

Preface

Hu Hung-shu and I met sixty years ago. He was a senior high school student, and I was studying art at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). We both loved playing basketball and his home is right behind NTNU, he often came watch us playing. He hoped to be a substitute when we are lacking of players. He was tall and welcome. In 1959, I was a teaching assistant at the Department of Architecture of National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) and he was training as a reserve officer in Fongshan. He often visited NCKU in vacations, as he was majored in architecture. The next year, I was appointed as a lecturer at Chung Yuan Christian University (CYCU). When he demobilized from the army, he also joined CYCU and we became coworkers for six months. Later, he was hired by Tunghai University. We kept in touch until he went to the U.S. to obtain further education. In early 1966, I received the John D. Rockefeller III fund of global traveling for two years. I first went to study intaglio printmaking with Prof. Mauricio Lasansky at University of Iowa. I heard that there is a good teacher in design at University of Northern Iowa, who was later employed by University of Iowa. I was surprised to find that this person was my friend Hu Hung-shu. In 1971, I was appointed as the Dean of the Department of Fine Arts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 1975, when Hu Hung-shu heard that I was on sabbatical for a year, he referred me to the School of Art at the University of Iowa (UI) as a visiting professor. We met almost everyday during the year at UI. Our children also became good friends. A year later, my children became very fond of the American's encouraging education style, hating Hong Kong's punishing teaching style and refused to return to Hong Kong. Hung-shu suggested my wife stay with the children in the U.S. and I returned to Hong Kong by myself. In the following seven years, I came to the U.S. for family reunion in every year's vacation. My children received good education and the Hus and my family became close friends.

I've read lots of fabulous reviews, criticism and praise on his art works. Therefore, I only talk about our relationship and his pursue of the "Harmony between Nature and Human being" that others haven't mentioned yet.

In September 2005, Taiwan National Museum of History held a retrospective exhibit of eighty paintings for his 70th birthday. He used volatile oil to wash black oil and made an effect of flowing and denudation. These paintings fully represent the Chinese aesthetic taste of "Natural Beauty". Western artists always take painting as a mirror to reflect social good and evil, while Chinese artists pursue metaphysical spirit, vivid atmosphere. We know that vividness comes from Nature, deliberate methods are not natural, but stiff and rigid. Once the painting is vivid, the spirit comes out. The key of Hung-shu's painting is its vividness, which leads to his success.

The ultimate pursue of Chinese philosophy is the "Harmony between Nature and Human being". We think human being is a part of Nature, and what we pursue is the harmonious relationship between human being and Nature. Westerners think human being is in opposite to Nature, and want to conquest Nature, control Nature, conduct Nature, or even change Nature. Their thinking of "Man will conquer Nature" leads to the damage and

pollution of earth, climate change and the unbalance of Nature. Recently, in order to terminate the devastating development, green organizations sprout, the Western society realizes that Chinese thinking of the “Harmony between Nature and Human being” is the medication to save the fallen civilization. Hung-shu brought up the thinking of the “Harmony between Nature and Human being”, which is exactly what I was thinking.

I wish this exhibition success, to comfort Hung-shu’s spirit in the heaven.

Liu Kuo-sung
(English translation by Xinru Xu)