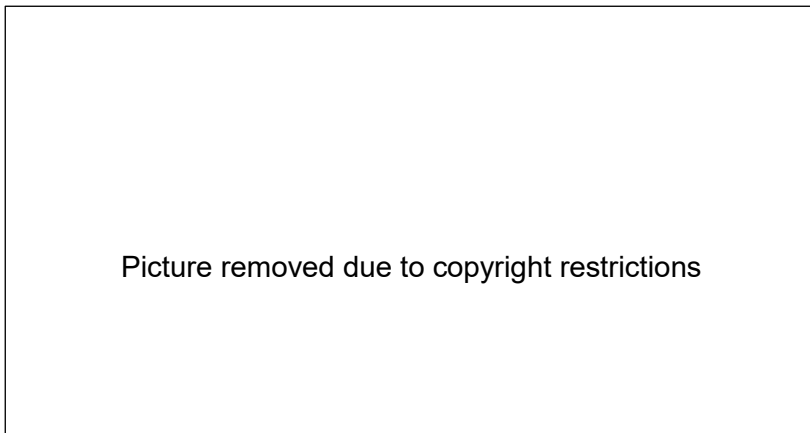


Fig.39 Kang Youwei's family, photography, 1921. As reproduced on the website of “Kang Youwei yisheng fengliu ai xia ji, qu liu fang taitai huiju zhongxi meinü 康有为一生风流酷爱狎妓, 娶六房太太汇聚中西美女”, accessed March 16, 2019, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2015-12-11/1224846290.html>

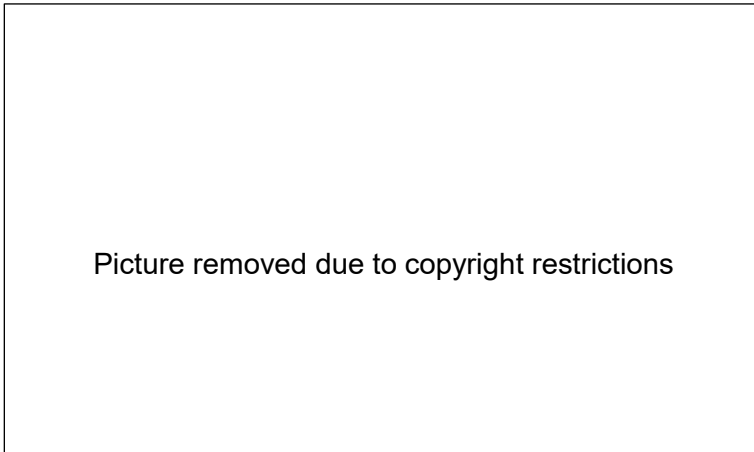


Fig.40 Zhang Yuanheng, *Guilin shanshui*, photography, 1932. As reproduced on the website of “Lao zhaopian li de gushi: di yi ben <Guilin shanshui> sheying ji (tu) 老照片里的故事：第一本《桂林山水》摄影集(图)”, accessed March 16, 2019, <http://www.gxnews.com.cn/staticpages/20170205/newgx5896bfe4-15915405.shtml>

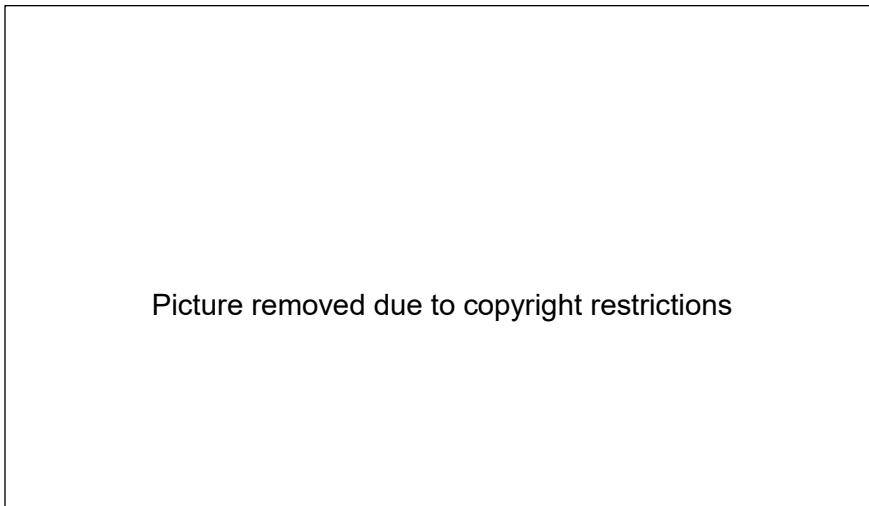


Fig.41 Great Wall in the *True Record*, 1912. As reproduced on the website of “ Xiandai muguang xia de Changcheng: cong gulao de yiji dao chengwei Zhonggguo de xiangzheng 现代目光下的‘长城’: 从古老的遗迹到成为中国的象征”, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://guoxue.ifeng.com/c/7jJxkojmMcv>