



Seizing Civilization: Antiquities in Shanghai's Custody, 1949 – 1996

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Seizing Civilization: Antiquities in Shanghai's Custody, 1949 – 1996

Abstract

Seizing Civilization uses the Shanghai Museum as a case study to examine an extraordinary process of art appropriation that persisted from 1949 to 1996 in the People's Republic of China (PRC). At the heart of this story is the museum's destruction of the preexisting art market, its wholesale seizure of privately-owned antiquities, and its sale of these objects on the international market. My findings show that museum employees used these events to create public art collections in the PRC. The Shanghai Museum pioneered the techniques that Chinese museums use to transform craft objects, as well as select ancient paintings, ceramics, and bronzes, into canonized cultural relics. I argue that the application of these techniques explains the erasure of provenance at Chinese Museums, and demonstrate how state cultural institutions render acquisition ledgers, private collecting records, and connoisseurship disputes invisible.

I examine cultural relics' transformation into Chinese cultural heritage in five chapters. I first demonstrate how museum employees appropriated private collections during nation-building campaigns such as the nationalization of industries (1956). Second, I investigate changes to the Chinese art historical canon, placing them in the context of art market takeovers, the wholesale acquisition of ethnic minority artifacts, as well as municipal programs in salvage archaeology. Then, in two chapters, I reveal the Shanghai Museum's active participation in antiquities confiscation and divestment during the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976), which enriched public art collections on a previously unprecedented scale. I conclude with an examination of the mass restitution of expropriated property in the 1980s and 90s, which underpinned the museum's dual function as both a preservationist institution, as well as a political and commercial enterprise. The antiquities and events I analyze not only explain the ascendancy of a dominant narrative about Chinese civilization, but also reveal the limits, contradictions, and challenges of PRC national patrimony.

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Foreword

Research for this dissertation began in June 2008 and ended in June 2011, with twelve months of fieldwork and archival research in Shanghai, China. During the summer of 2010 I also took a week-long trip to Hong Kong to conduct interviews with the overseas Chinese art dealing community. In addition, I conducted six months of fieldwork, museum and archival research in the United Kingdom, during which time I was based in London and made sporadic trips to Oxford, Princes Risborough (Buckinghamshire), and East Grinstead (West Sussex). My work was funded by the Institute of International Education's Fulbright Cultural Exchange Fellowship, an Institute for Historical Research Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities, and a Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts Andrew W. Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship. In addition, the Research Councils UK and the Harvard Yenching Institute sponsored workshops focused on Globalization and Urban History that shaped the trajectories of my work.

I conducted my fieldwork in Shanghai during one visit in the summer of 2009, plus a more extended trip from November 2009 to July 2010. On-site research included interviews, museum and household visits, material collection from private homes and municipal archives, as well as participation in the Shanghai Museum Retired Employees' monthly gatherings. My fieldwork in Britain took place in the fall of 2009, plus a more extended trip in the fall and winter of 2010. On each trip I presented myself as a student interested in Chinese museums and art markets. Depending on their nationality and history with the People's Republic of China, the individuals that I interviewed on my trips yielded different types of information, whose impact

on my research I address as follows.

In May of 2009 I met Zheng Zhong, a reporter who had worked on the Wenhui newspaper's Shanghai Museum beat for the past three decades. During the 1990s the Shanghai Museum commissioned Zheng Zhong to write a monograph about the museum's major donors. As part of that commission he gained unrestricted access to both the museum's internal archives as well as its employees, many of whom had worked for the museum since 1952. After I explained my project, Zheng Zhong gifted me with Shanghai Museum documents that he photocopied and kept whilst he conducted the research for his monograph. He also introduced me to many of the museum employees he interviewed for the same purpose. These employees include Li Junjie and Huang Xuanpei, both former associate director at the museum, Zhong Yinlan and Chen Peifen, senior painting and bronze researchers, respectively, Xu Yongxiang, former director of the museum's Customs inspections team, and Sun Jian, senior painting restorer. These veteran employees invited me to the Shanghai Museum's Retired Employees' monthly gatherings, where I met yet more former employees. Li Junjie also helped me contact retirees that played a role in the museum's political, administrative, and curatorial divisions but did not frequent the monthly gatherings.

Between May 2009 and July 2010 I conducted interviews with twenty-two veteran Shanghai Museum employees in Shanghainese. I also interviewed the former and current directors of Duo Yunxian, a Shanghai art dealership that opened in 1900. When verbal consent was granted, I recorded these interviews in audio and transcribed them into English. During my

visits I also presented my interviewees with archival documents I retrieved from the Shanghai Municipal Archives (SMA). The documents helped jog my interviewees' memories and place specific inquiries in context. When asked, I provided my interviewees with copies of my archival findings, which inspired some interviewees to share related documents and artifacts that they had kept in their homes for personal reasons. Initially my interviewees were introduced by Zheng Zhong or individuals I already interviewed. By the winter of 2010 I found the majority of my interviewees through regular attendance at the retiree's gatherings, or had pointed out to me by previous interviewees. These interactions gave me invaluable insight into the Shanghai Museum's unpublished history, particularly with regard to events and occurrences whose primary documents remain classified by the Chinese state.

I interviewed and presented documents to five individuals extensively over the course of my research: the Shanghai Museum's former Associate Director Li Junjie, former Bronze Curator and Senior Researcher Chen Peifen, former Paintings and Calligraphy Curator and Senior Researcher Zhong Yinlan, Bronze Conservator Gu Youchu, and former First in Administrative Command Xia Shunkui. I selected these individuals based upon the diversity of their working roles, the longevity of their employment, and the first-hand insight they possessed during major vicissitudes in the Shanghai Museum's history. I also chose these five individuals based on their own interest in my research, as well as personal sympathies that we shared and developed over the course of two years. Their perspectives, personal documents, life histories, and the sensitivities they maintained regarding specific events and individuals transformed my

understanding of Shanghai's history and enriched every part of this project.

In the summer of 2008 I met Michael Knight, senior curator of Chinese art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Michael provided me with a list of contacts in New York, London, and Hong Kong who either had extensive family history with or played crucial roles in the international Chinese art market, PRC museums, and Chinese art collecting. From 2008 to 2010 I contacted these individuals and interviewed them in New York, London, and Hong Kong. These individuals spoke to me about their personal and familial history with the Chinese art trade as well as China's museums, and in some cases gave me access to personal archives that contained documents, photos, and interview transcriptions that no longer exist in mainland China. In particular, interactions with Anthony Carter, Doninick Jellineck, John Ayers, Roger Keverne, Philip Constantinidi, Paul Moss, Hugh Moss, Julian Thompson, Helen Shepard, James Watt, Carol Conner, Lois Katz, Patty Tang, Diane Woo, and Jim Lally enhanced my understanding of the relationship between PRC cultural institutions, overseas Sinophiles, and the international art market.

The vast majority of my interviewees in both Shanghai and abroad consented to my naming and recognizing them in my study. Some, however, chose not to have their names associated in conjunction with certain sensitive topics of discussion, such as cash donations to the Shanghai Museum, the secret storage of Shanghai Museum artifacts in Anhui, and the beating and resultant death of Shanghai Museum employees during political campaigns such as the Anti-Right movement and the Cultural Revolution. In order to explore these events and

their impact on perceptions of Chinese cultural heritage, I chose to identify my interviewees by name whenever they granted me consent. In cases when consent was not granted but context remained important, I analyze my interviewees' rejection of identification with the particular topic in mind. For example, when interviewees told me about raiding private homes for antiquities or the museum's treatment of counterrevolutionary art dealers, I asked my interviewees why they do not want their names associated with these accounts and analyze their responses with respect to the initial act, as well as its perceived consequences for the interviewee. Nevertheless, unless my interviewees granted consent, I anonymized any information that might negatively affect the interviewee's relationship with their work unit or social world.

Most of the museum employees, art dealers, philanthropists, and collectors I interviewed and directly cited in this thesis met me as a history student studying the Shanghai Museum and the international market for Chinese art. I understand, however, that personal circumstances mediated both my interviewees' perception of my identity and their interactions with me. My Shanghai-born identity and ability to speak the local dialect positioned me as a co-hometowneer with Shanghai natives. My English language ability and educational standing as a doctoral student encouraged some to open up to me as a perceived outsider-amongst-insiders, and others to limit or reject interacting with me for fear of what I might do with the information they gave me. While comprehending my cultural and social identities as unfixed through specific circumstances and interactions, as a historian I often welcomed context-based interactions in my fieldwork. My above-mentioned identities underlined the information I retrieved. Therefore,

my dissertation highlights the context of my interviews throughout, particularly as they illuminate the relationship between museums and art markets, as well as between individuals, cultural institutions, and cultural heritage.

Note on Translations

Unless otherwise noted, I am the author of all translations and transcriptions in this study. I rendered all Chinese names and titles in hanyu pinyin romanization, simplified Chinese characters, and Chinese surname order, unless standard citation styles mandate formulations otherwise. The accompanying index includes frequently referenced names and titles.

Cultural Relics (wenwu 文物) refers to Chinese antiquities as the objects have been defined and shaped by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage since 1949. Museum (bowuguan 博物馆) refers to cultural institutions for the acquisition, preservation, and exhibition of cultural relics as they are established and transformed by the Ministry of Culture since 1949.

I consistently use English equivalents for Chinese terms that define professional identity in the PRC's cultural institutions, such as art dealer (wuwang shang 古玩商), apprentice (tudi 徒弟), collector (shoucang jia 收藏家), acquisition (zhengji 征集), exhibition (zhanlan 展览), warehouse (kufang 库房), revolutionary rebel (zaofan pai 造反派), segregated interrogations (geli 隔离), restitution (luoshi 落实), and donation (juanxian 捐献). Certain terms, however, encompass a range of meanings (zhuanjia 专家) and even evolve and change as they become associated with particular individuals, events, and time periods (hongse jieban ren 红色接班

人). In these cases I use a variety of English equivalents which express their meaning with respect to context. The accompanying index also contains terms repeatedly used in the thesis.

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Introduction: Welcome to the Shanghai Museum



Figure 0.1. Cover art for the first Shanghai Museum exhibition catalog, 1952. Catalog obtained and photographed with permission from Xia Shunkui.

Welcome to Five Thousand Years of Chinese Civilization

The Class of 1952, so-named for the year its members started work at the Shanghai Museum, had little experience. The museum hired all 126 of them to work as antiquities buyers, catalogers, gallery guides, and security guards at its newly-opened facility on #325 West Nanjing Road, next to the People's Park in downtown Shanghai. A glance at the Class of 1952's qualifications, however, would have raised even the most callow visitor's eyebrows. Chen Peifen had just completed her second year of high school. Zhong Yinlan, who applied to work as a

gallery guide, put melon seed inspector and chicken hatchery attendant in the Professional Experience section of her résumé. Li Junjie and Huang Xuanpei had no previous work experience. Shen Minren, who did well on her employment exams, had an alarming mark on her personnel file – it labeled her a candidate for reeducation because her father had fled for Taiwan as soon as the Communists won control of Shanghai in 1949. The Class of 1952 were paid to show all visitors “the cultural inheritance of our people”, yet none were alive when the dynastic system collapsed in 1911 – ostensibly the impetus for the creation of the modern Chinese state and the fount of cultural heritage production on the mainland.¹

The Class of 1952's lack of experience did nothing to dampen the popular frenzy to see Chinese antiquities in museums.² The third largest collection of Chinese antiquities in the world and the only one assembled after 1949, the Shanghai Museum became a formative element with which to portray the nation as a single, unbroken entity, with territory that stretched from the icy Tibetan alps to the tropical beaches of Hainan island. Visitors nodded eagerly as the new hires pointed out artifacts that stood for Five Thousand Years of Chinese Civilization, the ancient culture that began with the rule of the Yellow emperor and stretched

¹ Zhongshi wenwu guji jiaqiang baohu guanli [Paying Attention To Cultural Relics And Ancient Sites, Strengthening Protection And Management] *Wenwu cankao zhiliao* 1, no. 1- 6, (1950): 11.

² For period records on the popular response to museums see Beijing Bowuguan Xuehui, ed., *Beijing Bowuguan Nianjian* [Annals of the Palace Museum] (Beijing Shi, 1989): 33; Guoli Nanjing bowuyuan zhengshi chengli [State-Established Nanjing Museum Officially Inaugurated] *Wenwu cankao zhiliao* 4, no. 1- 6, (1950): 55-56; Mengjia Chen, “Haiwai zhongguo tongqi de shoucang yu yanjiu” [Overseas Chinese Bronze Collections And Research], *Tianjin Minguo Ribao*, February 6, 1949, Collected in Mengjia Chen, *Mengjia baocunwen* [Mengjia's Precious Collected Writings] (Beijing, 2006): 303-309; Zhengduo Zheng, Baocun guwu zhenyi [The Debate On Preserving Ancient Objects] in Gugong bowuyuan, Ed, *Juanxian Dajia – Zhen Zhengduo* [A Donation To All – Zhen Zhengduo], 2 vols. (Beijing, 2005), 2: 27-28.

through succeeding dynasties to the current state – the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The Department of Cultural Affairs, an administrative unit that housed the Class of 1952's immediate municipal superiors, asked the new hires to “develop the excellent traditions of Chinese civilization's art and culture, publicize and implement the party's policies on the protection of cultural relics, and conduct nationalist and socialist education for the multitudes.”³ This directive pushed Shanghai to elaborate and popularize a particular position on China's place in the world – a perspective that privileged antiquities, dubbed *wenwu* (cultural heritage), as the representatives of a civilization unlike any other in history.⁴ The museum collection gave this position great immediacy. As the Class of 1952 told visitors everyday, the value of Chinese antiquities underlined China's special destiny. Chinese cultural heritage outranked the brashly young United States, and stood impervious to any slights that foreign imperial powers have left on its soil since the First Opium War (1839 – 1942).⁵

Shedding new light on the transformation of cultural heritage in the twentieth century, *Seizing Civilization* interrogates four conceptual frameworks that underlie all origin narratives

³ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju suo shu Shanghai bowuguan fazhan shi gao (cugao) he zai qingzhu guoqing hui shang de jianghua gao* [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Draft For Shanghai Museum Development History (First Draft) And Speech Draft For National Day Galla Evening Speech] January 2nd, 1959 – September 28th, 1959, B172-5-103, Shanghai Municipal Archives (SMA), Shanghai.

⁴ For more information see Tu Wei-ming, “Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center”, *Daedalus*, 120, no. 2, (1991): 1-32;

⁵ Exhibition schema and interpretations for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui; Investigations into China as part of an international order include David Shambaugh “Introduction: The Emergence Of 'Greater China'” *The China Quarterly* 136, (1993): 653-659; Amy Chua, *Day Of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise To Global Dominance – And Why They Fall* (New York, 2007).

such as that which the Class of 1952 learned to recite from their first day on the job.⁶ The first is the distinction between museums and the art market, in particular the notion that commercial interests only erode the integrity of a civilization's heritage. I explore the simultaneous development of cultural institutions and markets in the PRC context, examining the former's strong investment in regulating, developing, and profiting from the latter. The second framework is an immutable art historical canon, which in the Chinese context is defined as both a greatest hits list as well as a set of categories that delimit art (bronzes, ceramics, paintings and calligraphy, etc.). I investigate the canon's so-called immutability, its dependence on a distinguished cohort of taste-makers, as well as its immunity from the vicissitudes of the art market.⁷ I use the Shanghai Museum as a case study to demonstrate that canon-formation is an open and dynamic process, open to institutional intervention as well as social, economic, and political vicissitudes.

The third framework is the philanthropic nature of donations, that antiquities and cash are free gifts that private individuals bequeath museums throughout their institutional history.

⁶ The most prominent example of using antiquities to establish an origins narrative in the Chinese context is the Guomindang state's removal of the Palace Museum's collection in 1949. For a first hand account of the removal and its justification see Lih-wu Han, *Zhonghua Wenwu Boqian Ji* [The Transfer Of Chinese Cultural Relics] (Taipei, 1980); A more recent account of the events in English is Jeannette Shanbaugh Elliot, *The Odyssey Of China's Imperial Art Treasures* (Seattle, 2005). For non-Chinese contexts see Wendy M. K. Shaw "Islamic Arts in The Ottoman Imperial Museum, 1889-1923" *Ars Orientalis*, 30, (2000): 55-68.

⁷ For further discussion on canonicity see Yasser Tabbaa "Canonicity and Control: The Sociopolitical Underpinnings of Ibn Muqla's Reform" *Ars Orientalis*, 29 (1999): 91-100; taste-makers are defined in Marilyn Jenkins-Madina "Collecting the 'Orient' at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America" *Ars Orientalis*, 30, (2000): 69-89; A discussion of both in the context of a market for Chinese art can be found in Ankeney Weitz "Art and Politics at the Mongol Court of China: Tugh Temür's Collection of Chinese Paintings" *Artibus Asiae*, 64, no. 2 (2004): 243-280;

People rarely give donations freely. Different constituents grant and solicit donations, actively and intentionally, for myriad purposes. My findings show, for example, that the Shanghai Museum used the *language* of donation to transform appropriations into bequests. I propose that donations are elegant fictions that legitimize museums' self portrayal as the “custodians of cultural heritage”. Furthermore, the tropes of donation change over time. In the PRC context, the language of donation, have transformed from highlighting nationalism, in the 1950s and 60s, to highlighting consensual exchanges between private collectors and public cultural institutions. I argue that this cult of consent, as it is portrayed through institutional ceremonies and merit awards, underwrites the very invention of cultural heritage, both in China and overseas.

The fourth and last framework I explore is the museum's role in creating the “state effect”, the illusion that a monolithic Chinese state encompasses everything from sports to foreign trade.⁸ *Seizing civilization* makes visible the entire cast of characters whose joint efforts created the appearance of a coherent state apparatus: middling curio traders and art repairers, junior museum employees, sales girls at state-run antiquities stores, and high school drop-outs – state and non-state actors alike whose collaboration outlined the contours of social and political order in the PRC. With the collaboration of domestic and foreign constituents, these state and

⁸ Damien Ma, “Li Na: The Face Of Chinese Soft Power” *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 4th, 2011, visited June 5th, 2011 from <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2011/06/li-na-the-face-of-chinese-soft-power/239923/> For similar portrayals of the PRC see Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famine* (New York, 1998); Brahma Chellaney “Autocratic China Becoming Arrogant” *Times Of India*, November 15th, 2006; Michael P. Colaresi, *Scare Tactics: The Politics of International Rivalry* (Syracuse, 2005); Thomas Friedman, “Our One Party Democracy” *The New York Times*, September 8th, 2009; Zhengyuan Fu, *Autocratic Tradition And Chinese Politics* (Cambridge, 1993).

non-state actors co-created the ways in which Chinese art is acquired, evaluated, and institutionalized in the twentieth century. The fabrication of Chinese cultural heritage would not have occurred without these vastly different individuals, who persuaded each other of antiquities' primacy in the history of Chinese civilization.

Seizing Civilization shows that Chinese museums are more than sites of Red propaganda. It explains how the Shanghai Museum stripped its collection of provenance, and rendered acquisition ledgers, private collecting records, and connoisseurship disputes invisible. Like many achievements, this one is both exquisitely simple and fiendishly problematic. Elite connoisseurs, new museum employees, municipal administrators, in conjunction with state policy makers, recast privately-owned antiquities as cultural inheritance and marketed that vision to both domestic and international audiences. In the process, the museum obtained unprecedented municipal collaboration in the systematic expropriation of antiquities from local denizens. Shanghai, for example, pioneered the wholesale acquisition of ethnic minority artifacts, as well as the artifacts' subsequent establishment as a category of art that demonstrated the common heritage of the Han majority and all fifty-five ethnic minority peoples living in the PRC.⁹ Furthermore, the Shanghai Museum expropriated privately art collections to exhibit as the cultural inheritance of all Chinese, transforming antiquities from private to public property. In short, the museum made the erasure of provenance integral to the creation of cultural

⁹ The “culturalization” of ethnic minorities receive extended treatment in Ma Rong “The ‘Politicization’ And ‘Culturalization’ Of Ethnic Groups” *Chinese Sociology And Anthropology*, 42, no. 4, (2010): 31 – 45.

heritage.

Shanghai didn't invent the erasure of provenance. The idea was new to the PRC but also very old – utilized in so-called autocratic and democratic nation-states alike. When the the Louvre Museum opened to the public in 1793, its paintings didn't bear any mark of their appropriation from French Catholic churches, nor did public exhibitions mention the paintings' provenance throughout the subsequent French empires, republics, and administrations.¹⁰ Similarly, Catherine The Great's Hermitage Museum collection “served as a visible sign of cultural enlightenment” with no gesture towards the dense network of envoys and previous owners that assembled the bricolage.¹¹ The systematic erasure of provenance in Shanghai fits into an existing, established process; audiences worldwide have long reconciled national museum collections' expropriated nature with the institutions' representation of individual nation-states, civilizations, and indeed world heritage.¹² To summarize, the history of the

¹⁰ Paul Jamot “The Acquisitions of the Louvre during the War, 1914-1919” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 36, no. 207 (Jun., 1920):287- 289, 292-293; James Kearns “From Store to Museum: The Reorganization of the Louvre's Painting Collections in 1848” *The Modern Language Review*, 102, no. 1 (Jan., 2007): 58-73; Andrew L. McClellan “The Musée du Louvre as Revolutionary Metaphor During the Terror” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (Jun., 1988), pp. 300-313;

¹¹ Katia Dianina “Art and Authority: The Hermitage of Catherine the Great” *Russian Review*, 63, no. 4 (Oct., 2004): 630-654; For later histories of the Hermitage see O. Neverov “The Lyde Browne Collection and the History of Ancient Sculpture in the Hermitage Museum” *American Journal of Archaeology*, 88, no. 1 (Jan., 1984): 33-42;

¹² For an introduction to the vast literature on museums and expropriated property around the world, see Ann Fienup-Riordan “Collaboration on Display: A Yup'ik Eskimo Exhibit at Three National Museums” *American Anthropologist*, 101, no. 2 (Jun., 1999): 339-358; John Henry Merryman “Thinking About The Elgin Marbles” *Michigan Law Review*, 83, No. 8 (1985): 1880 - 1923 ; David Rudenstein, “Cultural Property: The Hard Question Of Repatriation The Rightness And Utility Of Voluntary Repatriation” *19 Cardozo Arts And Entertainment Law Journal*, 69, (2001); Nora Niedzielski-Eichner “Art Historians And Cultural Property Internationalism” *International Journal Of Cultural Property*, 12, (2005): 183 – 200; Lyndel V. Prott “The International Movement Of Cultural Objects” *International Journal Of Cultural Property*, 12, (2005): 225 – 248;

Shanghai Museum's systematic appropriations of art provides rich analytical purchase because it demonstrates *how* cultural institutions integrated antiquities into the modern state apparatus. Studying Chinese museums, and writing a Chinese museology, then, serves a dual purpose. It both reveals the limitations of the autocratic Chinese state narrative, and the shortcomings of envisioning western cultural institutions as the fount of heritage preservation.

In its methodology and sources, *Seizing Civilization* utilizes the “polyphonic” resources of three different kinds of sources to elicit the Shanghai Museum's multifarious inhabitants: archival records, oral interviews, and statistics.¹³ I read government edicts, small-business records, monthly ledgers, as well as a diverse array of texts from print and visual culture, such as museum exhibitions, training manuals, speaking scripts, photographs, and private notebooks. Two years of oral interviews with people from this era helped me to connect archival documents with the experience and consciousness of individuals. I not only investigated personal accounts but also scrutinized archival sources with the record keepers themselves, including museum employees, art dealers and collectors in China, Hong Kong, America, and Britain. These sources, as I have interpreted them, inhabit a shared discursive field – a syncretic dialogue about Chinese cultural heritage articulated not only in institutional boardrooms and at state ceremonies, but also in the lives and imagination of “ordinary” people. As such, this dissertation

Barbara T. Hoffman, “International Art Transactions And The Resolution Of Art And Cultural Property Disputes: A United States Perspective” in Barbara T. Hoffman Ed., *Art And Cultural Heritage Law, Policy And Practice* (Cambridge, 2006) :159 – 177; John Henry Merryman, ed., *Imperialism, Art And Restitution* (Cambridge, 2006);

¹³ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity And Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, 1993): 115-119.

resists the kind of ideology that imagines behavioral divisions wherein “Capitalist” and “Communist” cultural institutions arbitrarily inhabit the same world but pass by each other like ships in the night. Above all, I want to reveal how different constituents used the museum as an instrument to make cultural heritage up as they went along. Shanghai's experience reveals the ways in which these origin narratives unfix objects from history, infusing them with new national, aesthetic, market, and institutional value.¹⁴

Creating Cultural Heritage

The museum's international ubiquity makes it compelling as a site for the articulation and creation of origin narratives. The proliferation of public museums in eighteenth century France and nineteenth century England drew strong attendance, whether they treated the institution as a tribute to the downfall of unpopular regimes or an arena in which to practice civilized behavior.¹⁵ Facilitated by art dealers, personal travel, as well as an imaginary of exotica as projected by their respective nation-states/empires, individual collectors amassed antiquities collections from both domestic and overseas sources – many of which became signature

¹⁴ For further discussions of the ideas surrounding cultural heritage and its distinction from historical narrative, see John Henry Merryman, “Protection' Of The Cultural 'Heritage'?” *The American Journal Of Comparative Law*, 38, (1990): 513 – 522; Susan A. Crane, “Memory, Distortion, And History In The Museum” *History And Theory*, 36, no. 4 (1997): 44 – 63; David Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage” *History And Memory*, 10, no. 1, (1998): 5 – 24; Janet Blake, “On Defining The Cultural Heritage” *The International And Comparative Law Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (2000): 61 – 85; Tammy S. Gordon, “Heritage, Commerce, And Museal Display: Toward A New Typology Of Historical Exhibition In The United States” *The Public Historian*, 30, no. 3, (2008): 27 – 50.

¹⁵ Frances Borzello, *Civilising Caliban: The Misuse Of Art, 1875 – 1980*, (London, 1987); David J. E. Gilks, A.C. *Quatremère de Quincy And Regenerating The Visual Arts In France, c. 1770-1810* Unpublished Dissertation, University of Cambridge, Faculty of History (Cambridge, 2008); Tony Bennett, *The Birth Of The Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London, 1995); James Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy Of Imperialism In Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham, 2003)

museum collections themselves.¹⁶ Commentary on museums came in the form of political speeches, advertisements, newsreels, journals and newspapers, film and television productions, and museums themselves. The art collections inspired poems, novels, essays, posters, as well as countless reproduction souvenir and curios from full-sized paintings to hand mirrors. This rich and profound culture of antiquities brought museums into everyday life across the globe, even though only a small fraction of the world could afford to collect, much less develop an interest in “culture”.

While the study of museums and collecting have shaped our understanding of Imperialism, the use of art in the age of the nation-state has been less explored.¹⁷ *Seizing*

¹⁶ Elizabeth Hope Chang, *Britain's Chinese Eye Literature, Empire, And Aesthetics In Nineteenth Century Britain* (Stanford, 2010); Sarah Cheang, “The Dogs Of Fo: Gender, Identity And Collecting” in Anthony Shelton, Ed., *Collectors, Expressions Of Self And Other* (London, 2001): 55 – 72; Warren I. Cohen, *East Asian Art And American Culture: A Study In International Relations* (New York, 1992); Christine Guth, *Art, Tea, And Industry: Masuda Takashi And The Mitsui Circle* (Princeton, 1993); Judith Green, “A New Orientation Of Ideas': Collecting And Taste For Early Chinese Ceramics In England: 1921 – 1936.” in Stacey Pierson, ed., *Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation And Display* (London, 2000): 43 – 56; Jordana Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, And The Modern Nation, 1929 – 1939* (University Park, 2005); Thomas Lawton and Linda Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy Of Art* (New York, 1993); Maya Jasanoff, *Edge Of Empire: Lives, Culture, And Conquest In The East, 1750 – 1850*, (New York, 2005); Jason C. Kuo, Martha Ann Bari, Fan Dongqing, eds, *The Helen D. Ling Collection Of Chinese Ceramics* (Seattle, 1995); Nicky Levell, “Scholars And Connoisseurs: Knowledge And Taste. The Seligman Collection Of Chinese Art” in Anthony Shelton, Ed., *Collectors, Expressions Of Self And Other* (London, 2001): 73 – 90; Lara J. Netting, *Acquiring Chinese Art And Culture: The Collections And Scholarship Of John C. Ferguson (1866-1945)* Unpublished Dissertation, Princeton University (Princeton, 2009); Stacey Pierson, *Collectors, Collections And Museums: The Field Of Chinese Ceramics In Britain, 1560-1960* (Oxford, 2007); Julia B. Rosenbaum, *Visions Of Belonging: New England Art And The Making Of American Identity* (Ithaca, 2006); Yiyou Wang, *The Louvre From China: A Critical Study Of C. T. Loo And The Framing Of Chinese Art In The United States, 1915-1950* Unpublished Dissertation, Ohio State University (Ohio, 2007).

¹⁷ The seminal works in the studies of art appropriation and museum building come from scholars working on the history of Nazi Germany, including Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: the Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York, 1994); Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill, 1996); Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (Woodstock, 2003).

Civilization argues that museum-building galvanized the formation and articulation of a new Chinese cultural heritage: a world view that allowed Chinese to embody antiquities with a continuous, five-millennia-old civilization whose physicality is not only tangible, but collectable, malleable, and worth displaying to both domestic and international audiences. The rise of public museums in the PRC inspired individuals to re-imagine the world and the trajectory of their civilization within it.

From the perspective of social and political historians in China and the West, the PRC's 1950s museum-frenzy seems remarkably late. Nationalist pride in a post-dynastic republic and popular antiquarianism fostered enough philanthropic movements to establish public museums several times over.¹⁸ As the Shanghai Museum itself announced on its inaugural banners: “our people will never again be one battered by others, we have stood up, our revolution has already received the world's empathy and celebration.”¹⁹ Indeed, museum exhibitions introduced a new

¹⁸ For nationalism as an explanation for communal imaginaries see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections On The Origin And Spread Of Nationalism* (New York, 1991); For the case of China specifically, see Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism And Communist Power; The Emergence Of Revolutionary China* (Stanford, 1962); John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, And Class In The Nationalist Revolution*, (Stanford, 1996); Henrietta Harrison, *The Making Of The Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies And Symbols In China, 1911 – 1929* (Oxford, 2000); Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance And Collaboration In Modern China* (Berkeley, 2000); Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging The World: Chinese Nationalism At The Turn Of The Twentieth Century* (Durham, 2002); Stephan Anthony Smith, *Like Cattle And Horses: Nationalism And Labor In Shanghai, 1895 – 1927* (Durham, 2002); Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture And The Creation Of The Nation* (Cambridge, 2003); Diana Lary, “Regions and Nation: The Present Situation in China in Historical Context”, *Pacific Affairs*, 70, no. 2 (1997): 181-194 ; Zuoyue Wang “Saving China Through Science: The Science Society Of China, Scientific Nationalism, And Civil Society In Republican China” *Osiris*, 17 (2002): 291-322.

¹⁹ Exhibition schema and interpretations for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff (circa 1952), Private collection of Xia Shunkui. This parallels Mao Zedong's PRC inauguration speeches, as noted by Roderick MacFarquhar “On 'Liberation'” *The China Quarterly*, 200 (2009): 891-894.

world order, one in which the PRC stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States, Britain, France, and all the other countries that once occupied Shanghai's International Settlement.

While the Shanghai Museum fostered national interest in Chinese cultural heritage, it also represented the persistence of Shanghai's regional power. The city's well-stocked coffers allowed its museum to acquire top-tier antiquities from poorer neighbors, such as nearby Suzhou and Hangzhou, as well as faraway Tibet and Yunnan. The prestige of these acquisitions enabled Shanghai to refuse appropriation demands from Beijing, establishing itself as a collection that defined ancient Chinese civilization with antiquities that museums in the nation's capital could not obtain. Unusually skilled conservators, whom the museum recruited and trained since the mid-1950s, made such a profound impact on the restoration of damaged artifacts that institutions outside Shanghai clamored to take lessons from its museum. Thus, the city that once earned renown from its foreign concessions became a sophisticated repository that literally restored Chinese antiquity. Furthermore, the expansion of municipal borders into hinterland counties such as Qingpu and Songjiang allowed museum archaeologists to unearth excavated artifacts that demonstrated that Shanghai, in its new conglomeration, wielded a history as old as ancient Chinese civilization itself. These additions to the museum's permanent collection allowed the institution to argue that Shanghai's history did not stop at the International Settlements, but reached further back to ancient cultures that pre-dated the Tang dynasty. By the 1960s, the museum's facilities, collection, and staff reversed the infrastructural

hierarchy that put Beijing at the center of cultural heritage narratives.

Thus, despite the ready logic of a nationalist explanation, this study seeks to challenge the conceptual dichotomies that underlie the integration of antiquities into Chinese cultural heritage. Reducing museums to propaganda instruments, or sites of nation-state building, occludes a more complex historical drama. In the Shanghai Museum's case, the Manichean framework in which we might interpret its exhibitions resurrects a Cold War-mentality that historians are beginning to reject: that Socialist-era Chinese statesmen used top-down strategies to shape a faceless, heritage-proud population that privileges the continuity of Chinese civilization over all else, whereas the democratic West utilized its public sphere to foster multivalent narratives and artifacts about its recent and distant past.²⁰ Upon closer examination, these generalizations seem overly simplistic.²¹ Individuals from a whole spectrum of social and political backgrounds peopled the Shanghai Museum. In 1952, the staff roster included junior high school graduates and elite connoisseurs, art dealers and cultural heritage preservationists, craft repairers and scientists, each with their own agendas for pursuing municipal employment, as well as their own interests in the construction of a public dialogue on Chinese cultural heritage. Also, the museum was never for Chinese, by Chinese. Foreign tourism fueled the

²⁰ Orville Schell "China's Hidden Democratic Legacy", *Foreign Affairs*, 83, no. 4 (2004): 116-124; Robert S. Snyder, "The End of Revolution?", *The Review of Politics*, 61, no. 1 (1999): 5-28;

²¹ In recent years, scholars have come to question the outdated framework that the Cold War imposed on East Asia. For a selection of these interrogations see Harry Harootunian "The Black Cat In The Dark Room" *Positions*, 13, no.1 (2005): 137 – 155; Xiaobo Lu and Elizabeth J. Perry, "Introduction", ed. Xiaobo Lu and Elizabeth J. Perry, *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New York, 2004): 3-20; Elizabeth J. Perry "Studying Chinese Politics: Farewell to Revolution?" *The China Journal*, no. 57 (2007): 1-22.

demand for Chinese cultural artifacts and museums, as well as the vast international market for Chinese art in America, Western Europe, and the Middle East (Figure 0.2).²² If the Shanghai Museum's history characterizes Communist-Capitalist binaries, then the interpretive framework only affirms preexisting identifications in the minds of its visitors.



Figure 0.2. A gallery guide walking members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom through the Tang dynasty exhibition galleries at the Shanghai Museum (1957). Photo obtained from the Shanghai Municipal Archives (SMA)

²² For examples of non-state actors who campaigned vigorously for museum building in the PRC, see Qi Gong, *Qi Gong Cong Gao* [Qi Gong's Collected Drafts] (Beijing, 1981); Zhang Boju, *Chun You She Suo Tan, Su Yue Lou Lian Yu* [The Spring Outing Society's Trifling Chats, The Plain Moon Building's Couplets] (Beijing, 1998); Ding Yanfeng "Fu Zengxiang Yu Haiyuan Ge Yishu" [Fu Zengxiang And Books From The Haiyuan Ge Library] *Guojia Tushu Guan Xuekan* 15, no. 4, (2006): 67 – 73; Sun Ronglei, *Jindai Cangshu Dajia Fu Zengxiang Yanjiu* [Research Regarding Modern Bibliophile Fu Zengxiang] Unpublished Dissertation, Shandong University (Shandong, 2007).

Seizing Civilization neither seeks to demonstrate the West's monolithic portrayal of China nor to champion forgotten interpretations of ancient Chinese civilization. If the master narrative about Chinese authoritarianism and Western multiculturalism sounds stagnant, so too does the counter-narrative that populates the Chinese art historical canon with eremitic artists and impoverished scholar-amateurs who protest through obscure references, or paint Western museology as the source of cultural imperialism and racial bias.²³ Shanghai Museum acquisitions targeted folk embroideries as well as ancient bronzes. As authenticators of Chinese art for Shanghai Customs, its employees enforced export regulations on dynastic relics and shaped the boundaries of contemporary Chinese art. The museum's staff-recruitment practices targeted illiterate craftsmen as well as college graduates; while its exhibitions had featured in-house displays as well as traveling poster shows, illuminated projector displays. Furthermore, the museum's retail channels drove the sale of reproduced antiquities from the moment of the institution's creation in 1952. This integration of "high" and "low", "not for profit" and "retail",

²³ Mark C. Elliot most poignantly highlighted this fallacies when he quipped "I don't think all these people went around saying 'oh I just can't take this nineteenth century'!", AAS Chicago, 2009. Art historical inquiries that address and seek to go beyond the literati-professional painter divide include Anning Jing "The Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi by Anige (1245-1306), a Nepali Artist at the Yuan Court" *Artibus Asiae*, 54, no. 1/2 (1994): 40-86; Sherman E. Lee "Yan Hui, Zhong Kui, Demons and the New Year" *Artibus Asiae*, 53, no. 1/2 (1993): 211-227; Jerome Silbergeld "The Evolution of a "Revolution": Unsettled Reflections on the Chinese Art-Historical Mission" *Archives of Asian Art*, 55 (2005): 39-52; Peter C. Sturman "The Donkey Rider as Icon: Li Cheng and Early Chinese Landscape Painting" *Artibus Asiae*, 55, no. 1/2 (1995): 43-97; Richard Vinograd "Origins and Presences: Notes on the Psychology and Sociality of Shitao's Dreams" *Ars Orientalis*, 25, (1995): 61-72; For similar insights on western museums see Miriam R. Levin "Museums And The Democratic Order" *The Wilson Quarterly* 26, no. 1, (2002): 52 – 65; Robert S. Nelson "The Map of Art History" *The Art Bulletin*, 79, no. 1 (1997): 28-40.

suggests that “elite”, “connoisseur”, and even “antiquity” are mutable terms whose meanings become unfixed in the invention of heritage. As I show throughout this study, the articulation of heritage narratives presupposes a nation of antiquities enthusiasts unbound by the distinctions of class, and fills works of art, as well as the individuals who own, trade, and engage with them, with new cultural, social, and political values.

Commodifying The Canon

In both its origins and practice, narratives of cultural heritage operate on an implicit binary that places cultural institutions in a separate category from the art market.²⁴ Chinese museums, however, regulated sales from the moment the PRC’s Cultural Relics laws designated museum employees as Customs inspectors for the export Chinese art market in 1949. Art dealers worked as authenticators for the Shanghai Museum, while local art markets had an implicit understanding to funnel choice acquisitions to the museum at cut-rate prices, as well as to help the state predict collecting trends both on the mainland and abroad. More importantly, throughout the Shanghai Museum's history its staff, as did cultural institution employees all over

²⁴ The narrative of cultural heritage is most visible in the study of architectural and archaeological preservation, as presented by Chen Xingcan, *Zhongguo shi qian kaogu xue shi yanjiu, 1895 – 1949* [Before Chinese History: A History of Archaeological Studies 1895 – 1949] (Beijing, 1997); Cherie Wendelken-Mortensen, *Living with the Past: Preservation and Development in Japanese Architecture and Town Planning* Unpublished Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, 1994); Magnus Thorkell Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin, 2005), Talinn Grigor, *Building Iran: Modernism, Architecture, and National Heritage under the Pahlavi Monarchs* (New York, 2009); in recent years, further studies on organizations such as UNESCO have broadened the dialog towards an understanding of world cultural heritage, as discussed by Lucia Allais, *Will to War, Will to Art: Cultural Internationalism and the Modern Aesthetics of Monuments, 1932 – 1964* Unpublished Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, 2008).

China, inventoried expropriated antiquities and determined which the museum acquired, which the dealerships sold for profit, and which were simply not art. These intersections between museum and market demonstrate the persistent interest that cultural institutions maintain in profiting from the sale of art, both in China and overseas.

Narratives of cultural heritage often propose that cultural institutions “preserve” art from commercial interests. They assert that museums only expand acquisitions – the permanent collections don't change institutions, go up for sale, nor do institutions reproduce specific artifacts for profit. Increasingly, however, art historians have noted that cultural institutions participate in commerce and even sell artifacts, often as part of the collecting tradition.²⁵ As such, the Shanghai Museum's history demonstrates a syncretic process in which individuals working in both museums and the art market – none of whom adhere to the boundaries that their professions suggest – co-created value and meaning, in the service of heritage. It is through this process that the abovementioned cast of characters assembled the collections that underline our notion of the Chinese art historical canon.

As a collection of “cultural relics from all ages” and part of “one of the first countries in the world to develop civilization”, the Shanghai Museum's antiquities derive their value from representing the canon.²⁶ This includes both an immutable coterie of objects that define Chinese

²⁵ Susan A. Crane, “Memory, Distortion, And History In The Museum” *History And Theory* 36, no. 4, (1997): 44 – 63; Donald Preziosi, *Brain of The Earth's Body: Art, Museums, And The Phantasms Of Modernity* (Minneapolis, 2003); Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture In Ming Dynasty China* (London, 1996); Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture And Social Status In Early Modern China* (Honolulu, 2004);

²⁶ Shanghai Museum *Chenlieshi shuomingshu* [An Interpretative Guide to the Exhibitions] (Shanghai, 1952): 4. The book is out of print. I found my copy in the private collection of Xia Shunkui.

civilization, as well as a set of artistic categories that represent the “essential criteria of antiquities” in China.²⁷ *Seizing Civilization* interrogates the idea that such a canon exists. Especially when filtered through the lens of shifting acquisition programs, policy foci, and active museum intervention in the art market, a fixed Chinese art historical canon is conceptually ineffective when we consider the history of the Shanghai Museum in greater detail. Its acquisition ledgers, as well as the various constituents of people who carried out acquisitions, do far more than reproduce a pre-ordained list of Chinese art's greatest hits. Museum employees introduced new categories of collecting, such as coins, ethnic minority artifacts, furniture, and stone buddhas. State and municipal recycling projects salvaged texts and bronzes, many of which predate the Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties, from industrial refineries so that the objects could be acquired by regional and national museum collections. In fact, my findings show that Shanghai's metal recycling projects retrieved and distributed 532 first-tier bronzes relics throughout the country at a time when the Shanghai Museum only owned 105 of the same – an achievement that accounts for the strong representation of ancient bronze relics in PRC museums.²⁸ The museum staff's Customs inspection duties kept

²⁷ I take this phrase from the *Gegu yaolun*, the eponymous fourteenth century text on Chinese antiquities. It lists the categories, in order of importance, as ancient bronzes, ancient paintings, ancient calligraphy, ancient zithers, ancient ink stones, precious objects (jades, agates, crystal, etc), metals (brown gold, silver, steel, etc), ancient porcelain, ancient lacquer, textiles, rare woods, rare stones, and studio objects. Cao Zhao, *Chinese Connoisseurship: The Ko Ku Yao Lun, The Essential Criteria of Antiquities* Trans. Sir Percival David (New York, 1963): xv – xxx. Craig Clunas pioneered the social analyses of these categories in Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture And Social Status In Early Modern China* (Honolulu, 2004).

²⁸ First-tier refers to antiquities that the museum inventory categorizes as the best of the best – normally less than 1% of any collection. Information compiled from *Huadong wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu zhengli cangku ku cun tongqi waili wenti de baogao, pifu* [The China Eastern Cultural Affairs Administration and

antiquities made before 1795 from export, while its enforcement of Cultural Relics laws succeeded in pushing the legal definition of exportable art to objects made after 1911, and more recently to extend commercial restrictions to specific artists' signature works, such as that of Qi Baishi, Xu Beihong, and Wu Hufan.²⁹

The canon of Chinese art is a trope that reinforces temporal boundaries and erases the density of local, national, and international transactions that cast antiquities as representative of China in the first place. For example, the 1795 demarcation for art exports privileged the quality of artistic production before and during the Qianlong emperor's reign – establishing the sixtieth year of the Qianlong emperor's reign as a temporal marker of distinction both in China and overseas.³⁰ Selective export restrictions on art made after 1911 created two distinct collections, one gradually accumulated by overseas buyers as Cultural Relics laws came to regulate the

the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Responses To The Disposal Of Bronze Objects Stored In the Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse] September 1st, 1953 – November 4th, 1955, B172-4-422, SMA, Shanghai; *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie* [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu* [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁹ Interview with Zhang Qinghao, December 24th, 2009;

For the 1949 version of Cultural Relics law see Zhongyang renmin zhengfu zhenwu Yuan “Fenfa 'jinzhi zhenggui wenwu tushu chukou zanzing banfa' ling” [Announcement 'Provisional Plans For Preventing the Export of Precious Cultural Relics and Books] *Wenwu cankao zhiliao* 1, no. 1- 6, (1950): 5 – 7.

For the more recent version of this law see State Administration Of Cultural Heritage, Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenwu baohufa shishi tiaole [Implementation Regulations For The People's Republic Of China's Cultural Relics Protection Law] *Zhonghua renmin gonghe guo gowu Yuan ling #337* visited on May 8th, 2011 from <http://www.sach.gov.cn/tabid/311/InfoID/381/Default.aspx>

³⁰ Chapter 1 discusses the application of PRC Cultural Relics Laws in detail.

international market for Chinese art, and another enshrined in collections throughout the mainland – resulting in two disparate canons of modern and contemporary Chinese art. Since the 1970s, collecting trends have also rendered snuff bottles, Maoist posters, and even cigarette cards into artistic categories. Exhibitions that feature these objects lavish praise on their “ambiguous appeal”, suggesting that these genres possesses a timeless quality comparable to more traditionally accepted categories of Chinese art, such as bronze relics, ceramics, and painting and calligraphy.³¹

The constant promotion and demotion of objects from a “definitive” canon characterizes the narrative of cultural heritage. This condition does not only refer to museum in the PRC, but also international cultural committees and their assemblage of a world cultural heritage. The fiction of immutable greatest hits and categories, as well as the manufactured aspect of value in “signature pieces” depends on an art historical trope that designates specific objects as masterpieces which together tell the “story of art”.³² This schema is shared by art historians from Heinrich Wölfflin to Qi Gong, a calligraphy specialist whose commentaries remain in use at institutions like the National Palace Museum in Beijing.³³ Canonical objects are

³¹ Quoted from the exhibition introduction of University of Westminster, *Poster Power: Images From Mao's China, Then And Now*, (London, 2011), visited June 7th, 2011 from <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/about/news-and-events/events/2011/poster-power>; for related collecting interests see the China Posters Foundation at <http://chineseposters.net>; for snuff bottles see Elsa Glickman, *Chinese Snuff Bottle Mania: Stories Of Collectors, Trade, Intrigues And Gotham's Auctions* (Hong Kong, 2006)

³² I take this phrase from its eponymous book, E. H. Gombrich, *The Story Of Art* (1950; repr. ed., London, 1995)

³³ For examples of Qi Gong's work in creating a canon of Chinese calligraphy see Qi Gong and Yang Renkai, eds., *Sui Tang Wudai Shufa* [Calligraphy From The Sui, Tang, And Five Dynasties] (Beijing, 1989); Qi Gong and Shen Peng, eds., *Song Jin Yuan Shufa* [Calligraphy From The Song, Jin, And Yuan Dynasties] (Beijing, 1986); Qi Gong, ed., *Shang Zhong Zhi Qin Han Shufa* [Calligraphy From The Shang, Zhong, Through The Qin and Han

uniformly defined as stand-alones, unfettered by market vicissitudes. Although preservation without market or institutional intervention is hardly imaginable even in the case of the “great masters”, the value of the work of art’s independence from either is, ironically, a minimum criterion for membership in the canon.³⁴ Museums are thus consistently positioned as custodians, thereby “preserving” the distinction between price and value. I propose, however, that so long as museums remain primary sites for the assemblage and exhibition of an artistic canon that represents “civilization”, their role may always be seen as “seizing civilization”.

If this caricatures the process of canon formation, founded on the presupposition of inviolate greats and their progeny, it only further evinces how unabashed references to “Five Thousand Years of Chinese Civilization” lends itself to the modern Chinese state's dissemination of cultural essentialisms. The assemblage of any official canon of art depends on the existence of objects, as well as cultural arbiters, that stand apart from the impact of social, cultural, political, and economic change. In recent years, however, art historians from Donald Preziosi to Craig Clunas have challenged this presupposition, raising the possibility that different constituents of people, institutions, and nation-states “did not merely reflect, but served to create, social and class identities, or qualities like 'elegant' and 'vulgar', or 'the values and tastes of the educated elite.’”³⁵ I argue in this study that cultural institutions create heritage,

Dynasties] (Beijing, 1987).

³⁴ Winnie Wong's dissertation helped me unpack language of canonization in the art historical establishment. Winnie Won Yin Wong, *After The Copy: Creativity, Originality And The Labor Of Appropriation, Dafen Village, Shenzhen, China (1989 – 2010)* Unpublished Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute Of Technology (Cambridge, 2010).

³⁵ Craig Clunas “Ginger Cheng-Chi Hsu. A Bushel Of Pearls: Painting For Sale In Eighteenth-Century

and erase provenance. For constituencies of the modern Chinese state, ever sensitive to evaluations from within and without, heritage is a matter of self-invention and performance, particularly as the acquisition and exhibition of antiquities continue to shape the reception of China. The vast arrays of individuals who placed antiquities in the Shanghai Museum's custody reveal that no individual, or artifact, enters the museum as a blank cultural slate.³⁶ The individuals who acquired, preserved, sold, exhibited, and narrated the story of Chinese art engage in ongoing negotiations that keep terms like that “elite”, “connoisseur”, and “antiquity” under construction, and therefore meaningful.

Inventing Donors

Art museums are hardly the first medium to facilitate cultural heritage narratives. The antiquarian Zhang Yenyüan (ca. 815 – after 875) and his literary audience looked to ancient artifacts as both a confrontation with mortality and a tool with which to reach beyond time, which in turn inspired antiquarians of the early seventeenth century to identify antiquarian manuals and encyclopedias as an extension of themselves and a shared classical heritage.³⁷ When archaeologists associated with the Great Game discovered the Dunhuang caves, both Chinese and international audiences dubbed the sites “treasures” and immediately incorporated

Yangchow” *The American Historical Review*, 107, no. 4, (2002): 1202.

³⁶ I borrow the term inhabited museum from Roberta Bonetti, “The Museum As An Inhabited Object” *RES: Anthropology And Aesthetics* no. 52, (2007): 168 – 180.

³⁷ For the interest in manuals see Wai-Yee Li, “The Collector, The Connoisseur, And Late-Ming Sensibility” *T'oung Pao*, 81, fasc. 4/5 (1995): 269 – 302; For encyclopedias see Carla Nappi, *The Monkey Of The Inkpot: Natural History And Its Transformations In Early Modern China* Unpublished Dissertation, Princeton University (Princeton, 2006); Bruce Rusk *The Rogue Classicist: Feng Fang (1493 - 1566) And His Forgeries* Unpublished Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles (Los Angeles, 2004);

them into often conflicting narratives about Chinese civilization.³⁸ Langdon Warner, amongst the first to recognize the value of Dunhuang's artifacts, considered his expedition to the Taklamakan desert “a labour of love”, particularly as they yielded ancient Chinese “works of art” that “no vandal hand but mine had disturbed...for eleven hundred years.”³⁹ Archaeological discoveries in northwest China expanded the borders of Chinese cultural heritage into the Central Asia, while ongoing disputes over the Dunhuang artifacts enlisted British, Swedish, French, American, Canadian, and Chinese alike as potential authorities of Chinese cultural heritage.⁴⁰

Even in its own time, the public Chinese art museum was not unique in its ability to

³⁸ Peter Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road the Search for the Lost Cities and Treasures of Chinese Central Asia* (Amherst, 1980); Jeannette Mirsky *Sir Aurel Stein Archaeological Explorer* (Chicago and London, 1977);

³⁹ Langdon Warner, *The Long Old Road In China* (Garden City, 1926): 144.

⁴⁰ For period writings see “Chinese Expedition of Andrews Banned Commission for Preservation of Antiquities Says American’s ‘Arrogance’ is to Blame”, *New York Times* July 3, 1931; Folke Bergman, *Archaeological Researches In Sinkiang, Especially The Lopnor Region* (Stockholm, 1939); Mildred Cable And Francesca French, *Through Jade Gate And Central Asia; An Account Of Journeys In Kansu, Turkestan And The Gobi Desert* (London, 1927); Albert Von Le Coq, *Buried Treasures Of Chinese Turkistan* (New York, 1988); Sven Hedin, *Across The Gobi Desert* (London, 1931); Aurel Stein, *Ruins Of Desert Cathay: Personal Narrative Of Explorations In Central Asia And Westernmost China* (London, 1912); Chang Shuhong “Jingao Quleisi. Jeni he tamen de zhuzi men” [A Warning To Charles Jenning And His Masters] *Wenwu*, no. 8, (1955): 3 – 4; Langdon Warner, *Buddhist Wall Paintings, A Study Of A Ninth Century Grotto At Wan Fo Hsia* (Cambridge, 1938).

For how Dunhuang archaeological artifacts continue to change conceptions of the landmass and authorship of Chinese cultural heritage see Christopher Atwood, “Life In The Third Fourth Century Cad’ota: A Survey Of Information Gathered From The Prakrit Documents Found North Of Minfeng (Niya)”, *Central Asiatic Journal* 35, no. 3 – 4, (1991): 161 – 99; Xincan Chen, *Zhongguo shiqian kaoguxue shi yanjiu, 1895 – 1949* [Before Chinese History: A History of Archaeological Studies 1895 – 1949] (Beijing, 1997); Valerie Hansen, “The Path Of Buddhism Into China: The View From Turfan” *Asia Major*, Third Series, 11, no. 2, (1998): 37 – 66; James A. Millward “Coming On To The Map: Western Regions Geography And Cartographic Nomenclature In The Making of Chinese Empire In Xinjiang” *Late Imperial China* 20, no. 2, (1999): 61 – 98; Laura J. Newby, “The Chinese Literary Conquest of Xinjiang” *Modern China* 25, no. 4, (1999): 458 – 9; Prods Oktor Skjærvø, *Khotanese Manuscripts From Chinese Turkistan In The British Library* (London, 2002); Mariko Namba Walter, “Tocharian Buddhism In Kusha: Buddhism Of Indo-European Centum Speakers In China Before 10th Century C. E.” *Sino Platonic Papers*, 85, (October, 1998): 1 – 30;

articulate Chinese cultural heritage. Around the turn of the twentieth century, an efflorescence of new associations, modes of communication, and inland-to-coastal migration on the mainland revolutionized perceptions of China and its ancient civilization. Regional and international Chinese art exhibitions changed the material representation of China.⁴¹ The dissemination of rare texts and the revival of architectural history made China's distant and recent past palpable to both domestic and overseas audiences, while the expanding wealth of port cities like Shanghai and Guangdong brought the interests of elite Beijing connoisseurs to new antiquarians on the southeastern coast.⁴²

⁴¹ Lisa Claypool, "Zhang Jian And China's First Museum" *The Journal Of Asian Studies*, 64, no. 3, (2005): 567 – 604; Nick Pearce, "Shanghai 1908: A. W. Bhar And China's First Art Exhibition" *West 86th*, 18, no. 1 (2011): 4 – 25; Alfred Salmony, "Chinese Art. The First Exhibition Of The Friends Of Far Eastern Art" *Parnassus*, 6, no. 7, (December 1934): 14 – 16; Alfred Salmony and David E. Berenberg "Peking As A Museum City" *Parnassus*, 3, no. 1, (January 1931): 35 – 37; Shenyang Yigong Lianglingzhi Bianzuanweiyuan Hui, eds., *Shenyang Gugongzhi* [Shenyang Imperial Palace Gazetteer] (Shenyang Shi, 2006); Zhuang Yan, *Qiansheng zaoding gugong yuan* [My Predestined Life At The National Palace Museum] (Beijing, 2006).

Thought provoking accounts of related movements in Japan include Lisbeth Kim Brandt, *Kingdom Of Beauty: Mingei And The Politics Of Folk Art In Imperial Japan* (Durham, 2007); Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts Into History* (Berkeley, 1993); Alice Yu-Ting Tseng, *Art In Place: The Display of Japan At The Imperial Museums, 1872 – 1909* Unpublished Dissertation Harvard University (Cambridge, 2004);

A contemporary equivalent of these museum projects may be the Confucius Institutes, as described by James F. Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power" *Asian Survey*, 49, no. 4 (2009): 647-669

⁴² For studies on the Beijing-Shanghai connection with regards to antiquities, see Zhongyuan Chen, *Guwan shihua yu jiangshang* [Antiquities: Its History And Connoisseurship] (Beijing, 1990); Hua Deng, ed. *Qingdai Dashoucangjia Chen Jieqi* [Chen Jieqi, a Major Qing Dynasty Collector] (Beijing, 2005); Gail King "The Xujianghai (Zikaiwei) Library Of Shanghai" *Libraries & Culture*, 32, no. 4 (1997): 456 – 469; Weiji Li, ed. *Cangshi fenyunlu* [A Record of Collecting Tales] (Beijing, 2004); Jizu Luo, *Tingwen Yilue : Huiyi Xufu Luo Zhenyu de Yisheng* [Tales Remembered and Heard from the Hall: a Memoir of the Life of my Grandfather Luo Zhenyu] (Changchun Shi, 1987); Mayuyama & Company, *Mayuyama, Seventy Years*, Vol. 1, (Tokyo, 1976); Sadajirō Yamanaka, *Tenryusan sekibutsushu* [Stone sculptures of Tianlong Mountain] (Osaka, 1928); Renkai Yang, *Guobao Chenfulu: Gugong Sanyishuhua Jianwen Kaolüe* [The Emergence and Disappearance of National Treasure: a Record of the Texts and Paintings that Dispersed from the Forbidden Palace] (Shanghai, 2007).

Yet if museums were not wholly unique in their ability to shape Chinese cultural heritage, they nonetheless did so in distinctive ways. Imbued with state authority, its staff could seize private property at the same time as it praised philanthropists for their generous donations to the museum. For example, in the first ten issues of *Wenwu*, the PRC's premiere art and archaeology journal, the regime of nationalism led museum visitors to believe that cultural institutions accrued their antiquities from an outpouring of jingoistic donations during the early 1950s.⁴³ Only the so-called imperialist oppressors, such as the United States and the defeated Guomindang state, would requisition antiquities from Chinese families. Statistical analysis on the Shanghai Museum and the Palace Museum in Beijing's acquisition ledgers demonstrate, however, that the rhetoric of “spontaneous nationalism” overreaches itself.⁴⁴ Cultural Revolution acquisitions confirm that the Shanghai Museum's collections took an exponential leap due to the museum staff's participation in house raids.⁴⁵ Post-Cultural Revolution restitution plans show that even celebrated donations in the 1980s and 90s bear the imprint of an iron fist that refused to lose its grip on confiscated art.⁴⁶ Indeed, the fiction of donation smoothes over a consistent process of requisitions and divestment bonanzas that explain how institutions like the Shanghai Museum could acquire, over mere decades, one of the foremost

For similar studies with regards to architectural and archaeological artifacts see Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt “The Tang Architectural Icon And The Politics Of Chinese Architectural History” *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 2, (June 2004): 228 – 254; Sigrid Schmalzer *The People's Peking Man: Popular Science And Human Identity In Twentieth Century China* (Chicago, 2008).

⁴³ For one example see “Juanxian” *Wenwu*, no. 1 (1950) 81 – 89.

⁴⁴ I discuss statistical anomalies in museum donations over time in detail in chapter 1.

⁴⁵ For more on how the museum profits through the Cultural Revolution chapters 3 and 4.

⁴⁶ My discussion on post-1980s “donors” and their requests appears in chapter 5.

collections of Chinese bronzes, ceramics, calligraphy, and painting in the world.

The Shanghai Museum's transformation of confiscations into philanthropic narratives represents both a reverberation and an inversion of the donation fiction. Its collection is a conglomeration of objects requisitioned from various constituents of people at multiple junctures in PRC history, starting in 1949 and continuing to the present. Every day, visitors from China and abroad arrive hoping to immerse themselves in Five Thousand Years of Chinese Civilization, at the same time as some revisit family heirlooms that they could not behold otherwise. Other visitors receive special treatment from museum staff and municipal officials because they contributed cash, private collections, or helped the museum contact individuals from whom it wishes to acquire yet more antiquities. All these individuals hope to benefit from the fiction of donation, which signifies status at national museums. Yet, as an appropriating entity that seizes the same antiquities that it praises its donors for contributing, the Shanghai Museum also stands for the oppressive entity against which it touts its own record of preserving antiquities. In order for the Shanghai Museum to become a philanthropic cultural institution, the affectation of donation – possessions given free of charge – must be named, celebrated, and promulgated. Thus, *Seizing Civilization* examines not only the Shanghai Museum's acquisition records, but the policies, practices, and “collector psychology” that the institution utilizes to renew the fiction of donation.

My findings show that Chinese museums utilized the fiction of donation over and over

again, both in the articulation of Chinese cultural heritage and the fabrication of Red antiquarians, the individuals whose contributions shaped that heritage. This fiction relies on the formation of an elite community that self-consciously identifies its philanthropic purposes, and that museums hold up for institutional legitimacy.⁴⁷ The emphasis on philanthropy arose as part of American and European museologies' focus on patrons and their bequests.⁴⁸ Public Chinese museums adopted this rhetoric in the 1950s, largely as a way to both appease the top strata of elite society and to rally favor and popular interest in their institutions' growing collections.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Prominent examples include the life of Zhang Boju and the Guoyun Lou Collection. For Zhang Boju see Shixiang Wang, "XiJin Lu Ji pingfu tie liuchuan kaolue." [The Provenance Of Western Jin Master Lu Ji's Restoration Scroll] *Wenwu can kao ziliao* no. 1, (1957): 12 – 14; Luxia Song, *Bainian shoucang: 20 Shiji zhongguo minjian shoucang fengyun Lu* [A Hundred Years Of Collecting: A Record Of Twentieth Century Private Collecting In China] (Shanghai, 1999); Boju Zhang, "Tan Jindai de shufa." [About Jin Dynasty Calligraphy] *Wenwu can kao ziliao* no.1, (1957): 15; Yihe Zhang, *Wangshi binbu ru yan* [The Past Is Not Like Smoke] (Beijing, 2004);

For Guoyun Lou see Shanghai Bowu guan, ed., *Gu Gongxiong jia shu juan zeng Shanghai bowu guan guoyun lou shu hua jicui* [The Select Painting And Calligraphy Treasures From Guoyun Lou That The Gu Gongxiong Family Donated To The Shanghai Museum] (Shanghai, 2002); Zhong Zheng, *Bowu guan yu shoucang jia* [Museums And Collectors] (Shanghai, 2000); Zhong Zheng, *Haishang shoucang jia* [Collectors In Shanghai] (Shanghai, 2003).

⁴⁸ Pierre Bourdieu and Alan Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public* (Cambridge, 1991); Rosalind P. Blakesley "Art, Nationhood, And Display: Zinaida Volkonskaia And Russia's Quest For A National Museum Of Art" *Slavic Review*, 67, no. 4, (2008): 912 – 933; Ann Day and Ken Lunn "Tales From The Sea: Oral History In British Maritime Museums" *Oral History* 32, no. 2, (2004): 87 – 96; Barbara Franco "The Challenge Of A City Museum For Washington, D. C." *Washington History* 15, no. 1, (2003): 4 – 25; Donald Preziosi "Epilogue: The Art Of Art History" in Donald Preziosi, ed., *The Art Of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford, 2009): 488 – 504; J. Donald Ragsdale, *Western European Museums And Visual Persuasion: Art, Edifice, And Social Influence* (Newcastle, 2009); Alex Wexler, "Museum Culture And The Inequities Of Display And Representation" *Visual Art Research* 33, no. 1 (2007): 25 – 33;

⁴⁹ For a brief introduction to state strategies towards cultural infrastructure building, see Kirk A. Denton "Museums, Memorial Sites And Exhibitionary Culture In The People's Republic Of China" *The China Quarterly*, 183, (2005): 565 – 586; Chang-tai Hung, "Revolutionary History In Stone: The Making Of A Chinese National Monument" *The China Quarterly*, 166, (2001): 457 – 473; Wu Hung "Tiananmen Square: A Political History Of Monuments" *Representations*, no. 35, (1991): 84 – 117; Richard Kraus *The Party And The Art In China: The New Politics Of Culture* (Oxford, 2004); Rana Mitter "Behind The Scenes At The Museum: Nationalism, History And Memory In The Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987 – 1997" *The China*

The affectation of donation, however, reinforces nationalist claims and erases the different constituents of people, institutions, policies, and contingencies that made donations the operative fiction driving Chinese cultural heritage.

Bequest ceremonies, state merit awards, and exclusive museum memberships are some of the techniques that museums use to give the fiction of donation tangibility. These rites also gave donations the palpable, quantifiable marker of consent, especially as traumatic upheavals in the 1960s and 70s made the link between antiquities and nationalism untenable. This phenomenon, which I call the cult of consent, became the platform on which the Shanghai Museum built a cultural heritage devoid of provenance. By gaining legitimacy for its appropriations through consent, the museum erased private collecting as a mode of art appreciation. Donation, or rather, obtaining a consensual donation, became the prerogative with which museums restored antiquities to their “true” value.

Seizing Civilization charts the assemblage of the Shanghai Museum collection through time, from its shaky beginnings in the 1950s to its emergence as one of the world's three largest collections of antiquities in the 1990s. Requisitions featured prominently in the museum's history. When Mayor Chen Yi (1901 – 1972) made his grand entry into Shanghai in 1949, he found himself in a city full of military-occupied spaces. The military commander “personally

Quarterly, 161 (2000): 279 – 293; Susan Naquin, “The Forbidden City Goes Abroad: Qing History And The Foreign Exhibitions Of The Palace Museum, 1974 – 2004” *T'oung Pao*, 90, fasc. 4/5 (2004): 341 – 397; Michael Sullivan “Art In China Since 1949” *The China Quarterly*, no. 159, (1999): 712 – 722. For examples of southern and southeastern Chinese museums, see Ankeney Weitz, “Notes On The Early Yuan Antique Art Market In Hangzhou” *Ars Orientalis*, 27, (1997): 27 – 28; Qin Shao “Exhibiting The Modern: The Creation Of The First Chinese Museum, 1905 – 1930” *The China Quarterly* no. 179 (2004): 684 – 702.

went to look for places to put the Shanghai Museum”, and after rejecting “a lot of houses that the foreigners left behind”, Chen Yi finally decided on the Shanghai Race Club headquarters in the People's Square.⁵⁰ Established by five English businessmen as a recreation space in 1850, the club occupied one of the largest green spaces in the city and was both an international icon and a prominent destination for foreign tourists in Shanghai. The field army requisitioned the building from the British colonial administration in 1946, which had just re-requisitioned the space from the Japanese Imperial Army in 1945. Chen Yi, in turn, “had the authority” to requisition the club from the field army and “once the building was fixed up it became the library and museum.”⁵¹ Thus, not only does the Shanghai Museum's collection bear the imprint of many different individuals, entities both requisitioned and purchased, domestic and foreign, regional and national also marked its very creation. In the following chapters, I trace the museum's move from a borrowed semi-colonial structure to its current, self-designed building in the middle of the People's Square. I also outline the genealogy of the museum's acquisition program, from donor-relations programming to its so-called “collector psychology” approach.⁵² In the process, I present the history of the Shanghai Museum as a starting point from which to explore historiographic questions about cultural institutions, canonization, and the articulation of cultural heritage.

⁵⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁵¹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁵² I gratefully borrow this term from reporter Zheng Zhong, who uses it to describe PRC cultural institutions' long-term courtship of individual “donors” as part of their acquisition program.

Manufacturing The State Effect

Seizing Civilization is, fundamentally, a history of cultural identity and its embeddedness in things, institutions, and people. My findings show that these disparate entities, together, “enabled mundane material practices to take on the appearance of an abstract, nonmaterial form”, also known as the party-state.⁵³ Permeating the distinction between state and society, the Shanghai Museum's conglomeration of individuals and things maintained “Five Thousand Years of Chinese Civilization”, a social and political order so deeply ingrained that we often see overseas cultural institutions, as well as mainland Chinese, repeat the same when referring to China.⁵⁴ Historian Prasenjit Duara has described such sinocentrism as part of “the contingency and contestedness of nations...the false unity of a self-same, national subject evolving through time” which “allows the nation-state to see itself as a unique form of community which finds its place in the opposition between tradition and modernity, hierarchy and equality, empire and nation.”⁵⁵ In other words, the rhetoric of Chinese exceptionalism presupposes a monolithic

⁵³ Timothy Mitchell, “Society, Economy, And The State Effect” in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds., *The Anthropology Of The State* (Malden, 2006): 170. Philip Kuhn addresses this phenomenon in the Chinese context in Philip A. Kuhn, “Ideas Behind China's Modern State” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 55, no. 2 (Dec., 1995): 295-337.

⁵⁴ In addition to the ubiquitous references to “China has five thousand years of history” amongst Chinese popular culture, we also see overseas sinophiles touting the same. In *A History Of The World In One Hundred Objects*, a 2010-2011 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) program that proclaimed museum antiquities as the representatives of world history, the anonymous contributor of a Chinese coin wrote that it “is a constant reminder to me of how ancient the Chinese civilisation is and how different their ways are to ours...I like to hold it and think of the ancient times so far away in China.” Chinese Coin, *A History Of The World In One Hundred Objects*, Produced By BBC Radio 4 And The British Museum, (2010), visited on May 7th, 2011 from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/uqu0lqOXQSiC9sDe0ZpcjA>

⁵⁵ Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History From The Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago, 1995): 4.

party-state whose machinations invented a nation, China, that stands apart from political disputes, social fissures, and temporal erosion. The making of Shanghai's collection, however, demonstrates that the party-state is not a singular actor. It is itself a collection of constituents that produce the *effects* of a freestanding entity called the state.⁵⁶

In Shanghai, an entire cast of characters made up Chinese cultural heritage as they went along. While the Central Committee deemed some of these individuals “taste-makers” for their antiquarian skill sets, most, like the Class of 1952, were simply there to make a living.⁵⁷ As the museum developed and changed over time, so too did its staff, visitors, and benefactors. Together, their experiences demonstrate the particular practices, processes, and techniques that “have continually reproduced the ghost-like abstraction of the state”.⁵⁸

Professionalization played a key role in reifying the state effect. The history of the Shanghai Museum bears out this point. In the decade beginning in 1949, civil service employment offered great advantages to young, ambitious Chinese. Museum salaries adjusted for inflation. Museum-affiliation offered access to stability at the same time as museums

⁵⁶ For a discussion of similar constituents in the non-museum context see Hung-Yok Ip “Politics and Individuality in Communist Revolutionary Culture” *Modern China*, 23, no. 1 (1997): 33-68; Philip C. C. Huang “Rural Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution: Representational and Objective Realities from the Land Reform to the Cultural Revolution” *Modern China*, 21, no. 1, (1995): 105-143; Danke Li “Popular Culture in the Making of Anti-Imperialist and Nationalist Sentiments in Sichuan” *Modern China*, 30, no. 4 (2004):470-505.

⁵⁷ The blurring of “popular” and “elite” in the making of cultural capital is not limited to museologies. For a select bibliography see Stuart Davies and Crispin Paine “Talking about Museums: The Insider's Voice” *Oral History*, 32, no. 2, (2004): 54-62; Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak “Reform' at the Shanghai Jingju Company and Its Impact on Creative Authority and Repertory” *TDR*, 44, no. 4 (2000): 96-119; Barry D. Wood “A Great Symphony of Pure Form': The 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and Its Influence” *Ars Orientalis*, 30, (2000): 113-130;

⁵⁸ Timothy Mitchell, “Society, Economy, And The State Effect” in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds., *The Anthropology Of The State* (Malden, 2006): 176.

rendered the livelihoods of private-sector art dealers precarious. Cultural industry employees' exalted social and political role received further confirmation in the 1960s, when rigorous training programs imbued antiquarianism with new value and cast junior museum employees as the PRC's first generation of Red antiquarians. Employment at the Shanghai Museum legitimized specific staff members as custodians of a modern institution of cultural heritage, inheritors to precious cultural knowledge that the vast art market in China and abroad could only hope to attain. Moreover, the employees' involvement in campaigns like the Cultural Revolution highlighted their worth, as their participation opened access to previously unprecedented quantities of art, as well as the authority to judge to their value. While antiquarianism and connoisseurship are said to have lost their purchase in PRC political movements, the institutionalization of Chinese cultural heritage has conversely strengthened their power and reach. *Seizing Civilization* aspires to examine how museum employees made Chinese cultural heritage palpable, for reasons that resonated with professional interests. Just as Pierre Bourdieu located cultural distinction in social status, I interpret cultural heritage as a contextually constituted category, not the blank canvas upon which a civilization reveals itself.⁵⁹ Looking at China through the perspective of the Shanghai Museum explains how individuals in both China and overseas came to envision Chinese cultural heritage, at a time when the systematic appropriation of antiquities made such visions possible.

To conclude, I do not intend to provide a comprehensive social history of the Shanghai

⁵⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique Of The Judgement Of Taste* Richard Nice, Trans. (London, 1986)

Museum or to offer a holistic portrait of the complete range of individuals who passed through its galleries. As I argue throughout *Seizing Civilization*, the different constituents that I portray do not neatly lend themselves to the categorizations that their official titles impose upon them. Museum professionals perform similar job functions as art dealers, donations often act as payments and purchases, commodities become canonical relics, and non-state actors often produced the effects of an intricate and omnipresent state apparatus. These categories are not mutually exclusive precisely because of the role they play in the invention of cultural heritage. I present the cast of characters that I do because the exigencies of my argument warrant this interconnectedness, and also because I have observed these different individuals as such.

Visitor's Guide (or Chapter Outline)

Spanning five decades, *Seizing Civilization* charts the history of the Shanghai Museum from its regionalist origins in the years following liberation, to the nationwide requisition of antiquities in the early nation-building years, through its acquisition of formerly marginalized persons and categories of art, across the organized appropriation and sale of privately-owned antiquities in the Cultural Revolution years, to its fully elaborated international mark on Chinese cultural heritage – a mark which, I argue, cohered during the Socialist era (1949 - 1976) and reached overseas audiences by the Reform years (post-1978). The imaginary cartography of my project is neatly captured in the museum's different locales from 1952 to 1993 (Figure 0.3).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Image taken from the Shanghai Museum website on May 8th, 2011.
<http://www.shanghaimuseum.net/cn/lsg/lsg.jsp>

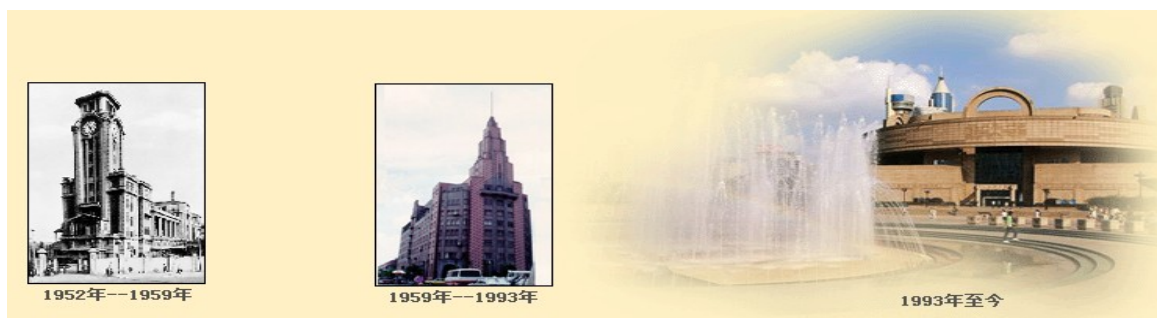


Figure 0.3. Shanghai Museum sites (from left to right): Old Jockey Club headquarters on #325 West Nanjing Road (1952 – 1959), Chinese Remittance Bank Building on #16 South Henan Road, and Shanghai Museum Building on #188 Wusheng Road.

As mentioned earlier, in 1952 the museum occupied a foreigners-only jockey club, as is typical of Old Shanghai's treaty port days. By 1959 it moved to the requisitioned Chinese Remittance (Zhonghui) Bank, a symbol of Shanghai's industrial and financial potential and the impetus of its regional dominance south of the Yangzi river. Finally, in the early 1990s, domestic and international funds raised the new Shanghai Museum building, an international icon and “ultra-modern repository for 5,000 years of history and tradition”.⁶¹

Between 1949 and 1956, the proliferation of cultural institutions reanimated longstanding narratives about Chinese cultural heritage's longevity, its special aptitude for scientific innovation (in particular inventing the compass, gunpowder, paper-making, and printing), as well as the civilization's recent emergence from centuries of foreign oppression.

CHAPTER ONE, “INVENTING THE SHANGHAI MUSEUM”, examines how specific

⁶¹ As described by the American Friends Of The Shanghai Museum website's introduction on the Shanghai Museum, cited and visited on May 8th, 2011. <http://www.shanghaimuseum.org/shanghaimuseum.htm>

constituents on the mainland defined and promoted antiquities as China's most enduring achievement and symbol – a material representation of Chinese civilization that links past, present, and future. Neither antiquities nor Shanghai had pre-destined claims to this arena. Multiple institutions, such as libraries and curio markets, emerged as possible candidates for the dissemination and commercialization of Chinese cultural heritage. Meanwhile, Beijing, Shanghai, and other wealthy cities competed for select antiquities in a nationwide acquisition program that sent new employees on buying trips to hitherto untraveled hinterlands.

Two key events, however, soon transformed Shanghai into a regional center for the integration of antiquities into Chinese cultural heritage. Firstly, the museum took advantage of an antiquities bonanza wherein private individuals divested collections due to the emergence of new financial challenges, as presented by campaigns like the Three-Anti (1951) and Five-Anti movements (1952). Municipal cooperation also enabled museum staff to enter defunct institutions and private homes, expropriating antiquities with unprecedented efficiency. Secondly, the nationalization of industries recast the professional identities of museum staff and art dealers. A newly created profession, museum employment, came to stand for the execution, legitimization, and representation of proper cultural heritage preservation. The export of smuggled artifacts, on the other hand, tainted art dealing – transforming dealers into suspicious traitors of the Han race whose industry cried out for Socialist reform. I argue that the creation of cultural institutions like the Shanghai Museum transformed antiquities from private to public

property, and turned export curios into cultural relics that contended for the title of *guobao* (national treasure).

Between 1956 and 1966, an expanding collection of artifacts and professional expertise extended the Shanghai Museum's presence across the nation. **CHAPTER TWO, “FROM TRASH TO TREASURE”**, explains how the museum integrated previously marginalized categories of art and artisans into its institutional infrastructure. The chapter also explores the museum's ongoing machinations in the art market – particularly the regulation of exports and the evaluation of art prices. Creating connoisseurship training programs and antiquities conservation apprenticeships proved particularly conducive to museum objectives in the arena of antiquities preservation, as it elevated the institution's cultural, political, and social status in the PRC without the “capitalistic” trappings of “elitism”. Indeed, how could any political campaign call salvaging antiquities at Shanghai's steel mills elitist, especially as those museum employees retrieved ancient bronze relics from smelting pits? Similarly, training bronze, ceramic, and painting conservators reinforced the museum's privileging of practical experience, as professionalization placed skilled, albeit illiterate, craftsmen in previously unreachable careers.

At the same time that the Shanghai Museum flouted its promulgation of cultural relics amongst ordinary people, it literally moved across the tracks, settling into a new and prominent location at the old Chinese Remittance Bank building on #16 South Henan road.⁶² I argue that

⁶² This address placed the museum in the center of downtown Shanghai's business district, within viewing distance of the Bund, the Yu Family Gardens, and other prominent markers of municipal history and tourism.

the institution's regional clout enabled its collection to rival that of Beijing's National Palace Museum and established Shanghai as an independent authority on matters of Chinese civilization. Concurrent movements to establish major Chinese art collections in Britain and America placed Shanghai as an influential player in the narration of Chinese civilization, and its antiquities as distinct markers of Chinese cultural heritage.

Because the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976) shaped the coherence of Chinese cultural heritage as such, *Seizing Civilization* devotes two chapters to this period. These chapters focus respectively on the organized seizure of antiquities from private individuals at all strata of society between 1966 and 1969 (Chapter three), and the subsequent commercialization, exhibition, and dissemination of those antiquities in both China and abroad (Chapter four).

CHAPTER THREE, “RAID AND SORT”, challenges the assumption that the Cultural Revolution marked a decade of chaos that “nuked and burned” China's cultural arena.⁶³ Using a combination of oral interviews, statistical analysis, and archival documents, I show that the Shanghai Museum actively participated in both the random house raids of 1966 – 1967 and the work unit-led confiscations of personal property from 1967 to 1969. Museum staff seized all personal property that they considered cultural relics for the museum's storehouse, where sorters promised to preserve and catalog the objects as relevant to their place in Chinese cultural heritage. Select employees also worked for Sorting Committees, extant all over the PRC, which

⁶³ I borrow this phrase from Thomas Mullaney, whose colorful terminology neatly captures assumptions about the Cultural Revolutions that persist in both China and abroad. Scheduled Discussion, May 4th, 2011.

sifted through personal property that the municipality's various work units confiscated in their own independent house raids. Sorting Committee employees separated works of art from ordinary confiscated property. The sorters then inventoried works of art as either cultural relics that the Shanghai Museum automatically acquired as part of its permanent collection, or curios that the newly established China National Arts & Crafts Import & Export Corporation (CNART) sold abroad for profit. I argue that, far from shutting down, cultural institutions profited enormously from Cultural Revolution campaigns. Organized raids and antiquities sort programs enabled the Shanghai Museum to gain unprecedented access to both elite and ordinary art collections, while nationalized art dealerships literally profited from the wholesale export of confiscated property to “international customer resources” in Hong Kong, Singapore, and beyond.⁶⁴

CHAPTER FOUR, “UNACCOUNTED GAINS”, chronicles the rise of the “Crimson Successors”, new employees that the Shanghai Museum's first generation of new hires recruited from the Shanghai countryside and trained for museum work in 1972. Based on their respective years of entry into cultural institution careers, I dub these two groups the Class of 1952 and the Class of 1972. The experiences of both classes suggest that our existing rhetoric of segregation and rehabilitation, so often used to describe difficult Cultural Revolution realities, do not account for the career gains and experiences that young professionals earned through active

⁶⁴ Quoted from the company history section of *Corporation Introduction*, China National Arts & Crafts Import & Export Corporation, visited May 9th, 2011 from <http://www.cnart.com.cn/>

participation in Cultural Revolution activities, like raiding residences and confiscating property. I argue that the forced incapacitation of senior museum staff gave new opportunities to younger employees, granting them with unprecedented access to cultural resources and artifacts, as well as the opportunity to evaluate their worth. This turn of events transformed inexperienced younger employees at the Shanghai Museum into Red antiquarians – the custodians of Chinese cultural heritage.

The post-1978 years marked China's explosive social and economic changes on the world stage, where high export revenues and new trading zones signified the prowess and potential of the ascendant Chinese Century.⁶⁵ Even at this point of trajectory, however, the dialog of Chinese cultural heritage grappled with limits and internal contradictions, as well as external resistance. **CHAPTER FIVE, “INCOMPLETE RESTITUTION”**, explores the Shanghai Museum's navigation of policies like the *luoshi zhengce* (restitution plan), where “rehabilitated” individuals could ask Chinese cultural institutions to return any and all antiquities seized between 1949 and 1976. The municipal administration worked closely with Shanghai Museum staff to keep confiscated antiquities in the museum's collection, at the same time as the museum promulgated its preservation of Chinese cultural heritage during the

⁶⁵ Historian Jonathan Spence first used the term the Chinese Century to refer to China's dramatic twentieth century history, in particular its turn from imperial power to nationalist republic to socialist state to contemporary superpower; see Jonathan D. Spence and Annping Chin, *The Chinese Century: The Photographic History Of The Last Hundred Years* (New York: 1996). For more recent interpretations for the Chinese Century and China's potential as a world power see Geoffrey Murray, *China: The Next Superpower: Dilemmas In Change And Continuity* (New York, 1998); Ted C. Fishman “The Chinese Century” *The New York Times Magazine*, July 4, 2004; William Rees-Mogg “This Is The Chinese Century” *The Times*, January 3, 2005;

difficult Cultural Revolution years. The issuance of restitution thus served the interest of the Shanghai Museum, at the same time as it became a channel of negotiation for un-purchasable needs, like the return of sons and daughters from hard labor, accelerated access to services like hotels and transportation, as well as the exoneration of personal and public reputations through the PRC media.

Seizing Civilization ends in 1996, when the Shanghai Museum celebrated its third grand opening in the People's Square, the cultural and commercial center of downtown Shanghai. The museum's impact on Chinese cultural institutions both domestic and abroad grew gradually rather than instantaneously. However, the international vetting process wherein museum staff tweaked, exhibited, and promoted their permanent collection, to the overwhelming response of sinophiles' enthusiasm for the objects themselves, transformed its narrative of Chinese cultural heritage from local to international. As cultural institutions shifted from discussing a history of the nation-state to a history of the world, the Shanghai Museum began to cast its antiquities in the light of human history, co-creating a dialog of world cultural heritage that positions the Chinese Century as an era in which the People's Republic might regain its position as the cultural and economic center of the world – thereby justifying its abbreviated title as the Middle Kingdom. In the **CONCLUSION, “FAMILY VALUES”**, I briefly analyze the museum's rehabilitation and continuing financial support of the Gu family, the former owners of the great Guoyun Lou art collection. I use personal, public, and official accounts of this family's history

with the Shanghai Museum to epitomize the ascendance of antiquities' mark on Chinese cultural heritage, as well as the museum's internal and external challenges. It is no coincidence that antiquities feature prominently in international celebrations like the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, nor is it insignificant that “scar literature” authors leverage the seizure and destruction of antiquities as a way to criticize the modern Chinese state. Even as the material representation of Chinese cultural heritage becomes omnipresent instead of situational, antiquities have continued to refract the contested meanings of China's return to the United Nations. The Shanghai Museum's galleries not only characterize the rhetorical underpinnings of Chinese cultural heritage, they also reveal the cracks in its foundations.

As the Class of 1952 soon learned, they would need years of training before they could become custodians to one of the world's largest repositories of Chinese art. For the moment, however, we return to their first day in the public eye, shortly after Mayor Chen Yi inaugurated Shanghai's new museum and library complex at the Old Jockey Club on West Nanjing Road. Uniformed gallery guides shifted nervously, while a crowd of thousands waited in front of the museum's doors, eager for a glimpse at Five Thousand Years of Chinese Civilization.

Chapter One: Inventing the Shanghai Museum, 1949 – 1956



Figure 1.1. Shanghai Museum employees admiring antiquities with the Gu family donors. From left to right, Shen Minren, Mrs. Gu Lijiang, Gu Lijiang, Zhong Yinlan, and Ma Defu. Photo obtained from the private collection of Zheng Zhong, Shanghai.

New State, New Jobs

Zhong Yinlan's family ran out of money for junior high school in the 1940s – she doesn't remember the exact year (Figure 1.1).⁶⁶ Her father spent the decade unemployed and with five kids to raise her mother never worked outside the house. During melon season Zhong inspected seeds at the local processing plant. In between melon seasons, she worked for a chicken hatchery. The jobs brought in roughly 20 RMB a month. That covered her family's daily expenses as well as something extra for the new year, like a hen and new socks for her four younger brothers.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ As a point of reference, Zhong Yinlan was born in 1932 and Shanghai's junior high schools typically accepted students between 12 and 15 years of age. Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁶⁷ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

When the Shanghai Museum made an open call for junior job applicants in 1951, Zhong Yinlan jumped at the chance. Civil service job opportunities were a boon for young, ambitious Chinese.⁶⁸ Private industry job opportunities shrank when the PRC instigated anti-capitalistic campaigns in the early 1950s.⁶⁹ This had an especially dire impact on industries in Shanghai. Many found themselves unemployed or simply stuck in difficult financial situations. When I interviewed Shen Minren (Figure 1.1), another 1951 junior job applicant at the Shanghai Museum, she explained that “our livelihoods were fairly strained...when the museum made its call I went.”⁷⁰

Zhing Yinlan needed to distinguish herself from other job candidates. She had worked for six months as a chicken incubation specialist at the Native Products Fair in downtown Shanghai. It wasn't good pay, but she won a speaker's award for talking herself hoarse about the benefits of mechanized hatcheries.⁷¹ The fair organizers supported her ambitions and gave her a

⁶⁸ Louis Putterman and Xiao-Yuan Dong, “China's State-Owned Enterprises: Their Role, Job Creation, and Efficiency in Long-Term Perspective,” *Modern China*, 26, no. 4 (2000): 403-447; Hung-Yok Ip, “Fashioning Appearances: Feminine Beauty in Chinese Communist Revolutionary Culture,” *Modern China*, 29, no. 3 (2003): 329-361; Eddy U, “The Making Of *Zhishifenzi* The Critical Impact Of The Registration Of The Unemployed Intellectuals In The Early PRC,” *The China Quarterly*, 173 (2003): 100-121.

⁶⁹ Deborah S. Davis, “Social Class Transformation in Urban China: Training, Hiring, and Promoting Urban Professionals and Managers after 1949,” *Modern China*, 26, no. 3 (2000): 251-275; James Gao, *The Communist Takeover Of Hangzhou: The Transformation Of City And Cadre 1949-1954*. (Honolulu, 2004); Toby Ho, “Managing Risk: The Suppression of Private Entrepreneurs in China in the 1950s,” *Risk Management*, 2, no. 2 (2000): 29-38; Kenneth Lieberthal, *Revolution And Tradition In Tientsin 1949-1952* (Stanford, 1980); Hua-yu Li, *Mao And The Economic Stalinization Of China, 1948-1953*, (New York, 2006); Wai-yip So, “The Policy-Making and Political Economy of The Abolition Of Private Ownership In The Early 1950s: Findings From New Material,” *The China Quarterly* no.171 (2002): 682-703; Andrew G. Walder and Songhua Hu, “Revolution, Reform, and Status Inheritance: Urban China, 1949–1996,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 114, no. 5 (2009): 1395-1427;

⁷⁰ Interview with Shen minren, September 24th, 2009.

⁷¹ For more on state spectacles of this kind see Chang-Tai Hung, “Mao's Parades: State Spectacles In China In The 1950s,” *The China Quarterly*, 190 (2007): 411-431;

recommendation. Everybody knew that compared to chicken incubation, museum “pay was good...about sixty units per work unit, so about thirty RMB per month.”⁷²

Few paid attention to the Shanghai Museum's minimum education requirements.⁷³

Applicants were required to have finished high school, yet even “people who just had elementary school” tried their luck.⁷⁴ Zhong Yinlan barely finished junior high but went anyway: “If I passed the test, we can figure things out”.⁷⁵

The preliminary exam took two days to complete. Applicants had to explain why they wanted to work for the municipality, demonstrate basic knowledge on dynasties Qin through Qing, and identify all the major directives that the PRC had promulgated since 1949.⁷⁶ An interview awaited those who passed. Zhong Yinlan had to calm her nerves before interviewing. Her father had Guomindang (GMD) associations and everyone knew that “with these Communists. They remember what your family history was, and when the time comes, they settle their accounts with you.”⁷⁷ Despite the warnings of this received knowledge, Zhong got a

⁷² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009. A retrospective statistical record account for labor in Shanghai's cultural industries noted that average salary for employees at the Shanghai Museum in 1952 was 58 RMB per month. 55 – 60 RMB per month is a typical salary for the average employee in Shanghai's cultural industries during the early 1950s. *Shanghai shi wenhua ju 1949nian – 1956 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye tongji ziliao huibian* [Edited Statistical Records for the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration, 1949 – 1956] September 1956 – May 1957, B172-1-182, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009; Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009; and Huang Xuanpei January 12th, 2010; For similar trends in other job sectors see Eddy U., “The Hiring of Rejects: Teacher Recruitment and Crises of Socialism in the Early PRC Years,” *Modern China*, 30, no. 1 (2004): 46-80.

⁷⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

⁷⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁷⁶ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁷⁷ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009. Lu Songlin and Zhong Yinlan were right to be weary about their personal history's impact on hiring decisions at the Shanghai Museum. For municipal and party documents specifically ordering the Shanghai Cultural Bureau to terminate all personnel with political or

letter of acceptance about a month and a half after her interview.⁷⁸ She was one of 126 young people that the Museum chose for its Class of 1952.⁷⁹ Over the next four decades, the teenage chicken incubator would transform from alley kid to museum professional.

This chapter examines the profound transformation of professional identity amongst Shanghai's cultural industry workers between 1949 and 1956. I argue that a nationwide campaign to acquire top tier antiquities marked museum employees as professionals with a special concern for canonization, philanthropy, and heritage preservation. This same campaign portrayed museum employees' commercial equivalents – art dealers – as law breakers and profiteers – smugglers whose industry needed social reform. These identifiers distinguished Zhong Yinlan's job functions from that of art dealers like Ye Shuzhong, even though both, fundamentally, spent their days evaluating and acquiring antiquities from the private sector.

The above-mentioned redefinition of professional identity went hand in hand with the nationwide transformation of antiquities ownership: From private to public property. Cultural

historical (familial) conflicts with state and party interests, see *Wenhua bu, huadong wenhua ju guanyu wenbo, tushu gongzuo de zhishi, guiding ji woju youguan de qingshi baogao*, [Ministry Of Culture And China Eastern Cultural Bureau's Directives And Regulations Regarding Museum And Library Work And Our Bureau's Related Petitions And Reports] 1954 – 1955, B172-4-301, SMA, Shanghai; *Wenhua bu, gongan bu guanyu jiaqiang wenwu anquan baowei gongzuo de tongzhi ji Shanghai shi wenhua ju suo shu she wen dui wai wenwu baoguan gongzuo de duokou jiancha baogao*, [Ministry of Culture And Office Of Security's Notifications Regarding Strengthening Cultural Relics Security Work And Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Personnel Inspections On Local Outfacing Cultural Relics Preservation Work] May 4th, 1960 – November 2nd, 1960, B172-5-249, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁸ Nevertheless, in all my interviews with Zhong Yinlan, as well as with other former Shanghai Museum employees whose families had GMD associations, the fact that a “bad family background” loomed in the background was consistently alluded to as a risk factor for job seekers in the Maoist era.

⁷⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju 1949nian – 1956 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye tongji ziliao huibian*, [Edited Statistical Records for the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration, 1949 – 1956] September 1956 – May 1957, B172-1-182, SMA, Shanghai.

Relics Laws, which declared ancient Chinese art the common inheritance of all Chinese, stood at the center of this transformation. In the name of heritage preservation, the Class of 1952 offered top dollar for antiquities at the same time as they expropriated antiquities from individuals and other cultural institutions. As the nationalization of industries (1956) converted private art dealerships into State Owned Enterprises, the Shanghai Museum staff leveraged Cultural Relics Laws to get first pick of private sector merchandise. I argue that these events inaugurated the museological fiction of donations. I further argue that museum employees erected a series of tropes, such as ceremonies and merit awards, to substantiate the affection of donation. These tropes cast specific individuals and antiquities as proof of the museum's legitimate custodianship of Chinese cultural heritage. Examining the first years of the Class of 1952's careers in detail, I explore how the above changes impacted the Chinese art market, and evaluate the Shanghai Museum's role in enforcing the nationwide appropriation of art.

Redefining Chinese Art

The PRC announced new antiquities export regulations in 1950. The edicts, also known as Cultural Relics laws, were distributed across all art market channels: at Customs, through antiquities publications, as well as in the Chinese Curio Markets, the downtown hub for art dealerships in Shanghai. Cultural Relics laws dictated that “inspector-approved cultural relics and books can only be exported from designated locations at Tianjin, Shanghai, and Guangdong Customs” and that those cities “will recruit experts” for inspection purposes.⁸⁰ The

⁸⁰ Zhongyang renmin zhengfu zhenwu Yuan, “Fenfa 'jinzhi zhenggui wenwu tushu chukou zaxing banfa' ling,”

experts in question were almost uniformly recruited from museum institutions in Tianjin, Shanghai, and Guangdong. Thus, Shanghai's art dealers had to send all antiquities intended for sale overseas to Customs, for inspection by Shanghai Museum employees. This radically changed the rhythm of business in the Shanghai art market, which was one of the world's richest suppliers of Chinese antiquities for the international art market.⁸¹ The regulations forced Shanghai's antiquities guild, a conglomeration of over one hundred and thirty dealers known internationally as the Shanghai Curios Trader's Association, to conform to new legal and administrative procedures that changed both the scale, and scope of their trade.⁸²

Cultural Relics laws essentially redefined Chinese art. The regulations put all of China's antiquities into one of two camps: *wenwu* or *guwan* (henceforth cultural relics and arts and crafts, respectively).⁸³ They also made the year 1795, Qing emperor Qianlong's sixtieth and final year in power, the border between heritage and commodity. Antiquities made before 1795 were heritage and could not leave the country. Antiquities dated post-1795 were commodities

[Announcement 'Provisional Plans For Preventing the Export of Precious Cultural Relics and Books] *Wenwu cankao zhiliao* 1, no. 1-6, (1950): 5.

⁸¹ For an assessment of Shanghai's role in the international art market see *Shanghai guwan shangye tongye gonghui gongzuo zongjie*, [Conclusion of Shanghai antiquities industry guild's work], 1951 – 1954, S186-4-3, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸² This is the English language name with which the antiquities guild referred to itself in its correspondences. For an example see *Shanghaishi guwan shangye tongye gonghui huiyuan yinyee nasuie he yinli suofa suie qingce*, [Shanghai antiquities industry guild's operational taxes and received taxes], August 1946 – January 1947, S186-1-12, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸³ Historic artifacts specifically refer to objects related to events the CCP considered revolutions, such as the Opium War, the Taiping Rebellion, the May Fourth Movement, and the Communist Revolution. Zhongyang renmin zhengfu zhenwu Yuan, "Fenfa 'jinzhi zhenggui wenwu tushu chukou zanzing banfa' ling" [Announcement 'Provisional Plans For Preventing the Export of Precious Cultural Relics and Books], *Wenwu cankao zhiliao* 1, no. 1-6, (1950):6-7.

eligible for sale across the globe.⁸⁴ Private individuals had the right to own both categories of antiquities, but should consider the former public property – the cultural inheritance of all Chinese.⁸⁵

Demarcating Chinese cultural heritage at 1795 reinforced the received knowledge, held by cultural arbiters in China and overseas, that the end of Qianlong's reign also marked the end of quality art production in China. Qianlong's antiquities acquisitions, commissions, and collection had already formed the foundation of the Palace Museum in Beijing, as well as its competing monument to Chinese art in Taiwan – both landmark repositories of the imperial collecting legacy.⁸⁶ Cultural Relics Laws integrated this legacy into the narrative of cultural heritage.⁸⁷ From 1950 onwards, both PRC cultural institutions and art markets used 1795 as their official benchmark for heritage *identification*.

Cultural Relics Laws made it difficult for Shanghai art dealers, such as Ye Shuzhong, to

⁸⁴ *Shanghaishi remin zhengfu guanyu Shanghai haiguan jihuo zousi guwu, zhongxinju riben guihuan gudong, deren yiliu wenwu de jieshouchuli deng*, [Shanghai Municipal Government Regarding Smuggled Antiquities Retrieved by Shanghai Customs, Arrangements Made For Antiquities the Japanese Returned at the Central Trust Bureau and Cultural Relics Left Behind By Germans, etc] July 21st, 1949, B1-1-2214, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁵ Zhongyang renmin zhengfu zhenwu Yuan, “Fenfa 'jinzhi zhenggui wenwu tushu chukou zanxing banfa' ling” [Announcement 'Provisional Plans For Preventing the Export of Precious Cultural Relics and Books], *Wenwu cankao zhiliao* 1, no. 1- 6, (1950):11-13.

⁸⁶ Jeannette E. Shambaugh with David Shambaugh, *The Odyssey of China's Imperial Art Treasures* (Seattle, 2005).

⁸⁷ My interpretation of Cultural Relics Laws' follows a growing discourse in the investigation of Chinese law and society. For a select bibliography of this approach see William P. Alford, “Law, Law, What Law?: Why Western Scholars of Chinese History and Society Have Not Had More to Say about Its Law” *Modern China*, 23, no. 4 (1997): 398-419; Philip C. C. Huang, “Whither Chinese Law?” *Modern China*, 33, no. 2 (2007): 163-194; William Kirby, “China Unincorporated: Company Law and Business Enterprise In Twentieth-Century China,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 54, no. 1, (1995): 43 – 63; Xiaoqun Xu, “The Rule of Law without Due Process: Punishing Robbers and Bandits in Early-Twentieth- Century China,” *Modern China*, 33, no. 2 (2007): 230-257; Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (New York: 1978).

export antiquities at pre-1949 volumes. Obtaining Customs approval necessitated tedious form-filling. Every antiquity that dealers sent overseas had to have seven copies of Customs declaration material, including the object's photo, description, weight, price, specific measurements, plus proof of ownership.⁸⁸ Shipments awaiting inspection clogged storehouses. As a result, dealers complained that “We have not been able to export any goods and business has stopped...it is affecting our employees' livelihood.”⁸⁹ According to K. Chuck Wong Co. on Myburgh Road, “our overseas customers wrote that we must send them their goods soon...we have more than five shipments waiting at customs and although our employees have asked around many times, we have seen no progress.”⁹⁰

The above complaints came from both small-time entrepreneurs as well as those who worked at the top of their field. Ye and his cohorts, a group of four art dealers who were so successful that they were known as the Four Vajrapani, resorted to desperate measures. Dai Fubao, one of the Vajrapani, fled the country. He changed his name to J. T. Tai, left his wife, and tried to move his business to every Chinese enclave from Taiwan to New York City.⁹¹ His

⁸⁸ *Shanghashi renmin zhengfu guanyu guwenhua yizhi ji gumu zang zhi diaocha faqu zanxing banfa, jinzhi zhenggui wenwu tushu chukou zanxing banfa*, [Shanghai Municipal Government's Temporary Solution Regarding Ancient Cultural Sites and Tomb Burials' Discovery and Excavation Plans, and the Ban on the Export of Cultural Relics and Books], June 1950, B1-2-773, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁹ *Shanghai dui waimaoyi guanli ju guanyu wenwu, guwan, zhucui deng chukou wenti de gonghan, dianbao*, [Shanghai Commission of Export Commerce's Public Directives and Telegrams Regarding the Export of Cultural Relics, Curios, and Jewelry] March 1952 – August 1952, B83-2-1295, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁰ *Shanghai dui waimaoyi guanli ju guanyu wenwu, guwan, zhucui deng chukou wenti de gonghan, dianbao*, [Shanghai Commission of Export Commerce's Public Directives and Telegrams Regarding the Export of Cultural Relics, Curios, and Jewelry] March 1952 – August 1952, B83-2-1295, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹¹ Shanghai's municipal authorities and the antiquities industry knew J. T. Tai as Dai Fubao. He referred to himself as Jun Tsei Tai amongst Hong Kong and overseas compatriots. This practice reflected common practice in the early twentieth century, when Chinese men converted their sinophone names into initials for the

compatriots joked that Tai “swam across the Taiwan Strait with one Song dynasty vase clutched under each arm”.⁹² The anecdote is clearly a joke. The image that it conjures, however, paints a difficult reality. During the early PRC years, art dealers literally had to cross oceans to keep their businesses afloat. Even the municipal Commission of Commerce complained that “Shanghai’s antiquities industry is at full stop”⁹³ because the lengthy, inefficient process made “most of the stock in the Shanghai Antiquities Industry’s possession stagnant.”⁹⁴

The enforcement of Cultural Relics laws, in turn, made the Shanghai Museum staff the gatekeepers of Shanghai’s art market. The municipality gave those museum employees who had experience authenticating works of art full rights to evaluate any and all antiquities awaiting export, as well as to recommend police investigations into dealerships under suspicion of breaking Cultural Relics laws. Museum staff also gained considerable leeway in the execution of evaluations. For example, they could recommend that confiscated antiquities be released for sale if the items were deemed “curios without historical or artistic value”.⁹⁵ This was true of Shanghai’s considerable repository of Japanese-owned antiquities, which were abandoned in

benefit of anglophone ears. A famous example is Song Ziwen, who simplified his name as T. V. Soong. Tai and his wife eventually reunited in New York City, after he reestablished his business.

⁹² Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

⁹³ *Shanghai duiwai maoyi guanli ju guanyu xiuding jingzhi zhenggui wenwu, tushu, guwan chukou zanxing banfa de han, zuotan hui jilu*, [Shanghai Commission of Export Commerce’s Records Regarding its Meeting on Amendments to the Temporary Directive Banning the Export of Precious Cultural Relics, Books, Curios] March 16th, 1951 – September 11th, 1951, B172-4-87, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁴ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration’s Statistics Regarding Shanghai’s Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁵ *Shanghai dui waimaoyi guanli ju guanyu wenwu, guwan, zhucui deng chukou wenti de gonghan, dianbao*, [Shanghai Commission of Export Commerce’s Public Directives and Telegrams Regarding the Export of Cultural Relics, Curios, and Jewelry] March 1952 – August 1952, B83-2-1295, SMA, Shanghai.

vacated estates after the Japanese retreated from Shanghai in 1945. The Shanghai Museum's staff evaluated these to be commodities of "no cultural value" that "the Japanese already picked through and did not want".⁹⁶ The objects were subsequently allocated to cultural institutions, as well as for sale in China and overseas.

Making Antiquarians Red

The majority of Shanghai Museum employees with the ability to authenticate antiquities were senior staff. The city mayor, Chen Yi, inaugurated a nation-wide recruitment campaign for capable senior staff in 1949.⁹⁷ The recruits included Xu Senyu, a seasoned bureaucrat who only corresponded by calligraphy brush, who catalogued antiquities for the Palace Museum and directed acquisitions at the National Beiping Library.⁹⁸ Xie Zhiliu, a well-known artist whose command of connoisseurship made him one of the most sought-after appraisers of the twentieth century, was also heavily recruited.⁹⁹ Others, such as collector/connoisseur Xu Bangda and

⁹⁶ *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shanghai shi wenwu guanli weiyuan hui suo baoguan de riben guihuan wenwu de chuli baogao he zhengfu yuan de pifu*, [Shanghai People's Government's Disposal Report on the Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Cultural Relics that the Japanese Returned, with Rescripts from the State Department] April 23rd, 1954 – August 5th, 1954, B1-1-1372, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁷ For the full list of Cultural Relics Management Board members, see *Shanghai shi renwei wenyi bangong shi ge wenhua shiye danwei jingsuo gaizao modi jihua ji fangan*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Board, Arts And Culture Office's Merger Plan And Investigative Report On All Cultural Danweis] May 1955 – July 1955, B9-2-11, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁸ For a selection of Xu Senyu's work on ancient Chinese civilization, see Xu Senyu, *Jitan Hanwei Shijing canzi*, [Xu Senyu collection of rubbings from the Han and Wei dynasties] (China: 1912-1949); Shanghai Committee for the Preservation and Administration of Art Objects, *Gems of Chinese Painting*, (Shanghai, 1955); Xu Senyu, *Han shi jing zhai wencun* [Records of Han Stele Rubbings], (Beijing, 2010); For a recent biography of Xu Senyu using oral historical and archival sources, see Zheng Zhong, *Xu Senyu* (Beijing, 2007).

⁹⁹ For a selection of Xie Zhiliu's work on Chinese art connoisseurship, see Xie Zhiliu, *Jian yu za gao* [Miscellaneous Drafts Drawn from Connoisseurship] (Shanghai, 1979); Xie Zhiliu, *Zhongguo gudai shuhua yanjiu shilun* [Ten Thesis on Ancient Chinese Calligraphy and Painting] (Shanghai, 2004); For a recent biography of Xu Senyu using oral historical and archival sources, see Zheng Zhong, *Xie Zhiliu* (Beijing, 2004).

calligrapher Shen Yinmo, lived and breathed the kind of connoisseurship and social interactions that Jiangnan's "old society" elites practiced in everyday life. Fifty-four such luminaries were appointed to Shanghai's Cultural Relics Management Board, the political and administrative arm of the Shanghai Museum, by 1952.¹⁰⁰

The senior staff spent the majority of their first years of appointment training the new hires – the Class of 1952. Members of the Cultural Relics Management Board took turns working at Customs but complained vociferously about conducting inspections, because Customs kept “random, chaotic, and messy” warehouses that mixed antiquities with broken type writers, leather goods, and dank books.¹⁰¹ The senior staff's dissatisfaction with Customs gave the Class of 1952's training real urgency. After all, the senior staff had something to gain from creating the PRC's first generation of Red antiquarians. Once trained, the Class of 1952 could relieve the senior staff from working at the Shanghai docks.

¹⁰⁰ By “old society” I refer to how the PRC described pre-1949 society – a phrase still in use by most of my interviewees. Interview with Zhong Yinlan July 10th, 2009.

¹⁰¹ Quote obtained from *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shi wenwu guanli wenyuanhui chengli fangan, renyuan pinyong, niandu yewu jihua deng wenti de qingshi ji pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Government's Requests and Rescripts on the Establishment of a Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board including Administrative Outline, Hiring, and Yearly Budget], September 1949, B1-2-765, SMA, Shanghai. Description of warehouse conditions obtained from *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shanghai shi wenwu guanli weiyuan hui suo baoguan de riben guihuan wenwu de chuli baogao he zhengfu yuan de pifu*, [Shanghai People's Government's Disposal Report on the Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Cultural Relics that the Japanese Returned, with Rescripts from the State Department] April 23rd, 1954 – August 5th, 1954, B1-1-1372, SMA, Shanghai.

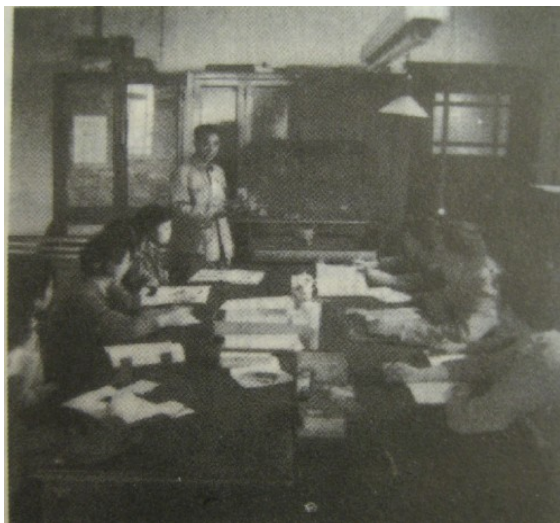


Figure 1.2. Archaeologist Jiang Dayi teaching a survey of ancient Chinese art to the Shanghai Museum's the Class of 1952 (1952). Photo obtained from Zheng Zhong

The Class of 1952 uniformly called the senior staff *laoxiansheng* (venerable sir).¹⁰² Xie Zhiliu, for example, was *Xie lao* (venerable sir Xie). Nearly sixty years later, my interviewees pronounce these honorifics with bodily expressions of respect. They call their first months of work “going to school” or “taking lessons.”¹⁰³ When describing her lessons Zhong Yinlan actually gets up, hunches over her shoulders, folds her hands in the form of a notepad and nods her head up and down. Li Junjie never fails to straighten his frame when he says “venerable sir”. He points his glance upwards, cups his hands and says “every week the venerable sirs held their lessons.”¹⁰⁴ Li then gestures writing and utters “we wrote things down”.¹⁰⁵ These vocal and bodily habits

¹⁰² This term literally translates into “old mister”. The phrase, however, does not capture the valences of respect inherent in the term *xiansheng*, or the honorific *lao* when it is attached to *xiansheng*. I thank Benjamin Andersen and Dana Byrd for their suggestion of the term “venerable sir”.

¹⁰³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009; Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

reflect the extent to which new-hire training marked the Class of 1952.¹⁰⁶ They learned how to interact with donors, party officials, as well as quotidian museum visitors. The museum's senior staff taught the Class of 1952 how to give the impression of being cognoscenti while maintaining a humility that bespoke respect for potential benefactors.

Training the new hires took months. Senior staff such as paleographer Yang Kuan (also the Shanghai Museum's Director), archaeologist Jiang Dayi, and painter Shen Jianzhi designed the sessions from scratch.¹⁰⁷ The teaching team literally wrote its own survey of Chinese art. Select members of the Class of 1952 copied out the senior staff's drafts by hand and assembled a textbook using the museum's own mimeograph press. Those who still have their mimeos today dub them the "pen edition" because their cohorts hand-cranked the originals with pen and ink.¹⁰⁸

The training sessions underlined Chinese antiquities' "Chineseness" and used this quality to glorify the achievements of Chinese civilization. Ma Defu, the ceramics lecturer, described

¹⁰⁶ For additional findings that confirm the relationship between physical bearing and historical experience, see Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman, "How Bodies Remember: Social Memory and Bodily Experience of Criticism, Resistance, and Delegitimation following China's Cultural Revolution," *New Literary History*, 25, no. 3, (1994): 707-723.

¹⁰⁷ These individuals were also well supported by Chinese Communist Party members within and overseeing Shanghai Museum administration. For Yang Kuan's own account of his experiences in the party see Yang Kuan, *Lishi jiliu zhong de dongdang he quzhe: Yang Kuan zi zuan*, [The Vicissitudes of Historical Drama: Yang Kuan, an Autobiography] (Taipei, 1993), for examples of his work as it reflects Marxist ideologies see Yang Kuan, *Shang Yang bian fa*, [Shang Yang's Reforms and State Control in China] (Shanghai, 1973); Yang Kuan, *Gushi xintan* [New Discoveries about Ancient History] (Beijing, 1965); For Jiang Dayi's work as it reflects Jiang's support of the Chinese Communist Party, see Jiang Dayi, *Tianbei minzhong kangzhan shilue* [A Record of the People of Tianbei's Resistance Against the Japanese] (Zhexi, 1942); While Shen Jianzhi, published very little, evidence of his approved status may be found from his personnel records with Shanghai Museum administration, *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shi wenwu guanli wenyuanhui chengli fangan, renyuan pinyong, niandu yewu jihua deng wenti de qingshi ji pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Government's Requests and Rescripts on the Establishment of a Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board including Administrative Outline, Hiring, and Yearly Budget], September 1949, B1-2-765.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

ceramics as “the Chinese working people's great invention.”¹⁰⁹ His genealogy of Chinese kilns argue that Yue kilns have a foundational role in the propagation of ceramic arts throughout mainland China (Figure 1.2). They were used by Shanghai Museum exhibitions to justify Chinese civilization's mark on artistic creativity amongst ethnic minority peoples.¹¹⁰ Jiang Dayi called Shang and Zhou dynasty bronzes “the zenith of excellence.”¹¹¹ “Whether from the perspective of form, patterning, or metal quality...they are the best of the entire world's bronze cultures”.¹¹² Chinese paintings also stood “first in the world” in its poetry, form, and intellectual merit.¹¹³ “All of New China's people should perceive paintings from a nationalistic perspective, and consider ancient paintings as part of our mother country's great artistic heritage.”¹¹⁴ These statements created a master narrative for the Shanghai Museum collection. They also highlighted the PRC's investment in those “cultural relics and ancient remains that are part of our nation's cultural inheritance.”¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹¹⁰ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu shanghai bowu guan, shijian bowuguan chenlie jihua ji qi gaijing fangan de qingshi, pifu*, [People's Republic Shanghai Municipality Representative Board's Propaganda Ministry and Municipal Cultural Administration's Rescripts Regarding Exhibition Plans and Improvement Requests for the Shanghai Museum and the Shanghai History Museum] January 24th, 1956 – August 27th, 1956, B172-4-532, SMA, Shanghai.

¹¹¹ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹¹² Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹¹³ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹¹⁴ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹¹⁵ Zhongyang renmin zhengfu zhenwu Yuan, “Zhongshi wenwu guji jiaqiang baohu guanli” [Taking Cultural Relics and Ancient Remains Seriously, Increasing Preservation and Management] *Wenwu cankao zhiliao* 1, no. 1-6, (1950): 11.

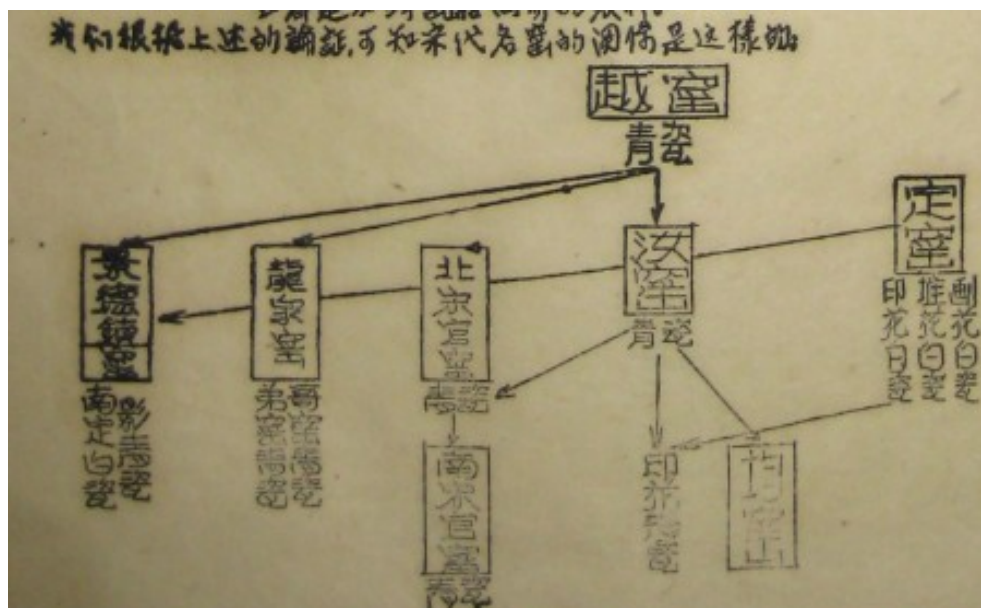


Figure 1.3. Ceramics Kiln map in the Shanghai Museum's Survey of Chinese Art, also known as the Pen Edition (1953), Private Collection of Xia Shunkui, Shanghai, photographed with permission.

The lessons and exhibitions that drew from the Shanghai Museum's Survey of Chinese art equated “Chineseness” with creativity. According to the textbook, Chinese creativity not only benefited the Chinese themselves, but also all the peoples with whom the Chinese came into contact. Museum exhibits, which both drew from the textbook and advertised the textbook for sale to all visitors, expanded this argument. They integrated all categories of art into one consistent, historical narrative that underscored Chinese creativity's ability to absorb and sinicize foreign influence. The Wei/Jin/Northern and Southern Dynasties gallery, for example, used Buddhist art to “explain that Chinese people not only have great inventive abilities, but also the

first-rate tradition of absorbing and integrating foreign countries' outstanding culture."¹¹⁶ When leading guided tours, the Class of 1952 assured visitors that Chinese civilization's sinicizing effect on creativity is how "art reaches the next step in development".¹¹⁷

The senior staff privileged Maoist ideology in the classroom. Lessons used class-oppression as a framework to interpret objects as well as events, and encouraged the Class of 1952 to integrate Marxist terminology into their articulation of Chinese cultural heritage. For example, Jiang Dayi, author of the pen edition's bronzes chapter and the Shanghai Museum's senior archaeologist, contextualized the museum's collection of ancient bronze relics as follows: "Only the extorting classes could use bronze crockery...the repressed and extorted masses used pottery, bamboo, or bone utensils".¹¹⁸ Student scribbles in the margins of one pen edition repeated, "Shang dynasty had slave mentality, slavery still existed."¹¹⁹

The pen edition's chapter on ceramics best illustrates how the senior staff integrated proletariat revolutions into aesthetic education.¹²⁰ Its introduction to imperial red porcelain

¹¹⁶ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu shanghai bowu guan, shijian bowuguan chenlie jihua ji qi gaijing fangan de qingshi, pifu*, [People's Republic Shanghai Municipality Representative Board's Propaganda Ministry and Municipal Cultural Administration's Rescripts Regarding Exhibition Plans and Improvement Requests for the Shanghai Museum and the Shanghai History Museum] January 24th, 1956 – August 27th, 1956, B172-4-532, SMA, Shanghai.

¹¹⁷ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu shanghai bowu guan, shijian bowuguan chenlie jihua ji qi gaijing fangan de qingshi, pifu*, [People's Republic Shanghai Municipality Representative Board's Propaganda Ministry and Municipal Cultural Administration's Rescripts Regarding Exhibition Plans and Improvement Requests for the Shanghai Museum and the Shanghai History Museum] January 24th, 1956 – August 27th, 1956, B172-4-532, SMA, Shanghai.

¹¹⁸ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹¹⁹ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹²⁰ This is consistent with recent scholarship on CCP and social education Liyan Liu, "The Man Who Molded Mao: Yang Changji and the First Generation of Chinese Communists," *Modern China*, 32, no. 4 (2006): 483-512.

portrayed a regional administrator, Pan Xiang, as a eunuch-tyrant who “harassed the people” with heavy taxes.¹²¹ Pan Xiang's “oppressive management” incensed a ceramist named Tong Bin, who protested by “walking into fire and burning to death”.¹²² Tong Bin's desperate act both galvanized “great peasant rebellions” against Pan Xiang and left a lasting aesthetic legacy. Mixed with porcelains in his kiln, Tong Bin's blood produced a bright, scarlet glaze, now known as imperial red.¹²³

Tong Bin's life story bears clear parallels to Socialist martyr narratives, which use similarly gruesome anecdotes to heroize proletariat sacrifices in the Chinese Civil War (1945 – 1949).¹²⁴ In the Class of 1952's Survey of Chinese Art, however, Tong Bin's story does far more than replicate Communist propaganda. The narrative transformed rhetoric about the revolution into an origins myth about aesthetic innovation. At the same time, it rewrote the imperial history of Jingdezhen, an imperial ceramics production center and Tong Bin's home, from the perspective of “ordinary people”. This was an alternative to traditional art historical narratives, which had focused on Jingdezhen's imperial patronage.

The Marxist turn transformed Chinese Ceramics into artifacts of ideological harmony between antiquarianism and Marxism. The research themes, such as labor, trade demands, and

¹²¹ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹²² Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹²³ Introductory lessons for Shanghai Museum Junior Staff, Private collection of Xia Shunkui.

¹²⁴ In fact, these narratives continue to the present. For examples see Rana Mitter, “Behind The Scenes At The Museum: Nationalism, History And Memory In The Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987 – 1997,” *The China Quarterly*, 161 (2000): 279 – 293; Chang-tai Hung, “The Red Line: Creating A Museum Of The Chinese Revolution,” *The China Quarterly*, 184, (2005): 914 – 933.

taxation, remain how the history of Chinese ceramics is studied today – especially as new archaeological finds have expanded the available data on everyday life in Jingdezhen.¹²⁵ As the Class of 1952 learned, antiquarianism rescued Tong Bin's innovations from obscurity. By articulating ordinary people's mastery of clay and fire, ceramics connoisseurship became a vehicle to facilitate artisan wisdom and personal sacrifice.

Training young antiquarians to be Red also meant political socialization. The Class of 1952 regularly participated in recreational activities with other municipal employees, including police officers, postmen, and bankers.¹²⁶ Zhu Shuyi, who visited Zhongshan Park with her cohorts every Sunday, fondly boasted that “I still have the awards that I won from these athletic

¹²⁵ Before the turn towards Marxism, the study of Chinese Ceramics focused on identifying the ceramics' reign dates, colors, decorative features. Michael Dillon, “Fang Zhimin, Jingdezhen and the Northeast Jiangxi Soviet: Tradition, Revolution and Civil War in a Pottery Town,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 26, no. 3 (1992): 569-589; Robert Finlay, “The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History,” *Journal of World History*, 9, no. 2 (1998): 141-187; Wen-Chin Hsu, “Social and Economic Factors in the Chinese Porcelain Industry in Jingdezhen during the Late Ming and Early Qing Period, ca. 1620-1683,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (1988): 135-159; Clare Le Corbeiller and Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, “Chinese Export Porcelain,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 60, no. 3, (2003): 1,5-60; Stephen Little, “Economic Change in Seventeenth-Century China and Innovations at the Jingdezhen Kilns,” *Ars Orientalis*, 26 (1996): 47-54; Anne P. Underhill, “Investigating Variation in Organization of Ceramic Production: An Ethnoarchaeological Study in Guizhou, China,” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 10, no. 3 (2003): 203-275.

¹²⁶ The now seminal study on political socialization is Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*, (Princeton, 1963); while few studies exist on how these activities affected young people in the PRC, studies on East German socialization efforts reveal that the state used a variety of “transmission belts”, including organized leisure activities, to shape political culture in everyday life. See Sterling Fishman and Lothar Martin, *Estranged Twins: Education and Society in the Two Germanys*, (New York, 1986); Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement, 1946 – 1968*, (Oxford, 2004); Ester Von Richthofen, *Bringing Culture to the Masses: Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR*, (New York, 2009).

For applications in PRC history, see Chang-tai Hung, “Mao’s Parades: State Spectacles in China in the 1950s,” *The China Quarterly* 190 (June 2007): 411-431; Chang-tai Hung, “The Politics of National Celebrations in China,” In *The People’s Republic of China at 60: An International Assessment*, ed. by William C. Kirby, (Cambridge, 2011): pp. 357-372.

contests.”¹²⁷ Li Junjie learned to sing and play soccer while others took dance lessons.¹²⁸ Many found the activities so engrossing that they “didn't go home in the evenings”.¹²⁹ The Ministry of Culture even distributed entertainment passes for Soviet and Czechoslovakian dance performances, which the Class of 1952 attended with avid curiosity.¹³⁰ My interviewees point out that working at the museum enabled them to “horse around. There were so many activities. At night in the People's Square, the singing, dancing, and general carousing was all night long.”¹³¹ These activities both reinforced their confidence in PRC priorities and boosted their interest in the museum profession. In fact, the camaraderie developed during classroom and leisure activities kept new hires from moving to other industries. Chen Peifen asserted that she turned down other career opportunities because “I liked the environment and the people...the things that I was learning here were more interesting and I stayed.”¹³²

The Art Dealers' Trade

While socialization campaigns meant fun and games for the Class of 1952, they hounded Shanghai's art dealers. State intervention in the antiquities trade quickly escalated from the enforcement of stricter export regulations to the institutionalized appropriation of profits and inventory. The Five-Anti campaign, an anti-capitalist political movement that ran for the first ten months of 1952, exposed Shanghai's dealers to crippling municipal audits. The auditors

¹²⁷ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

¹²⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹²⁹ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

¹³⁰ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

¹³¹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹³² Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

accused dealers of regularly flouting commercial regulations: Some haggled despite instructions to keep prices as marked, others evaded taxes, posed as collectors to avoid auditors, or simply kept incomplete accounts.¹³³ The most serious charge by far, however, was smuggling.

According to municipal investigators, art dealers habitually “claimed that real antiquities are fake and ancient objects are reproductions.”¹³⁴ Common ruses include using “glazes to cover imperial markings,” applying “flour and paint to camouflage antique surfaces,” and allowing “alcohol to change the texture of lacquer covers.”¹³⁵ The municipality accused dealers of tampering with inventory as well as forging receipts and declaration forms.¹³⁶ Investigators speculated that Shanghai's art dealers maintained extensive smuggling routes that stretched from Dalian to Guangzhou. Municipal officials even warned that many “have family and friends in Hong Kong.

Some even own stock in Hong Kong dealerships.”¹³⁷ Thus, dealers “knew very detailed

¹³³ *Shanghai shi wenshang xingzheng guanliju guanyu shanghai shi guwan shichang, guwu shangchang qingkuang yi tanshang zuangkuan*, [Shanghai Commission of Commerce Management Bureau Report Regarding Shanghai's Chinese Curio Markets and Itinerant Art Dealers], 1955, B182-1-848-115, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju guanyu 1955 nian ge tongye gonghui siying shangye pucha gongzuo xiaojie*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau's Conclusions Regarding Its Investigation on Private Industries and Guilds in 1955] 1955, B123-2-1452, SMA, Shanghai.

¹³⁴ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹³⁵ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹³⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹³⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Ministry of Culture's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

information about the Hong Kong art market, once they know Hong Kong wants something, they buy it in large quantities then either export it themselves or sell to others” - an act often involved smuggling.¹³⁸ Pinpointing the exact details of Shanghai's smuggling operations, however, “was not easy to manage.”¹³⁹ Investigators agreed that art dealers had no incentive to turn their colleagues over to an administration that capped their business.

Shanghai tried taxing dealers into submission. In 1954, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agents pressured dealers to buy bonds for “national economic building”.¹⁴⁰ Senior dealers had to sell bonds to junior dealers at mandatory socialization classes. During each session, agents indoctrinated guild members with new industry priorities. Lessons included “follow state laws and regulations,” “turn in those who evade taxes,” “avoid purchasing illicit antiquities and help police apprehend transgressors,” and “protect the national essence, do not export precious cultural relics.”¹⁴¹ CCP agents also encouraged dealers to look into each other's finances, supplies, and stocks.¹⁴² Each class ended with self-criticism meetings where dealers

¹³⁸ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Ministry of Culture's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹³⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴⁰ *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui tuixiao 1950 nian ji 1954 nian gongzhai de rengou baogao biao ji gongjie*, [Shanghai Antiquities Guild's Conclusions and Sale Sheets Regarding the Sale of State Bonds in 1950 and 1954] March 16th, 1950 – March 16th, 1955, S186-4-15, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴¹ *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui qingkuang yuebao yi nianbao yi jiagong dinghuo guanxichang yu fei guanxichang zonghe biao*, [Shanghai antiquities industry guild events, monthly reports, annual reports, restorations and orders, with a compiled list of related factories and unrelated factories] May 1955 – February 29th, 1956, S186-4-13, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴² *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju guanyu 1955 nian ge tongye gonghui siying shangye pucha gongzuo xiaojie*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau's Conclusions Regarding Its Investigation on Private Industries and Guilds in 1955]

wrote confessions detailing how socialist education and bond purchasing enlightened their “understanding of the nation's industries.”¹⁴³

The municipality took its bond campaign seriously. Eighty-four percent of Shanghai's antiquities trade, or 147 out of 176 dealerships, bought bonds by the end of 1954.¹⁴⁴ The debts amounted to more than three billion RMB.¹⁴⁵ By way of comparison, in 1954 the industry paid its workers twenty million RMB.¹⁴⁶ According to these numbers, dealers owed the state the equivalent of staff salaries for the next fourteen years. The municipality collected payments monthly, which amounted to payments of thirty-three million per month, industry-wide.¹⁴⁷ Storefronts that lapsed on payments had to apply for reprieve. Until the municipality approved the reprieve, dealers accrued penalty fees.¹⁴⁸ This meant that on average, each dealers paid 229,856 yuan a month, or had to liquidate the equivalent 2.3 rosewood writing desks, in order to

1955, B123-2-1452, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴³ *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui tuixiao 1950 nian ji 1954 nian gongzhai de rengou baogao biao ji gongjie*, [Shanghai Antiquities Guild's Conclusions and Sale Sheets Regarding the Sale of State Bonds in 1950 and 1954] March 16th, 1950 – March 16th, 1955, S186-4-15, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴⁴ The exact sum is 304,100,000 yuan. *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui tuixiao 1950 nian ji 1954 nian gongzhai de rengou baogao biao ji gongjie*, [Shanghai Antiquities Guild's Conclusions and Sale Sheets Regarding the Sale of State Bonds in 1950 and 1954] March 16th, 1950 – March 16th, 1955, S186-4-15, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴⁵ The exact sum is 304,100,000 yuan. *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui tuixiao 1950 nian ji 1954 nian gongzhai de rengou baogao biao ji gongjie*, [Shanghai Antiquities Guild's Conclusions and Sale Sheets Regarding the Sale of State Bonds in 1950 and 1954] March 16th, 1950 – March 16th, 1955, S186-4-15, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴⁶ The exact sum is 20,493,600 yuan. *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui gongzuo renyuan mingdan, gongzi shouju he shouzhi yujuesuan ji guding zichan mingxi biao*, [Shanghai Antiquities Guild Members' Census, Salary Receipts and Sales Predictions as well as Permanent Assets Audit] December 31st, 1953 – February 20th, 1956, S186-4-18, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁴⁷ The municipality collected payments monthly. The payments amounted to 33,788,889 per month.

¹⁴⁸ *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui tuixiao 1950 nian ji 1954 nian gongzhai de rengou baogao biao ji gongjie*, [Shanghai Antiquities Guild's Conclusions and Sale Sheets Regarding the Sale of State Bonds in 1950 and 1954] March 16th, 1950 – March 16th, 1955, S186-4-15, SMA, Shanghai.

satisfy their commitment to the city.¹⁴⁹ Every art dealer in Shanghai felt the pressure. To meet their payments, dealers had to divest fast, and cheap.

In defense of their livelihood, dealers commissioned guild histories that framed their profession in Socialist terms. One history argued that dealers rescued art appreciation from class oppression. “In feudal, imperialist times...barely a handful of people could appreciate” Chinese art because “the art objects that people created with their wisdom only circulated amongst the ruling few.”¹⁵⁰ Art dealing, however, “uniformly enriched and raised people's material and cultural standards” by making antiquities accessible to “people interested in our ancient civilization.”¹⁵¹ The Chinese Curio Markets, dealers argued, “made Chinese arts and crafts popular” and got “capitalist countries all over the world aware of our nation's unique culture and art.”¹⁵² Guild histories also highlighted dealers' popularization of Chinese cultural heritage at the same time as they minimized the industry's commercial ties. The accounts specifically touted dealers' role in “archaeological research”, where they provided museums with artifacts that garnered “high commendations, pride, and a bright future” for Chinese civilization.¹⁵³ These

¹⁴⁹ *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui gongzuo ren yuan ming dan, gongzi shou ju he shou zhi yu juesuan ji guding zhi chan ming xi biao*, [Shanghai Antiquities Guild Members' Census, Salary Receipts and Sales Predictions as well as Permanent Assets Audit] December 31st, 1953 – February 20th, 1956, S186-4-18, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁵⁰ *Shanghai guwan shangye lishi yange*, [Shanghai Antiquities Industry's Historical Evolution], 1954, S186-3-1, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁵¹ *Shanghai guwan shangye lishi yange*, [Shanghai Antiquities Industry's Historical Evolution], 1954, S186-3-1, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁵² *Shanghai guwan shangye lishi yange*, [Shanghai Antiquities Industry's Historical Evolution], 1954, S186-3-1, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁵³ *Shanghai guwan shangye tongye gonghui gongzuo zongjie*, [Conclusion of Shanghai Antiquities Industry Guild's Work's work], 1951 – 1954, S186-4-3, SMA, Shanghai.

narratives simultaneously credited art dealers with popularizing ancient Chinese civilization and appealed to the PRC's investment in Chinese cultural heritage.

Art dealers characterized their industry in the framework of class-struggle, portraying themselves as honest laborers who suffered at the hands of corrupt administrators.¹⁵⁴ In the face of autocratic foreign officials who “randomly searched houses, held people without reason, and demanded bribes,” their guild “fought for their rights” and won “just settlement that settled the hearts of our fellow workers.¹⁵⁵ These achievements putatively put art dealers in the same position as CCP exemplars, such as tenant farmers who suffered at the hands of profiteering landlords.¹⁵⁶ The histories also served as the antiquities industry's new compact with the PRC. Each concluded with lofty proclamations that asserted the dealers' commitment to “preserving the national essence...welcoming world peace, and the development of international commerce.”¹⁵⁷

The guild's panegyrics didn't assuage the municipality. The municipality did, however, recognize that dealers ran “a profitable business” whose earning potential outshone its transgressions.¹⁵⁸ Even the Ministry of Culture noted that selling antiquities “helps the nation

¹⁵⁴ Dealers may have gotten the inspiration for this from historical conflicts between the Lower Yangzi chamber of commerce and their overseas trading partners. Zhongping Chen, “The Origins of Chinese Chambers of Commerce in the Lower Yangzi Region,” *Modern China*, 27, no. 2 (2001): 155-201.

¹⁵⁵ *Shanghai guwan shangye tongye gonghui gongzuo zongjie*, [Conclusion of Shanghai Antiquities Industry Guild's Work], 1951 – 1954, S186-4-3, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁵⁶ For similar narrative approaches see Chang-Tai Hung, “Reeducating a Blind Storyteller: Han Qixiang and the Chinese Communist Storytelling Campaign,” *Modern China*, 19, no. 4 (1993): 395-426.

¹⁵⁷ *Shanghai guwan shangye lishi yange*, [Shanghai Antiquities Industry's Historical Evolution], 1954, S186-3-1, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁵⁸ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaoobao*, [Shanghai

earn foreign currency”.¹⁵⁹ It all came down to hard cash. In the interest of expanding China's international trade, Shanghai officials agreed to “encourage and support” the commercial antiquities sector, especially insofar as it “accelerates arts and crafts production.”¹⁶⁰

Arts and crafts production encouraged dealers to invest in cheaper inventory. Traders began to sell objects made with cheaper materials, such as newly mined jade and ivory from Northwest China.¹⁶¹ Storefronts shied away from arts and crafts made with nephrite, coral, and amber, as they necessitated a level of craftsmanship that dealers could not afford.¹⁶² Objects that guaranteed quick and easy turnovers, such as furniture, stamps, and reproduction antiquities, became industry staples.¹⁶³ The growing trade in arts and crafts, as Cultural Relics Laws defined the category, kept the art market in business. The cultural relics-half of dealers' stock, however, remained in limbo.¹⁶⁴

Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁵⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁶⁰ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu 1952 nian shanghai wenhua yishu shiye jiben qingkuang tongji biaobao*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Statistics Regarding Shanghai's Cultural and Artistic Industries 1952], March, 1952, B172-1-167, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁶¹ *Shanghai shi dier shangye ju 29 ge hangye qingkuang diaocha ji gaozao anpai fangan yijian*, [Shanghai Second Commercial Bureau's Industry Report Regarding 29 Industries Plus Plans for Industry Reform], January 1952 – November 1955, B98-1-57, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁶² *Shanghai shi dier shangye ju 29 ge hangye qingkuang diaocha ji gaozao anpai fangan yijian*, [Shanghai Second Commercial Bureau's Industry Report Regarding 29 Industries Plus Plans for Industry Reform], January 1952 – November 1955, B98-1-57, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁶³ *Shanghai guwan shangye tongye gonghui gongzuo zongjie*, [Conclusion of Shanghai antiquities industry guild's work], 1951 – 1954, S186-4-3, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁶⁴ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu guwan ye guikou wenti de qingshi*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Requests Regarding the Nationalization of the Curios Industry], March 29th, 1956 – August 15th, 1956, B172-4-531, SMA, Shanghai.

The Nationwide Divestment of Art

Art dealers weren't the only people who desperately needed cash. The aforementioned socialization campaigns severed domestic exchanges with overseas partners, which reduced income amongst formerly elite households.¹⁶⁵ The Shanghai Museum staff affirmed that the Five-Anti movement struck Shanghai's wealthy industrialists especially hard. Li Junjie explained that “the Five-Anti campaign was about people who had tax evasion...Well some people, they owed the state money and they couldn't pay it back, so they had to sell their things, they had to sell cultural relics.”¹⁶⁶ Private collectors' divestment needs formed the basis of Shanghai's antiquities bonanza in early 1950s. The museum “unfailingly accumulated books and cultural relics from private collections because at present most collectors are in dire straits”.¹⁶⁷ Museum administrators couched these acquisitions in subtle terms, claiming that once collectors learned that “their ancestors' books and cultural relics were in danger of dispersal, they willingly contributed to the state”.¹⁶⁸ Amongst themselves, however, museum staff agreed that empty coffers motivated the sales. “In the end it all comes down to money. At that time if the state became interested in your

¹⁶⁵ Julia Strauss, “Paternalist Terror: The Campaign To Suppress Counter-Revolutionary And Regime Consolidation In The People's Republic Of China, 1950-1953,” *Comparative Studies In Society And History*, 44, no. 1 (2002): 80-105.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹⁶⁷ *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shi wenwu guanli wenyuanhui chengli fangan, renyuan pinyong, niandu yewu jihua deng wenti de qingshi ji pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Government's Requests and Rescripts on the Establishment of a Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board including Administrative Outline, Hiring, and Yearly Budget], September 1949, B1-2-765, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁶⁸ *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shi wenwu guanli wenyuanhui chengli fangan, renyuan pinyong, niandu yewu jihua deng wenti de qingshi ji pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Government's Requests and Rescripts on the Establishment of a Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board including Administrative Outline, Hiring, and Yearly Budget], September 1949, B1-2-765, SMA, Shanghai.

collection, they would send someone over and give you a price.”¹⁶⁹

Museum employees also pressured collectors to divest. Both the senior staff and the Class of 1952 visited collectors regularly – a gesture that some perceived as rude and threatening.¹⁷⁰ For example, when museum staff approached Yan Huiyu (1895 – 1968) for antiquities the collector threw his guests out.¹⁷¹ Yan literally pulled out his drawers and said “you look, I've got plenty of money, I don't sell things, I have money, why would I sell things?”¹⁷² The museum staff, however, paid Yan so many visits that “they almost wore out his front steps”.¹⁷³ Zhu Junbo, an employee at Duoyun Xian Art House, explained that,

“The Cultural Relics Management Board comes to your house and says oh you have some nice things in your house. Our Museum is lacking the same kinds of nice things. The first time you don't want to, the second time...the third time, you're scared. Some people gave things willingly, and some people were just scared. If I don't give it to them this time, the next time there's some kind of political movement, then maybe they'll arrest me.”¹⁷⁴

As Zhu pointed out, while some collectors divested antiquities willingly, others had reservations that repeated visits and concurrent political circumstances made moot. Li Junjie confirmed the museum's position: “We were a political organization, we had a political department and could help the collectors. If the collectors had problems.”¹⁷⁵ This combination of persistence and

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Li Junjie January 21st, 2010.

¹⁷⁰ For more on Yan Huiyu's art collecting, see Jiangsu Sheng Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Weiyuan hui and Zhenjiang shi Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Weiyuan hui, *Yan Huiyu Jinian Wenji*. [Yang Huiyu Memorial Literature] (Nanjing: 1994).

¹⁷¹ Zhong Zheng, *Bowu guan yu shoucang jia*, [Museums and Collectors] (Shanghai, 2000): 177.

¹⁷² Zhong Zheng, *Bowu guan yu shoucang jia*, [Museums and Collectors] (Shanghai, 2000): 177.

¹⁷³ Zhong Zheng, *Bowu guan yu shoucang jia*, [Museums and Collectors] (Shanghai, 2000): 177.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

pressure worked. “If we go and visit them, even if they don't donate they'll sell to you. Shanghai was good at doing this kind of work.”¹⁷⁶ Eventually, even the obstinate Yan Huiyu sold antiquities to Shanghai. He did so, however, with regret: “these things have accompanied me my whole life.”¹⁷⁷

Between 1950 and 1954, mayor Chen Yi gave the museum unprecedented financial support, partly in recognition that in comparison to the rest of the PRC, Shanghai's preponderance of local wealth offered “more cultural relics and rank a special category...in cultural relics acquisition and promulgation.”¹⁷⁸ Chen Peifen boasted that “Chen Yi our mayor really cared...he had some culture in him. He gave lots of funding.”¹⁷⁹ This level of support continued even after 1956, when Chen Yi stepped down as mayor and “went to the central bureau.”¹⁸⁰ Whenever Shanghai requested supplementary funds for new acquisitions, “old ancestor Chen he was fine with it. He just nods.”¹⁸¹ This enabled Shanghai to make bail out-level offers. In fact, municipal budget officer Liu Shiji revealed to the museum staff that up until 1962, the municipality's museum and library got “one third of the city's culture and education budget” so their acquisitions teams could “buy a lot of cultural relics”.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁷⁷ Zhong Zheng, *Bowu guan yu shoucang jia*, [Museums and Collectors] (Shanghai, 2000): 178.

¹⁷⁸ *Shanghai bowuguan, shanghai shi wenguan hui, shanghai tushuguan fu jing gongzuo zu gongzuo baogao*, [Work Report from the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai Cultural Relics Management Bureau and Shanghai Library's Trip to Beijing], June 20th, 1953, B172-4-230, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁷⁹ Chen Yi had the city mayor's post from 1949 – 1954. Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁸² Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

By 1953, the National Summit of PRC Museums had appointed Shanghai as *the* lead in converting antiquities from private to public property. The Shanghai Museum staff attributed this decision to the density of private collectors and antiquities in their region. “South East China has the highest concentration of antiquities and most of it is in Shanghai...we need to prevent [these objects] from going overseas...use multiple methods to sooth collectors and build their confidence [in the PRC].”¹⁸³ The summit identified museum professionals as special emissaries in an imminent transformation wherein “the top cultural relics that are spread amongst private hands will inevitably be nationalized,” and placed in museum custody.¹⁸⁴

The summit also identified art dealers as primary obstacles to its acquisition project. Zhang Congyu (1915 – 1963), a Shanghai antiquarian who moved to Beijing to take up dual positions at the Palace Museum and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, warned that “the important thing is not to let dealers take advantage in the interim, and take charge of standardizing acquisition prices.”¹⁸⁵ This assessment enabled the Shanghai Museum to manipulate art market prices to its own advantage. Strong political and financial backing soon made Shanghai the nation's highest bidder for antiquities. Meanwhile, heavy taxes and

¹⁸³ *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shi wenwu guanli wenyuanhui chengli fangan, ren yuan pinyong, niandu yewu jihua deng wenti de qingshi ji pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Government's Requests and Rescripts on the Establishment of a Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board including Administrative Outline, Hiring, and Yearly Budget], September 1949, B1-2-765, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁸⁴ *Shanghai bowuguan, shanghai shi wenguan hui, shanghai tushuguan fu jing gongzuo zu gongzuo baogao*, [Work Report from the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai Cultural Relics Management Bureau and Shanghai Library's Trip to Beijing], June 20th, 1953, B172-4-230, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁸⁵ *Shanghai bowuguan, shanghai shi wenguan hui, shanghai tushuguan fu jing gongzuo zu gongzuo baogao*, [Work Report from the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai Cultural Relics Management Bureau and Shanghai Library's Trip to Beijing], June 20th, 1953, B172-4-230, SMA, Shanghai.

socialization campaigns kept art dealers from taking advantage of Shanghai's antiquities divestment bonanza. In other words, the Shanghai Museum manipulated the market so that it, and only it, could profit from nationwide divestment of art.

The Class of 1952 confirmed that the museum's acquisitions offers topped the nation. Elsewhere on the mainland, prices went down because “if everybody wants to sell, then of course the prices would be lower...if this object was originally 2000rmb, if everyone's selling, then I'll buy it at 1800. If you don't sell I'll buy it from someone else.”¹⁸⁶ The best antiquities got stuck in the domestic market because Cultural Relics laws made it “illegal to sell overseas”.¹⁸⁷ Thus, when it became clear that dealers “could make the train money back and still make a profit off their sales,” collectors and dealers across the nation chose to liquidate their collections in Shanghai.¹⁸⁸ All worked on the received knowledge that “people paid more for things in Shanghai.”¹⁸⁹ The exact price differences between cities remain unclear. The Class of 1952, however, stressed that “at that time, having five RMB more was a really big deal, so of course they came and sold things to Shanghai...that's how a lot of things came to Shanghai”¹⁹⁰ The museum's ledgers confirm that throughout the 1950s, new acquisitions came from faraway cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, and Hefei, as well as Shanghai and its nearby provinces.

It should be noted that in addition to the 1952 demarcation, Cultural Relics laws

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

encouraged museum institutions to evaluate Chinese antiquities according to a Three-Tier system. The tiers correspond to a nationwide standard for antiquities that PRC cultural institutions used to evaluate art as early as 1949. First-Tier refers to “important cultural relics worthy of preservation.”¹⁹¹ These objects usually took center place at exhibitions and in museum catalogs. Second-Tier antiquities “are average cultural relics which, unless part of a larger set of objects which the Department of Cultural Affairs will preserve, may, after inspection, be distributed to various film companies, theater groups, cultural centers, libraries, etc. as props and exhibition material.”¹⁹² Third-Tier antiquities “are not cultural relics and have no preservation value”.¹⁹³ This category of objects comprise the bottom rank of all museum collections, if they make it to museums at all. Some individual variations exist in tier rankings across the country. For sake of quality control, however, all PRC museums uniformly refrained from identifying more than one percent of their collections as First-Tier.

The figure entitled “Shanghai Museum First-Tier Acquisitions 1949 - 1959” (Figure 1.4) charts purchases against cost-free transactions, such as donations, internal transfers,

¹⁹¹ *Huadong wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu zhengli cangku ku cun tongqi waili wenti de baogao, pifu*, [The China Eastern Cultural Affairs Administration and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Responses To The Disposal Of Bronze Objects Stored In the Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse] September 1st, 1953 – November 4th, 1955, B172-4-422, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁹² *Huadong wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu zhengli cangku ku cun tongqi waili wenti de baogao, pifu*, [The China Eastern Cultural Affairs Administration and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Responses To The Disposal Of Bronze Objects Stored In the Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse] September 1st, 1953 – November 4th, 1955, B172-4-422, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁹³ *Huadong wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu zhengli cangku ku cun tongqi waili wenti de baogao, pifu*, [The China Eastern Cultural Affairs Administration and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Responses To The Disposal Of Bronze Objects Stored In the Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse] September 1st, 1953 – November 4th, 1955, B172-4-422, SMA, Shanghai.

expropriations, and requisitions, for First-Tier acquisitions at the Shanghai Museum.¹⁹⁴

Shanghai Museum First-Tier Acquisitions 1949 – 1959

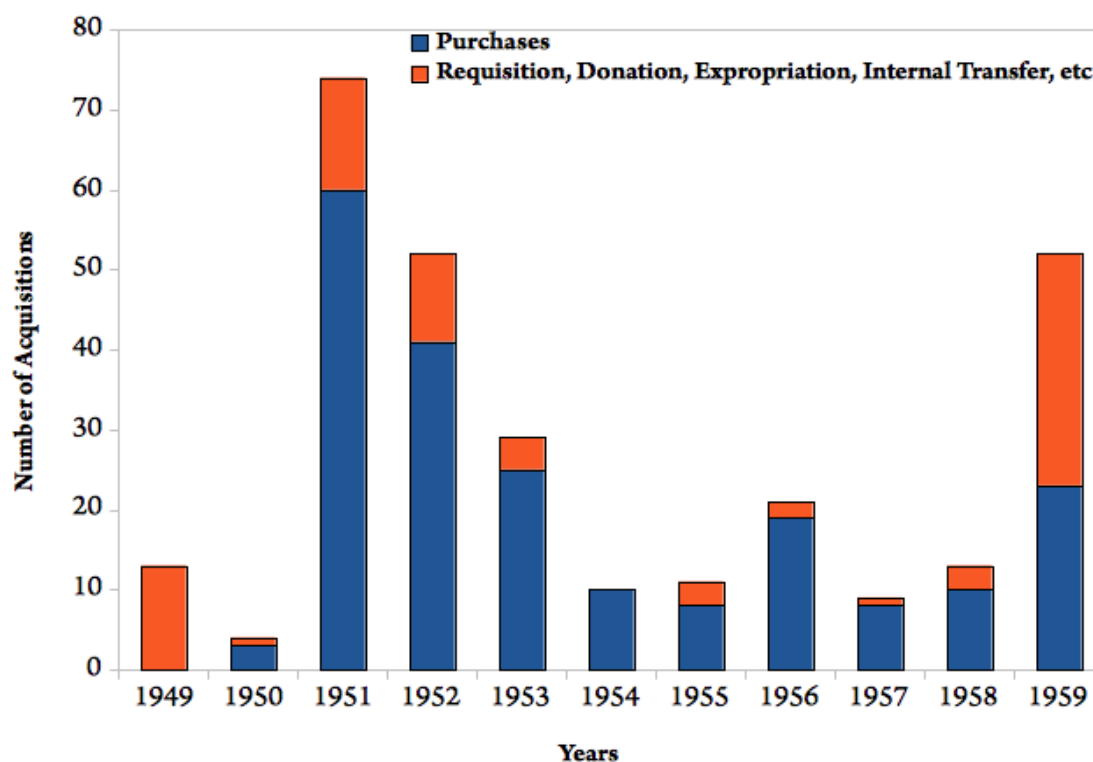


Figure 1.4. Shanghai Museum's First-Tier Antiquities Acquisitions, 1949 – 1959.

Seventy-two percent of the museum's 288 First-Tiers came from purchases. By way of

comparison, the Shanghai Museum owned 149,000 antiquities in 1959, suggesting that the First-

¹⁹⁴ Data extracted from *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie*, [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

Tier rank is indeed rare – about .002% of the entire collection. The fact that the majority of these came to Shanghai through purchases suggests that money and pressure opened doors. Museum ledgers note that the majority of First-Tier acquisitions came from private sales, by collectors who divested as a result of active door-knocking and above-market prices. Some acquisitions also came from dealers living outside of Shanghai, confirming that Shanghai's offers topped the nation. As Li Junjie explained, the Shanghai Museum spent more than one million RMB on acquisitions between 1949 and 1959. Yearly salaries for museum employees, in contrast, added up to 135,320 RMB.¹⁹⁵ In other words, the acquisitions budget could pay for the next eight years' worth of employee salaries.

The Four Vajrapani

Art dealers heard dark news in June of 1955. The Shanghai Police arrested Zhang Xuegeng, a seasoned dealer whose assets held the antiquities industry in awe, for smuggling.¹⁹⁶ Zhang Xuegeng was one of the Four Vajrapani. He and fellow Vajrapanis Ye Shuzhong, Hong Yulin, and the expatriate J. T. Tai made profits that put them at the top four-percent of their industry.¹⁹⁷ They acquired antiquities from throughout mainland China and catering extensively to foreign clientele.¹⁹⁸ The Shanghai Museum's senior staff considered the dealers' appraisal

¹⁹⁵ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju 1956 nian guomin jingji jihua he jiuxing qingkuang de zongjie*, [Conclusion of Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's 1956 Citizen's Financial Plans and Implementation Report] September 1955 – February 1957, B172-1-179, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁹⁶ Luxia Song, *Bainian shoucang: 20 shiji zhongguo minjian shoucang fengyun Lu*, [A Century of Collection: 20th Century Chinese Private Collecting Tales] (Shanghai shi, 1999): 381.

¹⁹⁷ For more information on J. T. Tai, see Christie's, "Property of the Ping Y. Tai Foundation" Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of art September 17th, 2008.

¹⁹⁸ Nicknames reminiscent of the Buddhist pantheon are commonly used to underline the greatness of the

skills on a par with their own – two of the Vajrapani even advised museum acquisitions. The ramifications of this crackdown are still whispered about today.

The Shanghai Police had linked Zhang Xuegeng to an illegal shipping container. Police records allege that the container, which belonged to both Zhang and J. T. Tai, contained more than ten thousand contraband antiquities, including bronze relics from the Three Dynasties era, Tang dynasty pottery, and gold and silver implements from the Qin and Han dynasties.¹⁹⁹ The No. 2. Intermediate People's Court immediately froze the dealers' assets and detained their employees for questioning. The Shanghai Police then opened investigations on Ye Shuzhong and Hong Yulin, effectively putting the antiquities industry's top brass out of business.

Police investigators interrogated the entire Shanghai antiquities guild. Guild members were divided into small groups and required to confess all extant transgressions against the state.²⁰⁰ As with many such interrogations, the interrogators told dealers “if that person had completely confessed, then it was fine...once you tell us everything then you are not a counter-

individuals to whom the nicknames refer. Although the above four dealers were frequently referred to as the Four Vajrapani during the 1950s, the earliest written reference I found is in 1964, in *Shanghai shi renwei, wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu danwei de xioushan, caichu ji daji wenwu shuhua touji fanmai huodong de jihua baogao he pifu*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Board and the Cultural Affairs Administration's Replies and Reports Regarding the Reform, Break-up, and Destruction of Opportunistic Profiteering From the Sale of Cultural Relics, Painting, and Calligraphy] April 7th, 1964 – December 19th, 1964, B3-2-139, SMA, Shanghai.

¹⁹⁹ “Wenwu Shangye,” [Cultural Relics Industries] in Ma Chengyuan, Huang Xuanpei, and Li Junjie, eds., *Shanghai wenwu bowuguan zhi*, [Gazetteer of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museums] (Shanghai, 1997): 430 – 431.

²⁰⁰ *Shanghai shi guwan shangye tongye gonghui qingkuang yuebao yi nianbao yi jiagong dinghuo guanxichang yu fei guanxichang zonghe biao*, [Shanghai antiquities industry guild events, monthly reports, annual reports, restorations and orders, with a compiled list of related factories and unrelated factories] May 1955 – February 29th, 1956, S186-4-13, SMA, Shanghai.

revolutionary.”²⁰¹ Those who didn't cooperate, however, risked getting into trouble because “then we had to go and investigate and make sure they tell us everything.”²⁰²

Guild members soon confessed to all manners of smuggling, condemned Tai as “a traitorous merchant”, and confirmed that the “court's decision is definitely correct and important”.²⁰³ Under interrogation, some admitted to minor crimes such as “not trusting the state and hoarding American dollars”.²⁰⁴ Others wrote “I am willing to confess my wrongs in front of all my industry cohorts and our financial management comrades.”²⁰⁵ These interrogations began as an inquiry into the Four Vajrapani's smuggling ring. The resultant confessions, however, constituted a full investigation into Shanghai's antiquities industry.

The investigation destroyed the Four Vajrapani. Zhang Xuegeng got fifteen years in prison. He was fifty-three years old in 1955 and would have been sixty-eight upon his release; too old to start over in any industry.²⁰⁶ That didn't matter though – he died in prison. Hong

²⁰¹ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

²⁰² Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

²⁰³ *Shanghaishi guwan shangye tongye gonghui qingkuan yuebao yi nianbao yi jiagong dinghuo guanxichang yu fei guanxichang zonghe biao*, [Shanghai antiquities industry guild events, monthly reports, annual reports, restorations and orders, with a compiled list of related factories and unrelated factories] May 1955 – February 29th, 1956, S186-4-13, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁰⁴ *Shanghaishi guwan shangye tongye gonghui qingkuan yuebao yi nianbao yi jiagong dinghuo guanxichang yu fei guanxichang zonghe biao*, [Shanghai antiquities industry guild events, monthly reports, annual reports, restorations and orders, with a compiled list of related factories and unrelated factories] May 1955 – February 29th, 1956, S186-4-13, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁰⁵ *Shanghaishi guwan shangye tongye gonghui qingkuan yuebao yi nianbao yi jiagong dinghuo guanxichang yu fei guanxichang zonghe biao*, [Shanghai antiquities industry guild events, monthly reports, annual reports, restorations and orders, with a compiled list of related factories and unrelated factories] May 1955 – February 29th, 1956, S186-4-13, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁰⁶ I calculated Zhang's age based on his registration certificate with the Shanghai Curios Trader's Association. *Shanghaishi guwan shangye tongye gonghui huiyuan ruhui zhiyuan shu*, [Shanghai Antiquities Industry Guild Members Initiation Documentation] January 1946, S186-1-5, SMA, Shanghai.

Yulin, who was forty-six at the time of his arrest, tried to defect to Hong Kong but soon got mixed up in forgery claims.²⁰⁷ One particularly gray day, the penniless dealer jumped off a building. The Shanghai Museum had confiscated all of his stock.

Ye Shuzhong fought his fifteen-year sentence all the way to the Shanghai Higher People's Court. The dealer argued that charges against him should be reduced because the municipality was trying him for sales that occurred between 1927 and 1942, before Cultural Relics laws existed.²⁰⁸ Ye added that he was never the main perpetrator on any of his overseas deals. He was a middleman for overseas dealers like C. T. Loo, who orchestrated the transactions and took most of the profits.²⁰⁹ The Higher Court acknowledged Ye's appeal, but did not exonerate him. The fifty-one year old got transferred to hard labor in Qinghai, a bitterly cold province on the Tibetan plateau, and never came back.²¹⁰ The only time his family saw him again was when they went to Qinghai to collect his body, which had already been cremated.²¹¹

None of the Vajrapani's families ever recovered from the taint of having produced a smuggler. Chen Peifen, who tracked the Vajrapanis' children through Shanghai Museum connections, explained that the municipality confiscated the dealers' homes and the stigma of

²⁰⁷ Song, *Bainian shoucang: 20 shiji zhongguo minjian shoucang fengyun lu*, 382.

²⁰⁸ Song, *Bainian shoucang: 20 shiji zhongguo minjian shoucang fengyun lu*, 380.

²⁰⁹ For more information on C. T. Loo and his work as a dealer in China, America, and Paris, see Yiyou Wang, *The Louvre from China: A Critical Study of C. T. loo and the Framing of Chinese Art in the United States, 1915 – 1950*. Unpublished PhD, Ohio University, 2007. An image of C. T. Loo can be found at the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition entitled Portraits of the Art World, Available <<http://www.npg.si.edu/cexh/artnews/loo.htm>> [3, December 2010]

²¹⁰ For a thorough discussion of labor conditions in Qinghai during this era see Greg Rohlf, "Dreams of Oil and Fertile Fields: The Rush to Qinghai in the 1950s," *Modern China*, 29, no. 4 (2003): 455-489.

²¹¹ Oral interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

guilt kept their children from getting decent jobs. Even in the 1980s, when she visited one of Ye Shuzhong's daughters, the family regarded her with fear and suspicion. As she parked her bicycle in their housing complex “the whole complex was saying someone's coming, someone's coming...they were afraid because if one person was no good, then the whole family gets affected.”²¹² To underscore the impact that such an arrest had on one's family, Chen Peifen added that “until this day, Ye Shuzhong's two remaining kids, one is 60, one is 55 or so, neither of them are married...even if you're a woman, you have to have something to be able to get married. It's like they were garbage sweepers.”²¹³ In short, the Vajranapis' arrest stamped their children as people without social status – the lowest of the low.

J. T. Tai, the only Vajrapani to escape the raids, stayed in America. According to those who worked with him in New York, Tai talked about Shanghai to no one.²¹⁴



Figure 1.5. J. T. Tai and Ping Y. Tai at Mrs. Tai's sixtieth birthday celebration (1975) in New York. Photograph courtesy of Christie's.

²¹² Oral interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

²¹³ Oral interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

²¹⁴ Oral interview with Lois Katz, October 22nd, 2009; Oral interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009; Oral interview with Patty Tang, October 22nd, 2009.

The Shanghai Museum became the major beneficiary of the Four Vajrapani's downfall. The No. 2 Peoples Court officially condemned the dealers as criminals. Therefore, all their stock got appropriated for the museum collection.²¹⁵

Nationalization

The nationalization of industries began just as the dust settled on the Four Vajrapani. The four men's disappearance signaled the end of an era. Private art dealing shut down. The state made all privately businesses into State Owned Enterprises, transferring all proprietors and their employees to work in state-appointed *danwei* (work units).²¹⁶ The work unit administered everything: Housing, child care, training, health care, stores, post offices, as well as permission for marriage, child -bearing, and travel. Dealers soon understood that regardless of their guild histories or earning potential, “private parties could not deal in works of art anymore. They don't let you do business.”²¹⁷ Shops in the Chinese Curio Markets “still look the same, here there's some ceramics, there's furniture, but it's not separate stores.”²¹⁸ They now belonged to a municipal work unit where all inventory and profits belonged to the state.

Nationalization enabled the Shanghai Museum to acquire the pick of antiquities

²¹⁵ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jiachang wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo he guwan ye guanli de yijian, baogao, pifu ji jianding biao zhun*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration, The Shanghai Representatives Board's Propaganda Board, and Shanghai Municipal Ministry of Culture's Reports, Objections, Approvals and Appraisal Standards for Improving the Management Of Export Appraisals and the Antiquities Industry] February 1960 – November 1960, B172-1-364, SMA, Shanghai.

²¹⁶ Dorothy J. Solinger, “The Chinese Work Unit and Transient Labor in the Transition from Socialism,” *Modern China*, 21, no. 2 (1995): 155-183.

²¹⁷ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

²¹⁸ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

industry stock. This meant the museum could appropriate art market inventory just as it did court-confiscated personal property.²¹⁹ All the antiquities that belonged to the Four Vajrapani, for example, became museum property upon their arrest.²²⁰ Museum employees picked out the best of the lot and sent the rest, largely antiquities post-dating 1795, to commercial work units like the newly nationalized Chinese Curio Markets.²²¹ The Class of 1952 called this process inventory clearance.

Inventory clearance caused widespread panic amongst already apprehensive dealers. Some kept “a large amount of antiquities in storage for many years” and didn't want to lose it all to the state.²²² Others wondered whether the municipality suspected that dealers who had already fled for Hong Kong kept their Shanghai storefronts as a smuggling depot. No one knew what the future portended.

The Shanghai Museum cleared T. Y. King's store on March 6th, 1956. The Kings had already fled the mainland in 1949. One employee, the elderly Li Chaozhen, stayed behind.

²¹⁹ *Shanghai shi renmin weiyuan hui wenyi bangong shi guanyu shanghai shi siyin guwan shang anpai gaizao ji wenwu zhengli gongzuo de youguan wenjian*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Board, Arts and Cultural Office's Documents Regarding Reformation Plans for Shanghai's Art Dealers and the Organized Allocation of Cultural Relics] March 1955 – November 1955, B9-2-25, SMA, Shanghai.

²²⁰ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jiachang wenwu chukou jiating gongzuo he guwan ye guanli de yijian, baogao, pifu ji jiating biao zhun*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration, The Shanghai Representatives Board's Propaganda Board, and Shanghai Municipal Ministry of Culture's Reports, Objections, Approvals and Appraisal Standards for Improving the Management Of Export Appraisals and the Antiquities Industry] February 1960 – November 1960, B172-1-364, SMA, Shanghai.

²²¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju shehui wenhua xitong de bianzhi wenti*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Bureau's Decisions Regarding the Organization of Municipal Cultural Institutions] April 1956 – December 1956, B9-2-56, SMA, Shanghai.

²²² *Shanghai shangye yiju guanyu shi bowuguan tiqu jincaiji guwu jinguo qingkuang baogao*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau Report Regarding the Municipal Museum Appropriating T. Y. King's Antiquities], 1956, B123-3-571, SMA, Shanghai.

Rumors about museum staff tagging and commandeering inventory swept the Chinese Curio Markets within the day. Dealers who peeked in T. Y. King's saw commandeered items displayed in the windows, marked with tags that read “already selected for the Shanghai Museum”.²²³ More than 150 objects, including a pair of woven shoes from the Warring States era, Shang dynasty oracle bones, Han lacquer, Tang jewelry, and Yuan ceramics, bore the museum's seal.²²⁴

Dealers panicked. They wanted to know whether the King family received any compensation from the museum (no), if the museum had permission to commandeer any and all inventory (yes), and whether private buyers had the opportunity to give counter offers to the museum (no). The rumors caused so much agitation that by the end of the week, district administrators refused to allow museum staff daylight access to T. Y. King's.²²⁵ City officials warned that “it is no longer beneficial to expropriate at will...the antiquities guild is abuzz with rumors and it looks bad politically.” Officials expressed particular concern over the Hong Kong connection – “the Cultural Bureau needs to devise a different approach, otherwise this will have a negative impact overseas”.²²⁶ In response, district administrators called Li Chaozhen and T. Y.

²²³ *Shanghai shangye yiju guanyu shi bowuguan tiqu jincaiji guwu jinguo qingkuan baogao*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau Report Regarding the Municipal Museum Appropriating T. Y. King's Antiquities], 1956, B123-3-571, SMA, Shanghai.

²²⁴ *Shanghai shangye yiju guanyu shi bowuguan tiqu jincaiji guwu jinguo qingkuan baogao*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau Report Regarding the Municipal Museum Appropriating T. Y. King's Antiquities], 1956, B123-3-571, SMA, Shanghai.

²²⁵ *Shanghai shangye yiju guanyu shi bowuguan tiqu jincaiji guwu jinguo qingkuan baogao*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau Report Regarding the Municipal Museum Appropriating T. Y. King's Antiquities], 1956, B123-3-571, SMA, Shanghai.

²²⁶ *Shanghai shangye yiju guanyu shi bowuguan tiqu jincaiji guwu jinguo qingkuan baogao*, [Shanghai First

King's daughter in for a talk. Both were told not to discuss inventory clearance with anyone.²²⁷

The Shanghai Museum, however, retained its ability to appropriate stock. Its employees just had to exercise more discretion in the future.

Art dealers soon found out that the Shanghai Museum got the pick of T. Y. King's stock for a pittance. The museum paid five thousand RMB for 151 objects, all of which were antiquities that predated the Yuan dynasty. Li Chaozhen wanted to negotiate for ten thousand RMB, but got rebuked.²²⁸ By way of comparison, in 1958 J. T. Tai sold a Song dynasty jar (Longquan kiln) in London for £620, or 4,237 RMB.²²⁹ The Shanghai Museum's confiscations list for T. Y. King included three Song dynasty ceramics from the same Kiln. The set included a matched pair, which alone was worth more than 4,237 RMB.²³⁰ Nevertheless, the Shanghai Museum got all three ceramics, plus 148 other top-tier antiquities, for only five thousand. The museum used nationalization to justify this price. As Zhu Junbo explained, after 1956 “all the stores changed, it all belonged to the state [gestures]...this belongs to the state, that belongs to the state...if you bought it for 3 rmb then you sell it to me for 4rmb. It wasn't doing business, it

Commercial Bureau Report Regarding the Municipal Museum Appropriating T. Y. King's Antiquities], 1956, B123-3-571, SMA, Shanghai.

²²⁷ *Shanghai shangye yiju guanyu shi bowuguan tiqu jincaiji guwu jinguo qingkuang baogao*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau Report Regarding the Municipal Museum Appropriating T. Y. King's Antiquities], 1956, B123-3-571, SMA, Shanghai.

²²⁸ *Shanghai shangye yiju guanyu shi bowuguan tiqu jincaiji guwu jinguo qingkuang baogao*, [Shanghai First Commercial Bureau Report Regarding the Municipal Museum Appropriating T. Y. King's Antiquities], 1956, B123-3-571, SMA, Shanghai.

²²⁹ Art Files: Burling – Chang, Wen-Ti Box 6. Frank Caro, 1953 - 1969, Folder 15, Letter from Avery Brundage to Frank Caro dated November 13th, 1958. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Avery Brundage Archives, San Francisco.

²³⁰ For an example of the financial means necessary to obtain a matched pair vase, see Jessica Harrison Hall, “Sir Percival David's Taste,” *Apollo Magazine*, No. 566 (2009): 40 – 45.

was just an internal transfer.”²³¹

It would be a mistake, however, to claim that the nationalization of industries expanded the Shanghai Museum's reach. The requisitions made during inventory clearance were consistent with those that the Class of 1952 had performed since they started work. The chart entitled “Shanghai Museum General Acquisitions 1949 – 1959” (figure 1.6) visualizes the history of appropriations at the Shanghai Museum by comparing purchases to cash-less transactions from its first decade in existence.²³²

²³¹ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

²³² Data extracted from *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie*, [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

Shanghai Museum General Acquisitions 1949 - 1959

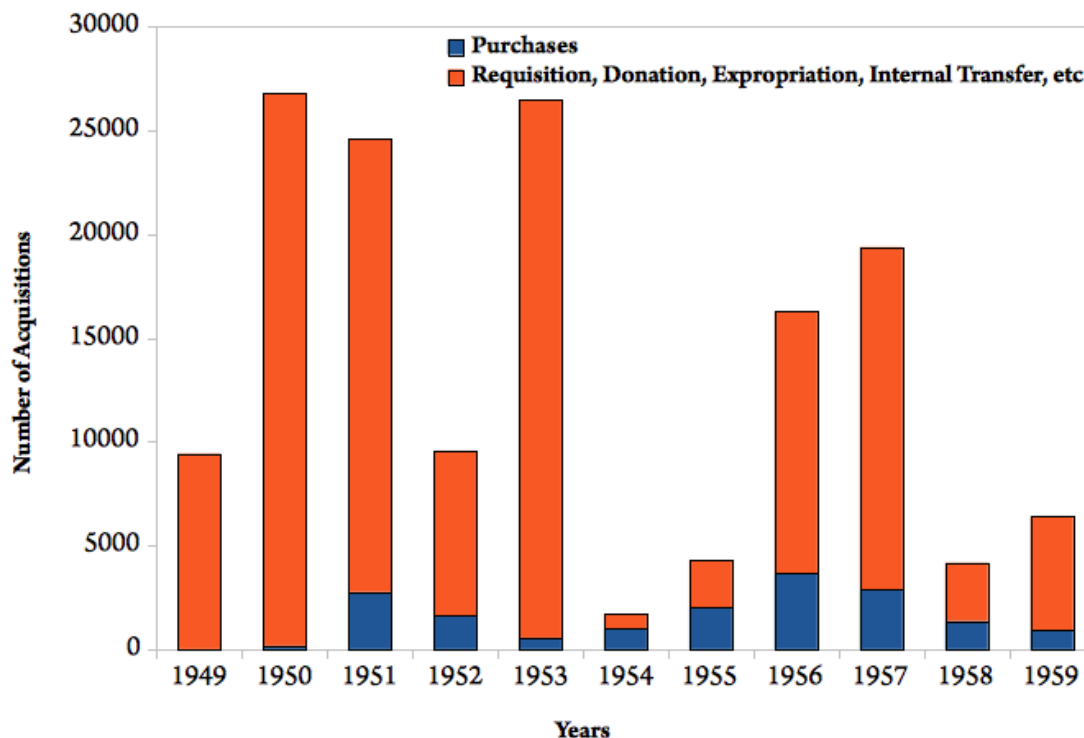


Figure 1.6. Shanghai Museum's General Antiquities Acquisitions, 1949 – 1959.

The top sections of each acquisition column show that the majority of the Shanghai Museum's permanent collection came from cash-free transactions. If anything, the Shanghai Museum's cash-free acquisitions from 1956 were less than those that it got, on average, over the previous seven years. In 1956 the Class of 1952 brought back 12,634 antiquities without having to pay for them. Between 1949 and 1955, the Class of 1952 appropriated, on average per year, 13,540 antiquities – a difference of 6,342 objects in total. In its first decade of existence, the museum got 132,000 of its 149,000-object collection cash-free. This means Shanghai only had to paid for

eleven percent of its entire collection. This is in stark contrast to the First-Tier acquisitions chart (Figure 1.4), which shows the museum paying for seventy-two percent of its collection.

The remarkable requisitions-to-purchases ratio in the Shanghai Museum's general acquisition ledgers has everything to do with the creation of a museum professionals' identity. Enforcing Cultural Relics laws allowed museum employees to present themselves as custodians of Chinese cultural heritage. Appropriations legitimated this identification. The museum argued that its participation in PRC ideological movements “raised the people's political awareness...increased their demand to learn culture and elevated their need for museums.”²³³ Appropriations expanded the museum collection, which, when exhibited, “enriches laborers and students' understanding of the motherland's history, allow the people to critically absorb our ancient cultural essence, raise ethnic pride, and develop new ethnic cultures.”²³⁴ In sum, the museum's role in cultural heritage promotion justified the appropriation of art.

The institutional infrastructure for appropriations was immense. The museum operated a Cultural Relics Warehouse that shifted through factories and recycling centers for antiquities that it acquired by internal transfer.²³⁵ It also maintained a trade-and-transfer partnership with Shanghai's Bureau of Higher Education: Universities and colleges relinquished their collections

²³³ Shanghai Museum, *Chenlieshi shuomingshu*, [An Interpretative Guide to the Exhibitions] (Shanghai, 1952): 4. The book is out of print. I found my copy in the private collection of Xia Shunkui.

²³⁴ Shanghai Museum, *Chenlieshi shuomingshu*, [An Interpretative Guide to the Exhibitions]: 4.

²³⁵ *Huadong wenhua bu guanyu jiang gaibu suoshu de luxun jinian guan, wenwu cangku yijiao shanghai shi wenhua ju lingdao de tongzhi ji shanghai shi wenhua ju de jiejiao jihua, baogao*, [China Eastern Region Ministry of Culture's Notification Regarding Transferring the Luxun Memorial Museum and Cultural Relics Warehouse to the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Authority, with the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans and Report Regarding the Acceptance of Transfer], December 1952 – May 1953, B172-1-107, SMA, Shanghai.

of ancient bronzes and mirrors to the Shanghai Museum in exchange for fossils.²³⁶ Defunct cultural institutions such as the Shanghai History Museum and the Shanghai Confucius Research Institute also relinquished their possessions to the Department of Cultural Affairs, which automatically transferred the artifacts to the Shanghai Museum.²³⁷ Museum employees could also, as previously mentioned, appropriate antiquities from abandoned estates and persons under trial. Whenever a court trial resulted in the confiscation of personal property, for example, the Shanghai Museum could request that its employees takeover the appropriation process. The museum staff called the subjects of appropriation *hanjian* or “traitors of the Han people, at that time they still used that term.”²³⁸ Employees who participated in appropriations found many of the homes unoccupied because “they were all gone, gone off to Taiwan, or some people were captured and jailed already.”²³⁹ Nevertheless, “they had lots of objects in their home. You would go over there and take a look, then fill out forms for anything you wanted to take back.”²⁴⁰ In interviews, members of the Shanghai Museum confirmed that “once the house was searched all cultural relics got confiscated and sent to the museum.”²⁴¹

The museum's position in municipal infrastructure made appropriating easy. Ostensibly,

²³⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shinian lai wenwu gongzuo, qiangjiu gongzuo de zongjie, tongji shuzi*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Conclusion and Statistics Regarding the Past Ten Year's Work on Cultural Relics Preservation and Rescue] October 1959 – March 1960, B172-1-341, SMA, Shanghai.

²³⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shinian lai wenwu gongzuo, qiangjiu gongzuo de zongjie, tongji shuzi*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Conclusion and Statistics Regarding the Past Ten Year's Work on Cultural Relics Preservation and Rescue] October 1959 – March 1960, B172-1-341, SMA, Shanghai.

²³⁸ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

²³⁹ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

²⁴¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

appropriations paperwork took time because Shanghai maintained distinct offices for all its cultural institutions. By municipal appointment, however, the same administrators who served the city's myriad cultural boards and institutions also ran the Shanghai Museum. Thus, in practice Shanghai Museum employees simply went to their supervisors if they wanted “a letter of introduction.”²⁴² By authority of that letter, museum staff could enter defunct institutions, frozen estates, or recycling centers. Once inside, they “appraised the items and took them back to the museum.”²⁴³

By the end of 1956, Shanghai had successfully branded art dealing as a delinquent profession that promoted national economy with one hand but squandered cultural relics with the other.²⁴⁴ Dealers' authentication skills remained valuable, but the taint of smuggling cut off any potential for upward mobility. The municipality forbade museums from hiring art dealers outright. The Ministry of Culture branded art dealers “individuals with serious historical and political problems” and placed them on the same scale as “tomb raiders and other bad elements.”²⁴⁵ Those with “close relationships with overseas art dealers” were either immediately terminated from cultural institutions or kept under close surveillance and consistently placed in

²⁴² Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

²⁴³ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

²⁴⁴ *Shanghai maoyi xintuo gongsi guanyu shanghai shi guwan xingye qingkuang de muodi baogao*, [Shanghai Commercial Trust Company's Comprehensive Report on the Shanghai Antiquities Industry] March 12th, 1956, B123-3-578-19, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁴⁵ *Wenhua bu, huadong wenhua ju guanyu wenbo, tushu gongzuo de zhishi, guiding ji woju youguan de qingshi baogao*, [Ministry Of Culture And China Eastern Cultural Bureau's Directives And Regulations Regarding Museum And Library Work And Our Bureau's Related Petitions And Reports] 1954 – 1955, B172-4-301, SMA, Shanghai.

reeducation programs. These procedures dramatically changed art dealers' identities. They transformed from entrepreneurs to suspicious elements who not only needed “reeducation in political understanding”, but also “intimate attention to their personal rehabilitation.”²⁴⁶

This transformation of identity enabled the Shanghai Museum to achieve what Zhang Congyu had proposed at the National Summit of PRC Museums in 1953. They took over distribution in the Shanghai art market. “The Cultural Relics Store and the Arts and Crafts Stores can sell” antiquities if and only if the Shanghai Museum processed them first.²⁴⁷ Art dealerships had to keep “any kind of cultural relic” for the museum.²⁴⁸ Employees referred to these transactions as “the agreement” between museum and market.²⁴⁹ Sun Jiecong, an employee at Duoyun Xian Art House, explained that “if our work unit, us retail, commercial work units, if we got anything good...the first thing we have to do is to tell the museum, ask them if they want it.”²⁵⁰ If the museum replied yes, then the object automatically became museum property. If “the Shanghai museum thought well we already have this” then the item was offered to “a museum outside the area.”²⁵¹ Only when no museums expressed interest did Duoyun Xian make the item available on the open market.

²⁴⁶ *Wenhua bu, gongan bu guanyu jiaqiang wenwu anquan baowei gongzuo de tongzhi ji Shanghai shi wenhua ju suo shu she wen dui wai wenwu baoguan gongzuo de duokou jiancha baogao*, [Ministry of Culture And Office Of Security's Notifications Regarding Strengthening Cultural Relics Security Work And Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Personnel Inspections On Local Outfacing Cultural Relics Preservation Work] May 4th, 1960 – November 2nd, 1960, B172-5-249, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁴⁷ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

²⁴⁹ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

²⁵⁰ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

²⁵¹ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

Xia Shunkui, a member of the Class of 1952, asserts that antiquities' transformation from private to public asset would not have been possible without the nationalization of industries. Nevertheless, he privileges the promotion of Chinese cultural heritage over the erasure of art dealers' upward mobility. “In terms of protecting cultural relics, we had some achievements. Whether they were supposed to confiscate those objects, what can we say about that? That's just the politics of the time.”²⁵² Period reports confirm Xia's convictions. Nationalization reports stress that State Owned Enterprises provided a minimum standard of living for dealers. Jobs at the antiquities danwei “weren't well paid or anything”, but the salaries ensured that dealers “can at least pass the days.”²⁵³ The danwei even tried to pay wives and older relatives, whom typically worked without pay in family-owned businesses.²⁵⁴ In other words, nationalization took away art dealers' businesses, but not their livelihood.

Smugglers On Exhibit

Museum exhibitions reinforced the distinction between museum professionals and art dealers. Throughout nationalization, Shanghai Museum exhibitions such as “Ancient Relics That Antiquities Dealers Who Transgressed the Law Tried To Smuggle” cast art dealing in a negative light.²⁵⁵ The Shanghai Police provided “photographs, antiquities and account books”

²⁵² Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

²⁵³ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

²⁵⁴ *Zhongguo zhubao yuqi gongsi shanghai shi gongsi guanyu zhubao yuqi ye tanshang si xie shang dingxin de baogao*, [The Chinese Jewelry and Jade Company's Shanghai Branch Report Regarding Workers' Salary Settlements], 1956, B123-3-300, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁵⁵ *Shanghai shi wenwu baoguan weiyuan hui guanyu songshang bufu guwan shang daoyun gudai wenwu zhanlan choubei weiyuan hui huiyi jilu de han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Protection Management Bureau's Documents Regarding Member Meeting Minutes In Preparation for Its Ancient Relics That Antiquities

from at-large dealers like C. T. Loo, while Customs contributed frequent-offenders lists.²⁵⁶

Exhibitions featured “expropriated artifacts from Zhang Xuegeng's case”, as well as “court records, confessions, photos of secret rooms where dealers hid their antiquities, and photos of antiquities smuggled overseas after 1949.”²⁵⁷ Labeling on the displays encouraged museum visitors to denounce antiquities smuggling and “isolate law-breakers”.²⁵⁸ The galleries even showcased exemplary letters, purportedly sent in by individuals who wanted to shame art dealers for participating in an industry that peddled Chinese cultural heritage.²⁵⁹

The 1956 Vajrapani show opened alongside a courtroom-style exhibition entitled “America's Conspiracy and Cultural Relics Orphaned in Taiwan”.²⁶⁰ This exhibition literally put

Dealers Who Transgressed the Law Tried To Smuggle Exhibition] March 17th, 1956, B9-2-46-18, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁵⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁵⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁵⁸ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁵⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶⁰ *Shanghai shi wenwu baoguan weiyuan hui guanyu songshang bufa guwan shang daoyun gudai wenwu zhanlan choubi weiyuan hui huiyi jilu de han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Protection Management Bureau's Documents Regarding Member Meeting Minutes In Preparation for Its Ancient Relics That Antiquities

the antiquities industry's association with overseas collections on trial. Shanghai Museum staff mounted photographs of “our nation's cultural relics in Taiwan” as evidence of an “American imperialist plot.”²⁶¹ Signboards posted throughout the museum praised nationalization for “its enforcement of policies that properly protect cultural relics” and highlighted “the Chinese Communist Party and the state's steady privileging of cultural relics.”²⁶² In order to appeal to general audiences, the museum even simplified the names of specific antiquities. Archaic Chinese words and specialized terminology like “mid-mountain style” got edited out because “ordinary audiences find them...too complicated and not easy to understand.”²⁶³ Instead, displays featured new names that described the objects' period and categorical designation. “Mid-mountain style colored pottery container” became “colored pottery container from the new stone age.”²⁶⁴

Dealers Who Transgressed the Law Tried To Smuggle Exhibition] March 17th, 1956, B9-2-46-18, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶² *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶³ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu zuzhi shanghai bowuguan jindai meishu gongyiping shougou weiyuan hui, yinzhi wenwu tupian xingxiao guowai deng de baobao, pifu*, [Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai Cultural Bureau's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Shanghai Museum's Board For The Acquisition of Contemporary Arts And Crafts, The Sale Of Reproduction Cultural Relics And Print Material Overseas, Etc] September 18th, 1954 – February 24th, 1956, B172-4-419, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶⁴ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu zuzhi shanghai bowuguan jindai meishu gongyiping shougou weiyuan hui, yinzhi wenwu tupian xingxiao guowai deng de baobao, pifu*, [Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai Cultural Bureau's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Shanghai Museum's Board For The Acquisition of Contemporary Arts And

The exhibitions worked. Art dealers who didn't hear the death knell when the Vajrapani got arrested saw the end when they visited the Shanghai Museum. Their nationalization applications stressed that “the state and the party's guidance and teachings have elevated our guild members' ideas and enlightenment”, inspiring dealers to “link our future with that of the state.”²⁶⁵ Dealers even offered to do exhibitions of their own. Attendants at the Chinese Curio Markets could showcase select curios because “delegations to Shanghai often enjoy visiting the Shanghai Art Market, either as a part of a tour or to purchase.”²⁶⁶ These exhibits could act as a diplomatic lubricant: “All the nations of the world are enamored with the handicrafts that our nation's workers have invented, including ceramics, bronzes, jades, and stone carvings.”²⁶⁷ These proposals came to naught. In the years following nationalization, museum employees increasingly cast art dealers into commercial roles, even as museums exercised more power in the art market.

Collector Psychology

Their first four years at the Shanghai Museum taught the Class of 1952 that amassing a

Crafts, The Sale Of Reproduction Cultural Relics And Print Material Overseas, Etc] September 18th, 1954 – February 24th, 1956, B172-4-419, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶⁵ *Shanghai diyi shangye ju guanggao, guwan, qideng, bingxiang geyin shengqing shu*, [Nationalization Application Letters from Shanghai's Advertising, antiquities, Automotive, Electric, and Refrigeration Companies] 1956, B123-3-530, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶⁶ *Shanghai diyi shangye ju guanggao, guwan, qideng, bingxiang geyin shengqing shu*, [Nationalization Application Letters from Shanghai's Advertising, antiquities, Automotive, Electric, and Refrigeration Companies] 1956, B123-3-530, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁶⁷ *Shanghai diyi shangye ju guanggao, guwan, qideng, bingxiang geyin shengqing shu*, [Nationalization Application Letters from Shanghai's Advertising, antiquities, Automotive, Electric, and Refrigeration Companies] 1956, B123-3-530, SMA, Shanghai.

collection took money and state collaboration. But that's not all. To get more than Shanghai's best, to get China's best, the Class of 1952 needed relationships, access, and sheer tenacity.

Zheng Zhong, a *Wenhui* newspaper reporter who worked the Shanghai Museum beat throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, dubbed the museum's acquisition techniques its “collector psychology.”²⁶⁸

Between 1952 and 1956, junior employees' biggest responsibility was to track down antiquities.²⁶⁹ The museum assembled its own acquisitions team. Senior staff personally trained junior employees in how and where to locate top-quality artifacts, both in the classroom and on the field. Senior archaeologist Jiang Dayi, for example, mentored junior archaeologist Sun Weichang when they paired up to excavate Shanghai's hinterland counties. When the two first entered a small town, Jiang sent Sun to bed early and woke the younger man up at dawn the next morning. They walked to the local tea-house for breakfast and approached regulars to ask whether anyone in town had found any archaeological material.²⁷⁰ Jiang noted that tea-houses were excellent sources of local information.²⁷¹ “There are lots of elderly people and they would

²⁶⁸ Interview with Zheng Zhong, June 11th, 2009.

²⁶⁹ Shanghai's cultural institutions did not have much of a collection when Mayor Chen Yi inaugurated plans to establish them in 1950. Although the CRMB inherited all the archaeological artifacts from the city's defunct history museum, the quality and quantity of those objects did not measure up to the city's ambitious acquisition plan. Even the institutions' own employees opined that “in terms of quality our collection was a zero.”

Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

²⁷⁰ Interview with Sun Weichang, April 30th, 2010.

²⁷¹ For more on tea-houses see Qin Shao, “Tempest over Teapots: The Vilification of Teahouse Culture in Early Republican China,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57, no. 4 (1998): 1009-1041; Di Wang, *The Teahouse: Small Business, Everyday Culture, and Public Politics in Chengdu, 1900-1950*, (Stanford, 2008).

gossip...some might tell you something.”²⁷² Sun confirmed that tea-house sources led the pair to ancient artifacts “in locals' houses. They might have artifacts in their house that they just use as everyday tools, like pans that fed the chickens.”²⁷³ The museum successfully acquired hinterland artifacts at below-market prices because “the farmers didn't care, they don't know how much it's worth in the city.”²⁷⁴ Jiang's tea-house technique unearthed many artifacts and excavation sites in the Shanghai countryside and remains a part of archaeological training today.²⁷⁵

Museum administrators also installed donor-relations programs to gain access to private collections. Municipal officials collaborated as museum doyens taught the Class of 1952 proven techniques for soliciting Jiangnan's private collectors. Some of these techniques gave symbolic capital.²⁷⁶ City officials presented official commendations and merit awards for private contributions, demonstrating that the state held donors in high regard and awarded them accordingly.²⁷⁷ Others, such as regular social visits and special invite lists, suggest a more personal touch.

The acquisition of the Pan family art collection best illustrates the Shanghai Museum's use of collector psychology. On July 6th of 1951, Pan Dayu wrote a letter to the Shanghai

²⁷² Interview with Sun Weichang, April 30th, 2010.

²⁷³ Interview with Sun Weichang, April 30th, 2010.

²⁷⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

²⁷⁵ Interview with Sun Weichang, April 30th, 2010.

²⁷⁶ I borrow the phrase symbolic capital from Zhang Xiaojun, “Land Reform in Yang Village: Symbolic Capital and the Determination of Class Status,” *Modern China*, 30, no. 1 (2004): 3-45.

²⁷⁷ For examples of these certificates see *Shanghaishi wenhua ju, shanghaishi renwei guanyu jieshou Gu Lujiang xiansheng juanxian wenwu de qingshi, pifu, jiangzhuang he qingce*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau, Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Board's Petitions, Rescripts, Merit Awards And Inventory List For Accepting Mister Gu Lijiang's Donated Cultural Relics] 1955 – 1956, B172-4-534, SMA, Shanghai.

Cultural Ministry expressing her desire to donate “two great bronzes named Yu and Ke...to the municipal collection for permanent safe keeping.”²⁷⁸ The Pan family collection commanded an international reputation, but few antiquarians had ever gained access to their Suzhou estate.²⁷⁹ The museum seized this opportunity. Administrators immediately commandeered two trucks and filled the vehicles with custom-made storage containers, hay camouflage, cotton cushioning, as well as one bronze connoisseur, four art dealers, and fourteen movers.²⁸⁰ Once the retrieval team brought Ke and Yu back to Shanghai, museum staff installed both in a special exhibit and dedicated a state ceremony to the Pans. Tang Tao, the Ministry of Culture's regional bureau chief, awarded Pan Dayu with two thousand RMB for “preserving our people's cultural inheritance and spreading nationalism.”²⁸¹ As news of the donation trickled from Shanghai to Beijing, the Pans saw laudatory coverage in both local and national news.

²⁷⁸ Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia* [Shanghai Collectors]: 12.

²⁷⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

²⁸⁰ Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia* [Shanghai Collectors]: 13.

²⁸¹ Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia* [Shanghai Collectors]: 14.



Figure 1.7. Commemorative photo for Pan Dayu's donation of Yu and Ke to the Shanghai Museum, dated December 28th, 1952. Pan Dayu is seated second to the right on the first row. Photo obtained from Zheng Zhong's private collection, Shanghai.

Collector psychology like that described above opened doors. Li Junjie explained that private owners may sell their antiquities for the right price but they “also loved owning it” and “would rather not part with it.”²⁸² Collectors wanted to see their treasures “become part of a permanent institution.”²⁸³ Thus, collector psychology practices portrayed the Shanghai Museum as *the* permanent institution. Employees “kept up relations with donors” and “did lots of services for them.”²⁸⁴ Li confirmed that collector psychology, or the museum's willingness to invest both financially and personally in potential donors, helped it obtain not only the best antiquities in Shanghai, but also in China. Like Pan Dayu, “a lot of donors in those early days were from Suzhou”, but they chose to “give [their collections] to Shanghai and not Suzhou. That's because

²⁸² Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

²⁸³ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

²⁸⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

Shanghai had the infrastructure first.”²⁸⁵ Indeed, Pan Dayu would donate and sell hundreds of antiquities to the Shanghai Museum over the next two decades, including bronzes relics, ancient mirrors, jade ornaments, paintings, and calligraphy.²⁸⁶ Pan's enthusiasm even motivated the rest of her family. For example, Ding Xierou, Pan Dayu's sister, also donated her art collection to the Shanghai Museum.²⁸⁷

Collector psychology practices complicate the PRC's overarching narrative about art acquisition in the early 1950s, which claim that private collectors donated out of a newly-discovered sense of nationalism.²⁸⁸ From 1950 to 1956, PRC media promoted numerous stories about the myriad individuals who donated antiquities to state cultural institutions.²⁸⁹ *Wenwu*, the PRC's premiere journal of art and archeology, even designated a Donations and Benefactors section in each of its issues. These publications manufactured the fiction that many of the PRC's museum collections came from voluntary, jingoistic donations made in the 1950s. This fiction of

²⁸⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

²⁸⁶ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie*, [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁸⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, July 17th, 2009; Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010; *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shoucang jia juanxian zhengui wenwu de qingshi, pifu ji jiangzhuang*, [Ministry Of Culture, Shanghai Municipal People's Board, Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Petitions, Rescripts, And Awards Regarding Private Collectors' Donated Precious Cultural Relics] March 13th, 1961 – May 9th, 1961, B172-5-438, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁸⁸ For more on the link between nationalism and culture see Tze-Ki Hon, “Cultural Identity and Local Self-Government: A Study of Liu Yizheng's 'History of Chinese Culture',” *Modern China*, 30, no. 4 (2004): 506-542.

²⁸⁹ For an example see “Juanxian: Zhoudai tongqi Guojizi baipan gui zhu renmin,” *Wenwu can kao zi liao* 1, no.1-6, (1950): 56-57.

donation perpetuates to the present. The descendants of art dealers and collectors maintain that “elites in China are the most nationalist” because “look at everything the government did to them, and yet they still donate their collections to the state.”²⁹⁰

Shanghai's case contradicts the prevailing narrative. Museum records demonstrate that institutions played a crucial role in rallying and recruiting donations. Figure 1.6, entitled “Shanghai Museum Donors by Year of Donation, 1950 – 2007”, demonstrates active intervention's impact on antiquities acquisition.²⁹¹

Shanghai Museum Donors by Year of Donation, 1950 - 2007

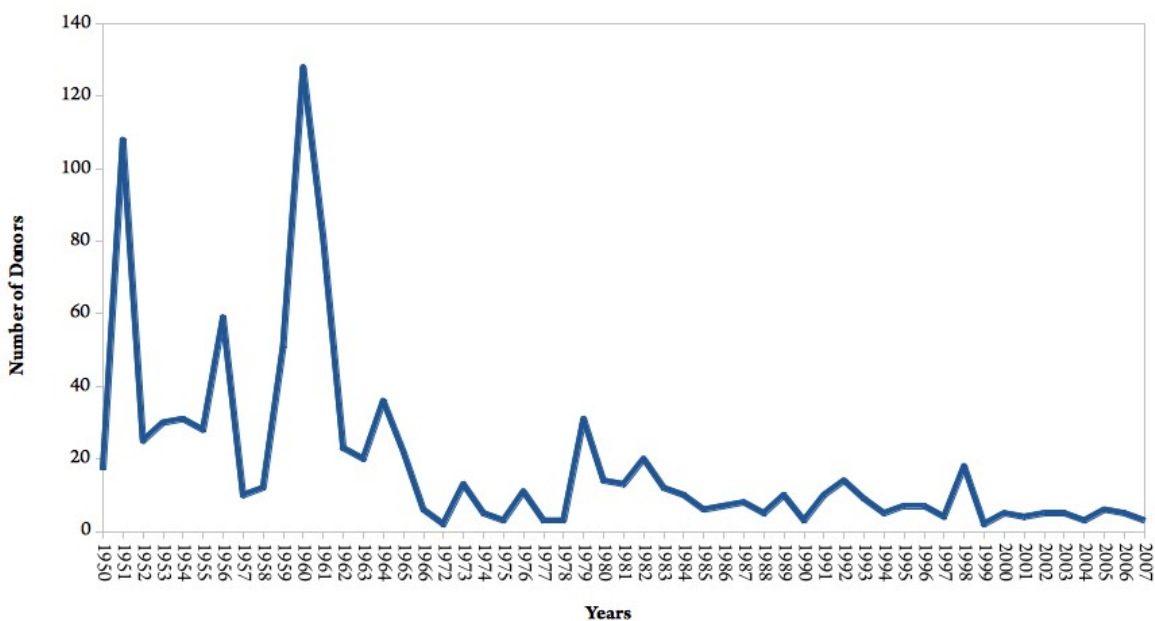


Figure 1.8. Shanghai Museum Donors By Year Of Donation.

²⁹⁰ Interview with Ma Zhongde, June 20th, 2009.

²⁹¹ Data retrieved from the Donors Plaque in the Shanghai Museum Lobby

On average, the Shanghai Museum received donations from 18 individual donors each year, though the institution's median number of donors between 1950 and 2007 is ten per year. This indicates that in some years, unusually large numbers of donors contributed to the Shanghai Museum, pulling the mean to the right of the median. The peaks and valleys in Figure 1.8 confirm these findings. The number of donors-per-year ranges between two (years 1972 and 1999) and 128 (year 1960).

Wenwu's claims regarding nationalistic giving predicts that years with the greatest number of donors would appear between 1949 and 1953 – the crucial years of PRC nation-building. Instead, the years in which so many donors gave that the numbers appear as outliers in the dataset are 1951, 1956, 1959, 1960, and 1961. These dates have nothing to do with nation-building. 1951, 1956, 1959, 1960, and 1961 correspond to years when museum employees actively engaged donors for institutional reasons. In 1951, for example, 108 donors gave to the museum, six times the above-mentioned mean. The staff won these donors by undertaking intense recruitment activity for the museum's grand opening on December of 1952. As Li Junjie explained, the museum's collection was “equal to zero” and the staff had to organize a major acquisition effort to create a permanent collection.²⁹² The years 1959, 1960, and 1961, correspond to both the Great Leap Forward, during which agricultural campaigns inflicted tremendous social, political, and financial strain on both ordinary and elite Chinese, and a second

²⁹² Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

grand-opening for the Shanghai Museum.²⁹³ In October of 1959 the museum moved to a larger, more prestigious location in downtown Shanghai. Museum employees took this move so seriously that they dubbed its transportation logistics the “Forty-Day's Battle.”²⁹⁴ Donation records collaborate this sentiment. A total of 261 donors contributed antiquities to the permanent collection in those three years. Minus the exception of 1951, that's more donors than the previous decade combined. While the museum employees insist that donor recruitment drove successful acquisitions, one suspects that the overwhelming need to maintain basic sustenance for families undergoing Great Leap Forward movements also played a role in antiquities divestment. The same sinister logic applies to 1956, the year of nationalization. Given the level of panic that inventory clearance imposed on Shanghai's art market, it is difficult to believe that individuals donating to the Shanghai Museum had only nationalism on their minds.

The Shanghai Museum's donation patterns correspond with that of the Palace Museum in Beijing, whose peaks also do not correlate with the so-called jingoistic surge of the early 1950s.²⁹⁵ Nationalism may have motivated some private collectors. The distribution in

²⁹³ For Frank Dikötter's seminal study on the social and political ramifications of the Great Leap Forward see Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: the History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958 – 1962*. (London, 2010). For a detailed study on how socialization campaigns impacted art acquisition as well as political culture in the PRC, see Chang-tai Hung, *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic*. (Ithaca, 2011).

²⁹⁴ *Wenhua bu guanyu zhaokao quanguo wenwu, bowuguan gongzuo huiyi de tongzhi ji shanghai shi wenhua ju de huibao cailiao*, [The Ministry of Culture's Reports and Materials Regarding the Notification to Publicize the Nation's Cultural Relics, Museum Administrative Meeting Minutes, and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration], February 1960 – June 1960, B172-1-362, SMA, Shanghai.

²⁹⁵ Donation records for the Palace Museum (1949 – 1999) can be found in Gugong bowu yuan, *Gugong bowu yuan wushi nian rucang wenwu jingping ji*, [Selected Gems of Cultural Relics – Newly Collected in the Palace Museum in the Last Fifty Years] (Beijing, 1999): 358 – 360.

Shanghai's donor ledgers, however, suggest that institutional motivations like “expanding our collection and exhibition space”, as well as larger shifts in the PRC's political socialization plans, have greater predictive power when it comes to determining the number of individual donors on a year-to-year basis.²⁹⁶ “Nationalistic giving” only lent dramatic flair to the museum's collector psychology practices. In Shanghai, as is true throughout mainland China, donors played just a small role in an elaborate drama. In this drama, museums use donations as the operative fiction to create, and legitimize, their role as custodians of Chinese cultural heritage.

The greatest irony, however, lies in comparing the figure entitled Shanghai Museum Donors By Year Of Donation to the figure entitled Shanghai Museum's General Antiquities Acquisitions, 1949 – 1959 (Figure 1.6). While donations gave the museum a boost in acquisitions in the late 1950s, these numbers pale in comparison to the acquisitions bonanza that the Shanghai Museum achieved between 1949 and 1953, the years that museum employees and official sources highlight as the crowning era of nationalistic giving. 1949 – 1953 are also the years with the most dramatic non-purchase to purchase ratios. In those four years, 95% of the museum's acquisitions came cash-free – out of 96,863 objects, 91,777 were acquired without payment. In contrast, between 1954 and 1959, the museum acquired 52,181 objects, and paid for 23% of them.

²⁹⁶ *Wenhua bu guanyu zhaokao quanguo wenwu, bowuguan gongzuo huiyi de tongzhi ji shanghai shi wenhua ju de huibao cailiao*, [The Ministry of Culture's Reports and Materials Regarding the Notification to Publicize the Nation's Cultural Relics, Museum Administrative Meeting Minutes, and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration], February 1960 – June 1960, B172-1-362, SMA, Shanghai.

The statistics above reveal the cracks in the Shanghai Museum's operative fiction. Those who dealt with collectors on a daily basis saw a blurry line between donations, divestments, and appropriations. Municipal administrators even portrayed private collectors as resources, “Shanghai has a lot of pools of water, every collector is like a pool of water.”²⁹⁷ The ideological campaigns created opportunity. “Those big rich families, after 1949 they didn't have income anymore” and “if you want to pass the days, to eat, then you can sell your family collections.”²⁹⁸ Thus, “once the Shanghai cultural bureau knows who has nice things in their house, they can go to work on those individuals. They can tell you to donate it, or sell it to the museum.”²⁹⁹ In sum, while the Shanghai Museum touts its wealth of philanthropic bequests, the subtext of the bequests had little to do with voluntary giving.

Interviews with the Class of 1952 indicate that the Shanghai Museum's collector psychology practices carried a long life span. The Pan clan, for example, received regular visits from the museum staff for five decades. On each visit, the Pans received token gifts. Museum employees brought moon cakes during the Mid-Autumn festival and sweet glutinous rice cakes for the Lunar New Year, a courtesy that the institution extended to all its major donors. The curatorial department offered appraisal services and “didn't take appraisal fees from our collectors.”³⁰⁰ When visiting or receiving visits from private collectors, the museum staff never

²⁹⁷ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

³⁰⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

“sat facing south,” meaning they deferred master's honors as a sign of deference.³⁰¹ The conservation department offered repair services for collectors with broken ceramics and fragile paintings.³⁰² Additionally, the museum regularly sent collectors special invitations for antiquities discussion-groups, closed exhibitions, and special viewings with the education department.³⁰³ The institution inaugurated these practices in 1950, before the museum's grand opening, and continues to employ them today. When museum staff introduced reporter Zheng Zhong to the Pan Clan in the 1990s, the reporter immediately noticed the institution's mark on the family. Pan Dayu and her daughter greeted the museum staff “like family, and immediately fell into chatting about mutual acquaintances' comings and goings.”³⁰⁴ Collector psychology practices encouraged relationship building, which enabled Shanghai to buy from Suzhou and Hangzhou families even though the families' regional allegiances had nothing to do with Shanghai.

The Class of 1952 employed collector psychology practices far and wide. The techniques gave Shanghai an edge, especially as employees found themselves in competition with acquisition teams from other wealthy municipalities. The Shanghai staff interpreted their interaction with other museum employees as part of a nationwide trend. As Huang Xuanpei observed, “Shanghai could to go other provinces and other provinces also came to us.”³⁰⁵ These acquisition visits aroused turf wars between museums. Institutions guarded local collections jealously and refused

³⁰¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

³⁰² Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁰³ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

³⁰⁴ Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia* [Shanghai Collectors]: 15.

³⁰⁵ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

to relinquish choice antiquities to out-of-towners.³⁰⁶ Shanghai, for example, competed with neighboring provinces like Zhejiang and Jiangsu for access to wealthy collecting families in Suzhou and Hangzhou.³⁰⁷ Beijing and Liaoning teams frequently traveled to the Jiangnan region, all the while jostling for artifacts in the Chinese southwest and northeast.³⁰⁸ Collector psychology, however, gave Shanghai's acquisitions team advantages that other museums didn't have. Local collectors felt encouraged to sell to the Shanghai Museum because collector psychology practices indicated that its staff might grant special favors.

The Shanghai Museum's nationwide acquisition program depleted private collections in poorer cities such as Suzhou and Hangzhou. This led some to complain that in the PRC's hierarchy of cities, administrators in lower-level cities “can't sit on your position securely unless

³⁰⁶ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu zuzhi shanghai bowuguan jindai meishu gongyiping shougou weiyuan hui, yinzhi wenwu tupian xingxiao guowai deng de baobao, pifu*, [Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai Cultural Bureau's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Shanghai Museum's Board For The Acquisition of Contemporary Arts And Crafts, The Sale Of Reproduction Cultural Relics And Print Material Overseas, Etc] September 18th, 1954 – February 24th, 1956, B172-4-419, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁰⁷ For one example see correspondence regarding Shanghai competing with Suzhou for a wooden Buddha statue in *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu zuzhi shanghai bowuguan jindai meishu gongyiping shougou weiyuan hui, yinzhi wenwu tupian xingxiao guowai deng de baobao, pifu*, [Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai Cultural Bureau's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Shanghai Museum's Board For The Acquisition of Contemporary Arts And Crafts, The Sale Of Reproduction Cultural Relics And Print Material Overseas, Etc] September 18th, 1954 – February 24th, 1956, B172-4-419, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁰⁸ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu zuzhi shanghai bowuguan jindai meishu gongyiping shougou weiyuan hui, yinzhi wenwu tupian xingxiao guowai deng de baobao, pifu*, [Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai Cultural Bureau's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Shanghai Museum's Board For The Acquisition of Contemporary Arts And Crafts, The Sale Of Reproduction Cultural Relics And Print Material Overseas, Etc] September 18th, 1954 – February 24th, 1956, B172-4-419, SMA, Shanghai; *Wenhua bu, caizheng bu deng guanyu xiaxiang shougou chutu wenwu, baocun zhubao yuqi, guwan wenwu deng guizhong wuping banfa tongzhi, Han*, [Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Finance And Others' Notifications And Directives Regarding Methods For Purchasing Excavated Cultural Relics In The Countryside, The Preservation Of Jewelry And Jade Wares, Curios, Cultural Relics And Other Precious Materials] May 28th, 1956 – October 10th, 1956, B172-4-530, SMA, Shanghai.

you give the people in Shanghai what they want.”³⁰⁹ Similarly, commercial work units protested that “it's not selling to them, it's called letting them have it.”³¹⁰

The Shanghai Museum's acquisition drives also occasionally backfired. In the winter of 1955, Huang Xuanpei and his acquisitions partner, Chen Desheng, took a bus to a train to a boat that finally deposited them on Dongting Shan, the biggest island on Lake Tai. They went from house to house, giving out their hotel address and telling residents that Shanghai had a keen interest in acquiring any ancient bronzes, ceramics, bamboo carvings, or embroideries – the senior staff assured the two that Suzhou's Lake Tai region had “lots of private collections.”³¹¹ Then the lake froze. The two only had funds to last them ten days but could not find a boat to take them off the island for nearly a month. Huang commented that in retrospect, it was amazing he and Chen had managed to acquire anything at all from Suzhou. Their ordeal made them look like paupers who “collected garbage.”³¹²

Conclusion

By the conclusion of nationalization in 1956, the Shanghai Museum had already established itself as *the* critical link between high culture and ordinary people. Making headway amongst China's private collectors allowed the museum to transition from a serendipitously well-located, regional collection to a cultural institution with resources that commanded national

³⁰⁹ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

³¹⁰ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

³¹¹ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

³¹² Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

renown. Gaining distribution authority over Shanghai's art market, the biggest in China, allowed museum employees to distinguish their professional identities from that of art dealers. All the while, training the Class of 1952 transformed Shanghai's chicken hatchers and alley kids into the PRC's first generation of Red antiquarians, a key step in maintaining winning over Jiangnan's older elites.

Key differences, nevertheless, remained between the present Shanghai Museum of international stature and its regionally-based self in 1956. The Class of 1952 were still green. They could give gallery talks and carry out everyday museum operations, but didn't know the difference between a Chao Menfu and a Bada Xianren painting. The nationalized economy gave the museum more reach in the art market. Collectors who had no incentive to sell, however, could still shut their doors when museums came calling. What private collectors, art dealers, and the Class of 1952 had yet to experience is the Shanghai Museum's transformation into one of the world's biggest collections of Chinese art. Throughout this transformation, the museum staff maintained relationships with private collectors and the art market, but gradually erased their collection's provenance in favor of a fiction of donation that the museum itself authored. Dealers like Ye Shuzhong had only lived through the transformation of antiquities from private to public property. The fully elaborated integration of antiquities into Chinese cultural heritage is yet to come.

Chapter Two: from Trash to Treasure, 1956 – 1966



Figure 2.1. Gu Youchu (fourth from right, top row) standing with fellow craftsmen at the China Crafts Commune in Shanghai, 1956. Private collection of Gu Youchu, Shanghai.

Country Boy

Twelve-year-old Gu Youchu was small for his age. When the “short and plump” country kid came to Shanghai in 1946, he wondered how mom would manage the farm without him.³¹³ He came for a three-year apprenticeship with Li Yuyi, the owner of a plaster molds manufacturing factory. Boss Li nearly sent Gu back. “He didn't like that I was small and short”.³¹⁴ Boss Li's wife convinced her husband otherwise. She “said I want him, he's from Pudong, she liked that we were from the same town”.³¹⁵ That was the last time Gu got to talk with his “mouth full of country language.”³¹⁶

The apprenticeship was hard. If Gu forgot to sweep the floor Boss Li would “pull at my

³¹³ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

³¹⁴ Interview with Gu Youchu, January 14th, 2010.

³¹⁵ Interview with Gu Youchu, January 14th, 2010.

³¹⁶ Interview with Gu Youchu, January 14th, 2010.

ears”.³¹⁷ The technical training, however, came easily to the Pudong native. Gu quickly became an expert draftsman. By 1956, he could sketch free-hand, model, as well as make artisan replicas from plaster.

Nationalization broke up Boss Li's business. Gu got transferred to the China Crafts Commune, where he designed sculptures for Sino-Soviet friendship ventures. He excelled once again, winning awards for making molds that reproduced fine-grained details. As a result, the commune administrators soon pulled Gu aside and “said there's some people that want you”.³¹⁸ He was being transferred to the Shanghai Museum. Gu had no choice in the matter. “The upper bureaucracy had letters of introduction”, and in Shanghai “if you have a letter of introduction there's nothing you can say, those politicians have more power than you do.”³¹⁹

As I have argued in Chapter One, the transformation of professional identities amongst Shanghai's cultural industry workers went hand in hand with the transformation of antiquities in China: From private to public property.³²⁰ In this chapter, I examine the absorption of previously marginalized artisans into the Shanghai Museum's existing coterie of professionals. I explore the continuities of identity formation as introduced in Chapter One, and show how craftsmen such as Gu Youchu became indispensable to the museum's monopolization of art

³¹⁷ Interview with Gu Youchu, January 14th, 2010.

³¹⁸ Interview with Gu Youchu, January 14th, 2010.

³¹⁹ Interview with Gu Youchu, January 14th, 2010.

³²⁰ In Chapter One, entitled *Inventing The Shanghai Museum*, I argue that professional identities amongst Shanghai's cultural industry workers changed profoundly between 1950 and 1956. Museum employees emerged as preservationist custodians of China's cultural inheritance, while art dealers became vilified as smugglers who industry needed social reform. I show that this redefinition of identity accelerated the nationwide change in antiquities ownership, which put museums in control of distribution in the Chinese art market.

restoration – a major link in the art market supply chain. I argue that monopolizing art restoration enabled the Shanghai Museum to maximize profits manipulating prices on the art market, which expanded the scale of private art collecting both in China and overseas.

While I focus on museum professionals' impact on the art market, I also interrogate the Shanghai Museum's collecting interests in so-called arts and crafts – antiquities that the PRC's Cultural Relics laws designate as exportable commodities. Institutional growth in both the financial and bureaucratic realms enabled the museum to promote some art and crafts, such as ethnic minority artifacts, to canonical status.³²¹ While local initiatives, such as the salvaging of ancient bronzes and paper from Shanghai's industrial manufacturers, motivated some of these designations, others came from the museum's desire to compete with international collecting trends. This process suggests that the making of an art historical canon is not a one-sided, or even top-down process. The creation of art historical categories is instead, I argue, a dynamic phenomenon co-produced by different constituents, all of whom operate simultaneously in the regional, national, and international arena.

Red Restoration

When Gu Youchu got to the Shanghai Museum, he met fellow transfers like Xie Hua, barely seventeen-years-old and the youngest in a family of book repairers. They all worked in the Conservation Workshop, a new department that restored paintings, calligraphy, bronzes,

³²¹ For collaborative findings in the field of music, see Frederick Lau, "Forever Red: The Invention of Solo dizi Music in Post-1949 China," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 5 (1996): 113-131.

ceramics, as well as “minor decorative arts”.³²² Museum administrators made all the younger transfers apprentices to more senior transfers, whom the museum staff called *laoshifu* (master artisan). Almost all the master artisans had done contract work for local collectors as well as dealers in the Chinese Curio Markets. As the restoration of paintings, ceramics, and bronzes was a limited profession, they also worked more mundane jobs, such as making poker cards, glue, and shoe heels.³²³

Ostensibly, the museum opened a Conservation Workshop because “without immediate rescue, we'll be in danger of losing our skill repository” of master restorers.³²⁴ The senior staff argued that Shanghai's existing pool of restorers have “serious gaps...thus, we need to invest heavily in new talent and increase the number of senior professionals and new apprentices, in order to nurture successors for these difficult-to-fill positions.”³²⁵ Thus, assembling the

³²² “Minor decorative arts” refers to miscellany such as lacquers, jades, wooden figures, etc. This is consistent with Chinese art category terminology across the PRC, as well as overseas. For specific reference to the formation of this workshop see *Shanghai shi wenhua ju shehui wenhua xitong de bianzhi wenti*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Bureau's Decisions Regarding the Organization of Municipal Cultural Institutions] April 1956 – December 1956, B9-2-56, SMA, Shanghai.

³²³ Personnel information gathered from Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010 and Interview with Xie Hua, January 22nd, 2010. For official records regarding the allocation of art restorers to Shanghai's newly nationalized pipe, sewing machine, and umbrella manufacturers, as well as their subsequent re-allocation to the Shanghai Museum's Conservation Workshop, see *Shanghai shi wenhua ju shehui wenhua xitong de bianzhi wenti*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Bureau's Decisions Regarding the Organization of Municipal Cultural Institutions] April 1956 – December 1956, B9-2-56, SMA, Shanghai.

³²⁴ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wenhu ju dangzu guanyu quanshi tushu guan yu wenwu, bowuguan shiye xu peiyang xinsheng lilian de baogao*, [People's Republic of China Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Bureau's Political Division's Report Regarding the City's Library, Cultural, Museum Industries' Need to Nurture New Strength] May 23rd, 1959, B172-5-138, SMA, Shanghai.

³²⁵ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu ju shu xiju, she wen danwei zuzhi jigou, renyuan bianzhi, ganbu diaopei deng de qingshi, baogao*, [The Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Report Regarding Work Unit Organization, Human Resource Structuring and Cadre Allocation in The Ministry's Drama, Culture, and Social Divisions] January 26th, 1959 – December 31st, 1959, B172-5-132. SMA, Shanghai.

workshop was itself an act of conservation. The museum recognized a rare skill set amongst previously marginalized artisans and presented them with an opportunity to rise above lower-level careers.³²⁶

In practice, getting in-house restorers altered the art market. It enabled the museum to regulate art restoration, or, as the municipality called it, enforce the “Reform, Break-up, and Destruction of Opportunistic Profiteering From the Sale of Cultural Relics, Painting, and Calligraphy.”³²⁷ Museum administrators suspected that restorers fueled the black market by “making fakes, participating in profiteering, and selfishly opening their own underground painting repair shops.”³²⁸ Specifically, “if an art dealer got an object that was missing everything, a ceramic that was broken everywhere,” a restorer “would could fix it for them so that it looked unblemished” and help the dealer with “his underground deals”.³²⁹ Creating the Conservation Workshop, however, rendered restoration services unavailable to the private sector. It allowed

³²⁶ Eddy U offers a thorough examination of the costs and benefits of similar bureaucratic decisions in Eddy U, *Disorganizing China, Counter-Bureaucracy And The Decline of Socialism*, (Stanford, 2007).

³²⁷ *Shanghai shi renwei, wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu danwei de xioushan, caichu ji daji wenwu shuhua touji fanmai huodong de jihua baogao he pifu*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Board and the Cultural Affairs Administration's Replies and Reports Regarding the Reform, Break-up, and Destruction of Opportunistic Profiteering From the Sale of Cultural Relics, Painting, and Calligraphy] April 7th, 1964 – December 19th, 1964, B3-2-139, SMA, Shanghai.

³²⁸ *Shanghai shi renwei, wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu danwei de xioushan, caichu ji daji wenwu shuhua touji fanmai huodong de jihua baogao he pifu*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Board and the Cultural Affairs Administration's Replies and Reports Regarding the Reform, Break-up, and Destruction of Opportunistic Profiteering From the Sale of Cultural Relics, Painting, and Calligraphy] April 7th, 1964 – December 19th, 1964, B3-2-139, SMA, Shanghai.

³²⁹ *Shanghai shi renwei, wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu danwei de xioushan, caichu ji daji wenwu shuhua touji fanmai huodong de jihua baogao he pifu*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Board and the Cultural Affairs Administration's Replies and Reports Regarding the Reform, Break-up, and Destruction of Opportunistic Profiteering From the Sale of Cultural Relics, Painting, and Calligraphy] April 7th, 1964 – December 19th, 1964, B3-2-139, SMA, Shanghai.

the museum to take over a major link to the art market supply chain. Indeed, museum administrators boasted that its workshop would “repair a gap in the socialist education of town and country.”³³⁰

Municipal officials tracked down restorers through industry contacts, personnel files, and sent candidates to the museum in droves.³³¹ By 1960, the Conservation Workshop employed so many master artisans that private citizens had a hard time contracting independent art restoration. Collectors in Shanghai and its surrounding provinces complained vociferously, stating that they felt they “had to have some kind of *guanxi* [relations] with the Shanghai Museum” in order to get any restoration done.³³² Even the Department of Cultural Affairs objected. “Collectors have no way to meet restorers and directly discuss the specifics of what should be done on a commission...there are hardly any painting repair shops on the street anymore, nor are there restoration masters.”³³³ The Conservation Workshop monopolized

³³⁰ *Shanghai shi renwei, wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu danwei de xioushan, caichu ji daji wenwu shuhua touji fanmai huodong de jihua baogao he pifu*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Board and the Cultural Affairs Administration's Replies and Reports Regarding the Reform, Break-up, and Destruction of Opportunistic Profiteering From the Sale of Cultural Relics, Painting, and Calligraphy] April 7th, 1964 – December 19th, 1964, B3-2-139, SMA, Shanghai.

³³¹ For more on the history of art restoration recruitment in the PRC see Wenchao Ji, “Tan gudai qingtongqi de chuantong xiufu jishu,” [Regarding The Traditional Restoration Technique For Ancient Bronzes] *Jiangxi Wenwu* [Relics From Jiangxi] no. 3 (1991): 103 – 106; Li Wan, “Qingtongqi xiufu jishu duiwu de lishi ji qi fazhan chuyi,” [My Observations On The History of Bronze Restoration And Its Development] *Zhongguo bowuguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 4 (1991): 64-68; Guodong Xiao, “Lüetan wenxian fuzhi gongzuo,” [A Brief Discussion On Art Reproduction Work] *Zhongguo bowuguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 1 (1985): 84 – 86;

³³² *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, wenguan hui wenwu, ziran bowuguan lingdao guanxi deng baogao*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration and Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Reports Regarding Leadership and Relationship Relevant to Cultural Relics Museums and Natural History Museums] January 22nd, 1963 – December 16th, 1963, B3-2-165, SMA, Shanghai.

³³³ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, wenguan hui wenwu, ziran bowuguan lingdao guanxi deng baogao*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration and Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Reports Regarding Leadership and Relationship Relevant to Cultural Relics Museums and Natural History Museums] January 22nd, 1963 –

Shanghai's restoration services. Any member of the general public who wanted antiquities repaired had to visit the museum and pay "prices calibrated according to services rendered".³³⁴

上海博物馆书画装裱门市部装裱市价价格表

		立轴、中堂类									
图式尺寸	规格 说明	4尺	5尺	6尺	6尺	6尺	7尺	7尺	7尺	8尺	8尺
		1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内	1.4尺以内
1.8x1.6尺	1.4尺以内	7.70	8.20	8.70							
1x0.8尺	1.4尺以内		9.20	9.70	10.20						
1.2x0.9尺	1.4尺以内			10.50	10.80	11.50					
1.4x0.9尺	2尺以内			11.50	11.80	12.50					
1.6x0.9尺	2尺以内				12.50	13.50	14.50				
2x0.9尺	2尺以内					16.50	17.00	17.50			
2x0.9尺	2尺以内						18.00	18.50	19.50		
2.4x0.9尺	2尺以内							20.70	21.50	22.50	
3x0.9尺	3尺以内										25.50

注：二色裱加5% 彩画二色三层裱加20%

对联类		
尺寸	规格	价目
0.7x0.8尺	1尺	7.00
"	1寸	7.50
0.7x0.8尺	1尺	8.30
"	1.2寸	9.00
1x0.8尺	1尺	9.50
"	1.2寸	10.70
1.28x0.8(0尺对)	1.2寸	14.20
1.5x0.8(6尺对)	1.2寸	16.50

注：色墨、粉墨、黄粉、对子等各加15%。
请量器按比例增加。

册页类	
得页图式尺寸 或按平面积	价目
0.5x0.8寸以内	1.40
0.7寸x1.3尺以内	2.40
1.9尺x1.9尺以内	4.00
供得及图后	4.50

注：一律裱，空白付页按50%前价

托 芯		
图式	规格	价目
1尺x1尺		0.50
1尺x2尺以内		0.80
1.8尺x3尺以内		1.00
1.8尺x5.8尺以内		1.20
4尺整幅		1.50
6尺整幅		2.00
6尺整幅		2.00
8尺整幅		3.00

注：黄色托二层各加50%

手卷类		
图式	规格尺寸	价目
高6寸以内	长2.6尺以内	17.00
"	"	21.60
"	1.2尺以内	26.70
"	1.8尺	31.00

注：轴头用价加20%

附注：1.尺寸均按市尺算。 2.立轴、中堂、对联、手卷，均系二后背纸价格，三层另加10%。
3.轴头、册页面、手卷的包背、封轴一律外加。 4.其它规格另议。
5.裱日图价格面，人工以每工5.00元计算。

Figure 2.2. Shanghai Museum's Retail Charges For Painting And Calligraphy Repairs. SMA, Shanghai.

December 16th, 1963, B3-2-165, SMA, Shanghai.
³³⁴ Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu tongyi shanghai bowuguan sheli zhuangbiao mengbu de baogao, pifu, [Shanghai People's Representative Board and Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Reports and Edits on Approving the Setup of A Conservation Department at the Shanghai Museum] August 1962 – March 1963, B172-1-442, SMA, Shanghai.

The Conservation Workshop presented a lucrative business opportunity. The museum charged a basic service fee to set wooden rollers on scrolls, reinforce painting and calligraphy scrolls, mount scrolls, and collate albums. Prices varied according to the size: big albums, for example, cost more than small albums. Additional services, such as saturating colors, painting over faded surfaces, smoking paper to create an antiquated look, and using silk and satin, cost an additional five to fifty percent. As the price chart further indicated (Figure 2.2), its estimates use contemporary art objects as the baseline.³³⁵ Older calligraphy and painting were subject to a 5.80RMB per hour professional's fee, as well as additional charges. The restoration of antiquities that already belonged to the museum, however, cost nothing. The museum kept its conservators on permanent retainer, with strict rules against taking private orders.

Private sector commissions were so lucrative that the workshop's earnings paid for itself.

Table 2.1 illustrates restoration earnings between 1960 and 1962.³³⁶

³³⁵ *Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu tongyi shanghai bowuguan sheli zhuangbiao mengbu de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai People's Representative Board and Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Reports and Edits on Approving the Setup of A Conservation Department at the Shanghai Museum] August 1962 – March 1963, B172-1-442, SMA, Shanghai.

³³⁶ In its first decades the Shanghai Museum's exhibition space could not offer a de-humidified environment for ancient artifacts, so the Conservation Workshop made reproductions for display. Run-offs from the reproduction process got sold for profit at the museum store. Data for Table 1 extracted from *Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu tongyi shanghai bowuguan sheli zhuangbiao mengbu de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai People's Representative Board and Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Reports and Edits on Approving the Setup of A Conservation Department at the Shanghai Museum] August 1962 – March 1963, B172-1-442, SMA, Shanghai.

Table 2.1. Painting Restorations at the Shanghai Museum's Conservation Workshop, July 1960 – June 1962

Commission Type	Number of Commissions	Number of Work Hours	Charges (RMB)
Ancient paintings	747	3,824	0
Reproduction paintings	691	1,025	0
Outside commissions	774	3,904	14,441
<u>Sum</u>	<u>2249</u>	<u>8,664</u>	<u>14,441</u>

In two years, the workshop repaired 747 ancient paintings, reproduced 691 paintings (for exhibition and sale), and repaired 774 paintings for outside collectors and donors. While outside commissions only comprised one third of the workshop's total number of commissions, they occupied more than 45% of its total working hours. Private commissions alone earned 14,441 RMB. By way of comparison, salary for a 25-person team cost 15,662 RMB.³³⁷ This suggests that the workshop's total output could both sustain itself and earn additional income for the museum. Additionally, the workshop took commissions from local work units at cost, which gave the museum social and political leverage. Between 1958 and 1962, in-house restorers “reproduced 19,854 pieces of cultural relics and repaired 2,249 pieces of calligraphy and painting” for both the museum and other municipal work units.³³⁸ Museum administrators

³³⁷ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu zuohao wenwu baohu gongzuo de tongzhi, baogao ji shanghai shi wenhua ju baohu yu yuan, longhua is de cu bu fangan*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration, Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Notifications and Reports Regarding Optimizing Cultural Relics Preservation Performance, And the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Preliminary Plans for Protecting the Yu Gardens and the Longhua Temple] February 1956 – January 1957, B172-1-221, SMA, Shanghai.

³³⁸ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year

boasted that on the basis of these services, its conservators “provided important research resources and attended to the needs of international cultural exchange.”³³⁹ In fact, the Conservation Workshop garnered so much recognition that the Ministry of Culture in Beijing asked the Shanghai Museum to teach conservation methods around the country, as an example to other cultural institutions.³⁴⁰

Monopolizing art restoration also gave the museum unprecedented insight into private antiquities ownership. Without leaving their office, museum staff saw, and interacted with, private collectors throughout Shanghai and its neighboring provinces. Between 1958 and 1962, the workshop “repaired 1,204 cultural relics for 36 collectors”.³⁴¹ These opportunities allowed the staff to encourage a wider demographic of collectors to donate, leveraging the fact that the workshop took care of their antiquities and thereby made the collectors “a part of the museum.”³⁴²

Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³³⁹ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁴⁰ *Wenhua bu guanyu zhaokai wenwu baohu gongzuo zuotanhui de tongzhi ji shanghai shi wenhua ju de huibao cailiao*, [The Ministry of Culture's Notification for Initiating A Conference on the Protection of Cultural Relics and the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Press Release Materials] February, 1963 – July, 1963, B172-1-440, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁴¹ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁴² Interview with Xie Hua, January 22nd, 2010.

Furthermore, the workshop enabled the museum to erase accidents. In 1963, for example, the Shanghai Museum was courting a private collector for his Song dynasty blue and white ceramic. The acquisitions team offered the collector 700 RMB, but he refused to sell.³⁴³ “The museum really wanted this thing, so we said to him could we keep it for a while, so we could study it.”³⁴⁴ The collector agreed and left. During a study session, senior archaeologist Jiang Dayi dropped the ceramic on the floor. It shattered. According to the museum staff, “one student came by...and patted him somehow”, which surprised Jiang into loosening his grip.³⁴⁵ Jiang immediately called the workshop. Ceramics restorer Yao Hongfa “came and he looked at it, he got a white piece of paper, licked his fingers and took the pieces all up with his finger tips.”³⁴⁶ The museum put Yao in a small hotel where no one could see and sent a bunch of cigarettes to speed him along. Much to the museum's relief, “after a week he really did fix it.”³⁴⁷

The museum even used the above-mentioned events to negotiate with the ceramic's owner. When the collector came for his antiquity, museum staff said “I'll tell you the truth, we were careless, when we held it in our hands it fell on the floor, and now it's completely shattered.”³⁴⁸ Instead of compensating the collector for damages, however, the museum reasserted its interest to acquire the piece for 700 RMB. The staff showed the collector his blue

³⁴³ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁴⁴ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁴⁵ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁴⁶ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁴⁷ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁴⁸ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

and white and said “We've fixed it, but if you take it back there's no point.”³⁴⁹ Yao had repaired the artifact so well that the collector could hardly tell any accident occurred at all. He “looked at the thing under the sun, rang his fingers on it and said, no it hasn't been broken, you're lying to me.”³⁵⁰

The Second Grand Opening

In the midst of the Great Leap Forward (1958 - 1962), the Shanghai Museum moved from its original location on #325 West Nanjing Road to the Chinese Remittance Bank building at #16 South Henan Road, in the heart of Shanghai's financial district. By definition, museums contributed little to the Great Leap Forward's focus on industrial and agricultural growth. The Shanghai Museum's association with bronzes, however, allowed it to work with steel manufacturing, a key item on the Great Leap Forward's agenda.³⁵¹ Furthermore, the new museum site gave the Class of 1952 space to sort through metal castoffs from Shanghai's municipal and backyard steel furnaces. Thus began the museum's collaboration with local metal refineries.

The Department of Cultural Affairs merged the Shanghai Museum with the Cultural

³⁴⁹ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁵⁰ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

³⁵¹ For a select biography on work distribution assessments during the Great Leap Forward see Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, (New York, 2010); William A. Joseph, “A Tragedy of Good Intentions: Post-Mao Views of the Great Leap Forward” *Modern China*, 12, no. 4 (1986): 419-457; Choh-Ming Li, “China's Industrial Development, 1958-63”, *The China Quarterly*, no. 17 (1964): 3-38; Kimberley Ens Manning, “The Gendered Politics of Woman-Work: Rethinking Radicalism in the Great Leap Forward” *Modern China*, 32, no. 3 (2006): 349-384; Xizhe Peng, “Demographic Consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's Provinces”, *Population and Development Review*, 13, no. 4 (1987): 639-670.

Relics Rescue Warehouse (henceforth Warehouse), a municipal department for salvage archeology that had been in place since 1949.³⁵² This facility trolled smelting pits and retrieved artifacts of value from local steel and paper refineries.³⁵³ In order to sift through the thousands of tons of metal that came to Shanghai for processing, the museum created a special department for “the rescue of ancient objects from all regions of Shanghai”, which was made up of Warehouse employees as well as members of the Class of 1952.³⁵⁴ These individuals regularly inspected more than 290 metal recycling stations in Shanghai and its surrounding hinterlands.³⁵⁵

Some employees got the difficult assignment of working in remote stations. For

³⁵² *Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu chexiao shanghai shi wenwu zhengli cangku jianzhi bin fenbie binru Shanghai tushu guan, shanghai wenguan hui de qingshi, pifu*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Board and the Shanghai People's Representative Board's Public Affairs Bureau's Replies on the Decision to Dismantle the Shanghai Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse and Merge Its Parts With the Shanghai Library and the Cultural Relics Management Board] January 1958 – January 1959, B172-1-299, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁵³ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu zizhu shanghai shi wenwu zhengli cangku qiangjiu wenwu de han, baogao ji gai cangku de gongzuo zongjie*, [The Ministry of Culture and Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding Funding the Shanghai Cultural Relics Sorting and Rescue Warehouse's Rescue of Cultural Relics Plus The Conclusive Report on the Rescue Operations] April 1957 – June 1957, B172-1-268, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁵⁴ The Warehouse's paper division became a part of the Shanghai Library, which took charge of retrieving steele rubbings, ancient texts, and other artifacts of possible value to the book industry. *Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu chexiao shanghai shi wenwu zhengli cangku jianzhi bin fenbie binru Shanghai tushu guan, shanghai wenguan hui de qingshi, pifu*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Board and the Shanghai People's Representative Board's Public Affairs Bureau's Replies on the Decision to Dismantle the Shanghai Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse and Merge Its Parts With the Shanghai Library and the Cultural Relics Management Board] January 1958 – January 1959, B172-1-299, SMA, Shanghai. For information about the Shanghai Library's paper sorting work, see *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu jieshou juanxian wenwu bin yu yi biaozhang de qingshi baobao, pifu*, [Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Municipal Department of Cultural Affairs, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Report And Rescripts Regarding The Acceptance Of Donated Cultural Relics And The Granting Of Merit Awards] November 1959 – December 17th, 1959, B172-5-97 SMA, Shanghai.

³⁵⁵ *Shanghai shi disan jie renmin daibiao dahui disanci huiyi guanyu wenjiao jie daibiao fayan gao*, [Third Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Conference's Third Meeting Regarding Cultural And Educational Field Representatives' Speech Draft] May 12th, 1960 – May 17th, 1960, B1-1-791, SMA, Shanghai.

example, inspections at outer Jiading district, an area more than sixty miles (97KM) away from the museum, required employees to “leave their house at 4AM in order to report to the factories by 6AM”.³⁵⁶ Many worked without face masks and “the bronze gases steamed and overwhelmed us, to the point where we could taste sweetness in our mouths.”³⁵⁷ Steel mills kept scrap ores uncovered, so inspectors worked outdoors in all seasons. Chen Peifen recalled that in the summer, “as you climb up the planks on the metal heap your shoes make this *zhi-zhi* sound because the soles are melting.”³⁵⁸ During the winter inspectors wore thick gloves to keep their fingers from freezing to metal. Lu Songlin, who worked inspections from 1956 to 1993, joked that the job made his team look so shabby that they called themselves *jianpolan* (trash-pickers), a term that described beggars who salvaged garbage.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shinian lai wenwu gongzuo, qianjiu gongzuo de zongjie, tongji shuzi*, [Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Conclusions and Statistics Regarding the Past Ten Year's Work In Cultural Relics And Cultural Relics Rescue] October 1959 – March 1960, B172-1-341, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁵⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shinian lai wenwu gongzuo, qianjiu gongzuo de zongjie, tongji shuzi*, [Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Conclusions and Statistics Regarding the Past Ten Year's Work In Cultural Relics And Cultural Relics Rescue] October 1959 – March 1960, B172-1-341, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁵⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

³⁵⁹ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.



Figure 2.3. Premiere Zhou Enlai admiring a retrieved Han dynasty bronze mirror with Shanghai Museum employee Ma Chengyuan. (Circa early 1960s) Courtesy of Zheng Zhong.

The Shanghai Museum's salvage archeology program was astonishingly effective. In their first year of operation (1959 - 1960), Lu and his cohorts retrieved more than ten thousand bronze relics from local smelting pits. The artifacts were so numerous that the museum cataloged them by the ton.³⁶⁰

As dictated by the Department of Cultural Affairs, bronze specialists such as Jiang Dayi and Ma Chenyuan categorized salvaged bronzes according to the three-tier system. First-Tier retrievals either stayed at the museum or got distributed amongst museums outside Shanghai.³⁶¹ Second-Tier retrievals didn't interest the museum. The museum had to recompense refineries

³⁶⁰ *Shanghai shi disan jie renmin daibiao dahui disanci huiyi guanyu wenjiao jie daibiao fayan gao*, [Third Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Conference's Third Meeting Regarding Cultural And Educational Field Representatives' Speech Draft] May 12th, 1960 – May 17th, 1960, B1-1-791, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁶¹ *Huadong wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu zhengli cangku ku cun tongqi waili wenti de baogao, pifu*, [The China Eastern Cultural Affairs Administration and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Responses To The Disposal Of Bronze Objects Stored In the Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse] September 1st, 1953 – November 4th, 1955, B172-4-422, SMA, Shanghai.

for all salvaged artifacts by weight, so instead of allotting money for unwanted bronzes the museum transferred them to theaters and film companies, which used the artifacts as props.³⁶² Some Second-Tier retrievals also became decoration at hotels and restaurants.³⁶³ Third-Tier retrievals interested neither the museum nor the art market, so their whereabouts depended on “the needs of the state”.³⁶⁴ Some returned to the smelting pits, while sellable trinkets went to the export art market.

The national and municipal government even incorporated salvage archeology into projects such as the creation of roads and communal farms. Throughout the Great Leap Forward, the Shanghai museum was responsible for antiquities unearthed during road construction and tilling. Thus, museum employees sometimes found themselves traveling to construction sites and agricultural communes.³⁶⁵ First-tier finds went to the museum. Second and third tier objects, however, got distributed “according to the needs of road building or

³⁶² *Huadong wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu zhengli cangku ku cun tongqi waili wenti de baogao, pifu*, [The China Eastern Cultural Affairs Administration and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Responses To The Disposal Of Bronze Objects Stored In the Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse] September 1st, 1953 – November 4th, 1955, B172-4-422, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁶³ *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu, shi wenhuaju guanyu wenwu huiji, guanli yu zhuzhi jigou lindao fenggong de zhishi ji longhua ta xiushan wenti*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Government, Municipal Department Of Cultural Affairs' Directives Regarding The Collection, Management And Organization of Leadership And Division Of Labor For Cultural Relics, Plus Problems Regarding The Restoration Of Longhua Pagoda] 1954, B34-2-211, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁶⁴ *Huadong wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu zhengli cangku ku cun tongqi waili wenti de baogao, pifu*, [The China Eastern Cultural Affairs Administration and the Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Responses To The Disposal Of Bronze Objects Stored In the Cultural Relics Rescue Warehouse] September 1st, 1953 – November 4th, 1955, B172-4-422, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁶⁵ *Shanghai shi renmin weiyuan hui fabu Shanghai shi lishi he gemin yiji baohu banfa yu youguan wenwu baohu guanli zhenji deng wenti de tongzhi, tonggao, diyipi wenwu baohu mindan*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Board Promulgates Shanghai Municipal Historical And Revolutionary Site Preservation Methods And Related Cultural Relics Preservation Management And Acquisition Regulations, Plus First List Of Objects For Cultural Relics Preservation] January 2nd, 1959 – December 21st, 1959, B1-1-1468, SMA, Shanghai.

industrial and agricultural industry growth”, pending permission from the appropriate “district and county officials.”³⁶⁶

The three-tier system served two important functions. First, it inaugurated new evaluation standards for Chinese art. The logic of evaluating by tiers runs counter to the idea of a pre-existing greatest hits list of Chinese art, filled with objects whose value are independent of market and political needs. According to tier-based evaluations, all salvaged artifacts are subject to “the needs of the state”, such as gaps in museum collections around the country, art market trends, and the Great Leap Forward's drive for steel.

Secondly, the tier-based system allowed the Shanghai Museum to expand the visibility of bronzes relics in Chinese art. The salvage archeology team sent Anhui's new provincial museum 163 bronzes, a substantial sum that remains the core of Anhui's bronze collection.³⁶⁷ Similarly, Shanghai sent the National Palace Museum in Beijing 175 salvaged bronzes and helped the Northwestern History Museum in Shaanxi province expand its collection by thirty-two bronzes.³⁶⁸ By way of comparison, the Shanghai Museum's permanent collection only contained

³⁶⁶ *Shanghai shi renmin weiyuan hui fabu Shanghai shi lishi he gemin yiji baohu banfa yu youguan wenwu baohu guanli zhenji deng wenti de tongzhi, tonggao, diyipi wenwu baohu mindan*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Board Promulgates Shanghai Municipal Historical And Revolutionary Site Preservation Methods And Related Cultural Relics Preservation Management And Acquisition Regulations, Plus First List Of Objects For Cultural Relics Preservation] January 2nd, 1959 – December 21st, 1959, B1-1-1468, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁶⁷ *Shanghai shi renmin weiyuan hui wenyi bangong shi guanyu shanghai shi siyin guwan shang anpai gaizao ji wenwu zhengli gongzuo de youguan wenjian*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Board, Arts and Cultural Office's Documents Regarding Reformation Plans for Shanghai's Art Dealers and the Organized Allocation of Cultural Relics] March 1955 – November 1955, B9-2-25, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁶⁸ *Shanghai shi renmin weiyuan hui wenyi bangong shi guanyu shanghai shi siyin guwan shang anpai gaizao ji wenwu zhengli gongzuo de youguan wenjian*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Board, Arts and Cultural Office's Documents Regarding Reformation Plans for Shanghai's Art Dealers and the Organized Allocation of Cultural Relics] March 1955 – November 1955, B9-2-25, SMA, Shanghai.

105 First-Tier bronze objects as of 1964.³⁶⁹ This injection of artifacts fundamentally altered the role of bronzes in Chinese museums. Ancient bronzes gained a denser, more identifiable presence in PRC collections, while the Shanghai Museum gained a reputation as *the* institution that put bronzes on the Chinese art historical map.

In order to alleviate the strenuous schedule that pit inspectors had to maintain on a daily basis, the Shanghai Museum produced posters that encouraged “comrades at each factory, warehouse, recycle station to be on constant alert for the protection of cultural relics.”³⁷⁰ These posters often appeared at the entrances of steel refineries and paper mills. Members of the Class of 1952 also distributed them to other municipal work units, with the request that they be posted in the cafeterias.

³⁶⁹ Data gathered from *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie*, [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁷⁰ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shinian lai wenwu gongzuo, qianjiu gongzuo de zongjie, tongji shuzi*, [Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Conclusions and Statistics Regarding the Past Ten Year's Work In Cultural Relics And Cultural Relics Rescue] October 1959 – March 1960, B172-1-341, SMA, Shanghai.

The bold, and black pictographs that frame the poster in Figure 2.4 declare “PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE, EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE!”³⁷¹ Fine print in the lower left hand corner summarize the major aspects of Cultural Relics law enforcement, and point out the categories of artifacts to which the public should pay closer attention. The images scattered throughout the length of the poster illustrate artifacts that have already been salvaged from industrial and agricultural movements, such as a Warring States era pot, a Tang dynasty mirror, and prehistoric stone tools. The captions underneath each image identify the artifact by name and age, and when possible, the site from which the Shanghai Museum's salvage archeology team retrieved it.

Pit inspectors would have found some of the artifacts pictured in Figure 2.4 surprising. Across the nation, salvage archeology programs prioritized the preservation of some categories of bronzes over others. This system of prioritization imposed a hierarchy of preservation that is absent from this poster. For example, cities and towns had no obligation to preserve religious artifacts if their districts already had several extant samples, even if the retrievals predated the Yuan dynasty.³⁷² This exemption included bronze Buddhas, human figures, lions, bells, incense burning vessels, all of which metal refineries could melt down. Municipal refineries could also

³⁷¹ Image taken from *Wenhua bu, shanghai renwei, shi wenhua ju guanyu jiaqiang wenwu baohu gongzuo de tongzhi, tongbao ji wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai People's Assembly, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Notifications, Notices, and Correspondence Regarding Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Relics] January 7th, 1959 – December 21st, 1959, B172-5-83, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁷² *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu, kaogu faju, guji xiushan, sanmu qingli deng de tongzhi, diaocha baogao, wang lai han*, [the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Correspondence Regarding Its Investigation and Reports on Cultural Relics Protection, Ancient Site Restoration, and Tomb Cleanup] January 11th, 1958 – December 18th, 1958, B172-4-948, SMA, Shanghai.

smelt Ming and Qing dynasty bronzes that bore no identifiable markings. Bronzes that only had markings such as “reign dates, the commissioner's name, the artist's markings, or average designs” were transferred to art dealerships for sale, as the PRC preferred only to keep bronzes made by “historically important artists or [bearing] rare and beautiful patterning”.³⁷³ According to these rules, neither the temple nor the Buddha statue in Figure 2.4 would have been salvaged – they were more likely to be treated as export stock or ore.

Museum visitors, on the other hand, would find themselves equally surprised to see the cannons, arm bands, and the “bloody coat of transportation worker Zhong Quanzhou”, which feature prominently at top of Figure 2.4.³⁷⁴ While the Shanghai Museum rarely exhibited these categories of art, Great Leap Forward policies mandated that inspectors collect, catalog, and preserve them for the museum industry at large. The state planned to display “weapons used against our enemies before the Revolution” at national, municipal, and township history museums.³⁷⁵ According to the Shanghai Museum's press office, these objects propagated

³⁷³ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu, kaogu fajiu, guji xiushan, sanmu qingli deng de tongzhi, diaocha baogao, wang lai han*, [the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Correspondence Regarding Its Investigation and Reports on Cultural Relics Protection, Ancient Site Restoration, and Tomb Cleanup] January 11th, 1958 – December 18th, 1958, B172-4-948, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁷⁴ *Wenhua bu, shanghai renwei, shi wenhua ju guanyu jiaqiang wenwu baohu gongzuo de tongzhi, tongbao ji wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai People's Assembly, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Notifications, Notices, and Correspondence Regarding Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Relics] January 7th, 1959 – December 21st, 1959, B172-5-83, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁷⁵ Many of these objects were later allocated to the collections of national and municipal history museums, which where they were used to articulate the history of the Chinese Communist Party. Quote comes from *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu, kaogu fajiu, guji xiushan, sanmu qingli deng de tongzhi, diaocha baogao, wang lai han*, [the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Correspondence Regarding Its Investigation and Reports on Cultural Relics Protection, Ancient Site Restoration, and Tomb Cleanup] January 11th, 1958 – December 18th, 1958, B172-4-948, SMA, Shanghai.

“workers' brave self-defense under Communist leadership” and deserved a place in Chinese cultural heritage.³⁷⁶

Bronze artifacts that pre-dated the Ming dynasty, such as *dings* (three or four-legged cooking vessels), wine vessels, war bells, farm implements, and work tools, were at the top of pit inspectors' retrieval lists. Ancient weapons, such as arrow heads, spears, knives, and swords, also took priority. Consequently, these categories of art frequently appeared on the Shanghai Museum's first-tier antiquities inventory under “internal transfer” (indicating that it came from smelting factories or similar sources). In fact, these are the kinds of bronze relics that most museum-goers expect to see when they visit Chinese art museum today. One wonders how our mental image of ancient Chinese bronzes might be different had Great Leap Forward programs calibrated their preservation priorities towards religious artifacts, or implements of the imperial courts.

Antiquarian Training Program

The late 1950s and early 1960s saw Shanghai Museum administrators actively campaigning for professionalization. Skill sets such as the ability to recognize, evaluate, and

For recent scholarship on these museums, see Chang-tai Hung, “The Red Line: Creating a Museum of the Chinese Revolution,” *The China Quarterly* 184 (December 2005): 914-933; Rana Mitter, “Behind The Scenes At The Museum: Nationalism, History And Memory In The Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987 – 1997,” *The China Quarterly*, 161 (2000): 279 – 293;

³⁷⁶ *Wenhua bu, shanghai renwei, shi wenhua ju guanyu jiaqiang wenwu baohu gongzuo de tongzhi, tongbao ji wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Cultural, Shanghai People's Assembly, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Notifications, Notices, and Correspondence Regarding Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Relics] January 7th, 1959 – December 21st, 1959, B172-5-83, SMA, Shanghai.

acquire top-end antiquities were “rare and difficult to acquire”.³⁷⁷ The Class of 1952 needed programs that made them proficient in antiquities identification, authentication, transcription, and evaluation, because they were eventually expected to replace the senior staff. After all, men like Xie Zhiliu, Shen Jianzhi, and Jiang Dayi were advanced in years when the museum hired them in 1949. Most of them “have diabetes...are more than fifty years old...have chronic illnesses and can only work half days”.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, the senior staff's elite backgrounds rendered them ineligible to become the “class-less...museum cadres” that a state-level museum needed to sustain its future.³⁷⁹

Museum administrators proposed that the PRC invest in the Class of 1952. These “young comrades” had the potential to “inherit the older generation's professional knowledge.”³⁸⁰ They also had the humble backgrounds necessary for upward mobility in PRC administration. In

³⁷⁷ The Shanghai Library also moved from the old Jockey Club building, which it shared with the Shanghai Museum, to a new location at 1634 Middle Huaihai Road. *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu ju shu xiju, she wen danwei zuzhi jigou, renyuan bianzhi, ganbu diaopei deng de qingshi, baogao*, [The Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Report Regarding Work Unit Organization, Human Resource Structuring and Cadre Allocation in The Ministry's Drama, Culture, and Social Divisions] January 26th, 1959 – December 31st, 1959, B172-5-132, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁷⁸ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wenhu ju dangzu guanyu quanshi tushu guan yu wenwu, bowuguan shiye xu peiyang xinsheng liliang de baogao*, [People's Republic of China Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Bureau's Political Division's Report Regarding the City's Library, Cultural, Museum Industries' Need to Nurture New Strength] May 23rd, 1959, B172-5-138, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁷⁹ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸⁰ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

fact, the municipality referred to the Class of 1952 as “new-born strengths” and cadres – the period moniker for individuals with the potential to lead their organization.³⁸¹ These individuals had the potential to become the PRC's first generation of Red antiquarians.

The Class of 1952's chicken-hatching roots, however, also held them back. As museum administrators noted, “their education levels are on average not high. Most are at the junior high school level, some have high school standards, few possess college or professional training.”³⁸² A 1956 census noted that only forty-two of the museum's 114 cadres had high school diplomas.³⁸³ Some self-identified as “skilled worker from the trades.”³⁸⁴ Others had primary or junior high school. Less than nineteen percent of the Class of 1952 had any exposure to college educations. Therefore, the Cultural Heritage Management Board proposed that the museum establish a formal training program, which would take “immediate steps to ensure that our younger generation can inherit these professional skills and gain the necessary experience.”³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸² *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸³ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju 1955 nian youguan bowuguan, jinian guan gongzuo qingkuang de tongji zonghe biao*, [Shanghai Municipal Department of Cultural Affairs' Statistical Reports For Museum And Memorial Institution Work Conditions In 1955] July 13th, 1955 – February 7th, 1956, B172-4-389, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸⁴ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

³⁸⁵ The Shanghai Library also moved from the old Jockey Club building, which it shared with the Shanghai Museum, to a new location at 1634 Middle Huaihai Road. *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu ju shu xiju, she wen danwei zuzhi jigou, renyuan bianzhi, ganbu diaopei deng de qingshi, baogao*, [The Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Report Regarding Work Unit Organization, Human Resource Structuring and Cadre Allocation in The

By 1961, more than twenty junior employees got promoted to apprentices in the museum's program for Red antiquarianism.³⁸⁶ The administration kept this program small, partnering select senior staff with no more than three apprentices. Wang Qingzheng, an apprentice who later became the Shanghai Museum's Vice President, learned how to read and identify stele rubbings with Xu Senyu, head of the Cultural Relics Management Board.³⁸⁷ Other apprentices, like Zhong Yinlan and Zhu Henghui, learned painting and calligraphy appraisal from Senior Painting Researcher Sheng Jianzhi.³⁸⁸ Some of these arrangements lasted for five or six years, others remained paired up for decades and now take apprentices of their own.

Red antiquarian coursework varied from apprenticeship to apprenticeship. For example, Sheng Jianzhi, an elderly man with chronic arthritis and ulcers, had Zhong Yinlan and Zhu Henghui visit his house every Monday to take half-day lessons.³⁸⁹ Chen Peifen studied bronzes

Ministry's Drama, Culture, and Social Divisions] January 26th, 1959 – December 31st, 1959, B172-5-132. SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸⁶ For a complete list of which junior employees got apprenticeships with which senior employees, see *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸⁷ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸⁸ *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁸⁹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

with Jiang Dayi at his house every Sunday morning, where Jiang's wife showed her the week's assignments while Jiang took his morning walk in the park.³⁹⁰ Others, like Feng Xiaogeng and Yang Jiangfa, trained on the job because their apprenticeships involved using large printing and photography equipment that the museum built on-site.³⁹¹

The lessons emphasized hands-on practice. Zhong Yinlan explained that “the way my teacher trained me wasn't school based, he didn't talk to me about theory”.³⁹² In fact, Shen Jianzhi told her “books you can read at home” and had her practice painting for three years. She literally learned “good and bad of ink and brush” hands-on.³⁹³ Similarly, Chen Peifen learned to punctuate old Chinese and transcribe seal script before she learned to identify bronze relics. Her mentor, Jiang Dayi, highlighted the ability to read ancient Chinese above all else and had her transcribe lengthy passages using the museum's own bronze and stele rubbings. Every Sunday morning Chen brought her transcriptions to Jiang's house where “he would ask. Well what about it? Did you read them? What do you think about it? What are the perspectives? Then I would have to reply.”³⁹⁴ Chen “had to tell him what I knew...How do I say this, what is this, what does this passage say, where are you putting the punctuations, what do you think these words are, is it a

³⁹⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

³⁹¹ Lesson details from interview with Feng Xiaogeng, April 2nd, 2010. Supplementary information regarding apprenticeship assignments from *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua*, [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-S-564, SMA, Shanghai.

³⁹² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

³⁹³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

³⁹⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2010.

person's name, a location, and when you interpret it, can you link it up with what it said before up here?”³⁹⁵ After she defended her interpretations, Jiang corrected her copy.

The antiquarian training program fostered a unique culture of expertise at the Shanghai Museum. Professionalization through hands-on learning, specifically the day-to-day work of looking at paintings, transcribing bronzes, and sketching and molding ceramics and lacquer casts, made experience a credible measure of expertise.³⁹⁶ The museum even called employees who “knew what they were doing” *zhuanjia* (experts).³⁹⁷ *Zhuanjia* distinguished the Class of 1952 from the more common antiquarian title of *jianshangjia* (connoisseurs). It highlighted the trainees' hand skills, specifically that they “could tell reals from fakes” without social pretense.³⁹⁸ This privileging of practical experience is consistent with PRC administrative practices going back to 1949. Even when mayor Chen Yi was recruiting senior staff for the Shanghai Museum's inauguration, personnel reports underlined the importance of hiring “experts and experienced individuals...to takeover management of books and ancient relics”.³⁹⁹ The phrase *jianshangjia* never appear on these documents. The title risked the taint of elite backgrounds, which went against the very idea of casting antiquities as the common cultural heritage of everyday Chinese.

³⁹⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

³⁹⁶ For collaborative findings see John Cleverley, “Deflowering the Cultural Revolution: Letter from China”, *Change*, 9, no. 5 (1977): 32-37.

³⁹⁷ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.

³⁹⁸ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.

³⁹⁹ *Shanghai shi renmin zhengfu guanyu shi wenwu guanli wenyuanhui chengli fangan, renyuan pinyong, niandu yewu jihua deng wenti de qingshi ji pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Government's Requests and Rescripts on the Establishment of a Municipal Cultural Heritage Management Board including Administrative Outline, Hiring, and Yearly Budget], September 1949, B1-2-765, SMA, Shanghai.

The important distinction between calling antiquarians experts, as opposed to connoisseurs, also shaped how the Class of 1952 envisioned their careers. They looked up to the museum's President, Shen Zhiyu, not only because of his authority over the museum but also for his lack of pretension.⁴⁰⁰ Museum employees admired the fact that Shen “was a simple guy, he just stood there in his blue cotton-padded jacket.”⁴⁰¹ The emphasis on hand skills became integral to the museum's definition of Chinese creativity, and the competitive advantage of its professionals. When I asked members of the Class of 1952 to assess the difference between overseas museums and their own, for example, they unanimously pointed out the distinction between knowledge and skill. Overseas museums “keep calling in these college graduates as if they know more, like they're valuing their knowledge. But they really should be nursing their...skills.”⁴⁰² Indeed, Shanghai's antiquarian training programs fashioned a particular assessment of professionalization, one in which open access to active involvement and the ability to identify and evaluate artifacts mattered more than university credentials and high test scores.

The privileging of hand skills also sowed tensions between those employees *with* higher education (senior staff) and those *without*. Administrators like Xu Senyu and Li Yanong punctuated their careers with academic scholarship and erudite publications. Xu Senyu took the Qing Imperial examinations and earned *juren* (recommended man) status, whereas Li Yanong

⁴⁰⁰ For a more extended discussion on these preferences see Wang Annuo, “Zhuiyi dajiu Shen Zhiyu,” [Remembering Uncle Shen Zhiyu] *Wenhua Jiaoliu* [Cultural Dialogue] no. 7, (2010): 44 – 48.

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.

⁴⁰² Interview with Shen Minren, September 24th, 2009.

studied at Kyoto University.⁴⁰³ Similarly, Xie Zhiliu acquired his skill set through through the study of ancient Chinese poetry and painting, which made him a college professor before it made him the paintings “expert” that the Shanghai Museum hired in 1949. In short, senior staff equated antiquarianism with higher education. The privileging of hand skills was therefore as new to the the Class of 1952 as it was to the senior staff.

The conflict between scholarly distinction and practical experience reveals itself in everyday language at the museum. Educated employees often referred to unskilled workers as *meiyou wenhua* (without culture), a derogatory term that shamed the uneducated for their lack of learning.⁴⁰⁴ Employees who privileged hand skills took offense at this term and used it to warn one another about the treacheries of dealing with those who privileged scholarly distinction. Zhong Yinlan and her fellow apprentices called senior staff like Xu Senyu and Xie Zhiliu “part of the old society”, casting the Class of 1952 as part of a new world order that “got trained to be experts in their turn.”⁴⁰⁵ Senior conservators at the Conservation Workshop sometimes pulled young apprentices aside and warned “you have less *wenhua*, you have to be careful.”⁴⁰⁶ Some employees even framed professional conduct in the context of *wenhua*. Gu Youchu highlights

⁴⁰³ Within the Chinese Imperial examination hierarchy, earning *juren* status makes one eligible for the national level exams for civil service. It also gives the status-bearer higher social status due to his rare achievement in the rite of public and private life.

⁴⁰⁴ For the application of the *wenhua* moniker in contemporary practice, see Nicholas Dynon, “Four Civilizations’ and the Evolution of Post-Mao Chinese Socialist Ideology,” *The China Journal*, no. 60 (2008): 83-109; Tamara Jacka, “Cultivating Citizens: Suzhi (Quality) Discourse in the PRC,” *Positions: East Asia Cultural Critique*, 17, no. 3 (2009): 523-535.

⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010

the following example, “in general we were very casual in the workshop, if our nose was leaking we just patted it off and wiped off our hands. No one cared.” Visits from upper administration, however, changed the atmosphere. When Xia Shunkui, the department's manager, “came it was different. Especially if the director came, you had to stand up straight and look correct. You had to know your face.”⁴⁰⁷ The junior employees attributed these tensions to the administrators' privileging of *wenhua*. They told each other that if they didn't feign some *wenhua* “the leaders might turn against you, make you go and work in hard labor.”⁴⁰⁸

Cultivating Private Collecting

Contemporary narratives presuppose a gap between art market performance in the Maoist years and the years following 1978, when Reform era economic prosperity encouraged record-breaking prices in the Chinese art trade.⁴⁰⁹ The Shanghai Museum's records, however, indicate that nationalized art dealerships cultivated private collecting both in China and overseas, *throughout* the so-called Socialist era. The Shanghai Museum's enforcement of Cultural Relics laws enabled state-run art dealerships to nurture the growth of the domestic art market as well as the export trade with the international art market. These market manipulations not only fueled existing interests in collecting, but also paved the way for bigger, wetter appetites in the years to come.

By 1958, the Shanghai art market's 215 private curio shops, stands, and migrant

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010

⁴⁰⁹ For more discussion about post-1978 art market trends see Chapter 5.

dealerships had nothing of the brick-a-brak coziness that so charmed overseas collectors like Sir David Percival back in the 1930s and 40s. The Shanghai First Municipal Trade Bureau merged the shops into six antiquities conglomerates: the Chinese Curio Markets in Huangpu district (downtown Shanghai), the Xinlong Store in Luwan district (former French concession), Gusong Ji in the South City District (City God's Temple), the Renli Store in Jinan district (Jinan temple), and Zunyi zhai in Hongkou district (former Japanese concession).⁴¹⁰ The Chinese Curio Markets remained the biggest antiquities bazaar in Shanghai, employing 169 of 178 individuals in the industry.⁴¹¹ The other five locations got transformed into specialized retail stores, which sold reproductions or export-only arts and crafts for low-end collectors.

⁴¹⁰ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu benshi wenwu shangye zhuanyi wenhua bumen lingdao guanli de baogao ji shi shangye ju guwan jinyin guanli de guiding*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Transfer of the Municipality's Antiquities Industry to the Cultural Administration's Management, and the Municipal Commercial Bureau's Regulations on Antiquities Industry Management] February 25th, 1963 – November 23rd, 1963, B172-5-691, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴¹¹ Antiquities industry census data comes from *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu benshi wenwu shangye zhuanyi wenhua bumen lingdao guanli de baogao ji shi shangye ju guwan jinyin guanli de guiding*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Transfer of the Municipality's Antiquities Industry to the Cultural Administration's Management, and the Municipal Commercial Bureau's Regulations on Antiquities Industry Management] February 25th, 1963 – November 23rd, 1963, B172-5-691, SMA, Shanghai. Chinese Curio Market census data comes from *Gongsi heyingshanghai shi guwan shichang guanyu muqian guwan shichang cunzai jige zhuyao wenti de qingkuang baogao*, [The Nationalized Chinese Curio Market's Report Regarding Questions About the Status of the Market] October 28th, 1961, B123-1-1341-49, SMA, Shanghai.



Figure 2.5. The Shanghai Antique and Curios store in Hongkou district, a contemporary remnant of the consolidated antiquities conglomerates of the late 1950s and 60s. Photograph taken by author in June, 2010.

Consistent with the redefinition of art dealers' professional identities as outlined in Chapter One, smuggling remained a primary concern. In 1958, the Ministry of Culture asserted that Shanghai art dealers “like Jin Yuanyong, Huang Kangxiang, and others traveled with large amounts of cash, without the Cultural Relics Management Board's permission, directly to [Zhejiang provincial towns] like Xiaoxing, Yuyao, Shangyu, Ningbo...Lanxi, Jinhua, Wukang and other localities to purchase cultural relics”.⁴¹² Only the Shanghai Museum's vigilant enforcement of Cultural Relics laws curbed these illegal activities, and “cut off art dealers' illegal activities and tomb robbing in [Zhejiang and other nearby] provinces”.⁴¹³

⁴¹² *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu, kaogu fajiu, guji xiushan, sanmu qingli deng de tongzhi, diaocha baogao, wang lai han*, [the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Correspondence Regarding Its Investigation and Reports on Cultural Relics Protection, Ancient Site Restoration, and Tomb Cleanup] January 11th, 1958 – December 18th, 1958, B172-4-948, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴¹³ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu baohu, kaogu fajiu, guji xiushan, sanmu qingli deng de tongzhi*,

The museum staff's Customs inspection records suggest, however, that smuggling was a non-issue when considered in the context of the nationwide effort to profit from the export art trade. The focus on maximizing profits from overseas sales is evident both in volume of antiquities inspected for export, as well as the consistent expansion in Customs inspection personnel. Indeed, one of the primary purposes of the Shanghai Museum's antiquarian training program was to increase the number of museum employees capable of working at Customs.⁴¹⁴ By 1962, the Customs inspection team expanded from ten to twenty members, while the number of inspectors-on-retainer grew from five to sixteen.⁴¹⁵ Figure 2.6 illustrates how these changes impacted the antiquities export trade.⁴¹⁶

diaocha baogao, wang lai han, [the Cultural Affairs Bureau and the Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Correspondence Regarding Its Investigation and Reports on Cultural Relics Protection, Ancient Site Restoration, and Tomb Cleanup] January 11th, 1958 – December 18th, 1958, B172-4-948, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴¹⁴ The members of the Class of 1952 remained museum employees. They simply had the additional job requirement of working at Shanghai Customs.

⁴¹⁵ For 1950s Customs inspectors see *Shanghai shi renmin weiyuan hui pifu youguan wenwu, gumu, baohu guanli, chukou jianding banfa deng wenjian*, [Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Board's Decisions Regarding Cultural Relics, Ancient Tombs' Protection and Management, and Export Appraisal, Etc] January 1958 – December 1958, B1-2-1262, SMA, Shanghai; For 1960s Customs inspectors see *Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wen xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu xiuding, diaozhen shi wenwu tushu ji tezhong gongyi pin chukou jianding weiyuan hui zuzhi zhangchen, weiyuan mindan de baogao, pifu he gongzuo zongjie*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Bureau, Shanghai People's Representative Bureau's Propaganda Division, Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs administration's Report, Correspondence and Conclusions Regarding Fixing and Restructuring the Municipal Cultural Relics, Books, and Specialized Arts and Crafts Export Appraisal Board's Proceedings and Board Members] March 1962 – September 1962, B172-1-417, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴¹⁶ Data for 1950 – 1958 gathered from *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jiaqiang wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo he guwan ye guanli de yijian, baogao, pifu ji jianding biaozhun*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai People's Representative's Propaganda Department, Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Objections, Correspondence, Decisions, and Appraisal Standards for Strengthening Cultural Relics Export Appraisal Work and the Management of the Antiquities Industry] February 1960 – November 1960, B172-1-364, SMA, Shanghai. Data for 1959 – 1961 gathered from *Shanghai shi renwei, shanghai shi wen xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu xiuding, diaozhen shi wenwu tushu ji tezhong gongyi pin chukou jianding weiyuan hui zuzhi zhangchen, weiyuan mindan de baogao, pifu he gongzuo zongjie*, [The Shanghai People's Representative Bureau, Shanghai People's Representative Bureau's Propaganda Division, Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs administration's Report, Correspondence and Conclusions Regarding

Antiquities Authenticated by Shanghai Museum: 1950 - 1961

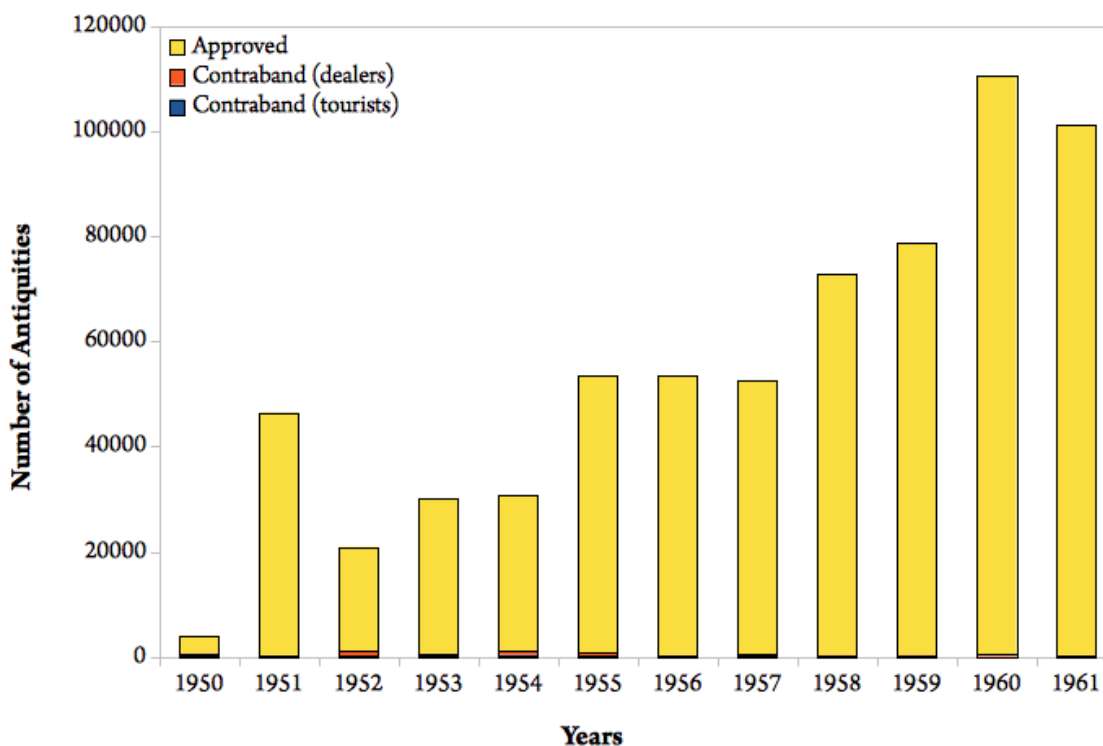


Figure 2.6. Number of antiquities that Shanghai Museum staff inspected for export between 1950 and 1961. SMA, Shanghai.

The step-wise pattern in Figure 2.6 suggests that nationalization enabled the Shanghai Museum staff to appraise more antiquities in 1955, 1956, and 1957, than the staff did between 1950 and 1954. The number of inspected antiquities rose higher still after 1958, when the museum expanded its Customs inspection team from ten to twenty inspectors. On average,

Fixing and Restructuring the Municipal Cultural Relics, Books, and Specialized Arts and Crafts Export Appraisal Board's Proceedings and Board Members] March 1962 – September 1962, B172-1-417, SMA, Shanghai.

between 1950 and 1954 the number of inspected export antiquities per year was 25,718 objects. In the years leading up to and following nationalization (1955 - 1957), the number of inspected antiquities increased to an average of 52,761 per year. Then, in the years starting with 1958, the appraisal team inspected an average of 72,494 export antiquities per year, increasing its 1955 – 1957 numbers by thirty-seven percent. In other words, the Shanghai Museum's inspectors enabled the municipal art trade to increase output by an average of 25,000 objects per year, once every three or four years.

Figure 2.6 also suggest that the museum's vigilant smuggler's watch was just for show. The minuscule darker bands on the lower regions of each column indicate the number of contrabands discovered during Customs inspection. The remarkable ratio of approvals to rejections demonstrate that inspectors did not discover more contraband as a result of inspecting more antiquities. In their first decade on duty, inspectors only marked 3,804 out of 437,230 artifacts as contraband, or less than 0.8% of all inspections.⁴¹⁷ In short, Customs inspectors' primary role was to enable the export trade to sell *more* antiquities overseas, which increased store revenues, and earned profits for the state.

In 1960, the municipal Cultural Affairs Administration announced that the Shanghai Museum's Customs inspection team “fought for and gained foreign currency, working in

⁴¹⁷ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jiaqiang wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo he guwan ye guanli de yijian, baogao, pifu ji jianding biao zhun*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai People's Representative's Propaganda Department, Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Objections, Correspondence, Decisions, and Appraisal Standards for Strengthening Cultural Relics Export Appraisal Work and the Management of the Antiquities Industry] February 1960 – November 1960, B172-1-364, SMA, Shanghai.

conjunction with the nation's socialist development plans to grow resources.”⁴¹⁸ As Chapter 1 demonstrated, art dealerships often used their ability to earn foreign currency to underscore their value to the state. By 1960, however, that recognition for earning foreign currency went to the Shanghai Museum. Members of the Class of 1952 took credit for the antiquities trade's own profits.

The Shanghai Museum also sought out specific art dealers, whose skills the museum wanted to utilize. Museum administrators developed an active interest in Ye Shuzhong, the art dealer whom the municipality arrested and exiled to Qinghai during nationalization. Despite Ye's tainted personnel record and his association with the condemned Four Vajrapani, museum administrators remembered him for the high-quality antiquities he identified and evaluated for the museum in the early 1950s.⁴¹⁹ Furthermore, the museum valued Ye's business network: “He knew lots of collectors and he made lots of introductions...say he saw something good, say a Qing dynasty thing, then he would come to the museum and sell it to you, he takes a cut like a commission.”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jiaqiang wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo he guwan ye guanli de yijian, baogao, pifu ji jianding biao zhun*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai People's Representative's Propaganda Department, Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Objections, Correspondence, Decisions, and Appraisal Standards for Strengthening Cultural Relics Export Appraisal Work and the Management of the Antiquities Industry] February 1960 – November 1960, B172-1-364, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴¹⁹ For more on the Shanghai Museum's persistent effort to expand its reach into the art market as well as the entrepreneurial network of dealers with exceptional art authentication knowledge, see *Shanghai shi wenhua ju shehui wenhua xitong de bianzhi wenti*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Bureau's Decisions Regarding the Organization of Municipal Cultural Institutions] April 1956 – December 1956, B9-2-56, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴²⁰ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

Between 1960s and 1964, the museum's petitions to get Ye Shuzhong early release got approval from officials as powerful as “Fang Xing, the associate director of Administration of Cultural Heritage.”⁴²¹ In a meeting with the municipal court,

“Fang Xing brought it up. He said that Ye Shuzhong, back when he was an art dealer, was a major art dealer, and his appraisal skills were especially impressive...Now it had already been so many years since Ye Shuzhong had been sent away, and was it possible to get him an early release, and have him come back.”⁴²²

This request was highly unusual, especially given Shanghai’s zero tolerance policy on art smuggling. Even museum administrators admitted that “this was not something that normal people can do, it has to be a suggestion from high up in the bureaucracy.”⁴²³ Nevertheless, Ye Shuzhong's record with the Shanghai Museum convinced municipal officials that the dealer, however disreputable, was a strong asset. His reputation for spotting a good investment rivaled that of Xue Guisheng, one of the municipality's most trusted agents in the Chinese Curio Markets. As Jin Jiapin explained, in comparison with Xue Guisheng, “we don't even need to talk about it. Ye Shuzhong had a better eye, and higher status.”⁴²⁴

The petition for Ye's early release failed for political reasons. According to Jin Jiapin, who participated in petitioning, “there were a lot of reports flying back and forth...but in the end it didn't go through.”⁴²⁵ In fact, when I questioned other members of the Class of 1952 about the art

⁴²¹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁴²² Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁴²³ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁴²⁴ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁴²⁵ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

dealer, they simply said “Oh don't mention the things that [they] did. They were working on political movements at the time, we try not to talk too much about those things. It was in the 1960s. How would we know if all those things are fairly meted out.”⁴²⁶ The 1950s campaign to recast art dealers as profiteers and smugglers had worked too well. However the museum staff wanted Ye Shuzhong, no amount of lobbying could erase the taint that the Class of 1952 themselves had helped create.

At face value, the above ministrations sound like bureaucratic wrinkle-smoothing. Upon closer examination, they reflect larger shifts in the Shanghai Museum's role amongst PRC cultural industries. Its regulation of the art market demonstrates the museum's reach in PRC policy-making. By the 1960s, Shanghai Museum staff not only knew which dealers and collectors owned what antiquities, they also had the authority to object when individuals sold their antiquities privately. The staff knew what collectors like Wu Hufan owned because it maintained an internal reporting system through public services, like hospitals and the Shanghai Police.⁴²⁷ For example, when Wu checked into the hospital in 1963, the museum staff visited, sent condolences, and “sent people to ask those who knew Wu about whether he still keeps paintings in Hong Kong”.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁴²⁷ Li Junjie, “Wu Hufan de shoucang yiwen,” [Anecdotes About Wu Hufan's Collecting] *Shanghai Wenbo Luncong* [Shanghai's Cultural Discussions] no. 2 (2002): 78-81.

⁴²⁸ *Wenhua bu guanyu dianding waibin xiedai wenwu chujing shouxu de yijian ji shanghai shi wen xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu diaozhen wenwu chukou jiating weiyuan mindan, xiuding zhangchen de qingshi, pifu, gongzuo zongjie*, [The Ministry of Culture's Correspondence, Decisions, and Conclusions Regarding Objections to the Procedures for Allowing Foreign Guests to Take Cultural Relics Beyond Our Borders and the Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Board Propaganda Division and Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Readjustment of the Cultural Relics Export Appraisal Board's Procedures and Members List] March 1962 – September 1962, B172-1-397, SMA, Shanghai.

Museum staff even questioned Wu's visitors to "find out from his visiting friends as well as others close to us whether Wu has a student named Wang Jiqian in America...he used to sell calligraphy and painting, sometimes to foreigners, and inquire whether Wu still maintains contact with Wang."⁴²⁹

Shanghai Museum staff also regulated the cost of art for both the domestic and export markets. It raised prices on antiquities that sold well and depress prices on antiquities that did not. The staff based these evaluations on their own acquisitions experience, which gave the Shanghai Museum a strong reputation for determining value as well as availability. The Department of Cultural Affairs even warned against trusting museum evaluations to a fault. "When comrade Xie Zhiliu believes that this is a scroll that belongs to Wu Hufan, other comrades don't even think to double check him".⁴³⁰ This led to the dangerous assumption, the department warned, that "once objects arrive and either Venerable Sir Xu or comrade Xie Zhiliu express their opinions then everything is settled."⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ *Wenhua bu guanyu dianding waibin xiedai wenwu chujing shouxu de yijian ji shanghai shi wen xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu diaozhen wenwu chukou jianding weiyuan mindan, xiuding zhangchen de qingshi, pifu, gongzuo zongjie*, [The Ministry of Culture's Correspondence, Decisions, and Conclusions Regarding Objections to the Procedures for Allowing Foreign Guests to Take Cultural Relics Beyond Our Borders and the Shanghai Municipal People's Representative Board Propaganda Division and Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Readjustment of the Cultural Relics Export Appraisal Board's Procedures and Members List] March 1962 – September 1962, B172-1-397, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³⁰ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu wenwu shougou, jianding gongzuo de qingshi baogao*, [Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Permissions and Reports Regarding Antiquities Acquisition and Appraisal Work] January 15th, 1960 – December 31st, 1960, B172-5-253, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu wenwu shougou, jianding gongzuo de qingshi baogao*, [Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Permissions and Reports Regarding Antiquities Acquisition and Appraisal Work] January 15th, 1960 – December 31st, 1960, B172-5-253, SMA, Shanghai.

Museum-led price evaluations enabled the antiquities trade to enjoy good general health in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Industry financial reports reveal that the danwei made 49% profits in the first six months of 1963 alone.⁴³² Between 1958 and 1962, storefronts not only sold 60,000RMB worth of reproduction artifacts overseas, but also provided 2,190 exhibition-quality antiquities for museums throughout the PRC.⁴³³

Figure 2.7 illustrates the Shanghai Museum's role in increasing profitability in the commercial sector.⁴³⁴ It shows the museum's adjustment of average prices for the sale of exportable, unexportable, and negotiable antiquities in 1962. As noted in Chapter 1, exportable and unexportable are categories that designate whether inventory was sold in China or overseas. Negotiable antiquities, on the other hand, occupy a gray-zone in the 1795-demarcation. Museum staff can arbitrate, depending on market needs, whether Customs can export antiquities in the negotiable category. This category includes antiquities that bear no date of creation, or whose date of creation crosses the 1795 demarcation, such an undated painting made by an artist who

⁴³² *Shangye bu, shanghai shi diyi shangye ju deng guanyu jiuhuo jishou zhengshui dingjia banfa shanghai shi guwan hangye jinyin guanli de baogao ji xiezhu waili muoshou wuzi de tongzhi*, [The Ministry of Commerce, Shanghai First Municipal Trade Bureau and Others Regarding How to Set Prices for the Sale of used Goods by Delivery and the Shanghai Municipal Antiquities Industry's Operations Management's Report and Notification Regarding the Disposal of Confiscated Possessions] January 1963, B123-5-1444, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³³ *Shangye bu, shanghai shi diyi shangye ju deng guanyu jiuhuo jishou zhengshui dingjia banfa shanghai shi guwan hangye jinyin guanli de baogao ji xiezhu waili muoshou wuzi de tongzhi*, [The Ministry of Commerce, Shanghai First Municipal Trade Bureau and Others Regarding How to Set Prices for the Sale of used Goods by Delivery and the Shanghai Municipal Antiquities Industry's Operations Management's Report and Notification Regarding the Disposal of Confiscated Possessions] January 1963, B123-5-1444, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³⁴ Data retrieved from *Shangye bu, shanghai shi diyi shangye ju deng guanyu guwan, jiuhuo gouxiao jiage ji jiaqian, gaijin heng qingbaodao gongzuo de tongzhi, baogao*, [The Ministry of Commerce, Shanghai First Trade Bureau, Etc's Report and Notifications Regarding Antiquities, Second Hand Goods' Sales Prices and Strengthening, Improving Industry Information Work] July 1962, B123-5-1102, SMA, Shanghai.

died in 1796.

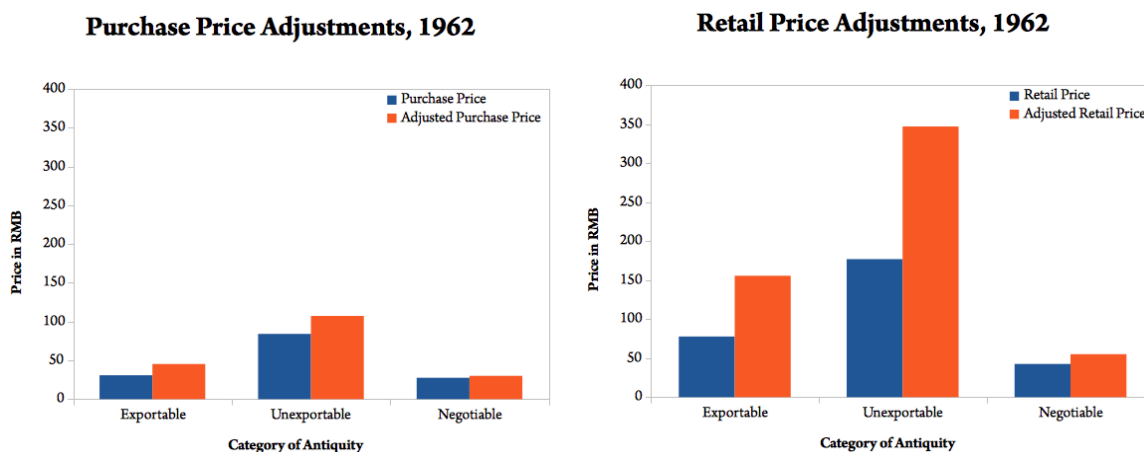


Figure 2.7. The Shanghai Museum's price adjustments for on-site purchasing and retailing in the Shanghai art market. SMA, Shanghai.

The chart entitled *Purchase Price Adjustments, 1962* examines how much Shanghai collectors received from selling to the nationalized antiquities industry. 1962 is not the only year in which the Shanghai Museum adjusted prices in the art market, but the data is representative of how market intervention worked throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s. The chart shows that individuals received an average of forty-seven percent more RMB for selling exportable antiquities, twenty-eight percent for unexportable antiquities, and nine percent for selling negotiable antiquities than they did in the previous year. The differences between categories suggest that the booming overseas trade raised offers on exportable goods. Domestic sales were also robust, which explains why prices rose in the unexportable category as well. Negotiable

antiquities, which required extended bureaucratic investment in order to clear inspections, bore the least change in price.

The chart entitled *Retail Price Adjustments, 1962* examines what the antiquities trade charged customers for buying antiquities. Overall, buyers saw more dramatic changes than sellers. Average retail prices for exportable antiquities rose 100% in comparison to the previous year. Unexportable antiquities rose ninety-six percent, while negotiable antiquities rose twenty-nine percent. While the differences between categories vary dramatically, the hierarchy of change between exportable, unexportable, and negotiable antiquities remained the same.

Overseas demand accounts for some of price increases. Export opportunities were so lucrative that some dealerships set up a partitioned area where “local residents could not enter...catering to the special needs of foreign guests”.⁴³⁵ The partition allowed dealers to “easily and quickly change” prices in order to “win more foreign currency”.⁴³⁶ This policy irked many foreign buyers, who found price differences between stores, and sometimes between transactions. Some “extremely unsatisfied foreign merchants” complained vociferously.⁴³⁷ “I’ve

⁴³⁵ *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, shanghai shi zonghe maoyi gongsi, fengxian shangye ju guanyu zhubao peipin, guwan, jiu huo jiage wenti baogao yijian*, [The Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, Shanghai Comprehensive Trade Company, and Fengxian Commercial Bureau's Report and Discussions Regarding the Problem of Prices for Jewelry, Accessories, Antiquities, and Second-Hand Goods] 1965, B123-6-865, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³⁶ *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, shanghai shi zonghe maoyi gongsi, fengxian shangye ju guanyu zhubao peipin, guwan, jiu huo jiage wenti baogao yijian*, [The Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, Shanghai Comprehensive Trade Company, and Fengxian Commercial Bureau's Report and Discussions Regarding the Problem of Prices for Jewelry, Accessories, Antiquities, and Second-Hand Goods] 1965, B123-6-865, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³⁷ *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, shanghai shi zonghe maoyi gongsi, fengxian shangye ju guanyu zhubao peipin, guwan, jiu huo jiage wenti baogao yijian*, [The Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, Shanghai Comprehensive Trade Company, and Fengxian Commercial Bureau's Report and Discussions Regarding the

already paid the money I'm supposed to pay, why do I have to pay additional amounts, I don't know what kind of trade policy you're running."⁴³⁸ Nevertheless, the foreigner's section worked wonders. Between 1964 and 1965, Shanghai's antiquities industry raised export prices by an additional fifty to 200 percent and "increased the price of some rare, extremely fine curios by more than a dozen times".⁴³⁹ In the first four months of 1965 alone, the danwei made 147,000 RMB in foreign currency, an increase of sixty-nine percent from the previous year.⁴⁴⁰

Domestic collecting also kept the market strong. The Shanghai Museum staff calibrated prices in specific categories of art according to regional interests. The Ministry of Commerce noted that painting prices rose in 1962 because "within the country those who love it are many, and their purchase power is strong".⁴⁴¹ The museum reduced prices for embroideries, coins, and

Problem of Prices for Jewelry, Accessories, Antiquities, and Second-Hand Goods] 1965, B123-6-865, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³⁸ *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, shanghai shi zonghe maoyi gongsi, fengxian shangye ju guanyu zhubao peipin, guwan, jiuho jiage wenti baogao yijian*, [The Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, Shanghai Comprehensive Trade Company, and Fengxian Commercial Bureau's Report and Discussions Regarding the Problem of Prices for Jewelry, Accessories, Antiquities, and Second-Hand Goods] 1965, B123-6-865, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴³⁹ *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, shanghai shi zonghe maoyi gongsi, fengxian shangye ju guanyu zhubao peipin, guwan, jiuho jiage wenti baogao yijian*, [The Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, Shanghai Comprehensive Trade Company, and Fengxian Commercial Bureau's Report and Discussions Regarding the Problem of Prices for Jewelry, Accessories, Antiquities, and Second-Hand Goods] 1965, B123-6-865, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁴⁰ *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, shanghai shi zonghe maoyi gongsi, fengxian shangye ju guanyu zhubao peipin, guwan, jiuho jiage wenti baogao yijian*, [The Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, Shanghai Comprehensive Trade Company, and Fengxian Commercial Bureau's Report and Discussions Regarding the Problem of Prices for Jewelry, Accessories, Antiquities, and Second-Hand Goods] 1965, B123-6-865, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁴¹ *Shanghye bu, shanghai shi diyi shanghye ju deng guanyu guwan, jiuho gouxiao jiage ji jiaqian, gaijin heng qingbaodao gongzuo de tongzhi, baogao*, [The Ministry of Commerce, Shanghai First Trade Bureau, Etc's Report and Notifications Regarding Antiquities, Second Hand Goods' Sales Prices and Strengthening, Improving Industry Information Work] July 1962, B123-5-1102, SMA, Shanghai.

jade because “internal sales are not good” and “there are too many extant examples in folk collections already.”⁴⁴² Although profit margins were lower in the 1960s than they are after 1978, the robust domestic sales figures show that domestic collectors remained active. Both the Shanghai Museum and the municipality firmly believed that Chinese collectors had the spending power. When I pressed Chen Peifen for how Shanghai maintained its domestic market throughout the Great Leap Forward she replied that in Shanghai “the water is deep, there's always people with money.”⁴⁴³ After some thought, she added: “some people are like that, they just can't possibly spend all the money that they have.”⁴⁴⁴

Ethnic Minority Art

The Shanghai Museum not only regulated prices amongst Chinese art collectors, it also regulated the categories of art that collectors would acquire. This is best illustrated in the museum's interest in ethnic minority artifacts, which the staff began to acquire in the late 1950s.⁴⁴⁵ This project coincided with the PRC's larger campaign to portray its fifty-five minority peoples as

⁴⁴² *Shanghaye bu, shanghai shi diyi shanghaye ju deng guanyu guwan, jiuho gouxiao jiage ji jiaqian, gaijin heng qingbaodao gongzuo de tongzhi, baogao*, [The Ministry of Commerce, Shanghai First Trade Bureau, Etc's Report and Notifications Regarding Antiquities, Second Hand Goods' Sales Prices and Strengthening, Improving Industry Information Work] July 1962, B123-5-1102, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁴³ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁴⁵ The history of this collection predates that which the existing literature has focused on, which place the PRC's interest ethnic minority peoples in the years following 1978. For a select bibliography see Erik Mueggler, “Dancing Fools: Politics Of Culture And Place In S 'Traditional Nationality Festival',” *Modern China*, 28, no. 1 (2002): 3-38; Beth E. Notar, “Authenticity Anxiety And Counterfeit Confidence: Outsourcing Souvenirs, Changing Money, And Narrating Value In Reform-Era China,” *Modern China*, 32, no. 1 (2006): 64-98; Daming Zhou, “On The Reconstruction And Identification Of Ethnic Groups from 'Han Assimilation' to 'She Assimilation': A Case Study of The She People In Southern Jiangxi Province,” *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology*, 40, no. 1, (2007): 72-82.

Chinese, a movement in which many cultural institutions participated.⁴⁴⁶ In 1959, for example, the Shanghai Museum opened an exhibit using minority artifacts that it requisitioned from the Royal Asiatic Society and Aurora University Museums (former British and French institutions in Shanghai). The exhibit, entitled *Fraternal Peoples' Arts and Crafts*, proclaimed that “the Northeast and Tibet are indivisible parts of our nation”.⁴⁴⁷ Museum guides told visitors that non-Chinese institutions, like the Royal Asiatic Society and Aurora University, were to blame for casting ethnic minority peoples as foreign. They called the “American, British, and other imperialist powers...twisted and shameless” for “dividing the Northeast, Tibet, and other regions from our national map, and claiming that Northerners and Tibetans are not Chinese.”⁴⁴⁸

As the museum staff proceeded with the exhibition, they found that ethnic minority artifacts were becoming collectables on the international Chinese art market. Chen Peifen explained that this growing trend prompted the museum to start an aggressive acquisitions campaign. “At the time we knew that there were lots of foreigners who were coming to buy ethnic

⁴⁴⁶ Jiann Hsieh, “China's Nationalities Policy: Its Development and Problems,” *Anthropos*, 81, no. 1./3. (1986): 1-20; Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming To Terms With The Nation: Ethnic Classification In Modern China*, (Berkeley, 2011);

⁴⁴⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁴⁸ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

minority relics, and if we didn't buy it up then, we would have nothing left to collect.”⁴⁴⁹

The museum started collecting close to home. Fudan University had a collection of Gaoshan artifacts (a Taiwanese minority) which the Class of 1952 petitioned for requisition. The petition asserted that the artifacts reinforced “existing museum exhibitions, they also illustrate the intimate relations between the Han and their fraternal peoples”.⁴⁵⁰ The Conservation Workshop also played a role. As the petition went on to argue, “Fudan University's preservation facilities are not ideal”, while the museum had resources to resolve “serious worm infestations” in the university's collection of bamboo and wood sculptures.⁴⁵¹ This requisition was successful. By December of 1960, Fudan University agreed to transfer its Gaoshan artifacts, which included sculptures as well as clothing, to the Shanghai Museum's custody.⁴⁵²

An international scandal soon prompted the museum to do far more than submit petitions. In 1959, a Swedish dealer named Naseem Nelson had bought 28,200 USD worth of antiquities, including bronze and wooden Buddhas, bronze relics, and carpets, from the Beijing Special Arts and Crafts Company and exported them back to Sweden.⁴⁵³ Soon, the PRC's

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁵⁰ *Shanghai wenhua ju guanyu jie shou yijiao ju juanxian wenwu, tushu de laiwang han (yi)*, [The Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Correspondence Regarding Accepting, Transferring, Appropriating, and Donations of Cultural Relics and Books (one)] September 24th, 1959 – December 12th, 1960. B172-5-245, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵¹ *Shanghai wenhua ju guanyu jie shou yijiao ju juanxian wenwu, tushu de laiwang han (yi)*, [The Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Correspondence Regarding Accepting, Transferring, Appropriating, and Donations of Cultural Relics and Books (one)] September 24th, 1959 – December 12th, 1960. B172-5-245, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵² *Shanghai wenhua ju guanyu jie shou yijiao ju juanxian wenwu, tushu de laiwang han (yi)*, [The Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Correspondence Regarding Accepting, Transferring, Appropriating, and Donations of Cultural Relics and Books (one)] September 24th, 1959 – December 12th, 1960. B172-5-245, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵³ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo ji wenwu shangye guanli wenti de qingshi, huibao, wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Requests, Reports, and Correspondence Regarding

Ministry of Culture noticed that Swedish newspapers were advertising that “Sweden is the first foreign country to receive permission to buy and sell antiquities from China”.⁴⁵⁴ The advertisements claimed that the relics “came from Tibet as well as newly excavated Ming dynasty tombs in the Beijing hinterlands.”⁴⁵⁵ Furthermore, the newspapers published readers' response letters asserting that “the Swedish used relics that the Chinese state stole from Tibetan monasteries to help the PRC gain profit”.⁴⁵⁶ The ministry reeled. The scandal seemed to fly in the face of ongoing efforts to incorporate Tibet and other ethnic minority regions into greater China.

The scandal prompted the Ministry of Culture to declare ethnic minority artifacts an integral aspect of the national essence.⁴⁵⁷ Customs inspectors decreed that all ethnic minority

Antiquities Export Appraisal Work and Cultural Relics Industry Management] November 18th, 1959 – January 9th 1961, B172-5-252, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵⁴ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo ji wenwu shangye guanli wenti de qingshi, huibao, wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Requests, Reports, and Correspondence Regarding Antiquities Export Appraisal Work and Cultural Relics Industry Management] November 18th, 1959 – January 9th 1961, B172-5-252, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵⁵ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo ji wenwu shangye guanli wenti de qingshi, huibao, wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Requests, Reports, and Correspondence Regarding Antiquities Export Appraisal Work and Cultural Relics Industry Management] November 18th, 1959 – January 9th 1961, B172-5-252, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵⁶ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo ji wenwu shangye guanli wenti de qingshi, huibao, wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Requests, Reports, and Correspondence Regarding Antiquities Export Appraisal Work and Cultural Relics Industry Management] November 18th, 1959 – January 9th 1961, B172-5-252, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵⁷ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo ji wenwu shangye guanli wenti de qingshi, huibao, wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Requests, Reports, and Correspondence Regarding Antiquities Export Appraisal Work and Cultural Relics Industry Management] November 18th, 1959 – January 9th 1961, B172-5-252, SMA, Shanghai.

artifacts that predate 1949 were no longer eligible for export – in other words, those artifacts now had their own category in the Chinese art historical canon.⁴⁵⁸ At the same time, the Shanghai Museum staff inaugurated an ambitious plan to acquire artifacts from those Chinese provinces with rich concentrations of ethnic minorities.

Museum administrators assigned Ma Chenyuan and Li Rongnie, two experienced staff members, to go to the North and Southwestern provinces and “acquire [previously undiscovered] minority peoples' artifacts as well as investigate kiln sites.”⁴⁵⁹ The expedition proved extraordinarily trying. Ma and Li “could not communicate with minority-peoples” because they did not speak the local dialects.⁴⁶⁰ They traveled without public “transportation so we walked for days to reach our location”, often “crossing mountains and not eating for an entire day”.⁴⁶¹ The local grain, hulless barley, gave Ma excruciating indigestion. Li soon fell sick with “a fever of 41C and...was hospitalized”.⁴⁶² Nevertheless, the two men persisted. Even with his fever,

⁴⁵⁸ *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jiaqiang wenwu chukou jianding gongzuo he guwan ye guanli de yijian, baogao, pifu ji jianding biaozhun*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai People's Representative's Propaganda Department, Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Objections, Correspondence, Decisions, and Appraisal Standards for Strengthening Cultural Relics Export Appraisal Work and the Management of the Antiquities Industry] February 1960 – November 1960, B172-1-364, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁵⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁶⁰ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁶¹ *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁶² *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

Li insisted on crossing the “thousand-meter sands of the Great Mongolian Desert” to get yet more antiquities.⁴⁶³

The expedition finally made headway when Ma and Li linked up with “local divisions and party representatives”, who used their regional networks to help the two locate, identify, and acquire artifacts from ethnic minority enclaves with known repositories of objects.⁴⁶⁴ With the help of these local cultural institutions and cadres, Ma and Li successfully purchased family heirlooms, including “jewelry, everyday utilitarian objects, musical instruments, and carpets”, as well as hand-made objects such as “embroideries, wax-dyed cloth, ornaments”, and ritualistic relics.⁴⁶⁵ Within the year, the Shanghai Museum gained “1,108 artifacts from 35 of our fraternal minority peoples.”⁴⁶⁶ In fact, the majority of objects in the museum's Minority Artifacts Gallery today come from acquisitions made during Ma and Li's expedition.⁴⁶⁷

By 1961 the Shanghai Museum had the mainland's biggest institutional collection of ethnic minority artifacts, but struggled to assess this collection's value. In fact, the staff were scared of the artifacts. Chen Peifen, who unpacked the packages that Ma and Li sent back, said

⁴⁶³ *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁶⁴ *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁶⁵ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁶⁶ *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

“when I took those things out of the box, cringe! Oh! But you couldn't get rid of it.”⁴⁶⁸ She recalled one instance when “there was something with hair on it, when I reached my hand into the box to get it, I just started screaming.”⁴⁶⁹ These objects had little in common with the bronzes, ceramics, and paintings that the Class of 1952 had learned to appraise in antiquarian training.

The Chinese art historical canon simply had no criteria for evaluating ethnic minority artifacts. In fact, junior employees thought the objects were cast-offs. Low acquisition prices seemed to support that stance – “it was easy to buy, those minorities didn't want to bother with all of their relics either.”⁴⁷⁰ Thus, gallery scripts from the 1960s do not define ethnic minority artifacts as an example of Chinese creativity. Neither did the artifacts appear in the main exhibition galleries, which ostensibly “focus on the excellent artistic creations that Chinese people produced.”⁴⁷¹ In fact, the museum did not put any artifacts on permanent display until 1996, when the generation of individuals who had acquired and cataloged the objects had already retired.

The Class of 1952 feared that prolonged exposure to ethnic minority artifacts, as well as the borderlands that produced them, turned urbanized Han Chinese into savages. After all, the minority peoples “had all these skull caps, they made a bowl out of skull caps...those people living

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁶⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁷⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁷¹ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu shanghai bowu guan, shijian bowuguan chenlie jihua ji qi gaijing fangan de qingshi, pifu*, [People's Republic Shanghai Municipality Representative Board's Propaganda Ministry and Municipal Cultural Administration's Rescripts Regarding Exhibition Plans and Improvement Requests for the Shanghai Museum and the Shanghai History Museum] January 24th, 1956 – August 27th, 1956, B172-4-532, SMA, Shanghai.

in Tibet were cruel.⁴⁷² Ma and Li's return only confirmed the Class of 1952's fears. The two "looked like wild men."⁴⁷³ They were unkempt. "Their pants were all torn."⁴⁷⁴ Neither bothered to send their pants out for mending. Instead, Ma and Li "said they would buy a handkerchief to mend it", a recourse that urbanized Shanghainese believed only the very impoverished would choose.⁴⁷⁵ Their colleagues thought these poor sartorial choices were the impact of Ma and Li's exposure to the uncivilized, rural provinces. Indeed, museum administrators worried that their own staff were transforming into people as savage as the ethnic minorities that they created exhibits about.

Despite the aesthetic difficulties, the state's interest in demonstrating that "our myriad peoples have long shared the same sensibilities" pushed the Shanghai Museum to integrate ethnic minority artifacts into their story of art.⁴⁷⁶ The staff were told to double acquisition efforts because "at present our work is not complete, we cannot acquire every minority people's arts and crafts without gaps, we must keep replenishing our collection going forward."⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷² Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁷³ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁷⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁷⁵ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁴⁷⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁷⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu jushu shewen danwei juban 'Shinian lai shanghai wenwu bowuguan de chengjiu' deng zhanlan de jihua, zongjie, laiwang han*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Plans, Conclusions, and Correspondence Regarding the Social and Cultural Danwei's Preparation for 'The Ten Year Anniversary of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Museum' and Other Exhibitions] January 5th, 1959 – December 5th, 1959, B172-5-104, SMA, Shanghai.

Museum administrators touted exemplary acquisition efforts. During his hospital stay, Li asked about possible acquisition hotspots from “fellow patients who were minority-peoples”.⁴⁷⁸ The Shanghai Museum praised Li as an example of employees who “think only of how to acquire a bit more artifacts”.⁴⁷⁹ These gestures formed part of a growing trend, amongst museums across the PRC, to frame ethnic minority artifacts as categories of art that always belonged to the Chinese art historical tradition.⁴⁸⁰

The acquisition of ethnic minority artifacts demonstrates far more than canonical mutability. It suggests that while the emphasis on Chinese national unity comes from state directives, the identification and evaluation of artifacts pertaining to Chinese cultural heritage is a more complicated phenomenon, co-produced by domestic as well as overseas influences.⁴⁸¹ The interest in cataloging, studying, and displaying ethnic minority artifacts, some of whose value have still yet to be determined by the art historical establishment, came from regional museums as well as traders in faraway countries like Sweden.⁴⁸² Therefore, like the Chinese art historical canon,

⁴⁷⁸ *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁷⁹ *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁸⁰ *Shanghai bowuguan xianjin shiji*, [A Record of the Shanghai Museum's Innovative Deeds] March, 1960. B172-5-381, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁸¹ Lei Guang, “Realpolitik Nationalism: International Sources of Chinese Nationalism,” *Modern China*, 31, no. 4 (2005): 487-514.

⁴⁸² In its demonstration of international influences, this study disagrees with the nationalist explanation for the PRC's categorization of ethnic minorities. Nimrod Baranovitch, “Between Alterity and Identity: New Voices of Minority People in China,” *Modern China*, 27, no. 3 (2001): 359-401; James Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China: From the Yellow Emperor to Peking Man,” *Modern China*, 32, no. 2 (2006): 181-220; Jiao Pan, “Deconstructing China's Ethnic Minorities, Deorientalization or Reorientalization?” *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology*, 42, no. 4, (2010): 46-61; Louisa Schein, “Gender and Internal Orientalism in China,” *Modern China*, 23, no. 1 (1997): 69-98; Gang Zhao, “Reinventing China: Imperial Qing Ideology and

the establishment of Chinese cultural heritage, though often shaped by PRC directives, is also a co-produced phenomenon that derives meaning from on-going negotiations with regional, national, and international constituents.

A National Institution

For the most part, PRC cultural institutions kowtowed to the demand of those in the state capital. Shanghai's role in art canonization and art market regularization, however, soon enabled it to push back when Beijing's museums came elbowing into its territory. The conflicts revealed themselves most explicitly during the nationwide project to requisition artifacts for two new cultural institutions in Beijing: the Museum of the Chinese Revolution and the Chinese History Museum. The planning committees sent Shanghai an order for 358 objects, including signature bronzes such as the Dayu ding and Dake ding.⁴⁸³ The requisition threatened to transfer some of the museum's finest antiquities to Beijing, including antiquities dating to the Shang, Zhou, and Tang dynasties.

The Shanghai Museum staff refuse to cooperate. They sent a letter to the Department of Cultural Affairs, not only rejecting Beijing's request but also reprimanding the capital for putting them in a difficult position.⁴⁸⁴ The staff took offense at Beijing's attitude. As Huang

the Rise of Modern Chinese National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China*, 32, no. 1 (2006): 3-30.

⁴⁸³ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shi wenguan hui, Shanghai bowuguan suocang wenwu diaobuo zhongyang lishi bowuguan de wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture and the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Correspondence Regarding Transferring Objects From the Shanghai Museum to the Central History Museum] February 1st, 1958 – December 26th, 1959. B172-5-102, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁸⁴ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shi wenguan hui, Shanghai bowuguan suocang wenwu diaobuo zhongyang lishi bowuguan de wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture and the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics

Xuanpei explained, “If you take everything nice from all over the country, then what's the point of having regional museums? Why don't people just go to Beijing to see everything?”⁴⁸⁵

Shanghai refused to open its storerooms. Chen Peifen recounted that “They said, we want to go into your storehouse and look by themselves...well what should we do, just close up the museum? We said you can't just go in there and mess everything up.”⁴⁸⁶ Museum administrators took a firm stand. Beijing should “acquire and transfer antiquities from the National Palace Museum in Beijing, not transfer things from Shanghai”.⁴⁸⁷

The Shanghai Museum specifically objected to Beijing's interest in the Dayu and Dake dings. The staff regularly used Pan Dayu's donation of both bronzes as an exemplar story in donor recruitment. If Beijing removed the two relics, then Shanghai's donation rhetoric would suffer.

We often conceive of donations as an exchange between the museum, potential donors, and the general public. In its negotiations with the Ministry of Culture, however, the Shanghai Museum turned the language of donation against other museums. Museum staff argued that their collection represented “part of a personal relations network”, a strong regional foundation

Management Bureau's Correspondence Regarding Transferring Objects From the Shanghai Museum to the Central History Museum] February 1st, 1958 – December 26th, 1959. B172-5-102, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁴⁸⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁴⁸⁷ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shi wenguan hui, Shanghai bowuguan suocang wenwu diaobuo zhongyang lishi bowuguan de wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture and the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Correspondence Regarding Transferring Objects From the Shanghai Museum to the Central History Museum] February 1st, 1958 – December 26th, 1959. B172-5-102, SMA, Shanghai.

for philanthropy that might breakdown if state expropriation occurred.⁴⁸⁸ In particular, Ma Chenyuan told Beijing that “this object, the old donor gave it to us, we have to go and ask her what *she* thinks about the requisition, otherwise she would think that we were just giving away her things.”⁴⁸⁹ in other words, as the authors of its operative fiction, the Shanghai Museum retained unmitigated rights to designate the terms of any bequest. Beijing could not simply transfer Shanghai's relics to museums where its donors had no personal affiliation.

The Shanghai Museum's official donation documentation explicitly state that donors gave their antiquities to *guojia*, or the nation as a whole. When I point out the documentation's lack of regional distinctions, however, my interviewees point out that institutional competition still mattered. Beijing had no right to expropriate Shanghai's property but “Beijing was greedy – they knew that they would not have many opportunities to take those items, so they just asked for a lot.”⁴⁹⁰ Hardly an institution to suffer such affronts passively, the Shanghai Museum asserted that if Beijing wanted its antiquities, then it had to give explicit reasons why it couldn't find the same category of objects in the capital, *and* it had to pay the Shanghai Museum for all requisitions.

After much back and forth, including face-to-face meetings between museum administrators as well as ministry officials, the two cities reached a compromise. The Ministry of

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009. See Chapter 1, 3, and 4 for more on how expropriations installed the very foundations of the collection whose philanthropic origins the Shanghai Museum staff are working so hard to articulate.

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁴⁹⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

Culture sent the Shanghai Museum an official letter of apology stating that “our ministry has criticized the History Museum” for “causing difficulties for Shanghai's Museum and Cultural Relics Management Bureau.”⁴⁹¹ Beijing museum administrators also hand wrote a letter of apology, stating that “so long as other provinces and cities can take care of our needs, we will not appropriate unnecessarily from Shanghai”.⁴⁹² The ministry reduced the size of Beijing's request from 358 objects to 142 objects, paid the Shanghai Museum 2,132.68RMB, and provided Shanghai with a replica of the Dayu ding for as long as Beijing held the original on display.⁴⁹³ A compromise of this magnitude: Specifically, a sixty percent reduction in expropriation, payments, as well as a promise to replace and return requisitions, was unprecedented. Even museums that shared the Palace Museum title, such as that in Shenyang, had to relinquish antiquities to Beijing upon request. The special treatment that Shanghai received from the Ministry of Culture underscored its status amongst the nation's cultural institutions, as well as its power dynamic with central administration.

Conclusion

⁴⁹¹ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shi wenguan hui, Shanghai bowuguan suocang wenwu diaobuo zhongyang lishi bowuguan de wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture and the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Correspondence Regarding Transferring Objects From the Shanghai Museum to the Central History Museum] February 1st, 1958 – December 26th, 1959. B172-5-102, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁹² *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shi wenguan hui, Shanghai bowuguan suocang wenwu diaobuo zhongyang lishi bowuguan de wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture and the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Correspondence Regarding Transferring Objects From the Shanghai Museum to the Central History Museum] February 1st, 1958 – December 26th, 1959. B172-5-102, SMA, Shanghai.

⁴⁹³ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shi wenguan hui, Shanghai bowuguan suocang wenwu diaobuo zhongyang lishi bowuguan de wanglai han*, [The Ministry of Culture and the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Correspondence Regarding Transferring Objects From the Shanghai Museum to the Central History Museum] February 1st, 1958 – December 26th, 1959. B172-5-102, SMA, Shanghai; Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

The Shanghai Museum's standing on the international museum circuit could only be “recognized” in the 1980s, when a more transparent cross-flow of artifacts, exhibitions, and personnel began to take place between Shanghai and museums in North America, Europe, and Japan. Not until the 1990s would funding from these regions become fully visible in the Shanghai Museum budget. Moreover, it took a more dramatic state transition – the rise of Deng Xiaoping and his associated economic policies in the years after 1978, to make the PRC's stake in Chinese cultural heritage more explicit. In the 70s and 80s, the most significant indicators of international interest in China's “cultural inheritance” were the expansion of overseas Chinese art museums. Institutions such as the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, the Cleveland Museum of Art in Ohio, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Sir Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art in London, and the Tokyo National Museum in the Ueno Park complex in Japan became major cultural destinations for both domestic and international visitors.⁴⁹⁴ The growing sophistication of Chinese art collections abroad made the PRC's privileging of Chinese cultural heritage visible, and ultimately *indispensable*.

Even so, the museum's indispensability to Chinese cultural heritage required new

⁴⁹⁴ For more on the creation, promulgation, and institutionalization of East Asian art collections as part of cultural heritage and cultural tourism, see Warren I Cohen, *East Asian Art and American Culture: a Study in International Relations*, (New York, 1992); Alice Y. Tseng, “Styling Japan: The Case of Josiah Conder and the Museum at Ueno, Tokyo,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 63, no. 4 (2004): 472-497; Jennifer Barrett, *Museums and the Public Sphere*, (Malden, 2011); Hyung Il Pai, “Romancing the Ruins of Imperial Antiquity: Travel Myths, Memories, and the Marketing of Heritage Destinations in Korea,” *Imperial Exposure: Early Photography and Royal Portraits across Asia*, Conference held December 5th, - 6th, 2011, Freer Gallery of Art.

strategies for promulgation and evaluation. By the 1960s, the concept of “cultural inheritance” had already transformed individual collecting whims, such as specific types of bronze relics and ethnic minority artifacts, to fully elaborated categories of art in the Chinese art historical canon. Furthermore, the Shanghai Museum's regulatory role in the art market marked the institution as a key player in both the commercial and non-profit aspects of cultural heritage creation. But even these transitions demanded new professional capacities. Would the Class of 1952 replace the senior staff to become fully elaborated Red antiquarians? Or would their newly acquired skills and responsibilities taint these young people with elite preoccupations that flew in the face of the greater Socialist project? Or perhaps, as some suggested, cultural institutions' apparent rise was simply a remnant of capitalist interests that lingered in the PRC, and an artifact of the Chinese art trade's reaction to bright financial forecasts.

**Chapter Three: Raid and Sort: the Shanghai Museum in
the Cultural Revolution, 1966 – 1969**

Warning Shot

In the Spring of 1966 a delegation of officials walked up to the third floor of Duoyun Xian, a Shanghai work unit that sold Chinese antiquities.⁴⁹⁵ Sun Jiecong, the store's Director, greeted them at reception. She didn't know who the men were. People who liked antiquities often came to look around and “if anyone came, then I received them, whatever they wanted to see I would show them.”⁴⁹⁶ These men, however, asked for something unusual. They wanted a list of the individuals who bought art at the store.⁴⁹⁷ Looking back, Sun realized that the men “wanted that information to use against older officials. People like Wang Yiping...because they would come and look at stuff...they bought things.”⁴⁹⁸ She gave the men Duoyun Xian's guest-book and they left. Within a few months, Sun heard that Wang Yiping (1914 – 2007) got attacked during a Cultural Revolution rally in Beijing. The former Shanghai Museum President spent the next five years in reeducation and hard labor.⁴⁹⁹

Li Junjie, a junior employee who joined the Shanghai Museum in 1952, remembers “it was in June and July of 1966 when [Cultural Revolution campaigns] started” in Shanghai.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁵ A danwei, sometimes translated as work unit, is both the name given to a place of employment and the principle instrument in implementing party policy in the PRC.

⁴⁹⁶ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

⁴⁹⁹ For more on Wang Yiping's political career in Shanghai see Shanghai Gazetteer online, Zhuan ye zhi, *Di Liujie weiyuan hui zhuren*, [Section Six Heads Of Board], Available <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node72907/node72917/node72962/node72967/userobject1ai86003.html>> [11 June, 2011].

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

Students who called themselves the Red Guards rallied throughout the city, gathering volunteers to break down the Four Olds: Old thoughts, Old culture, Old traditions, and Old habits.⁵⁰¹ They called it the Four Olds campaign (1966 – 1968). The students' destructive momentum escalated as more and more volunteers joined up, demonstrating in the streets and focusing the brunt of their violence on Huangpu district – downtown Shanghai. All the shopkeepers on Nanjing Road watched as “Red Guards were going on the street, going into people's houses and threatening to burn things down.”⁵⁰² Many feared that Red Guards would “treat the museum as part of the Four Olds [as well], especially the religious objects.”⁵⁰³ All cultural institutions in the municipality immediately put sentries at their doors.⁵⁰⁴ Despite the precaution, Shanghai Museum employees who “saw them smashing up the signboards in stores” wondered what *anyone* could do if Red Guards “brought their hammers and knocked up the exhibitions” in the museum gallery.⁵⁰⁵

This chapter demonstrates that Chinese cultural institutions did far more than shut down and scatter in the first four years of the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁰⁶ From behind closed doors,

⁵⁰¹ For a brief chronology of the Cultural Revolution see Alain Badiou, “The Cultural Revolution: The Last Revolution?” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 13, no. 3, (2005): 502 – 515. For a summary of historiography since the 1970s see Jonathan Unger, “The Cultural Revolution at the Grass Roots,” *The China Journal*, no. 57 (2007): 109-137; For a Shanghai-specific portrayals see Yomi Braester, “‘A Big Dying Vat’: The Vilifying of Shanghai during the Good Eighth Company Campaign,” *Modern China*, 31, no. 4 (2005): 411-447.

⁵⁰² Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

⁵⁰³ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

⁵⁰⁴ Shanghai gazetteers online, Shanghai wenwu gowuguan zhi, *Dashi ji* [Annales] Available <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node4467/node20331/index.html>> [February 2011]

⁵⁰⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁰⁶ The generalization that all cultural institutions shut down during the Cultural Revolution arose from political and economic updates written by former China-hands during the 1960s and has perpetuated through subsequent studies focusing on the PRC's education and religious sectors. For examples see Foreign Expert,

Shanghai's museums and libraries leveraged Cultural Revolution campaigns to the benefit of both institutional collecting and art market sales. Museum employees actively participated in the nationwide seizure and confiscation of art. They appropriated some objects based on museological concerns such as preservation and canonization, and seized others for the purpose of earning foreign currency on international art market.⁵⁰⁷ I argue that these activities enabled the Shanghai Museum to profited enormously.⁵⁰⁸ Participating in Cultural Revolution campaigns gave museum employees unprecedented access to both elite and ordinary art collections, as well as the ability to convert seized assets into sources of public wealth.

I further argue that Cultural Revolution campaigns expanded antiquarians' social capital

"Eyewitness of the Cultural Revolution", *The China Quarterly*, no. 28 (1966): 1-7; Melvin Gurtov, "The Foreign Ministry and Foreign Affairs During the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly*, no. 40 (1969): 65-102; Sarah Strong and John Strong, "A Post-Cultural Revolution Look at Buddhism," *The China Quarterly*, no. 54 (1973): 321-330; Robert S. Wang, "Educational Reforms and the Cultural Revolution: The Chinese Evaluation Process," *Asian Survey*, 15, no. 9 (1975): 758-774; Daniel S. P. Yang, "Theatre in Post Cultural Revolution China: A Report Based on Field Research in the Fall and Winter of 1981," *Asian Theatre Journal*, 1, no. 1 (1984): 90-103; Thomas B. Gold, "After Comradeship: Personal Relations in China Since the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly*, no. 104 (1985): 657-675.

For more recent interpretations that seek to revise the above views given recent access to archives, see Lu Xiuyuan, "A Step Toward Understanding Popular Violence in China's Cultural Revolution," *Pacific Affairs*, 67, no. 4 (1994-1995): 533-563; Jonathan Unger, "Cultural Revolution Conflict in the Villages," *The China Quarterly*, no. 153 (1998): 82-106; Dahpon Ho, "To Protect And Preserve: Resisting The 'Destroy The Four Olds' Campaign, 1966 – 1967," in Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz, and Andrew Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution As History* (Stanford, 2006): 64 – 95; Denise Ho, "The Ideology of Cultural Things: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly* (forthcoming).

⁵⁰⁷ I address the commodification of confiscated property in the international art market in detail in Chapter 4.

⁵⁰⁸ My findings resonate with that of scholars who study how informal power structures benefited from the Cultural Revolution. For examples see Nan Lin and Wen Xie, "Occupational Prestige in Urban China," *American Journal of Sociology*, 93, no. 4 (1988): 793-832; Joel Andreas, "The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization: A Case Study of Rebellion During the Chinese Cultural Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, 72, no. 3 (2007): 434-458.

and political reach.⁵⁰⁹ Their ability to identify, evaluate, and authenticate antiquities made the museum's antiquarians pivotal to executing the Four Olds campaign as well as subsequent movements, such as raids and the creation of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Sorting Committee. While some argue that cultural institutions buffered the PRC's ancient relics from the worst of the Cultural Revolution, Shanghai Museum employees' work throughout the 1960s show that converting seized property into public assets was the institutions' true legacy.

Lockdown

Stores on Nanjing road went into immediate lockdown in the summer of 1966.⁵¹⁰ Sun Jiecong and her colleagues shut Duoyun Xian's reception. "Our iron gates were closed so other people can't come in."⁵¹¹ Duoyun Xian stayed like that for months. Employees could still enter

⁵⁰⁹ Since the late 1960s, scholars working on the Red VS Expert paradigm have warned that the Cultural Revolution's ideological (Red) focus will erode the infrastructural and economic achievements that skilled individuals (Expert) have established in the PRC. For the erosion thesis see Dennis Ray, "Red and Expert' and China's Cultural Revolution," *Pacific Affairs*, 43, no. 1 (1970): 22-33; Paul J. Hiniker, "The Cultural Revolution Revisited: Dissonance Reduction or Power Maximization," *The China Quarterly*, no. 94 (1983): 282-303; Sharon Chien Lin, "Education for Librarianship in China After the Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Education for Librarianship*, 24, no. 1 (1983):17-29; David Lewis Feldman, "Ideology and the Manipulation of Symbols: Leadership Perceptions of Science, Education, and Art in the People's Republic of China, 1961-1974," *Political Psychology*, 6, no. 3 (1985): 441-460.

In recent years, opportunities to conduct oral historical interviews in the PRC have confirmed that the Cultural Revolution benefited professionalization amongst select sectors of expertise. For examples see Ji Feng Yuan, Koenraad Kuiper, Shu Shaogu, "Language and Revolution: Formulae of the Cultural Revolution," *Language in Society*, 19, no. 1 (1990): 61-79; Joel Andreas, "Battling over Political and Cultural Power During the Chinese Cultural Revolution," *Theory and Society*, 31, no. 4 (2002): 463-519.

⁵¹⁰ For more on systematic shutdowns in 1966 see Sharon Chien Lin, "Historical Development of Library Education in China," *The Journal of Library History*, 20, no. 4 (1985): 368-386; Richard D. Ellis, "Trade Union Libraries in the People's Republic of China," *The Library Quarterly*, 69, no. 4 (1999): 446-475; Alan P. L. Liu, "Rebirth and Secularization of the Central Party School in China," *The China Journal*, no. 62 (2009): 105-125.

⁵¹¹ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

from the backdoor and Sun reported to work every day, but there wasn't much to do.⁵¹² Some stopped going to work altogether. Left on her own, Sun sat in front of the store's in-house television set with some knitting. The stations "broadcast all the struggles, the criticism sessions...I watched the stations and I knitted."⁵¹³ Whenever strangers demanded entry Sun and her colleagues refused, stating "we're not letting strangers come in and sweep, we'll do our own sweeping of the Four Olds...we'll set up our own Red Guards."⁵¹⁴

Other antiquities dealerships coped by transferring their inventory elsewhere. "The Cultural Revolution said the Chinese Curio Markets' stock is the Four Olds," an accusation that no work unit could afford.⁵¹⁵ Once the word spread, "no one came to buy, and the whole business became one that had to be criticized and taken down."⁵¹⁶ The storefronts transferred all existing stock to the China National Arts & Crafts Import & Export Corporation (henceforth Arts and Crafts Company), a new work unit that the state department set up in the same year. Personnel transfers occurred as well, largely as a matter of necessity. "The people at the Chinese Curio Markets had no work to do, so they went over [to the Arts and Crafts Company] to see if

⁵¹² Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

⁵¹³ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

⁵¹⁴ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009. For more general studies of Red Guards activities between 1966 and 1969, see Tsang Chiu-Sam, "The Red Guards and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," *Comparative Education*, 3, no. 3 (1967): 195-205; Juliana Pennington Heaslet, "The Red Guards: Instruments of Destruction in the Cultural Revolution," *Asian Survey*, 12, no. 12, (1972): 1032-1047; Anita Chan, *Children of Mao: Personality Development and Political Activism in the Red Guard Generation*, (Seattle, 1985); Michael Schoenhals, "Review: Unofficial and Official Histories of the Cultural Revolution--A Review Article," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 48, no. 3 (1989): 563-572; Andrew G. Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement*, (Cambridge, 2009); Joel Andreas, *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origin of China's New Class*, (Stanford, 2009);

⁵¹⁵ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

⁵¹⁶ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

they can make a living.”⁵¹⁷ By the end of 1966, everything that belonged to the Chinese Curio Markets became Arts and Crafts Company property. The Arts and Crafts Company became an umbrella corporation with authority over all antiquities work units in the PRC. “Even the [markets’] real estate belonged to them.”⁵¹⁸

The Shanghai Museum staff started getting nervous in July. Red Guards clamored to inspect museum exhibitions and a rumor threatened that “there might be people who would rush the galleries”.⁵¹⁹ Some employees hoped that Red Guards would listen to reason. Others, however, argued that “we couldn't open the doors by a hair, because if they came in then they would 'bam'! Knock everything out. That would be the worst.”⁵²⁰ As conflicting anxieties played out inside the museum, the staff could hear Red Guards demonstrating out front. The museum staff quickly agreed “we couldn't mess around with that...that was when the museum knew, we gotta close the doors, they're definitely coming.”⁵²¹

The staff installed a two-pronged security plan. First, administrators like Jin Jiapin and Zhang Ming sealed the entrance. Jin Jiapin stood at the front gate and talked to all outsiders who requested entry. He “told them this is the museum here, the museum's collection is not the Old Fours.”⁵²² Any time Red Guards objected Jin reminded “them about history they learned from school, that that history all came from the objects, we found out about history from

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

⁵¹⁸ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁵¹⁹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵²⁰ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵²¹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵²² Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

objects. If ancient times had no objects, then we would have no history.”⁵²³ Jin leveraged the museum's role as custodian of Chinese cultural heritage. He argued that the institution housed “things passed down from our predecessors to the nation, that the nation will use to teach its progeny.”⁵²⁴ For every Red Guard that came knocking, “I would say it's not that I'm not opening the doors today and it's not that I don't trust you. But just in case we have one object damaged, then I have to answer to history. When you grow up you will know.”⁵²⁵ Amazingly, no one argued with Jin. They just left.

Some Red Guards tried to enter from the back. Zhang Ming met them there. Zhang managed the storehouse – an in-house depository that held the majority of the museum's collection. According to Li Junjie, Zhang “just didn’t give anything up.”⁵²⁶ Whenever a Red Guard “told him to give them these objects” in a particularly threatening manner, Zhang simply referred them to Jin Jiapin, who stood his ground and told the young people to go away.⁵²⁷ Zhang kept the storehouse keys on hand at all times. “He just didn't open the doors to anybody who wanted to take cultural relics away.”⁵²⁸

Fearful of a night attack, the museum assigned everyone to twenty-four hour shifts. Some packed up the exhibition displays. Others, the more physically intimidating employees, took turns patrolling the streets. If any patrolmen saw “a bunch of young people who gathered

⁵²³ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵²⁴ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵²⁵ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵²⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

⁵²⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

⁵²⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

outside the museum”, they got Jin or Zhang to “reason with them, tell them that they couldn't just come and slash up what was in the museum.”⁵²⁹ These measures worked effectively. “Our walls were tight.”⁵³⁰ In fact, “after a while [Red Guards] stopped coming.”⁵³¹

The second prong of the security plan was to set up the museum's own team of Red Guards. From the perspective of outsiders requesting entry, an existing Red Guard unit indicated that the Four Olds campaign was already underway. Museum administrators believed that “people who work at the museum there's no way they would smash up cultural relics.”⁵³² An in-house unit would also keep strangers out - if any outsiders wanted to enter “we just said that we were participating with Red Guards” internally.⁵³³

Museum administrators selected their Red Guards carefully. Only employees that had already obtained Chinese Communist Party membership were nominated. This methodology differed from the selection of Red Guards outside the museum, which left membership up to self-determination.⁵³⁴ Roughly thirty candidates were selected based on their record of Party participation.⁵³⁵ The appointment process even included a background check. “They said who are you and what did your parents do. You had to have three generations of straight and clean workers in your family.”⁵³⁶

⁵²⁹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵³⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁵³¹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵³² Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁵³³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵³⁴ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵³⁵ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵³⁶ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

Huang Xuanpei, another junior employee who joined the museum in 1952, led the museum's Red Guards. Huang credited his appointment to a clean background check: "My grandfather was a farmer, my dad was a worker, and I myself was in the party, so they trusted me."⁵³⁷ This group of "people of good birth" held the fort.⁵³⁸ Huang's duties "stopped once the Red Guards stopped [demonstrating], so about the end of 1966".⁵³⁹ He joked that the rest of the staff called them "the fake Red Guards" because they left museum property alone.⁵⁴⁰

The Shanghai Museum officially closed its doors on August 24th, 1966.⁵⁴¹ Curtains and tape covered the windows. The "exhibition halls were sealed, it was empty, we had no visitors."⁵⁴²

Nights At The Museum

Looking back, Zhong Yinlan remembers thinking that shutting down might mean the beginning of a long-deserved break. Most of the museum's junior employees (the Class of 1952) had spent the year in cadre-training: "Went to factories and farms to get reformed...to erase our old-world views."⁵⁴³ The program mandated constant movement. "We carried our clothes and bedrolls with us" and promoted Chinese cultural heritage at every farm and factory

⁵³⁷ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵³⁸ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵³⁹ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵⁴⁰ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵⁴¹ Shanghai gazetteers online, Shanghai wenwu gowuguan zhi, *Dashi ji* [Annales] Available at <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node4467/node20331/index.html>> [February 2011].

⁵⁴² Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁵⁴³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

on the training agenda.⁵⁴⁴ They spent most nights camped out on bare ground. If the trainees spent more than one night at any location, they looked forward to “putting up some bamboos for a screen” because it kept rodents at bay.⁵⁴⁵ Screens didn't always work though. “There were all these bats living there. Once the night comes all the bats come out and start flying around”.⁵⁴⁶



Figure 3.1. Members of the Class of 1952 at the Wuqi Cadre training school (Cultural Revolution era). Photo obtained from Zheng Zhong.

Sleeping in humidity and rodent droppings covered everything in fungus. The Class of 1952 spent all their free time boiling water because “you open up your bedroll and it was all moldy. Mold everywhere.”⁵⁴⁷ There wasn't “money to change our bedrolls every month” so “we wiped it down with hot water, hung it up to dry and slept on it again.”⁵⁴⁸ Upon their return from

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁴⁶ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁴⁷ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁴⁸ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

cadre-training, the Class of 1952 had hoped to spend time with family, or even pursue their antiquarian training programs further.⁵⁴⁹

That was when the raids started.

Raids had already swept Beijing so Shanghai's denizens, however apprehensive, knew exactly what to expect. Residents knew that Red Guards could enter private homes, ransack the occupants' possessions and seize anything that resembled the Four Olds. They also knew that raids could happen at all hours, and that participating Red Guards did not hesitate to use violence. All valuables, including antiquities, were game. Red Guards “would throw ceramics from the roof, if they saw paintings they would just rip it up. It was at that level!”⁵⁵⁰

As soon as news about raids hit Shanghai, the Shanghai Museum petitioned Mayor Cao Diqu for unmitigated entry rights to any and all proceedings. Museum administrators were determined to appropriate the city's seized antiquities. Cao signed off, mandating that city officials give the museum jurisdiction over art objects.⁵⁵¹ The mandate went to all major work units as well as “different departments and bureaus in Shanghai”, enabling museum employees to participate in any and all raids.⁵⁵²

Zhong Yinlan explained raid procedures as follows: “The city knew. For example, if someone in the textile industry was going to be raided, they would call us and let us know. Then

⁵⁴⁹ For more on apprenticeships for museum professionals, see Chapter 2.

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁵⁵¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁵² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

we would say, oh okay. If we knew that person we would go to their house.”⁵⁵³ Huang Xuanpei pointed out that museum cooperation was crucial to successful raids. “So long as we knew that someone's house was going to be searched, we would send someone there to make contact” with on-site Red Guards and arrange the appropriate division of work.⁵⁵⁴ These procedures gave museum employees time to find out what the residents had in terms of antiquities, as well as arrange for specific appraisers (for example, experts in ceramics, painting, bronzes, etc).

The Class of 1952's regular work schedules quickly fell apart. Raid notifications came in at all hours. “Red Guards can start going into houses at any time, midnight, one in the morning.”⁵⁵⁵ Employees with appraisal expertise started living in the museum. Zhong Yinlan and other antiquarians-in-training “slept in our offices” because “when they were confiscating we had to work.”⁵⁵⁶ They brought “a bedroll from home, dragged it out on the floor at night, covered yourself with a blanket.”⁵⁵⁷ During the week “we didn't go home...it was a work related necessity.”⁵⁵⁸ In fact, museum employees recalled sleeping through the night on weekends only, because that's when Red Guards stopped raiding “to go tour around” Shanghai.⁵⁵⁹

The Class of 1952 distributed the museum's raid hotline everywhere. 280160 answered calls twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Private collectors on the museum's donor-

⁵⁵³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁵⁴ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵⁵⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁵⁷ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁵⁸ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

relations program got targeted attention. The staff contacted them individually because “we had their number, their address, we kept up relations with them.”⁵⁶⁰ Some even visited collectors at home “to say that if you have anything nice bring it to the museum.”⁵⁶¹ Collectors were told to relinquish their antiquities or risk run-ins with Red Guards. Indeed, the museum stressed that the municipality had no way of predicting raids. Residents who didn't have telephones of their own were told to find the closest public phone, so they could notify the museum to come and appropriate antiquities the moment they sensed trouble.

With regard to raid-participation, it was the Class of 1952's absorption of the ordinary into the extraordinary that is so striking. When living in the museum, sleeping arrangements maintained social norms.⁵⁶² “Men slept on one side, the women on the other, we had to stay separate.”⁵⁶³ Overnighters brought their own bedrolls because “the museum didn't have dorm rooms or extra mats for you to use.”⁵⁶⁴ Schedules were made for bath and toilet time, especially for staff with children. This insistence on the mundane – morning rituals, cafeteria haunting, and toilet complaints – reduced the shock of raiding, if not exactly to the level of everyday annoyances, then at least to measurable difficulties.

It would be a mistake, though, to assume that the Class of 1952's response to PRC

⁵⁶⁰ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁵⁶² This is in sharp contrast to studies that show the breakdown of social norms amongst young Cultural Revolution participants. See Emily Honig, “Socialist Sex: The Cultural Revolution Revisited,” *Modern China*, 29, no. 2 (2003): 143-175; Wendy Larson, “Never This Wild: Sexing the Cultural Revolution,” *Modern China*, 25, no. 4 (1999): 423-450.

⁵⁶³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

campaigns of this magnitude were limited to lack of sleep and poor bathroom access. Raiding gave the Shanghai Museum opportunity to acquire antiquities that it had no ability to access prior to 1966. The museum staff even anticipated raids at specific households because of the vastness of the inhabitants' wealth or the notoriety of their collections. The collectors' "circle was small, we didn't say much, but we knew what people had in their houses."⁵⁶⁵ The Class of 1952 saw anticipation as the most efficient approach. "We couldn't go to everybody, we could only go to the people who volunteered, the people who collected a lot, the people who collected very fine things."⁵⁶⁶ Red Guards knew the same. Municipal raid-procedures maintained that "if you get cultural relics it goes to the museum, if you get gold, silver, and other hard cash you give it to the bank. Everyone who worked on raids knew that."⁵⁶⁷

Members of the Class of 1952 portray raiding, then as now, as an act of preservation. Their colleagues "voluntarily contacted collectors" at a time when all other cultural institutions closed their doors.⁵⁶⁸ Private collectors, however, saw things differently. They owned antiquities that the museum wanted but couldn't get by donation or purchase – family heirlooms. Indeed, the majority of homes that the Class of 1952 visited during raids were those that had consistently refused to make their antiquities part of the museum's collection.

⁵⁶⁵ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010. For the Shanghai Museum's own records of the same, see Shanghai Gazetteer Online, *dashi ji* [Annals] Visited June 13th, 2011 at <http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node4467/node20331/index.html>.

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

Staying In Business

The antiquities industry had a hard time generating income in 1966. Art didn't sell amongst nationals because no one wanted to be accused of owning Four Olds. Buyers who linked the Shanghai art market to Hong Kong also disappeared. Even under normal conditions, traveling from Hong Kong to the mainland was tough. Dealers left “at six in the morning by train” to get to the Luohu station in Shenzhen.⁵⁶⁹ After spending the afternoon toting through Customs, they caught a train to Guangzhou that reached the city “just around six in the evening.”⁵⁷⁰ From Guangzhou, dealers waited in overseas Chinese hotels like the *Huaqiao dasha* (Overseas Chinese Mansion) for train tickets to Beijing or Shanghai.⁵⁷¹ When dealers heard they had to endure both the journey *and* the Cultural Revolution, they refused to go.⁵⁷² Buyers didn't trust their mainland contacts' guarantee of protection. Even those who had long-term partnerships with mainland vendors worried that “midway there might be some Red Guards who'd stop you and mess with you.”⁵⁷³ Duoyun Xian's employees summarized the situation as follows: “it's not that China didn't let people from Hong Kong come back to the PRC, it's that they're too afraid to come back...they didn't want to come back.”⁵⁷⁴

In order to stay in business, antiquities work units in Shanghai sold Maoist trinkets.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁷² For more on the impact of the Cultural Revolution on Hong Kong, see Ray Yep, “The 1967 Riots In Hong Kong: The Diplomatic And Domestic Fronts Of The Colonial Governor,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 193, (2008): 122-139.

⁵⁷³ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

Duoyun Xian, for example, stocked “Mao statues, calligraphy, and poems.”⁵⁷⁵ Sun Jiecong and her colleagues also partnered with local artisans to sell “everything about Mao that they made.”⁵⁷⁶ People lined up for Red paraphernalia, which did so well that “we even sold it outside of Shanghai.”⁵⁷⁷ During major holidays Duoyun Xian also sold Red greeting cards. All the antiquities, however, disappeared from inventory. The Arts and Crafts Company kept those in hinterland warehouses, accessible only to employees and Customs agents.⁵⁷⁸

The Arts and Crafts Company abandoned the domestic market and focused sales efforts overseas. This strategy worked for two reasons. Firstly, “they want that stuff overseas...Taiwan, Hong Kong, America, France, they wanted it.”⁵⁷⁹ Secondly, selling abroad helped the industry claim that it had a special diplomatic mission. It contributed to “the elevation of our country's international reputation and the world's unlimited passion for Chairman Mao.”⁵⁸⁰ These strategies kept the export trade going despite antiquities' classification as part of the Four Olds.

Dealers in Hong Kong, America, and Britain remember that the Arts and Crafts Company started out as a mail-order business. Alvin Lo joked that the company's mantra was “send the list out and say please buy from the list.”⁵⁸¹ The list referred to the company's

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

⁵⁷⁶ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁵⁸⁰ *Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju guanyu guwan shichang chukou menshi bu gaiwei zhuan gong waibin canguan goumai de qingshi baogao*, [Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce's Request and Report Regarding The Chinese Curio Market's Export Division Converting To Exclusive Sales And Browsing For Foreign Visitors] August 17th, 1966, B123-6-1518-40, SMA, Shanghai.

⁵⁸¹ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

onionskin sales catalog. The catalog was comprised of “super thin paper, from China, very thin, thin it can fly in the air and it’ll keep floating in the air” – hence the nickname onionskin.⁵⁸² Each page included a list of objects, presented with each object’s name, age, price, and condition, wherein the condition ranged between “chipped, broken, [and] perfect”.⁵⁸³ Dealers simply “check off the list and send it back and then they would send a shipment.”⁵⁸⁴

The onionskin catalogs had very few images. The Arts and Crafts Company described its stock in industry jargon. For example, “in Chinese, in the jargon, they named different-sized porcelains (in terms of vases, fish bowls) *yibai jian*, *liangbai jian*, *sanbai jian*, *yiqian jian*, one hundred items, two hundred items, three hundred items, one thousand items.”⁵⁸⁵ The numbers indicated size: “They say the largest fish bowl is called *yiqian jian*, one thousand items...*wubai jian*, five hundred items, is half the size of that.”⁵⁸⁶ The description for a piece of porcelain might read “indigo, flowers and willows, one thousand items, condition column (right), *que* – maybe a chip or a big crack, or *nianfeng*, year date, then on the corner, price. Then there would be a long list of different things, *fengcai* [famille rose], *qingyou* [indigo glaze].”⁵⁸⁷

Due to their relative scarcity, images became the Arts and Crafts Company’s primary marker of value. “If the export company believed what they were trying to offer you was very

⁵⁸² Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁸³ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁸⁵ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁸⁶ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

very important they would send a black-and-white thumbnail photograph.”⁵⁸⁸ Hugh Moss, a British dealer of Chinese art who bought snuff bottles from the PRC throughout the Cultural Revolution, owns a collection of Arts and Crafts Company photographs. Figure 3.2 depicts photographs that Hugh Moss obtained himself. Figure 3.3 showcases those that the Arts and Crafts Company sent to Hong Kong art dealer Robert Chang, who in turn sent the pictures to Moss in 1966. The pictures fit on a child's palm and have a tell-tale scalloped edge, which mainland photo shops used when cutting family portraits and other important records.

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.



Figure 3.2. Snuff bottles photographs taken from The Arts and Crafts Company Catalog for the Hugh Moss snuff bottle archive, Courtesy of Hugh Moss, Old Surrey Hall.

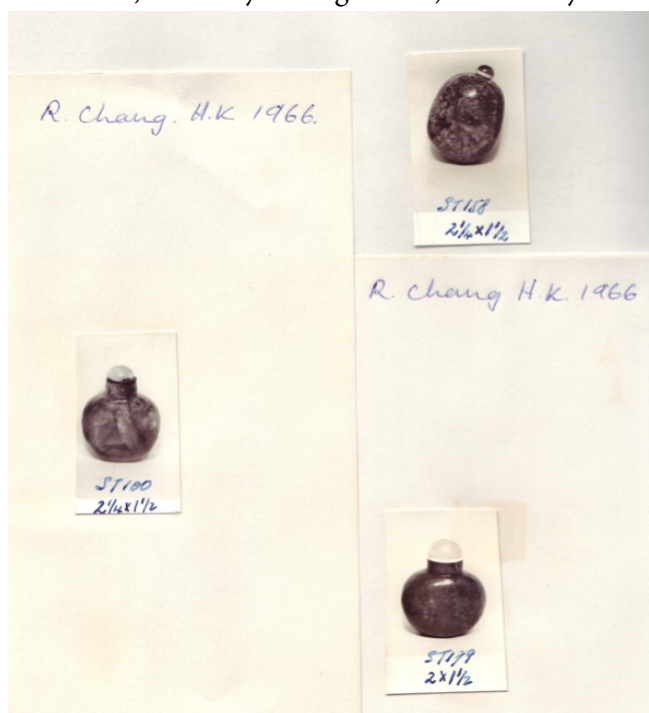


Figure 3.3. Additional Snuff bottles, originally taken from the Arts and Crafts Company Catalog for the Hugh Moss snuff bottle archive, Courtesy of Hugh Moss, Old Surrey Hall.

Moss bought lots of snuff bottles from the Arts and Crafts Company during the Cultural Revolution. Cultural Relics laws didn't itemize snuff bottles as art, which made it easy to export

them.⁵⁸⁹ Moss' PRC contact, a New Zealander who did economic research for the PRC, helped him obtain access to the Arts and Crafts Company warehouses in Beijing. "I would get hundreds of pictures of stuff sent to me in London. I would send them the money and they would send them to me in the post."⁵⁹⁰ Using his PRC contacts, Moss built up, over the following ten years, a substantial Chinese snuff bottle collection as well as a successful Chinese antiquities dealership. In return, dealers like Moss helped the Arts and Crafts Company obtain valuable foreign currency at a time when the PRC had few overseas trading partners.

Raider's Rules

While Shanghai's art market transitioned into a mail order business, Shanghai's museum employees were busy becoming raid administrators. The Class of 1952 accompanied Red Guards on raids, took calls on its raid hotline, directed in-house appraisers to residences undergoing raids, and took in any confiscations that its appraisers deemed art. When I interviewed them, members of the Class of 1952 described this period as one of the busiest in their careers.

Not everyone was fit for the job. Chen Peifen, a newly married member of the Class of 1952, worked throughout the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁹¹ She started out accompanying Red Guards on raids but being pregnant soon made her miserable. She had to tie a kilogram of *kaiyang* (dried baby shrimp) around her belly. "I had no flavor in my mouth" and nibbling kept

⁵⁸⁹ For more on Cultural Relics Laws in the PRC, see Chapter 1.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

⁵⁹¹ Zheng Zhong, *Bowuguan yu shoucang jia* (Shanghai: 2000), 215.

nausea under control.⁵⁹² Chen looked for toilets at every raid. “Whenever I went to someone's house the first thing I did was to find the bathroom...I was still throwing up.”⁵⁹³ Sometimes, the raids went on all night long and Chen had to use public outhouses in convenient alleyways.

The museum transferred Chen to hotline duty. She answered 280160 on both day and night shifts. Whenever a call came in, she asked specific questions to determine which appraisers to send where. For example, “I would ask, what kind of Four Olds do you have. They would say oh drawings, so I would know it was for painting and calligraphy. If they said really heavy metal I would know it was for the bronze department.”⁵⁹⁴ Often, Chen got jumbled messages because callers couldn't articulate under duress. “People call and they had no idea what they were calling about.”⁵⁹⁵ Chen would send appraisers to a specific address but appraisers wouldn't recognize anything upon arrival. Information either got mislaid or appraisers simply couldn't get there fast enough – Red Guards had come and gone already. Sometimes, Chen also “made mistakes and sent the wrong people because the communication was so hurried.”⁵⁹⁶ Nevertheless, 280160 tried its best to match raids with specific appraisers. Object-specific knowledge made the difference between new museum acquisition and smashed/unaccounted valuable.⁵⁹⁷ After all, museum employees had to share precious time and space with Red Guards with whom they had no prior acquaintance, and the guards had little

⁵⁹² Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁵⁹³ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁵⁹⁵ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

patience for jurisdiction.

Appraisers Zhong Yinlan, Shang Yehuang, and Li Hongye still remember raiding Liu Jingji's house. Liu ran the Anda textile company and owned a vast collection of painting and calligraphy.⁵⁹⁸ Museum employees had tried to court Liu into donating art since the 1950s, but he rebuffed all advances.⁵⁹⁹

The Red Guards had a strong head-start. By the time appraisers arrived, Liu was already sequestered in his courtyard. Zhong remembered that everyone “wore Capri pants and round-necked tee-shirts because they were at home.”⁶⁰⁰ The family watched as raiders went through everything. Some Red Guards gathered around Liu to “put that big, tall, white hat on him with the label that he was a ox-demon snake-spirit.”⁶⁰¹ Others wanted to publicly humiliate the family by marching them in chains.

The museum staff inventoried Liu's antiquities through the night and well into the next day. Zhong remembered that throughout their search, Liu “kept looking into the room where we were going through his paintings.”⁶⁰² He recognized Shang Yehuang as a Shanghai Museum employee and whispered “some Zhang Daqian paintings got torn.”⁶⁰³ Shang found the pieces

⁵⁹⁸ A detailed account of Liu Jingji's collecting interests can be found in Zheng Zhong, “Shuhua xiangban du zhongsheng” [Liu Jingji – A Shanghai Collector of Paintings And Calligraphy Works,” *Shanghai Wenbo Luncong* [Shanghai's Cultural Discussions] no.1, (2003): 10 – 17; Some of the Shanghai Museum's own records on the event can be found at Shanghai Gazetteer Online, Dashi ji [Annals] Available <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node4467/node20331/index.html>> [13 June, 2011]

⁵⁹⁹ Zheng, *Bowuguan yu shoucang jia*, 262.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁶⁰² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁶⁰³ Zheng, *Bowuguan yu shoucang jia*, 262.

and put them in the Shanghai Museum's pile.⁶⁰⁴ Liu also approached Zhong Yinlan. “He stood behind me and said, Miss, where are you from? I can tell from the way you go through paintings that you know what you are doing.”⁶⁰⁵ Zhong told Liu that she worked for the Shanghai Museum, which prompted the industrialist to reveal more information. He helped the staff find four paintings by the early Qing dynasty painter Shitao (1642 – 1707), which he kept “at the top of a closet.”⁶⁰⁶ Liu also showed Zhong where he kept “other important calligraphy and paintings” – a room that had remained untouched by Red Guards because Liu claimed it contained “letters from Chairman Mao.”⁶⁰⁷

The next morning, Zhong Yinlan and her colleagues gave Liu an itemized list of all the antiquities that they had seized. The list named more than one thousand pieces of painting and calligraphy.

According to the Shanghai Museum's raid procedures, all appropriations had to have an itemized list. The staff made lists in sets of five: “One went to the collector, one went to the municipal cultural relics administration, one went to the neighborhood association, and two went to the museum.”⁶⁰⁸ The Class of 1952 assured collectors that antiquities would be safe in museum custody. The museum intended to keep seized antiquities out of the Red Guards' reach and in good preservation. As Zhong Yinlan repeated to me on multiple interviews, “it was

⁶⁰⁴ Zheng, *Bowuguan yu shoucang jia*, 262.

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁶⁰⁶ Zheng, *Bowuguan yu shoucang jia*, 262. For more on Shitao see Jonathan Hay, *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in early Qing China*, (New York, 2001).

⁶⁰⁷ Zheng, *Bowuguan yu shoucang jia*, 262.

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

like we adopted those works of art, we were their custodians.”⁶⁰⁹

Theater of Donations

Raiders and raided alike employed the language of donation when referring to confiscated antiquities. When Red Guards sacked Sun Yufeng's house, the collector “said you can't move this stuff, this all belongs to the Shanghai Museum. I donated it all.”⁶¹⁰ Sun had no such agreement with the Shanghai Museum. He simply wanted to save his collection from getting smashed. Sun dialed 280160 as soon as he saw Red Guards coming. He “sealed up all his own materials with red tape” labeled property of the Shanghai Museum.⁶¹¹ Appraisers arrived within hours. “We went to his house, opened up the red tape, took the pieces one by one and cataloged them.”⁶¹² Sun Yufeng's case was also not unique. Throughout the summer of 1966, museum employees found that “people put the Shanghai Museum's tags and seals on their things, we went to their houses and saw they had done it already.”⁶¹³ In other words, private collectors used the language of donation in a last-ditch effort to protect their belongings from destruction.

Raiding allowed Shanghai Museum employees to author, elaborate, and promulgate its fiction of donation to previously unprecedented levels. The Class of 1952 referred to all appropriations as donations. Raid reports itemized seized antiquities as *jieshou* (acceptances),

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁶¹⁰ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶¹¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶¹² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶¹³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

an administrative term that distinguished cash-free transactions from purchases.⁶¹⁴ The museum had used this term since its establishment. In 1959, for example, the Shanghai Museum reported that “since our institution opened we've *jieshou*-ed donations from 63 groups and 275 individuals, totaling 27,415 objects.”⁶¹⁵ In the jargon, *jieshou* refers to antiquities that the museum received at no cost and had no obligation to return. All seized antiquities at the Shanghai Museum contained documentation that “said it was a price-less *jieshou*”, which encouraged the staff to treat appropriations as new acquisitions.⁶¹⁶

On the surface, the fiction of donation provides a platform for the Shanghai Museum to present its mastery over destruction during a tumultuous moment in PRC history. Those working the night shift, for example, noted that they often woke up to “find that someone’s thrown some works of art at the museum.”⁶¹⁷ Suspecting that owners dumped them hoping for the best, “we would just file it away and worry about it later.”⁶¹⁸ Li Junjie asserts that this condition framed “what the society was like at the time”.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁴ *Zhonggong Shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶¹⁵ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu jieshou juanxian wenwu bin yu yi biao Zhang de qingshi baogao, pifu*, [The Ministry of Culture, Shanghai Municipal Department of Cultural Affairs, And Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Petitions, Reports, And Rescripts Regarding The Acceptance of Donated Cultural Relics And The Granting Of Merit Awards] January 12th, 1959 – December 17th, 1959, B172-5-98, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶¹⁶ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 28th, 2010.

⁶¹⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁶¹⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁶¹⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

No one, however, equated confiscations with voluntary donations. As Zhong Yinlan pointed out, “under that kind of environment, you can't tell if people actually wanted to donate or if it was a situational thing.”⁶²⁰ Donating one's property to the state even aroused suspicion. In raid reports, the museum noted that “some are using the framework of donation to make themselves look good, others know that their collections...have problems and are afraid that they will be found during the Four Olds campaign.”⁶²¹ These statements suggest that both raiders and raided alike were fully aware that the fictive quality of donation put individuals at risk for *more* raids, as well as physical violence.

Conflating donations with seized property, however, did far more than reflect difficult realities. It established administrative continuity between small-scale antiquities appropriations in the 1950s and large scale seizures during the Cultural Revolution. It also equated raids and seizures with donor-relations, which the museum held up as pillars of legitimacy throughout its history. In other words, conflating seizures with bequests *expanded* the fiction of donation. Cultural Revolution appropriations did not belong to the museum in the way that a voluntary bequest did, but the owners could not get those objects back either. The staff “thought we would get it all for free from the state because once things are confiscated it belonged to the

⁶²⁰ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶²¹ *Zhonggong shanghaishi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

state, and if the state thought it was good they gave it to the museum.”⁶²² By applying the term *jieshou* to one-off as well as systematically seized antiquities, the Shanghai Museum extended appropriations' range of acceptability, from specific individuals and industries to all PRC denizens. In other words, expanding the fiction of donation transformed museum staff from raiders to custodians with indefinite holding power.

Moreover, the language of donation erected a false distinction between popular movements, in which Red Guards took center stage, and institutional work, wherein the museum took charge. The Class of 1952 regarded Red Guards as irresponsible students who “didn't know anything” and only thought of “bringing down the Four Olds”.⁶²³ It is worth remembering, however, that both Red Guards and museum employees followed the same set of state policies regarding the search and seizure of private property, and even worked together to maximize the efficiency of specific raids. The language of donation suggested that the museum would hold confiscations in custody until the Cultural Revolution blew over. As the campaigns proceeded, however, no one knew when the movement would end, if ever. At the same time as museum employees told private collectors “we are taking care of it for you, we're not confiscating”, they inventoried appropriations as museum property.⁶²⁴ Therefore, just as the fiction of donation reverberates the museum's image as a preservationist institution, it also reveals the museum's active role in inverting the definition of donation.

⁶²² Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 28th, 2010.

⁶²³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶²⁴ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

By the end of summer, 1966, the Shanghai Museum had participated in so many raids that the municipality requested a report itemizing how much it took and from whom.⁶²⁵ Figure 3.4 visualizes this list.

⁶²⁵ Data for antiquities appropriated in the latter half of 1966 retrieved from *Zhonggong shanghaishi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

Antiquities Appropriated by the Shanghai Museum in 1966

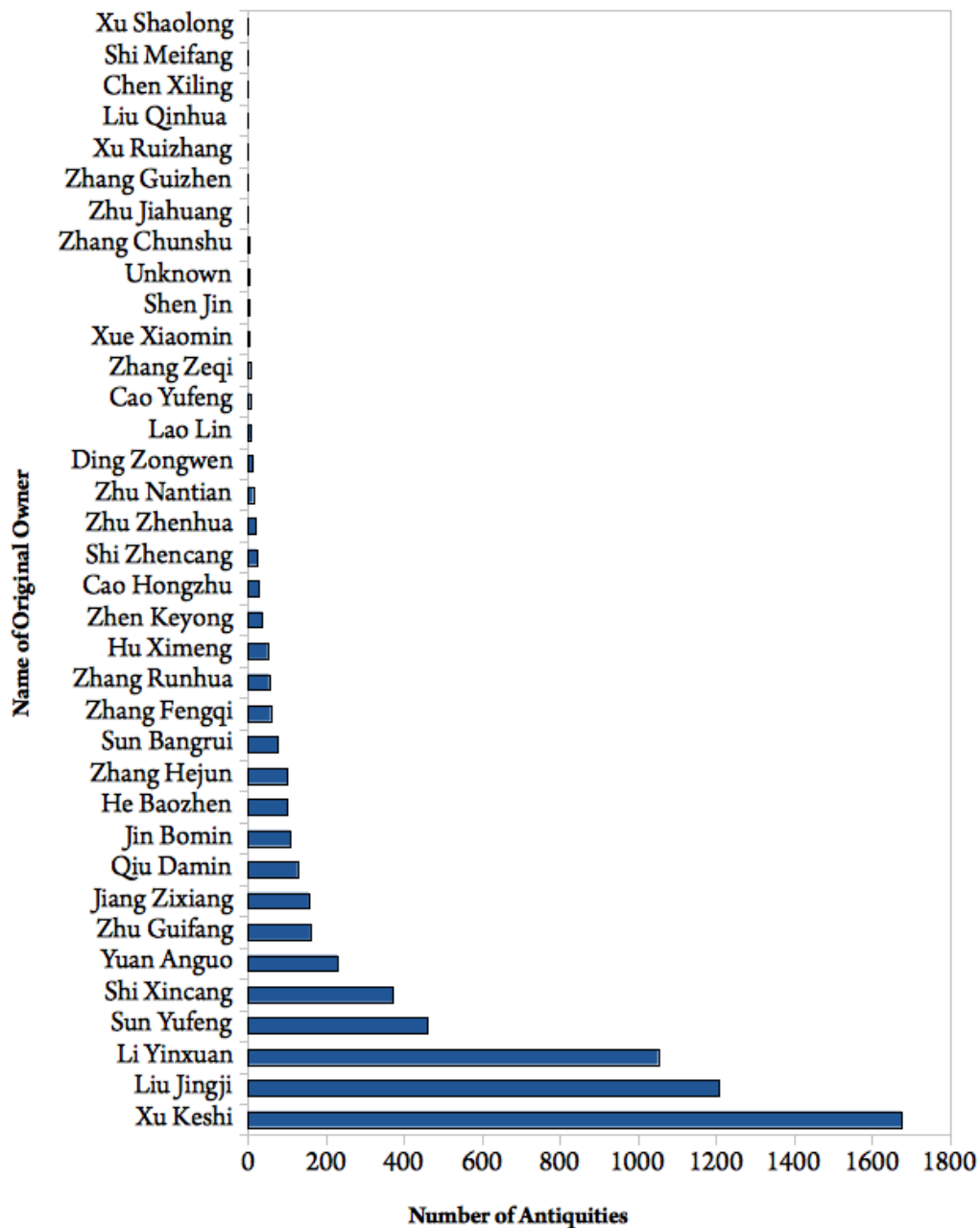


Figure 3.4. Number of Antiquities Appropriated By the Shanghai Museum in 1966, Organized By Name of Owner. SMA, Shanghai.

Shanghai Museum employees intercepted thirty-six raids between August 28th and September 12th, 1966. These fifteen days yielded 6,184 objects, which the staff cataloged and tagged according to the Three-Tier system.⁶²⁶ According to the inventory, “a considerable amount of precious antiquities” fell into the First- and Second-tiers.⁶²⁷ Traditional categories of art, such as “bronzes, calligraphy, and painting make up the majority” of this cache.⁶²⁸ Notable confiscations included bronzes from the Shang and Western Zhou dynasties, paintings and calligraphy from the Song and Yuan dynasties, and Ceramics from Song and Qing imperial kilns.⁶²⁹ Some of the antiquities were objects that the museum had known about for decades but could not access. Others were unexpected gains from individuals who had collected in secret for decades.

I showed this report to members of the Class of 1952 in order to ask them about the categories of art that the Chinese art historical canon marked as minor, such as seals, imperial clothing, jade, as well as newly incorporated categories such as ethnic minority artifacts. Zhong

⁶²⁶ For more on the Three Tier appraisal system for antiquities in the PRC, see Chapters 1 and 2.

⁶²⁷ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶²⁸ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶²⁹ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

Yinlan remarked that while “there were also people...who called us” regarding the preservation of those categories of art “there isn't much documentation about them.”⁶³⁰ When I pressed her about why the documentation didn't exist, she cited the privileging of some categories of art over others. Relics like seals and imperial clothing are “just not a major collecting category.”⁶³¹ The museum considered them non-essential to Chinese cultural heritage and made no special effort to intercept those raids. Much like the Shanghai Museum's salvage archeology program, one wonders what our imaginary distribution of the canon might look like had museum staff made the effort to retrieve ethnic minority artifacts, snuff bottles, studio implements, or lacquer wares throughout the Four Olds campaign – just to name a few.⁶³²

In its appropriations report, the Shanghai Museum noted that thirty-eight of the 6,184 antiquities that it seized in 1966 were First-Tier. To put this number in context, between 1949 and 1964 the Shanghai Museum acquired, on average, thirty-four First-Tier antiquities per year.⁶³³ To acquire thirty-eight in fifteen days means that Cultural Revolution raids enriched the Shanghai Museum's collection more quickly, cheaply, and significantly than any previous

⁶³⁰ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶³¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶³² For more on the metal salvaging project, see Chapter 2.

⁶³³ Data extracted from *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie*, [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

acquisition effort in the museum's history. Subsequent raid evaluations confirm that “those cultural relics that entered the museum in the early stages of the movement are better” in terms of quality.⁶³⁴ In other words, raiding the homes of collectors that the Shanghai Museum knew and warned beforehand yielded better antiquities than random raids did. The appropriations' value, plus the brutal nature in which collectors lost them, also explains why many remember their antiquities' loss to this day.

A descriptive analysis of the data in Figure 3.4 indicates that the mean number of objects appropriated per household is 172, while the median is twenty-seven. The median suggests that most individuals who called 280160 kept a modest number of antiquities – the average raid yielded several dozens objects. This confirms anecdotal observations about collecting in general: “In one year you might get one or two good things...it's not easy to be a collector, you need to save things for years.”⁶³⁵ Indeed, the museum staff considered anyone who owned more than one hundred antiquities a *da shoucangjia* (Big Collector). As Zhong Yinlan explained, even amongst the legendary collectors and connoisseurs, “no one ever donates several thousand” objects.⁶³⁶ Very few managed to accumulate more than one hundred objects because “collectors have to have stamina and money and the eye, if you don't have all of the above, you

⁶³⁴ *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶³⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶³⁶ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

can't be a big collector.”⁶³⁷ Furthermore, “if you don't have [any of] these qualities, you can't be a collector” at all.⁶³⁸ Thus, insofar as the staff knew, the distribution in Figure 3.4 represents a believable cross-section of antiquities ownership amongst elite Shanghai residents in the 1960s, from small-timers to the rare *da shoucangjia*.

The mean, 172, is more than six-times greater than the median. This suggests that Cultural Revolution raids ransacked private homes at the highest level – amongst collectors who never had to give museum staff the time of day. The six-fold difference between the mean and median also explains why Shanghai Museum employees can clearly recall raiding Liu Jingji and Sun Yuefeng's homes today. Liu and Sun owned 1,209 and 461 antiquities, respectively. Those quantities made them some of the biggest collectors in Shanghai. Their estates contained more antiquities than the museum staff had ever seen in a single home, probably in their working careers. The quantity and quality of these two collections gave Zhong Yinlan, Li Junjie, and other members of the Class of 1952 more distinct impressions of Liu and Sun than the thirty-four other individuals in the report. These memories remained vivid in spite of Liu and Sun's deaths, and despite the decades of time between the raids and my interviewing the museum staff. Incidentally, Zhong and Li also retain sharp recollections of Li Yinxuan, whose collection also passed the thousand-objects mark.

My interviewees raised two issues regarding missing data in the appropriations report.

⁶³⁷ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶³⁸ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

First, the Class of 1952 didn't maintain a consistent counter for coins until 1969.⁶³⁹ Some tagged a bag of gold coins as one unit, others counted each coin as one unit. Therefore, we do not know if “coins, one unit” refers to many coins or only one piece of coin. This implies that for some categories of art, the quantity of seized objects may well be higher than indicated in the itemization. Second, at the time that the museum submitted this report its staff had actually participated in fifty-four raids, not thirty-six.⁶⁴⁰ The staff, however, only had time to make inventories for thirty-six of the fifty-four households. Therefore, the scale of raids between August 28th and September 12th, 1966 is actually greater than that which is indicated in the chart. The extant quantity of antiquities in Figure 3.4 suggests, however, that even given missing data, the Shanghai Museum collection profited significantly from appropriations made in the summer of 1966.

The Shanghai Museum's fiction of donation obscures its Cultural Revolution profits. Seized antiquities enlarged the museum's collection both in quantity and quality. As its staff confirmed, “things that were confiscated during the Cultural Revolution were never intended to be returned.”⁶⁴¹ The appraisers' five-copy inventories recorded how much the institution gained

⁶³⁹ *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶⁴⁰ *Zhonggong shanghai shi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶⁴¹ Interview with Xu Yongxiang, July 8th, 2009.

from the Cultural Revolution, not how much preservation it achieved. Raiding gave the museum access to homes that could previously afford to close their doors to all other methods of entry. Red Guards may not have known the difference between valuable antiquities and prosaic Four Olds, but the museum staff did. This explains why the museum kept distributing salaries despite shutting down between 1966 and 1972. Continuous payroll suggests that the museum staff served a useful purpose – they had the antiquarian skill sets to determine what the municipality could gain from raids, and by how much.⁶⁴²

Revolutionary Rebels

While some members of the Class of 1952 participated in raids, others initiated revolutions within the museum itself. Shortly after July of 1966, denizens all over Shanghai began to self-identify as *Zaofan pai*, or Revolutionary Rebels.⁶⁴³ These individuals formally incorporated Cultural Revolution movements, such as the Four Olds campaign, into everyday operations at work units and local government institutions. At the Shanghai Museum, the number of Revolutionary Rebels rose just after the museum disbanded its Red Guards.⁶⁴⁴ By autumn of 1966, Revolutionary Rebels at the Shanghai Library started rallying for cross-

⁶⁴² This is in stark contrast to those individuals detailed in jails and interrogations, who had their salaries held indefinitely during their detainment. In fact, during the late 1970s and 80s, those who received rehabilitation from Cultural Revolution charges found that they got their detainment-period salaries returned to them, but charges were deducted for the cost of room and board during detainment.

⁶⁴³ For more on the rise of the Revolutionary Rebels see Alessandro Russo, "The Conclusive Scene: Mao and the Red Guards in July 1968," *Positions: East Asia Cultural Critique* 13, no. 3, (2005):535 – 575; Michael Schoenhals, "Why Don't We Arm the Left? Mao's Culpability for the Cultural Revolution's "Great Chaos" of 1967," *The China Quarterly*, no. 182 (2005): 277-300; Jonathan Unger, "Whither China?: Yang Xiguang, Red Capitalists, and the Social Turmoil of the Cultural Revolution," *Modern China*, 17, no. 1 (1991): 3-37.

⁶⁴⁴ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

institutional solidarity, which accelerated the rate of rebel self-identification at the museum.

Many of the museum's newly instated Revolutionary Rebels went to Beijing on a state-funded pilgrimage to meet with Mao Zedong. There, “they said that chairman Mao was in support of the *Zhaofan pai*, so then...they said okay, the museum is ready” for full-out rehabilitation.⁶⁴⁵

Revolutionary Rebels encouraged raids on fellow employees, focusing on the senior staff. It remains unclear how many of the roughly 150 museum employees participated in raiding each other's homes. Some estimate “95 percent of the the people at the museum joined – either they were Revolutionary Rebels or they were part of the group that became the Red Guards.”⁶⁴⁶ Others insist that few self-identified as Revolutionary Rebels and the handful who did got transferred out of the organization in subsequent decades. Willingness, however, was not an issue. By the winter of 1966, those who did not declare revolutionary membership faced interrogation. Whether or not they wanted to, they had to join up.

The institutionalization of Cultural Revolution movements was punctuated by big letter poster campaigns and the creation of jails for *geli shencha* (segregated examination).⁶⁴⁷ The poster-writing campaigns came first. Employees wrote any and all gripes in letters so big that the

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁶⁴⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁶⁴⁷ I borrow the phrase institutionalization of revolution from Joel Andreas, “Institutionalized Rebellion: Governing Tsinghua University during the Late Years of the Chinese Cultural Revolution,” *The China Journal*, no. 55, (2006): 1-28.

For more on detainment and interrogation in segregated examination jails, see Wang Youqin, “The Second Wave of Violent Persecution Of Teachers: The Revolution Of 1968,” Paper Presented at the 35th International Congress of Asian and North African Studies, Budapest, July 7-12, 1997, Available <<http://humanities.uchicago.edu/faculty/ywang/history/1968teacher.htm>> [April, 2011].

posters “stretched from ceiling to floor.”⁶⁴⁸ The public nature of these posts ensured that any accusation was witnessed by one and all – everybody knew what was on everybody else's minds. Gu Youchu, for example, found a poster that read “why does Gu Youchu not want to criticize Shen Zhiyu, but instead tags along Shen's shirt sleeves?”⁶⁴⁹ The post accused Gu, a bronze restorer, of maintaining a clandestine relationship with the Shanghai Museum's President from the time Gu was a child.⁶⁵⁰ According to the poster, Gu had no commitment to the revolutionary cause “because the two of them have a history, it's because Shen Zhiyu was the person who got him to the museum from the factories.”⁶⁵¹ Gu felt “so shocked when I heard that.”⁶⁵² He had no idea that Shen even knew him as a kid. He protested that he got transferred “to the museum because of work needs...when I was little, maybe he saw me, but I don't have much of an impression.”⁶⁵³ Nevertheless, Gu got assigned to segregated examination and reeducation.

The posters affected Hu Bo, head of the cataloging department, gravely.⁶⁵⁴ Chen Peifen remembers her former boss as an artistic type. “A very clever man, good at making seals.”⁶⁵⁵

One afternoon, she saw a poster that “said he had some kind of sales relationship with someone,

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁶⁴⁹ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

⁶⁵⁰ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

⁶⁵¹ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

⁶⁵² Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

⁶⁵³ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

⁶⁵⁴ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 28th, 2010.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

that he was dealing in works of art.”⁶⁵⁶ In other words, the post accused Hu of violating museum procedure – making money by selling antiquities on the side.

Both Chen and Hu saw the poster just before they were scheduled to attend reeducation study group, which their division held every afternoon. Hu told Chen he would come late. Chen “couldn't just let him go because now the central administration was interested in him,” but she said “don't worry, just come a bit late.”⁶⁵⁷ By four PM, Hu hadn't arrived so Chen called his house.

Chen remembers that a woman picked up. After Chen identified herself the woman “started crying right on the phone. She said after he ate he said I'm not going to the museum, don't come and call for me.”⁶⁵⁸ Chen understood that Hu committed suicide. He “took a lot of sleeping pills.”⁶⁵⁹

Chen froze. “I didn't know what to do...I was the first to know.”⁶⁶⁰ She quietly told the museum's President, Shen Zhiyu, who was detained in a segregated examination jail in the hallway outside Chen's office. She had to be discreet because detainees had to stay silent. Shen told her to “go over there to take a look, ask them if they need anything.”⁶⁶¹ Under the cover of darkness, Chen rode her bicycle to Hu's house. She couldn't do anything. The poster put everyone associated with Hu under scrutiny, including Chen herself. The family held Hu's last

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁶⁶¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

rites surreptitiously. “You couldn't really hold a big funeral.”⁶⁶²

Segregated examination monopolized the staff's workday. Everyone had to perform interrogations on themselves as well as each other. “We all had to come to work still, but coming to work meant being criticized, writing self examinations.”⁶⁶³ The interrogations used beatings, which instilled fear and, in some cases, serious personal injury.

All of the museum administrators, “bigger people at the museum like Zhen Wei, Jiang Dayi, Ma Chengyuan, Shen Jianzhi,” underwent intense scrutiny.⁶⁶⁴ Jiang Dayi, for example, used the phrase “careful work makes intricate projects” as his mantra.⁶⁶⁵ Revolutionary Rebels accused Jiang Dayi of harboring “anti-Mao” proclivities because the phrase seemed to contradict Mao's stance on labor, which emphasized “working fast and saving energy.”⁶⁶⁶

Every museum employee above a specific pay grade got criticized for clinging to old, outdated ideas of institutional hierarchy. “Everyone that did administrative and managerial work were being criticized as a group.”⁶⁶⁷ Some got into trouble for having unclear family histories. Others had to be rehabilitated for maintaining Capitalist ideas.⁶⁶⁸ Employees who didn't make enough accusations became known as *laobao* (Old Conservatives), and got interrogated for their silence.

⁶⁶² Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁶⁶³ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 28th, 2010.

⁶⁶⁴ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁶⁶⁵ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁶⁶⁶ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁶⁶⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

The staff had no duties outside of raids and segregated examination. Feng Xiaogeng explained that “everyday, you get together, you discuss, you criticize, every single day. Every day you go to the criticism room.”⁶⁶⁹ Once inside, “they sat on the floor, eight hours a day, being reeducated.”⁶⁷⁰ The museum's archaeologists, for example, stopped excavating because they were “not allowed to work.”⁶⁷¹ Similarly, the “Conservation Workshop's day to day work basically stopped. The museum became a black spot.”⁶⁷² Those detained in segregation had to participate in whatever activities their fellow employees assigned as part of reeducation. Even those on sick leave had to participate.

Some employees got sent to hard labor. The Class of 1952 called this program *zei gaowen*, a Shanghainese phrase that means baking oneself in heat.⁶⁷³ This term describes the work environment, which was long hours of manual labor in high-temperature rooms. Employees that “weren't developing” or needed “to learn from the farmers and laborers” worked these jobs in one or two year stints.⁶⁷⁴ The specific duration of reeducation varied according to perceived faults. “People who had bad family backgrounds went more often, people with farmer and laborer backgrounds went less.”⁶⁷⁵ Often, employees that got sent to *zei gaowen* didn't come back.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁶⁹ Interview with Feng Xiaogeng, April 6th, 2010.

⁶⁷⁰ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.

⁶⁷¹ Interview with Sun Weicang, April 30th, 2010.

⁶⁷² Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁶⁷³ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁷⁴ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁶⁷⁶ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

Zhong Yinlan did her stint at a chemical factory in Xujia Hui district, about 4.3 miles (seven KM) away from the Shanghai Museum. The factory made chemical fertilizer. Zhong worked in the drying room, where “you take all the dried cakes of stuff out of the plates, then you put the next batch in.”⁶⁷⁷ Every time she loaded a batch “hot air just hits you in the face...everything you're wearing is drenched.”⁶⁷⁸ The drying room kept open fires, so she had to keep a face mask and gloves on at all times.⁶⁷⁹ As soon as she dropped a batch off “you wave your fan around to dry the sweat...then you had to go in again, because time's up and you have to open that door again.”⁶⁸⁰ When I asked her why she got sent to *zei gaowen*, Zhong explained that she volunteered. Having *zei gaowen* experience on record indicated a willingness to rehabilitate, which some believed would protect them from the worst campaigns.

The Sorting Committee

The museum staff got an alternative to *zei gaowen* in April of 1967. In pursuit of a series of nation-wide initiatives to minimize unnecessary damage from the Four Olds Campaign, Shanghai set up its own Cultural Relics Sorting Committee (henceforth Sorting Committee). Sorting Committees administered confiscated property throughout the PRC – after 1967, all assets seized during the Cultural Revolution became committee property. Shanghai modeled its Sorting Committee after that in Beijing, which “sorted and protected all antiquities and books

⁶⁷⁷ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁷⁸ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁸⁰ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

confiscated in the Four Olds campaign” and already had a staff of “more than one hundred employees”.⁶⁸¹ Shanghai, however, expected greater workloads than Beijing. After all, the city had more than five hundred work units, each with its own set of Red Guards and confiscated property, as well as a higher density of wealth.⁶⁸²

The Shanghai Sorting Committee established multiple sorting stations throughout the city and its hinterland counties: Fengxian, Jinshan, Songming, Baoshan, Jiading, Chuansha, Nanhui, Songjiang, and Qingpu. Fengxian county converted seventeen communes into sorting stations. Songjiang county “routed books, calligraphy, and paintings to the care of the county museum” while others, like Baoshan, Songming, and Jiading counties, set up independent depositories.⁶⁸³ Shanghai itself had sorting stations in all ten municipal districts. “One site was at the Yufuo temple, one was at Xujia hui on Puxi road, and another was on Urumqi road, at the church.”⁶⁸⁴

The Sorting Committee recruited employees from all of Shanghai's cultural institutions, with an emphasis on individuals who could appraise art.⁶⁸⁵ As the committee's first priority was

⁶⁸¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶⁸² For more on the particularities of the Shanghai case, see Lynn White III, “Local Autonomy in China During the Cultural Revolution: The Theoretical Uses of an Atypical Case,” *The American Political Science Review*, 70, no. 2 (1976): 479-491.

⁶⁸³ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁶⁸⁵ For other case of antiquarians working in the Cultural Revolution infrastructure see Chu-Tsing Li, “Recent

converting confiscations into public assets, it needed workers who knew how to evaluate objects accurately, reliably, and efficiently. The municipality categorized Sorting Committee work as reeducation, which made hiring open to everyone except those who were already purged in Cultural Revolution campaigns. Li Junjie explained that “the nice name for it was development through labor, the bad name for it was reeducation through labor.”⁶⁸⁶ Li applied. He couldn't stand staying in segregated examination: “Talking about how you were wrong...I wanted something else to do.”⁶⁸⁷ Zhong Yinlan applied because it seemed like a better job than baking chemicals. Museum employees who had salvaged bronze relics from steel refineries during the Great Leap Forward got placed automatically because they had prior experience in distinguishing valuables from trash. Indeed, the Sorting Committee saw “rescuing cultural relics and books from waste metal and waste paper” as one of its primary responsibilities and even expanded the salvage team with recruits from other cultural institutions.⁶⁸⁸

Li Junjie worked at #150 Puxi road, the biggest sorting station in the city. Located in Xujia hui district, the station was considered well equipped because “the architecture is more solid, dry, and the storage space is bigger – it's good for precautions against humidity, fire, and

Studies on Zhao Mengfu's Painting in China,” *Artibus Asiae*, 53, no. 1/2 (1993): 195-210; Alfreda Murck, “Golden Mangoes – The Life Cycle Of A Cultural Revolution Symbol,” *Archives of Asian Art*, 57 (2007): 1-21.

⁶⁸⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁶⁸⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

⁶⁸⁸ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

security.”⁶⁸⁹

Those who worked at Puxi road joked that they got put “in the Momo's house.”⁶⁹⁰

Shanghai residents called maids and cleaners *momo tou* and the Puxi road station looked like servant's barracks. Some conjectured that the space was abandoned housing.⁶⁹¹ “Now we would call it houses awaiting reconstruction, for the cleaning staff, the *momo tou*.”⁶⁹² This guess was not far from the truth. The municipality appropriated #150 Puxi Road from the China Umbrella Factory, which used the space to store spare parts.⁶⁹³

All sorting stations in Shanghai alternated between four tasks: receiving, cataloging, appraising, and waste metal and paper processing.⁶⁹⁴ Li Junjie, who worked at Puxi road from 1967 to 1972, specialized in receiving. The sheer quantity of antiquities that came through the station stands out for him still: “Everyday we were there to receive, everyday there were things coming in.”⁶⁹⁵ Receivers positioned themselves behind a desk where “people lined up, long

⁶⁸⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶⁹⁰ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁹¹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁹² Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁶⁹³ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶⁹⁴ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁶⁹⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

lines...they came to the desk to relinquish items.”⁶⁹⁶ Li and his colleagues had to register packages quickly because “these cars were waiting outside to give things in and be cataloged.”⁶⁹⁷ Confiscations always arrived dirty. At the end of a work day Li “looked like an egg inked over” because registering confiscations covered him in soot, dust, and dirt.⁶⁹⁸

Sorting Committee employees had a difficult time associating confiscations with specific individuals and organizations. When I asked my interviewees where seized assets came from, they told me “some came from raids that the Revolutionary Rebels were doing. Others were things that Red Guards were getting from outside”.⁶⁹⁹ When I pressed for the exact location of “outside”, my interviewees admitted that they simply did not know. “If you wore a red badge anyone could do a house search.”⁷⁰⁰ Some of the confiscations came to the stations with “this and that capitalist's itemized list”, others simply said the contents came from “outside”, without further clarification.⁷⁰¹ The overwhelmed receivers rarely asked for more information because “there was just so much stuff..some tens of thousands of things.”⁷⁰² They didn't even have time to inventory all the confiscations already in custody, not to mention tracking down more.⁷⁰³

Catalogers collected confiscations from receivers.⁷⁰⁴ Ostensibly, catalogers were

⁶⁹⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁶⁹⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

⁶⁹⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷⁰⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷⁰¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁷⁰² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁷⁰³ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷⁰⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

stenographers who took down all records regarding the objects' original danwei registration and owner.⁷⁰⁵ In reality, catalogers moved confiscations from one end of the sorting station to another. Their work got so overwhelming that the sorting stations had to call in the Shanghai Electricity Company. The catalogers couldn't move fast enough so the electric company installed conveyor belts. This allowed catalogers to “pull a lever and the calligraphy and paintings would 'hhwwwooooo' slide over, and once they slide it over we would catalog.”⁷⁰⁶

The final step was appraising. There were two levels of appraisal. The first is separating objects of value from everyday confiscations. Appraiser set aside anything that might be art. “You had to look, you had to decide, good of bad, real or fake.”⁷⁰⁷ Sorting stations kept two different kinds of appraisers: object and print. The Sorting Committee recruited object appraisers from museums and art dealerships. Print appraisers came from the Shanghai Library, Shanghai Book Store, and other used book outlets.

The second level of appraisal involved enforcing Cultural Relics Laws. At this level, antiquarian skill sets mattered. Objects that predated 1795 went to museums. Those that postdated 1795 became stock for the Arts and Crafts Company. Zhong Yinlan, who cataloged objects at Puxi Road, explained that “if we found cultural relics then we would hold it for the state.”⁷⁰⁸ Thus, appraising became a matter of profit. If an appraiser could identify pre-1795 art

⁷⁰⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁷⁰⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷⁰⁸ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

from a pile of confiscations then museums stood to expand their permanent collections.

Similarly, if an appraiser could identify post-1795 art from everyday confiscations then the Arts and Crafts Company could sell it on the international art market for much-needed foreign currency. Otherwise, confiscations simply remained in storage with the Sorting committee until further notice.

Cultural industry employees who had the expertise and could obtain permission to work at sorting stations did. For example, the head print appraiser at Puxi Road was Gu Dinglong, a paleographer and President of the Shanghai Library (Figure 3.5).⁷⁰⁹ The Sorting Committee hired Gu because “there were all kinds of good printed books in Shanghai, first editions, second editions...ancient texts, well he knew them all.”⁷¹⁰ The committee transferred Gu out of segregated examination specifically for his appraisal skills.



Figure 3.5. Paleographer Gu Dinglong (left) examining steele rubbings with Shanghai Museum employee Shang Yehuang (right) at the Shanghai Museum (circa 1960s). Photo obtained from Zheng Zhong.

⁷⁰⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷¹⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

Gu Dinglong's case was a rare exception. Sorting stations often had trouble finding proficient appraisers. Segregated examinations kept senior staff, like Gu, from leaving their danweis. Xie Zhiliu, the Shanghai Museum's chief painting specialist, never worked for any sorting station because his interrogators refused to let him go. As a result, the Sorting Committee constantly petitioned for more appraisers. "Some people, who knew what they were doing, might be able to call everything in the pile by name. They might say, Zhang Daqian's painting...Ming or Qing dynasty work".⁷¹¹ Those who had less experience "won't know how to label things...a pair of banners with calligraphy...people who don't know, well...they just label it as one unit: Two big strips of paper."⁷¹² Preliminary progress reports berated inexperienced appraisers for "piling ceramics randomly" and "keeping books, calligraphy, and painting on bare ground", which damaged the objects.⁷¹³ The Sorting Committee was livid when the Shanghai Sixth Automation Instrument Factory "stored confiscated objects in an air-raid shelter and the calligraphy, painting and books got infested with mold."⁷¹⁴ The Tianping Road neighborhood

⁷¹¹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷¹² Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷¹³ The lack of experienced appraisers was especially acute in Shanghai's hinterland counties, where more instances of damage occurred. *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai. For confirmatory findings on damage in the social and cultural aspects of life during the Cultural Revolution, see Andrew G. Walder and Yang Su, "The Cultural Revolution in the Countryside: Scope, Timing and Human Impact," *The China Quarterly*, No. 173 (Mar., 2003), pp. 74-99; Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village: The Recent History of a Peasant Community in Mao's China*, (Berkeley, 1984); Jonathan Unger, "'The Social Conflicts Underpinning China's Cultural Revolution Turmoil," *Agora*, 4, no. 2 (2009), pp. 4-10;

⁷¹⁴ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli*

association left confiscated books near a water pipe, which spilled and made the books “rot to the state of glue, irreparable.”⁷¹⁵ In fact, due to the paucity of antiquarians, the Sorting Committee “estimate what we've already received is about ten percent of the total amount of cultural relics and books we are supposed to receive.”⁷¹⁶

The Sorting Committees' complaints appear to confirm the Cultural Revolution's uniquely destructive impact on cultural heritage in the PRC. To interpret these complaints as anything more than the daily vicissitudes of any large logistics operation, however, obscures broader continuities in the PRC's *history* of institutionalized antiquities appropriation since 1949.⁷¹⁷ The Cultural Revolution did not erode the PRC's repository of antiquarians. The systematic transfer of museum, library, and antiquities industry workers to new jobs both broadened and strengthened their value to the state. This is evident, for example, in the proliferation of Cultural Relics Sorting Committees and employees across the nation, all of which cataloged confiscations for municipal and county sorting stations. Furthermore, the sorting stations' petitions for more appraisers elevated antiquarians' value to both Cultural

yujian, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷¹⁵ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷¹⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷¹⁷ For the earlier history of appropriations see Chapters 1 and 2.

Revolution campaigns as well as municipal organizations. As the above-cited reports made clear, without antiquarians the museums lost antiquities, and the Arts and Crafts Company lost profits. Antiquarians could most efficiently, and effectively, evaluate the value of seized antiquities. Thus, while Cultural Revolution campaigns are *said* to have robbed antiquarianism of its social and political purchase, participation in those campaigns have only strengthened antiquarians' impact and reach.

Municipal Gains

Shanghai's sorting stations obtained unprecedented profits between 1966 and 1969.

Figure 3.6 compares the Sorting Committee's inventory to the antiquities the Shanghai Museum seized in 1966.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁸ Data gathered from *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai.

Comparison of Shanghai Museum And Sorting Committee Confiscations

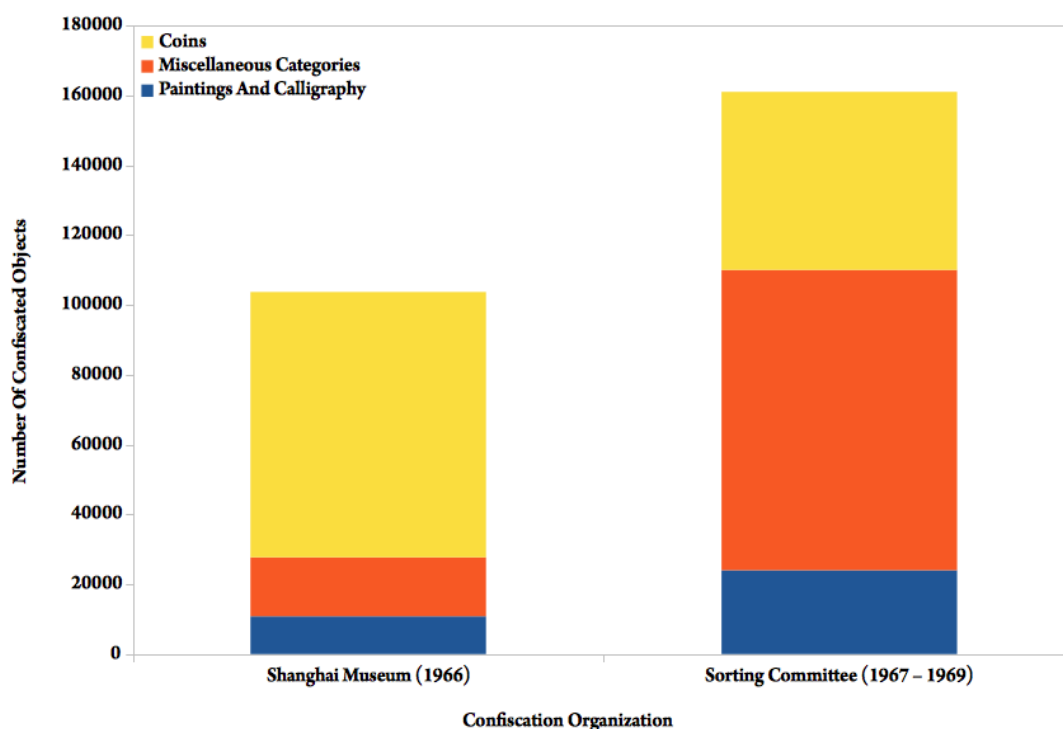


Figure 3.6. Comparison of Antiquities Obtained From Shanghai Museum Confiscations VS The Cultural Relics Sorting Committee. SMA, Shanghai.

The multicolored blocks in both columns represent different categories of art as Shanghai's Sorting Committee named them. These include Paintings and Calligraphy, Miscellaneous Categories, (a mishmash of jade, ivories, seals, lacquer, etc.), and Coins. The dominant height of the Sorting Committee column shows that Shanghai's sorting stations got more antiquities in every category of art. The museum expropriated 10,806 pieces of paintings and calligraphy while the sorting stations took in twenty-four thousand, a difference of eighty-two percent. The

museum seized 16,877 miscellaneous antiquities while the sorting stations collected eighty-six thousand, a difference of 409 percent. The comparison is even more astounding for Coins. While the museum collected seventy-six thousand pieces, the sorting stations reported fifty-one thousand pieces, plus an additional 2,669 kilograms' worth in bulk. The stations didn't report how many coins the bulk category contained because "the quantities are too massive...at present we are lacking in appraisal personnel and have not begun to sort through" the numbers.⁷¹⁹ By way of comparison, most ancient Chinese coins weigh between five and fifteen grams. To stay on the conservative side, let's assume that each coin weighs fifteen grams – 2,669,000 grams divided by fifteen gives 177,933 uncatalogued coins. When added to the fifty-one thousand already inventoried pieces, the resultant sum (228,933) puts the sorting station's confiscations at 201 percent over the number of coins the Shanghai Museum seized in 1966.

It is important to note, however, that both the committee and the museum organizations ultimately answered to Shanghai, the municipality. In other words, however many more confiscations the Sorting Committee accumulated, it is the *total* confiscations *both* retrieved that distinguished their participation in the Cultural Revolution. In four years, the two institutions obtained 34,806 pieces of paintings and calligraphy, 102,877 pieces of miscellaneous antiquities, and an estimated 304,933 coins. These appropriations easily make up the contents

⁷¹⁹ Data gathered from *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai.

of one museum. In fact, the sum of assets at both institutions outnumber that in the Shanghai Museum's permanent collection as of 1966.⁷²⁰

The Sorting Committee transferred all antiquities that predated 1795 to the Shanghai Museum. Figures 3.7 and 3.8 use the museum's Sorting Committee receipts to convey how much this expanded its collection. Figure 3.7 looks at general acquisitions, comparing the Shanghai Museum's Cultural Revolution gains with historical acquisitions from 1949 – 1959.⁷²¹

⁷²⁰ Data gathered from *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷²¹ Data for Cultural Revolution Confiscations comes from *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai. Data for the Shanghai Museum's historical acquisitions comes from *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie*, [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

Comparison of Museum Acquisitions: Cultural Revolution Seizures VS Historical

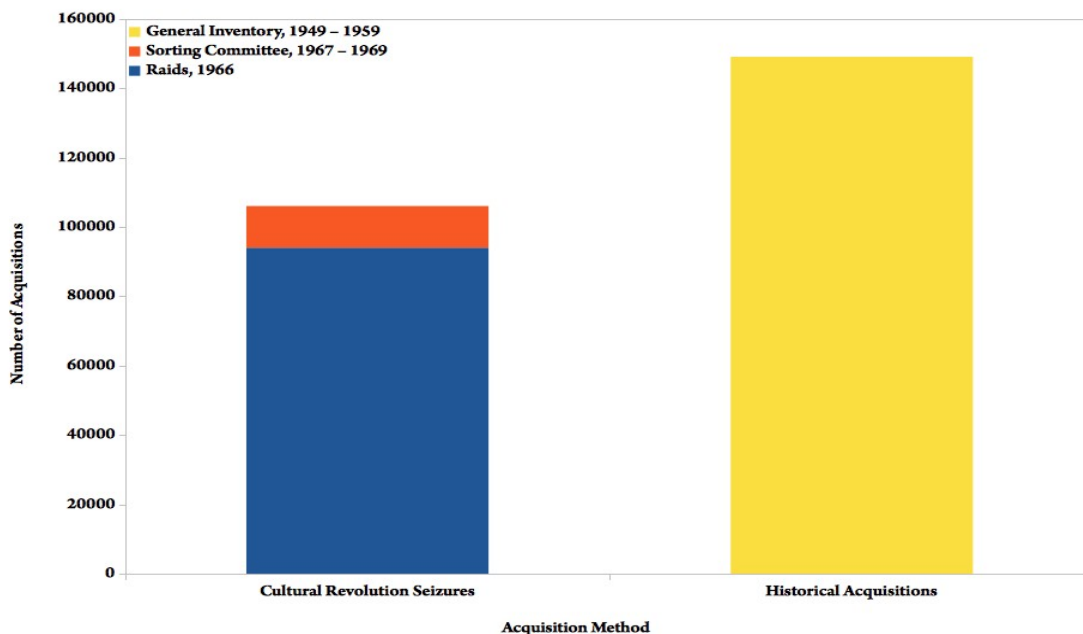


Figure 3.7. Comparison of The Shanghai Museum's Historical Acquisitions (1949 – 1959) To Its Acquisitions From The Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1969). SMA, Shanghai.

The multicolored column on the left represents all the antiquities that the museum itself seized in raids, as well as that which the Sorting Committee transferred to the museum between 1967 and 1969. The unicolored column on the right represents the museum's acquisitions from its first decade in existence. The multicolored column indicates that between 1966 and 1969, the Shanghai Museum gained 106,000 objects through a combination of raids and Sorting Committee transfers. This amounts to seventy-one percent of all acquisitions that the museum accumulated between 1949 and 1959, thereby increasing the museum's permanent collection by

seventy-one percent.⁷²²

The obvious benefits of acquiring this many objects aside, the museum's acquisition of First-Tier objects indicates a much more profound level of gain. Figure 3.8 refines the above statistics to look only at what the museum considered its best antiquities. The comparison remains between acquisitions from the Cultural Revolution and the museum's historical acquisitions. The greater availability of records for First Tier antiquities, however, allows me to extend the comparison to First Tier antiquities acquired between 1949 and 1964.⁷²³

⁷²² There are no public records for the total number of antiquities the Shanghai Museum acquired between 1959 and 1965.

⁷²³ Data for Cultural Revolution Confiscations comes from *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai. Data for the Shanghai Museum's historical acquisitions comes from *Wenhua bu, shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu bianzhi, chuban shanghai bowuguan yiji cangping jianmu, huace, tupu de tongzhi, baogao, zongjie*, [Cultural Division and Shanghai Ministry of Culture's Reports and Rescripts Regarding Publishing the Shanghai Museum's First Tier Collections' Index, Illustrated Album, and Graphics Archive], February 1963 – November 1963, B172-1-443, SMA, Shanghai; *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu shangbao shanghai gemin lishi jinian guan, shanghai bowuguan, shanghai luxun jinian guan yiji cangping de baogao, mulu*, [Shanghai Cultural Affairs Administration's Report and Table of Contents Regarding First Tier Collections at the Shanghai Revolutionary History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Shanghai Luxun Memorial Museum], August 1960 – October 1965, B172-1-498, SMA, Shanghai.

First Tier Museum Acquisitions: Cultural Revolution VS Historical

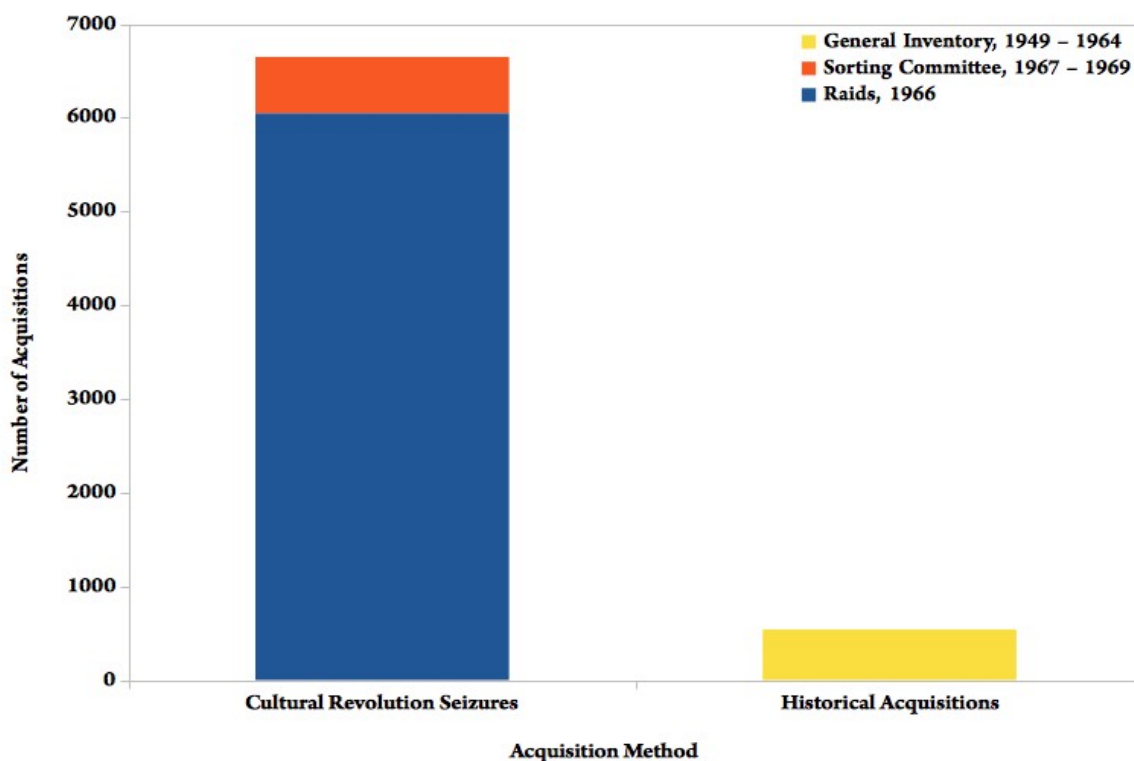


Figure 3.8. Comparison of The Shanghai Museum's First Tier Historical Acquisitions (1949 – 1964) To Its First Tier Acquisitions From The Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1969). SMA, Shanghai.

The multicolored column on the left represents all First-Tier antiquities that the Shanghai Museum seized in raids, as well as that which the Sorting Committee transferred into its possession between 1967 and 1969. The unicolored column on the right represents the museum's First Tier acquisitions from its first fifteen years of existence. As the chart shows, between 1949 and 1964, the museum got 539 First-Tier objects from acquisitions, internal

transfers, appropriations, and donations. Cultural Revolution appropriations, on the other hand, brought in 6,650 First Tier objects. In other words, the Cultural Revolution boosted the museum's finest collections by 1,234%. In fact, just the Sorting Committee's cache of First-Tier antiquities amounted to six hundred objects, which is more than the Shanghai Museum acquired in a fifteen year period. What's more, the museum received all these valuables at no cost, and expected keep them for the foreseeable future.

The distinction between museum-appropriations and Sorting Committee transfers in both Figures 3.7 and 3.8 illustrates the most haunting aspect of museum profiteering during the Cultural Revolution. While transfers from the Sorting Committee benefited the institution, the museum's own participation in raids trumped transfers by leaps and bounds. In both figures, the bottom chunks of the columns labeled Cultural Revolution Seizures represent antiquities that museum staff seized themselves. While Sorting Committee transfers gave the museum an additional twelve-thousand antiquities, the museum's own work brought in ninety-four thousand objects, expanding its permanent collection by sixty-six percent.⁷²⁴ This means even if the museum had no acquisitions program for its first seven years, its staff *still* would have seized enough antiquities to make a world-class institution by the winter of 1966.

One might say that the Shanghai Museum emptied the city's antiquities reserves during the Cultural Revolution.

⁷²⁴ As compared to museum acquisition ledger totals as of 1959.

Conclusion

From the perspective of “China Watchers” at the time, the Cultural Revolution's phenomenal sweep through all levels of society between 1966 and 1969 represented the machinations of an increasingly militarized state. The ambitions of its charismatic, albeit autocratic party chairman (Mao Zedong) seemed nothing less than the eradication of all Capitalism from China's Socialist soil.⁷²⁵ Following this narrative scheme, in which ownership of elite artifacts leads unquestionably to capitalistic decline, the Shanghai Museum's wealth of antiquities and antiquarian knowledge must make it the most debased institution of all, and therefore first in line for purges. Yet in both oral historical and statistical accounts of the Cultural Revolution, the museum only profited, and its antiquarians only expanded their reach. How is it that an institution so set for purges can achieve such enduring growth? There is something lacking, then, in the explanatory power of the monolithic PRC and autocratic Socialism paradigms. From the Shanghai Museum to the Arts and Crafts company, the same individuals, skill sets, and trade networks were used to appropriate antiquities as they were to “preserve” cultural relics – for the same audience, in the same market.

⁷²⁵ For examples of such “China Watching” see Philip Bridgham, “Mao's Cultural Revolution: The Struggle to Consolidate Power”, *The China Quarterly*, no. 41 (1970): 1-25; Harvey W. Nelsen, “Military Bureaucracy in the Cultural Revolution,” *Asian Survey*, 14, no. 4 (1974): 372-395; Joan Robinson, “The Cultural Revolution in China,” *International Affairs*, 44, no. 2 (1968): 214-227; Anne F. Thurston, “Victims of China's Cultural Revolution: The Invisible Wounds: Part II,” *Pacific Affairs*, 58, no. 1 (1985): 5-27; Jiping Zuo, “Political Religion: The Case of the Cultural Revolution in China,” *Sociological Analysis*, 52, no. 1 (1991): 99-110.

What I have presented is not *the* history of the Shanghai Museum between 1966 and 1969, but rather a historical account. This account serves two purposes. First, to show that a cultural institution's constituents, however marginalized for their “Capitalistic” elitism, can nevertheless be dynamic and active participants in creating the illusion of a coherent, free-standing entity known as the PRC state.⁷²⁶ As part of the abstracted force that directed local denizens' social, economic, cultural, and political life, the museum's different constituents not only produced the machinations of a coherent state apparatus, they also bore its impact. Second, to understand *how* different constituents' joint efforts reified the Cultural Revolution, it is necessary to observe both their failures and achievements. Neither raids nor sorting stations were well organized. Even given the unprecedented gains these campaigns achieved, their participants made mistakes, often failing to achieve their goal of acquiring as much seized property as possible, or even recognize objects of value. Indeed, one of the most persistent critiques of this period is the prevalence of petty theft. As Li Junjie described, “if you wore a red badge anyone could do a house search” and walk away with whatever they desired.⁷²⁷

It is in this broader configuration of an imperfect, yet putatively coherent actor that the Shanghai Museum, precisely *because* of its suspect status in the Socialist schema, pioneered the techniques of cultural heritage monopolization in the PRC. In both the historical record and contemporary interviews, museum employees portray themselves as working outside the state.

⁷²⁶ Timothy Mitchell, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics,” *The American Political Science Review*, 85, no. 1, (1991), 91.

⁷²⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

They present their participation in raids and appropriations as acts of preservation wherein they protected antiquities from state-sanctioned destruction.⁷²⁸ They transformed organized seizures into elegant fictions of donation. Museum employees downplay the ways in which raids and appropriations expanded both The Shanghai Museum collection and the value of its staff, as well as the fact that their paychecks came from the PRC state. While some have argued that the PRC maintains a low level of cultural governance, My findings show that state cultural institutions have worked *in collaboration* with those who self-identify as non-state actors since the institutions' inception.⁷²⁹ In sum, the Shanghai Museum's history contextualizes how cultural governance was experienced through time, from the perspective of constituents who were both the makers, and subjects of the entity we call the PRC state.

⁷²⁸ These portrayals have even filtered into the international media. For an example, see The Associated Press, "Ma Chengyuan, 77, President of Shanghai Museum, Dies," *New York Times*, October 15th, 2004.

⁷²⁹ Selina Ching Chan, "Cultural Governance And Place Making In Taiwan And China," *The China Quarterly*, 206, (2011): 372-390.

Chapter Four: Unaccounted Gains, 1969 – 1972

To Hong Kong

SPM meant a lot to Alvin Lo, a junior high-schooler in late 1960s Hong Kong. The island had two television channels and cartoons started at 5PM, sharp. Cargo from the docks, however, also unloaded in Lo's living room at 5PM. Trucks with a soft canopy top “just loaded off these crates and then you had to open up these crates and they were all wrapped in straw...they were just incredible.”⁷³⁰ Unpacking got straw everywhere. Every unloading day, Lo had to remind “these coolies, clear me a path so I can reach my TV.”⁷³¹

From the perspective of Hong Kong art dealers like Alvin Lo and his father, P. C. Liu, the trade “was controlled by only one company, this Arts and Crafts Company.”⁷³² The company had branches in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Guangdong. During the Cultural Revolution, however, dealers only saw catalogs, cargo, and straw. That's all they wanted to see. P. C. Liu refused to go up to the mainland for the first seven years after 1966.⁷³³ Hei Honglu, another dealer, assessed the situation as follows: “If you knew it wasn't safe then you shouldn't go, because maybe midway there might be some red guards who might stop you and mess with you.”⁷³⁴

⁷³⁰ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁷³¹ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁷³² Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁷³³ For more on the mainland's delicate relationship with huaqiao across the Luohu border, see Agnes S. Ku, “Immigration Policies, Discourses, and the Politics of Local Belonging in Hong Kong (1950-1980),” *Modern China*, 30, no. 3 (2004): 326-360; Glen D. Peterson, “Socialist China and the Huaqiao: The Transition to Socialism in the Overseas Chinese Areas of Rural Guangdong, 1949-1956,” *Modern China*, 14, no. 3 (1988): 309-335.

⁷³⁴ Interview with Hei Honglu, June 14th, 2010.

Hong Kong's bonded warehouses made receiving shipments easy. Dealers could redeem Arts and Craft Company cargo in parcels. Whenever they had cash, “you just go to the bank and say I have three thousand Hong Kong and then they just mark off three thousand Hong Kong worth of merchandise...and you go to the warehouse to collect.”⁷³⁵ The warehouses kept inventory lists. Once the bank released the cash, the warehouse cleared the equivalent in inventory. Dealers took their cargo, sold it, generated more cash, and went back to the warehouse to redeem more inventory.

The Kadoories started buying from P. C. Liu in the early 1970s. This was big time. Hong Kong had few local collectors and the Kadoories were *the* wealthy family. They owned The Peninsula Hotels, whose flagship property in Tsim Sha Tsui also consented to renting shop space to P. C. Liu. That event, plus the fact that by the early 1970s the “Cultural Revolution kind of calmed down a little”, prompted Liu go up to the mainland again.⁷³⁶

Hong Kong dealers knew exactly what they crossed the Luohu border to get. “Confiscated materials...sent to the Arts and Crafts company.”⁷³⁷ They suspected that merchandise came out in tiers. “The really good things they didn't let out of the country. Those all went to the museums.”⁷³⁸ The dealers were spot on. Shanghai Museum staff confirmed that “good things went to the museum, the not so good, average things went to the Arts and Crafts

⁷³⁵ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁷³⁶ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁷³⁷ Interview with Hei Honglu, June 14th, 2010.

⁷³⁸ Interview with Hei Honglu, June 14th, 2010.

company. The Arts and Crafts company then sold it overseas, to Hong Kong or Japan.”⁷³⁹ I pressed my interviewees about whether they could tell which antiquities came from confiscations and which came from art dealerships. Lo replied “it's impossible to keep an account of all the things that came out during the Cultural Revolution, they had so much stuff.”⁷⁴⁰

As I have argued in Chapter three, Cultural institutions profited enormously from participating in Cultural Revolution campaigns. In Shanghai's case, the establishment of sorting stations transformed museums into major links in the export art supply chain. This chapter explores the day-to-day operations of that supply chain across Shanghai, Hong Kong, and abroad, examining how distribution, profit, and sales volumes are constructed against museological concerns such as preservation, canonization, and heritage creation. My findings reveal the global aspect of Cultural Revolution profiteering. I argue that international buyers drove the commercial disposal of confiscated property, at the same time as the widespread availability of commodified confiscations inflated prices in the international art market.

This chapter also investigates the Cultural Revolution's unaccounted gains, which I define as the professional experiences that younger museum staff obtained as a by-product of the senior museum staff's incapacitation.⁷⁴¹ I show that the Class of 1952 not only took on new

⁷³⁹ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 28th, 2010. For accounts of similar policies in other industrial sectors, see Audrey Donnithorne, “China's Cellular Economy: Some Economic Trends since the Cultural Revolution,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 52 (1972): 605-619; Colina MacDougall, “Chinese Trade since the Cultural Revolution,” *The World Today*, 28, no. 1 (1972): 23-29.

⁷⁴⁰ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁴¹ While some scholars have argued that the 1970s generation have quickly dismantled any Cultural Revolution

responsibilities as a result of gaps in the administrative hierarchy, they also acquired the right to choose their successors. In this context, I introduce the Class of 1972, a new batch of recruits that the museum selected from Sent-down youths. The experiences of both classes show that the existing rhetoric of rehabilitation do not account for the unprecedented career advances that young professionals won throughout the Cultural Revolution years. I argue that participation in the Cultural Revolution, in the absence of former supervisors, allowed young museum employees to reap unaccounted gains.

Selling Out

Anxieties ran high at the Puxi road sorting station in 1969. The Cultural Revolution severed Sino-Soviet relations. That March, armed raids along the Ussuri River escalated to tense anti-Soviet war preparations throughout the mainland. Beijing built an entire underground city for civilian protection and Shanghai started to do the same. Sorting station employees had to figure out what to do with the confiscated antiquities in their custody. “Everyone was freaked out, we were digging air trenches, it would have been perfect if the whole warehouse could have

reforms upon coming to power, my findings show that in the Shanghai Museum's case, the 1970s generation built upon the previous generation's experience, seizing new opportunities using skills learned from museum doyens (senior administrators) as well as the Class of 1952. David Bonavia, “The Fate of the 'New Born Things' of China's Cultural Revolution,” *Pacific Affairs*, 51, no. 2 (1978): 177-194; For collaborating findings in other professions see Keith Forster, “Repudiation of the Cultural Revolution in China: The Case of Zhejiang,” *Pacific Affairs*, 59, no. 1 (1986): 5-27; George P. Jan, “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China since the Cultural Revolution,” *Asian Survey*, 17, no. 6 (1977): 513-529; Robin Munro, “Settling Accounts with the Cultural Revolution at Beijing University 1977-78,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 82 (1980): 308-333; Dwight H. Perkins, “Economic Growth in China and the Cultural Revolution (1960--April 1967),” *The China Quarterly*, no. 30 (1967): 33-48; Lucian W. Pye, “Reassessing the Cultural Revolution,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 108 (1986): 597-612; Sigrid Schmalzer, “On the Appropriate Use of Rose-Colored Glasses: Reflections on Science in Socialist China,” *Isis*, 98, no. 3 (2007): 571-583.

moved out of the country.”⁷⁴²

In order to get through work as fast as possible, the station installed a new inventory system and hired more workers. Employees from the Arts and Crafts Company “got transferred in to help out”, expanding Puxi road's headcount for catalogers and appraisers to “forty or fifty people”.⁷⁴³ Inventory categories stayed the same: *tong ci yu za* (Bronzes, Ceramics, Jades, Miscellaneous). Record keeping, however, privileged museum-quality antiquities. Catalogers wrote out complete names and titles for museum-level antiquities, but the “other stuff...the inventory was just bronzes, X units, ceramics, X units, jade, X units. There were no names.”⁷⁴⁴ The unit-based procedure anonymized all the antiquities that the Shanghai Museum didn't want to acquire, making it easy to consider them as all part of one great cache of stock.

The PRC was in dire financial straits.⁷⁴⁵ The Cultural Revolution froze production and education. Shen Minren, who did the packing at Puxi road, explained that “economically [the state] was pretty anxious, so they thought we can sell” confiscated property.⁷⁴⁶ What got sold

⁷⁴² Interview with Lu Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

⁷⁴³ Interview with Lu Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

⁷⁴⁴ Interview with Lu Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

⁷⁴⁵ While sinologists agree that the PRC was struggling to improve its economic conditions throughout the 1960s and 70s, they disagree on the impact that earlier campaigns, such as the Great Leap Forward, Soviet collaboration, and even selective fertility control, had on subsequent social and economic campaigns such as the Cultural Revolution. The seminal study on these issues is Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, Vol. 1-3 (London, 1974-1997); For a selection of subsequent studies see Prasenjit Duara, “The Great Leap Forward in China: An Analysis of the Nature of Socialist Transformation,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 9, no. 32/34, (1974): 1365-1390; Carl Riskin, “Judging Economic Development: The Case of China,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 12, no. 41 (1977): 1741-1754; Gregory C. Chow, “Economic Analysis of the People's Republic of China,” *The Journal of Economic Education*, 19, no. 1 (1988): 53-64; Tih-Fen Ting, “Resources, Fertility, and Parental Investment in Mao's China,” *Population and Environment*, 25, no. 4 (2004): 281 – 297.

⁷⁴⁶ Interview Shen Minren, June 16th, 2011.

depended on appraisers and Cultural Relics laws.⁷⁴⁷ Objects that predated 1795 stayed on the mainland, while “objects made after 1795, because according to national policy it could be exported, we gave it a number that indicated that it was arts and crafts.”⁷⁴⁸ This arts and crafts designation gave the Arts and Crafts company the right to place the object in its onionskin catalog for sale overseas.

From the perspective of art evaluation, the new emphasis on commodification meant that sorting stations disregarded the pre-existing Three-Tier system, which designated antiquities into the categories of museum acquisition, commodity, and trash. Anonymized objects didn't merit that level of attention. The sorting station workers' primary goal was to make use of available resources and get as much of its confiscated holdings into the art market as possible.

As of 1969, the Shanghai Sorting Committee estimated it had at least 98,000 pieces of stock that post-dated 1795.⁷⁴⁹ This number only accounts for sorting stations in municipal Shanghai. The nine hinterland counties had more. Though the committee did not publicize its

⁷⁴⁷ For more on the social underpinnings of art and law see Guo Xinghua, “Understanding the Logic Behind Rule of Law in China,” *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology*, 41, no. 2, (2008–9): 3–6; Samuel K. Parker, “The Matter of Value inside and out: Aesthetic Categories in Contemporary Hindu Temple Arts,” *Ars Orientalis*, 22 (1992): 97–109.

⁷⁴⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010. For the contemporaneous growth of the handicrafts industry, which exported the same categories of confiscated property, see Peter Schran, “Handicrafts in Communist China,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 17 (1964): 151–173.

⁷⁴⁹ Data gathered from *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai.

county-level records, fragments of data suggest that the majority of confiscation holdings in Shanghai's nine hinterland counties also post-dated 1795. According to Li Junjie, whenever the committee referred to “arts and crafts”, they meant stock that the Arts and Crafts Company could sell.⁷⁵⁰ Committee reports state that “most of the cultural relics in the...counties are arts and crafts.”⁷⁵¹ For example, Qingpu county “has comparatively good preservation conditions and plentiful numbers of arts and crafts” while the town of Zhu Jiajiao had “many arts and crafts amongst its bronze and ceramic objects”.⁷⁵² Therefore, the number of commodified holdings in the nine counties may have outnumbered that in municipal Shanghai.

The Arts and Crafts company prioritized speedy liquidation. In the years that Zhong Yinlan worked at the Sorting Committee, she often heard her superiors recite “we didn't have any foreign currency in the country, if we could sell our arts and crafts then we could make some foreign currency.”⁷⁵³ In fact, not selling meant wasting because “if we can't sell it then it's just going to take up space at the warehouse...I can't keep things in the warehouse that I can't sell, that's a business loss.”⁷⁵⁴ Therefore, the Arts and Crafts company insisted on selling in bulk:

⁷⁵⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁷⁵¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁵² *Shanghai shi wenhua ju guanyu baohu wenwu, qingli tushu de baogao yu pifu ji benshi shukan zulin ye renyuan chuli yujian*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Report And Rescript Regarding Protecting Cultural Relics And Sorting Books Plus Comments on the Allocation of Our City's Books and Rental Industry Personnel] January 1967 – November 1967, B172-3-5, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁵³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

⁷⁵⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

wholesale instead of piecemeal.

Arts and Crafts company associates asked sorting station employees to focus their work on exportable stock. Lu Songlin remembers a strong emphasis on well-sculpted, low quality jades. The Puxi road station, for example, had an unusually large jade bodhisattva that had no date markings, though its stylistic properties marked it as an expertly sculpted object made from lower-quality jade, most probably by craftsmen in Yangzhou. The museum didn't want the bodhisattva because its jade was poor quality and, in comparison to the relics already in Shanghai's collection, the object's pedigree was relatively young. The Arts and Crafts company, however, saw its potential in Southeast Asia. One of the sales representatives later told Lu that “we sold that thing. For twenty thousand. I don't know in what currency, sold it to someone in the Philippines. That company manager laughed all the way to the bank.”⁷⁵⁵

The export trade also got stock from regional purchasing stations. Duoyun xian, for example, kept a station in the back. The stations allowed everyday Chinese to sell antiquities for cash. In fact, the Commission of Commerce decreed that purchasing stations “are responsible for collecting the privately-owned cultural relics and reproductions” nationwide.⁷⁵⁶ Station agents were instructed to target objects with high export value, which meant antiquities that foreigners liked to buy. These include “ceramics, bronzes, calligraphy and painting, stele, silk

⁷⁵⁵ Interview with Lu Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

⁷⁵⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju zhuanfa guojia wenwu guanli ju 'duo waiguo ren, huajiao, gangao tongbao xiedai, youji wenwu chukou zan xing guanli banfa' deng de tongzhi*, [Shanghai Cultural Bureau Forwards State Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Notification On 'Temporary Regulations Regarding Foreigners, Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macao Wombmates' Carrying and Mailing Cultural Relics Overseas', Etc] May 1973 – November 1973, B172-3-79, SMA, Shanghai.

tapestry with cut designs, embroidery, seals, ink and ink stone, coral, jade, jewelry, ivory, and snuff bottles”.⁷⁵⁷ In short, the known canon of Chinese collectables for the international art market.

On the Road

By 1970, the Arts and Crafts Company set up shop at the Canton fair, a semiannual trade fair that targeted the international market. Twice a year, spring and fall, Hong Kong art dealers Hei Honglu and Y. F. Yang traveled from their home base to Guangdong to buy stock. These trips caused their families great anxiety. Hei “went wearing these dark glasses...we were worried he might be stopped by the Red Guards for the glasses.”⁷⁵⁸ During our interview, Hei Honglu perked up at the mention of his eye-ware and exclaimed “I still have those glasses!”⁷⁵⁹ They are his Cultural Revolution mementos.

Once dealers registered at the fair, they piled into the exhibition space. Sales representatives marketed everything from tea to silk robes, all produced in the PRC for overseas export. Art dealers frequented the booths marked for arts and crafts and the regulars knew they took a gamble on whenever they bought. “There was this unspoken rule at the time...they didn't separate the old and the new.”⁷⁶⁰ In other words, an eighteenth century jade or snuff bottle

⁷⁵⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju zhuanfa guojia wenwu guanli ju 'duo waiguo ren, huajiao, gangao tongbao xiedai, youji wenwu chukou zan xing guanli banfa' deng de tongzhi*, [Shanghai Cultural Bureau Forwards State Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Notification On 'Temporary Regulations Regarding Foreigners, Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macao Wombmates' Carrying and Mailing Cultural Relics Overseas', Etc] May 1973 – November 1973, B172-3-79, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁵⁸ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁵⁹ Interview with Hei Honglu, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁶⁰ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

could be sold alongside a modern-day version, or even reproduction, of the same thing. Displays covered the whole range of collectable antiquities and “whatever you found and bought, it depended on your eyes.”⁷⁶¹ Furthermore, dealers “had to buy in bulk. You couldn't say I want this one and that one you had to say I want five hundred here and five hundred there. You buy them all and this is the price.”⁷⁶² The sales representatives, in accordance with Arts and Crafts company goals, didn't take singleton orders.

The Canton Fair determined the rhythm of the international Chinese art market. Dealers who did not attend the fairs in Guangdong “wanted to be [in Hong Kong] when the dealers got back from the Canton Fair.”⁷⁶³ Every spring and fall, British, American, and other overseas buyers flew into Hong Kong for the sole purpose of meeting fair attendees. Even Sotheby's and Christie's auctioneers, who began to explore the Hong Kong market in the early 1970s, arrived according to the Canton Fair's schedule.⁷⁶⁴ Hugh Moss, who began buying from Hong Kong dealers in 1968, explained that fair attendees “would buy the stuff in bulk in China come and sell it semi-retail in Hong Kong. But in fact they were selling to dealers like me and others who would then go and sell them all over the world.”⁷⁶⁵ In other words, the Canton Fair acted as a major supply node that regular attendees used to collect merchandise for their respective networks of art dealers who sold Chinese art from dealerships located across Asia, the

⁷⁶¹ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁶² Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

⁷⁶³ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

⁷⁶⁴ Interview with Julian Thompson, September 4th, 2009; Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

⁷⁶⁵ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

Middle East, Europe, and North America. As far as the international market was concerned,

“The whole of China came out through Hong Kong...and then out to the rest of the world.”

The ready availability of Arts and Crafts company stock shaped Chinese art prices at the international level. “Between 1968 and 1973 the market in Chinese art went bananas.”⁷⁶⁶

Cultural Revolution confiscations injected the market with previously unprecedented numbers of Chinese antiquities. Japanese, European, and American collectors, as well as new wealth in Hong Kong met that availability by “suddenly becoming very active...driving the market up like crazy.”⁷⁶⁷

Even Canton Fair officials expressed shock at the profits that Arts and Crafts company stock turned overseas. Despite raising prices “by three or four times...many customers continue to purchase like mad.”⁷⁶⁸ In particular, “in the past snuff bottles sold for fifty Hong Kong Dollars (HKD), this time they sold for five hundred HKD. Fujian's gold lacquer wooden figurines used

⁷⁶⁶ Zhou xiannian fu zongli dui gongyi pin jiaoyi tuan dui wai shixing tongyi chenjiao jidian tihui de pishi ji shanghsi shi duowai maoyi ju taolun cailiao huibao, [Associate Chief Li Xiannian's Comments Regarding The Arts And Crafts Trading Group's Conclusions On Standardizing Trade Export Practices And Shanghai Municipality's Materials and Reports on Talks With The Foreign Trade Commission] May 1965 – July 1965, B170-2-1584, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁶⁷ Zhou xiannian fu zongli dui gongyi pin jiaoyi tuan dui wai shixing tongyi chenjiao jidian tihui de pishi ji shanghsi shi duowai maoyi ju taolun cailiao huibao, [Associate Chief Li Xiannian's Comments Regarding The Arts And Crafts Trading Group's Conclusions On Standardizing Trade Export Practices And Shanghai Municipality's Materials and Reports on Talks With The Foreign Trade Commission] May 1965 – July 1965, B170-2-1584, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁶⁸ Zhou xiannian fu zongli dui gongyi pin jiaoyi tuan dui wai shixing tongyi chenjiao jidian tihui de pishi ji shanghsi shi duowai maoyi ju taolun cailiao huibao, [Associate Chief Li Xiannian's Comments Regarding The Arts And Crafts Trading Group's Conclusions On Standardizing Trade Export Practices And Shanghai Municipality's Materials and Reports on Talks With The Foreign Trade Commission] May 1965 – July 1965, B170-2-1584, SMA, Shanghai.

to sell for ninety HKD, now more than six hundred HKD.”⁷⁶⁹ The China Ocean Shipping company confirmed that foreign dignitaries “show particular interest in...older arts and crafts like reproduction cultural relics, ceramics, bronzes, jades, stone, calligraphy and painting, jewelry, etc.”⁷⁷⁰ These are precisely the categories of Chinese art objects whose prices inflated during the latter half of the Cultural Revolution.

The Arts and Craft Company raised prices at each successive Canton Fair. It used the fair as a barometer by which to standardize the price of exportable antiquities in the PRC. Price hikes often prompted buyers to protest and strike bargains under the table. In response, Arts and Craft Company administrators mandated that its sales team must “cooperate closely, stand firm in out-facing situations so...the opposition...pays according to this higher price.”⁷⁷¹ At the same time, however, Canton Fair administrators wanted to deny that overseas demand drove price inflation. In all the Arts and Crafts Company documents I've come across, price adjustments always conclude with the phrase, “take care to keep [this] secret, don't let foreign

⁷⁶⁹ *Zhou xiannian fu zongli dui gongyi pin jiaoyi tuan dui wai shixing tongyi chenjiao jidian tihui de pishi ji shanghsi shi duowai maoyi ju taolun cailiao huibao*, [Associate Chief Li Xiannian's Comments Regarding The Arts And Crafts Trading Group's Conclusions On Standardizing Trade Export Practices And Shanghai Municipality's Materials and Reports on Talks With The Foreign Trade Commission] May 1965 – July 1965, B170-2-1584, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁷⁰ *Shanghai haiguan, wailun gongyin gongsi, yuanyang yunshu gongsi guanyu guowai shangren goumai wenyi pin, wupin chujin guanli wenti de qingshi baogao*, [Shanghai Customs, China Ocean Shipping Supply Company, and China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO)'s Requests and Reports Regarding Foreign Merchants' Purchasing of Arts and Crafts and Export Management Conditions] June 1973 – December 1973, B248-2-577, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁷¹ *Zhou xiannian fu zongli dui gongyi pin jiaoyi tuan dui wai shixing tongyi chenjiao jidian tihui de pishi ji shanghsi shi duowai maoyi ju taolun cailiao huibao*, [Associate Chief Li Xiannian's Comments Regarding The Arts And Crafts Trading Group's Conclusions On Standardizing Trade Export Practices And Shanghai Municipality's Materials and Reports on Talks With The Foreign Trade Commission] May 1965 – July 1965, B170-2-1584, SMA, Shanghai.

nationals know”.⁷⁷² This phrase has double underlines, written by hand.

It would be a mistake, however, to interpret anecdotal transgressions on the dealers' part to mean anything more than the fact that bargaining is an integral part of the culture of international trade fairs. Dealers found the Canton Fair worthwhile despite price hikes. In comparison to prices in Hong Kong and overseas, mainland “things were so inexpensive...buying wasn't a matter of selecting carefully.”⁷⁷³ They also considered the fair a good networking opportunity. Received knowledge told dealers that company representatives had the ability to “invite you to their companies directly, in Shanghai, Canton, or more inland.”⁷⁷⁴ What dealers wanted most was to find the individuals with authority to invite them to the Arts and Craft Company warehouses on the mainland. Such an invitation meant unfettered access to more antiquities *and* bypassing Canton Fair administration.

Warehouses invitations offered overseas dealers a further advantage. They came with official Arts and Company protection because the dealers had to arrive with enough cash to “buy by the lot.”⁷⁷⁵ When P. C. Liu went “he would go back to warehouse and say look, these these

⁷⁷² *Shangye bu, shige hui, Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, wailun gongsi deng guangyu youyi shangdian shangpin, gongyipin, jinkou tengzhi, waiguan renyuan xiedai jinkou wuzi shougou zuojia, diaojia de zanxing banfa, guiding de baobao, tongzhi he gaoxiu fu buzhang zai Beijing zhaokai bage diqu wailun gongyin, youyi shangdian shangpin jiage de zuotanhui de zongjie fayan*, [The Commission of Commerce, Municipal Revolutionary Board, Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, China Ocean Shipping Supply Company and Others' Meeting Regarding Temporary Plans For Pricing, Price Changes, Regulation Reports, and Notifications For Friendship Store Merchandise, Arts and Crafts, Imported Bamboo, and Foreign Commission Personnel Carrying Import Items, And Conclusive Remarks At Associate Commission Head Gaoxiu's Beijing Conference On Ocean Shipping Supplies and Friendship Store Merchandise Pricing For Eight Regions] February 14th, 1972, B123-8-708, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁷³ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁷⁴ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁷⁵ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

these these here you leave here, the rest I want.”⁷⁷⁶ Dealers who got warehouse access essentially “eyeball everything on the floor” and took cratefuls of merchandise home.⁷⁷⁷ They bought at such impressive volumes because the Arts and Crafts Company demanded it, and because profit margins on the international market more than covered the cost of getting a few duds in a bulk order.

New Alliances

On September 13th, 1971, a plane crash on the Öndörkhaan grasslands in eastern Mongolia changed the course of the Cultural Revolution. The plane carried PRC Defense Minister Lin Biao, his wife and son, as well as several personal aids. All were supposedly fleeing for the Soviet Union as a result of Lin's infamous break from Mao Zedong. No survivors emerged from the wreckage. To minimize panic throughout the country, the Chinese Communist Party did not disclose Lin Biao's death for the next year.

Lin Biao's disappearance galvanized sweeping political and administrative shifts throughout the PRC. It marked a turn in the Sino-Soviet split and shifted Cold War allegiances. At the state level, central bureau officials began to seek a *rapprochement* with the United States.⁷⁷⁸ At the local and regional levels, select individuals got rehabilitation notifications from work units that had purged them and cultural institutions that had ceased operations saw signs of renewal.

⁷⁷⁶ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁷⁷ Interview with Andy Hei, June 14th, 2010.

⁷⁷⁸ For contemporary accounts see G. P. Deshpande, “China's Foreign Policy in the Seventies,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 5, no. 16 (1970): 677-680; Harry Harding, “Political Trends in China Since the Cultural Revolution,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 402, (1972): 67-82;

In Shanghai, museums and libraries reopened their doors. Younger staff got transferred back from their respective reeducation programs and began putting together exhibition plans. Senior staff who had spent the past four or five years in segregated interrogation came back to work as well. Committees of scholarly communication made plans to bring American delegates to PRC museums, with focus on goals such as “advance scholarship, further international cooperation, and increase mutual understanding.”⁷⁷⁹



Figure 4.1. Shanghai Museum employees showing Conservation Workshop facilities to members of an American Delegation to the PRC (1974). Published photograph in the *Bulletin of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works*.

The staff made sure that international visitors didn't see Cultural Revolution markers in the museum itself. Gallery guides steered foreign visitors away from any “signs that read

⁷⁷⁹ W. T. Chase, “Conservation In The People's Republic Of China,” *Bulletin of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* 14, no. 2, (Apr., 1974): 131.

'Revolutionary Board' or 'Industrial Propaganda Team'", and even removed signs for specific visits.⁷⁸⁰ The museum also expanded its Foreign Visitors' Reception Room. The staff wanted internationals to be able to spread out comfortably.

The Shanghai Museum changed its schedule to minimize contact between non-Chinese and "the great industrial, agricultural and military masses" in mainland China.⁷⁸¹ International visitors came in the morning, while PRC citizens were admitted afternoons and all day Sundays.⁷⁸² Admission prices, however, stayed the same. Visitors bought "individual tickets at five cents per head, pre-arranged group at three cents per person."⁷⁸³ Those visiting the museum

⁷⁸⁰ *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai; For an example of accounts by individuals who participated in these tours, see Eric H. Brown "Our Visit to China", *The Geographical Journal*, 144, no. 2 (1978): 187-190; Stephen Fitzgerald "The Cultural Revolution: An Analysis of Some Trends in China following a Visit in January/February, 1968", *The Australian Quarterly*, 40, no. 3 (1968): 26-39; Frederick C. Teiwes, "Before and after the Cultural Revolution", *The China Quarterly*, no. 58 (1974): 332-348;

⁷⁸¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁸² *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁸³ *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

with a foreign delegation had their tickets purchased, or arranged, ahead of time and didn't wait in line.

The 152,977 individuals who visited the museum galleries in spring, 1972 saw the recent past on prominent display.⁷⁸⁴ The Shanghai Excavated Cultural Relics Exhibition showed archaeological material that ordinary people, as well as salvage archeology programs, unearthed during the Cultural Revolution. Gallery guides stressed that “during the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, active collaboration between the vast industrial and farming masses and cultural departments...protected important cultural relics”.⁷⁸⁵ The displays featured tools from the new stone age, which were salvaged from Qingpu county, Liantang commune when a river dredging project exposed them, as well as Tang dynasty Buddha statues and Ming dynasty silver that farmers retrieved from a swamp draining-project in Songjiang county.⁷⁸⁶ The exhibitions presented themselves as examples of Chinese cultural heritage preservation. Gallery guides

⁷⁸⁴ *Exhibition visitor data retrieved from Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁸⁵ *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁸⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

bragged that “the party and the state prioritize the protection of excavated cultural relics...great achievements” in heritage protection.⁷⁸⁷

The Qin Standard

The Shanghai Museum put confiscated antiquities on display. The Chinese Bronzes Exhibition, later reconfigured as the Qin Emperor's Standardization Of Coins, Measurements And Language Exhibition, featured confiscations from the 1966 raids as well as municipal sorting stations. The exhibitions erased all indications of private collecting from the artifacts. Provenance was seen to undermine the “scientific nature” of the museum's work, so the staff emphasized the objects’ archaeological significance instead.⁷⁸⁸

The *Shang an tong fang sheng* (henceforth Qin Standard), a volumetric measuring standard, took center stage in this exhibition.⁷⁸⁹ The relic represented a standardized unit of weight in the Qin campaign to standardize units and measures – a campaign that many regard as one of the great achievements in the history of Chinese civilization. Signboards surrounding its display case ran ten lines long, outnumbering every other exhibition label except for the

⁷⁸⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji* <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> *deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁸⁸ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubei <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁸⁹ For similarly symbolic uses of art, see Alfreda Murck, “Golden Mangoes: The Life Cycle of a Cultural Revolution Symbol,” *Archives of Asian Art*, 57 (2007): 1-21.

introduction at the museum entrance.

The exhibition used the standard to highlight Qin policies that paralleled existing PRC policies. The standardization of prices and units, for example, featured prominently. Black and white photographs showed the relic's base, which “bears the Qin emperor's edict unifying all China's weights and measures in his twenty-sixty year”.⁷⁹⁰ Meanwhile, gallery guides asserted that the Qin emperor used this relic as *the* “measuring device to unify all of China's unitary weights.”⁷⁹¹ Visitors also learned that standardization allowed Chinese civilization to progress from slave ownership to a multi-ethnic, feudalistic country under centralized rule – a multi-ethnic society that the PRC’s centralized rule would later release from feudalism. Just as the standard enabled the Qin state to “rule heaven and earth”, integrating the standard into Chinese cultural heritage was part of an “inevitability in socio-economic development” that fostered the “further development of trade, government, and culture” in the PRC.⁷⁹²

⁷⁹⁰ *Shanghai shi wenguan hui, shi wenhua ju guanyu faxian kangyin tiepao, suitang he songze yizhi, caixiao shi ji wenwu baohu danwei jing'an is ji juban guancang wenwu zhan de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau and Municipal Cultural Bureau's Proposals and Rescripts Regarding the Discovery of Anti-British Cannons, Sui, Tang, and Songze Remains, Eliminating Municipal Cultural Relics Protection Danwei Jing'an Temple and the Preparation for the Museum's Collected Cultural Relics Exhibition] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-168, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁹¹ *Shanghai shi wenguan hui, shi wenhua ju guanyu faxian kangyin tiepao, suitang he songze yizhi, caixiao shi ji wenwu baohu danwei jing'an is ji juban guancang wenwu zhan de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau and Municipal Cultural Bureau's Proposals and Rescripts Regarding the Discovery of Anti-British Cannons, Sui, Tang, and Songze Remains, Eliminating Municipal Cultural Relics Protection Danwei Jing'an Temple and the Preparation for the Museum's Collected Cultural Relics Exhibition] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-168, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁹² *Shanghai shi wenguan hui, shi wenhua ju guanyu faxian kangyin tiepao, suitang he songze yizhi, caixiao shi ji wenwu baohu danwei jing'an is ji juban guancang wenwu zhan de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau and Municipal Cultural Bureau's Proposals and Rescripts Regarding the Discovery of Anti-British Cannons, Sui, Tang, and Songze Remains, Eliminating Municipal Cultural Relics Protection Danwei Jing'an Temple and the Preparation for the Museum's Collected Cultural Relics Exhibition] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-168, SMA, Shanghai.



Figure 4.2. The Shanghai Museum's Qin Standard. Available from <<http://www.jlbjb.com/gddlh/30/200805081286.html>>. [31, March, 2011]

The displays erased the standard's provenance, in particular the crucial role that the Shanghai Museum played in raiding the Gong family, from whom the museum confiscated the standard in 1966. Museum records confirm that different constituents across the mainland had been searching for the standard since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949.⁷⁹³ The Shanghai Museum identified the Gong clan as the relic's owners back in the 1950s. The family patriarch, however, refused to grant any access to the museum: "this thing was sold to foreigners by my father. We don't have it in our family, please don't come here again."⁷⁹⁴

The Shanghai Museum was not easily deterred. A member of the Gong family worked

⁷⁹³ *Zhonggong shanghaiishi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics, Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

⁷⁹⁴ Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia*, 52

at the Shanghai Flour Company. During the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards raided her house and notified the Shanghai Museum for support.⁷⁹⁵ The appropriations team found nothing, which prompted further searches at the homes of other clan members. Huang Xuanpei confirmed that museum staff followed all raids involving the Gong clan closely. Whenever they heard that a Gong family residence “was being raided we went to take a look.”⁷⁹⁶

By the time the staff finally raided the estate that kept the Qin standard, the Red Guards had started without them. Gong family members “said this thing was already gone, it was thrown in the garbage.”⁷⁹⁷ The Red Guards didn't recognize the Qin standard's value “because you know...it looked like a coal shovel, it wasn't very eye catching.”⁷⁹⁸ Museum staff dug it out of the trash. After filling out the requisite paperwork, the staff brought the standard, along with other appropriations, back to the Shanghai Museum. The team revealed nothing about the value of their find to the Red Guards. They simply “said you can leave this under the museum's watch.”⁷⁹⁹ In a 1966 report to the Ministry of Culture, however, the Shanghai Museum rated its expropriation of the Qin Standard as one of the highlights of its history. The report called the standard “the most distinguished” antiquity amongst the “cultural relics that we continue to appropriate.”⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁵ Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia*, 54

⁷⁹⁶ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁷⁹⁷ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁷⁹⁸ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁷⁹⁹ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

⁸⁰⁰ *Zhonggong shanghaiishi wei xuanchuan bu, shi wenhua ju guanyu wenwu tushu ziliao waili gongzuo baogao ji jieshou beichao wenwu de yijian*, [The People's Republic of China Shanghai Representative's Board Promulgation Department, Municipal Cultural Affairs Administration's Report Regarding the Allocation of Cultural Relics,

None of the above vicissitudes appear in the Shanghai Museum's exhibition. The issues that raids and confiscations raised would have disrupted the exhibition narrative, which equated Qin dynasty bronzes with “the beginning of China as a unified, multi-ethnic country.”⁸⁰¹ The show attracted more than four thousand visitors a day, and proved so successful that the staff took it on the road.⁸⁰² Museum staff who participated nicknamed themselves “light calvary for cultural and museum propaganda work” because, they argued, the trip represented a pivotal marker on the road to socialism.⁸⁰³ The roadies attracted 544,612 visitors from eleven factories, seven counties, forty-one communal production teams, and eight military units.⁸⁰⁴ One

Books and Similar Resources, and Rescripts Regarding the Appropriation of Confiscated Cultural Relics] February 8th, 1965 – November 21st, 1966, B172-5-1105, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁰¹ *Shanghai shi wenguan hui, shi wenhua ju guanyu faxian kangyin tiepao, suitang he songze yizhi, caixiao shi ji wenwu baohu danwei jing'an is ji juban guancang wenwu zhan de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau and Municipal Cultural Bureau's Proposals and Rescripts Regarding the Discovery of Anti-British Cannons, Sui, Tang, and Songze Remains, Eliminating Municipal Cultural Relics Protection Danwei Jing'an Temple and the Preparation for the Museum's Collected Cultural Relics Exhibition] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-168, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁰² *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubai <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁰³ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubai <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁰⁴ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubai <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

particularly enthusiastic individual even gave the museum an account of how many man-hours the exhibition saved he and his fellow workers. He worked at an electrical plant in Yangshu district with more than 1,400 other men. According to his calculations, “seven rounds of 200 workers will need four hours to make a round trip to the city center, using a total of 5,600 work-hours.”⁸⁰⁵ The traveling museum exhibition “only cost us about fifty work-minutes per person...that doesn't disrupt production, saves the country more than five-hundred workdays, and more than 350 RMB in transportation costs.”⁸⁰⁶ By catering to ordinary people and delivering Chinese cultural heritage to their door, the museum showed its commitment to revolution. As a farmer's representative in Qingpu county concluded, “the museums used to work behind closed doors. Now they work in the open. That's revolution.”⁸⁰⁷

Professionalization

Cultural Revolution campaigns sharpened existing differences between the senior

⁸⁰⁵ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubai <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁰⁶ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubai <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁰⁷ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubai <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

museum staff and the Class of 1952.⁸⁰⁸ Junior employees underwent segregated interrogation as well as reeducation programs, but “we weren’t the main targets of the group criticisms.”⁸⁰⁹ The first generation of museum employees, “like our old museum President, and Xu Senyu, Xie Zhiliu, those were the main targets.”⁸¹⁰ Senior staff got segregated interrogation straight through. The class of 1952, on the other hand, could either transfer into reeducation work or supervise the senior staff’s interrogations. As Chen Peifen explained, the “older generation were all asked to stand aside” while the Class of 1952 “was in charge.”⁸¹¹ Consequently, for the first time since they started their antiquarian training programs in 1960, the Class of 1952 acquired responsibilities that put them on a par with their superiors.

Chen Peifen found herself thrust into leadership when her former supervisor, Hu Bo, committed suicide. She became an assistant division leader and keeper of the museum's storehouse for seized antiquities.⁸¹² Between 1966 and 1974, Chen also supervised senior staff.⁸¹³

Chen gave Xie Zhiliu, the senior painting specialist, menial tasks to occupy the hours between interrogations. This responsibility gave Chen, a junior employee in her early thirties, complete authority over Xie, a senior administrator in his late fifties. Museum President Shen

⁸⁰⁸ Ji Feng Yuan, Koenraad Kuiper, and Shu Shaogu, “Language and Revolution: Formulae of the Cultural Revolution,” *Language in Society*, 19, no. 1 (1990): 61-79.

⁸⁰⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁸¹⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁸¹¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸¹² Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸¹³ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

Zhiyu also worked for her. “I asked him to help write Arabic numbers...copy catalog cards or something.”⁸¹⁴ In addition, Chen managed Zhang Gongwu and Li Hongye, two older employees who specialized in cataloging and appraising. Zhang and Li “were so afraid...when they had to go to meetings, the minute they opened their mouths they were wrong.”⁸¹⁵ During their criticism sessions Zhang and Li “were always told off by the others, and if they didn't say anything then they were interrogated about why they didn't say anything.”⁸¹⁶

Chen had all of her charges inventory confiscations. Zhang and Li packed because “I knew that they were very good at putting things away.”⁸¹⁷ Xie just wanted to read and take naps. To keep him from sleeping, Chen assigned him “to write labels on the paintings”.⁸¹⁸ This assignment took advantage of Xie's appraisal skills. The museum had already commissioned covers and boxes for all its seized antiquities but “no one wanted to write the labels.”⁸¹⁹ Chen explained that “the calligraphy became part of the art work, if you don't write well it looked bad. You have to look for someone who knew how to write.”⁸²⁰ Xie also identified confiscated antiquities. The task “wasn't easy...sometimes [the artists] signed their courtesy name, sometimes they wrote their nicknames, there were a lot of names.”⁸²¹ Chen recorded these projects' progress for the museum's Revolutionary Rebels.

⁸¹⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁸¹⁵ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸¹⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸¹⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸¹⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸¹⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸²⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸²¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

Managing senior employees gave Chen a sense of authority, both through how others reacted to her and how she interacted with her former superiors. Zhang and Li “were very grateful for the job.”⁸²² They deferred to Chen on decisions like “how do you want things to be put away?”⁸²³ As the revolution progressed “several people who came to work”.⁸²⁴ In other words, Chen became the manager of a large cohort of older employees, all of whom saw her as both their professional and political superior. Visitors who recognized Xie Zhiliu’s handwriting expressed surprise. “Some people don't believe their eyes, why would Xie Zhiliu come to the museum and do this kind of work.”⁸²⁵ Chen replied “well he did this work, he liked it, and he was supposed to do it.”⁸²⁶ Before the Cultural Revolution, Chen reported to two immediate supervisors. Between 1966 and 1974 she was her own supervisor, with only Revolutionary Rebels to report to. In our interviews, Chen describes these responsibilities with pride. She never had reeducation because “I already had a job...to manage that group well there was a lot to do.”⁸²⁷ The experience even set her managerial style. “I believe in people having something to do...being bored and doing nothing is not good.”⁸²⁸

Assigning senior staff to menial tasks worked to the museum's advantage. Zhang and Li kept Revolutionary Rebels from rifling through the confiscations. They “locked the door...then

⁸²² Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁸²³ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁸²⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁸²⁵ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸²⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸²⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸²⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

when they left they wrote down for me who locked up and when.”⁸²⁹ Xie identified antiquities that few others could discern. “Once in a while he could go back and correct the card catalogs too...he knew how to do it and he wrote just so fast.”⁸³⁰ Xie's calligraphy even enhanced the confiscations' value. “What can you say about Xie Zhiliu's calligraphy? Usually his calligraphy costs thousands per word”.⁸³¹

Young museum employees also advanced their careers through working at municipal sorting stations. Both Li Junjie and Lu Songlin “joined [the station's] leadership team.”⁸³² When Li Junjie resumed museum work in the early 1970s, his leadership role at the Puxi road boosted his standing in the Chinese Communist Party and helped him win upper administrative roles.

Sorting confiscations gave antiquarians-in-training like Zhong Yinlan and Zhu Chenwei their first opportunity to evaluate art independently. “At the time, real experts were made to stand aside, they couldn't do anything.”⁸³³ While Zhong and Zhu's “appraisal skills and whatnot were not up to the level of the older experts,” they literally were the only ones with the minimum qualifications required to carry out the job.⁸³⁴ Zhong herself asserted that connoisseurship expertise correlates directly with the number of antiquities seen. “You can't only look at the

⁸²⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸³⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸³¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, January 25th, 2010.

⁸³² Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 28th, 2010.

⁸³³ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁸³⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

good painters, it's important to recognize an entire period".⁸³⁵ The Sorting Committee's storehouses had enough stock to outline several periods. Li Junjie assessed Zhong's expertise as follows: "her real knowledge of appraisals...she learned from working at the Sorting Committee...in the beginning we weren't authorities, we couldn't even be called authorities. But afterwards, that process made you an authority."⁸³⁶ One might say that without the sorting station, Zhong Yinlan would not be a member of the National Committee of Cultural Relics today.⁸³⁷

Even employees who worked in museum security got a leg-up from participating in Cultural Revolution campaigns. Lin Biao's Number One Command, a countrywide vigilance against Soviet attack, mandated that cultural institution employees participate in wartime preparations against the USSR.⁸³⁸ The Shanghai Museum participated by shipping their best antiquities to a set of caves in Anhui. This required transporting more than 300 trunks of books, packing 11,783 antiquities, as well as recruiting security guards for patrol duty.⁸³⁹ Museum

⁸³⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

⁸³⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁸³⁷ The *Guojia wenwu jianding weiyuan hui* (National Committee of Cultural Relics) was first established on January 26th, 1983. It comprises a fellowship of nominated antiquarians who perform appraisals on behalf of the state, perform commissioned research on cultural relics, and recommend cultural heritage policies. The categories of expertise include (as of 2005): Calligraphy, painting, and stèle rubbings, Contemporary calligraphy and painting, Ancient texts, Ceramics, Bronzes, Jades, Coins, Miscellaneous, and Modern historical artifacts. For more on the committee see the State Administration of Cultural Heritage website Available <<http://www.sach.gov.cn>> [May, 2011]

⁸³⁸ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 28th, 2010.

⁸³⁹ Both the Shanghai Museum and the Shanghai Library participated in this program, and shared space in the Anhui mountain facility. According to the Shanghai Library, transporting the books alone required "500m² of space, a dozen moving vans...and 100KG of plastic bags". *Shanghai wenhua xitong ge weihui (chou) guanyu tushu, wenwu zhanbei ji Lu Xun mu zhenxiu deng qingshi, baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai's Cultural Organization' Revolutionary Board's (Preparatory) Requests, Reports, and Directives Regarding the Wartime Preparation of

administrators regarded the Anhui project as “a secret mission.”⁸⁴⁰ Participating individuals earned the administration's utmost trust.

Some guards patrolled the caves “for a few months, others went for one or two years.”⁸⁴¹ Only younger men met the survival criteria. “Say it snows, then the roads get stuck and you can't go in, then your food and daily needs they all get affected.”⁸⁴² Feng Xiaogeng, who guarded the caves from 1969 – 1972, kept company with a group of two to five other colleagues. The museum “rented some spaces for us to sleep... that factory had space for us to sleep...we couldn't always find things to eat.”⁸⁴³ Those who went left their families behind. Feng's wife, for example, raised their two kids alone.

Those who guarded the caves came back as heroes. Feng got promoted to associate director of the Conservation Workshop. He didn't have the same skill set as restorers who “knew how to do it all, draw, print, reproduce”.⁸⁴⁴ On the other hand, he worked on a top-secret project and proved his worth as a Chinese Communist Party member. As Feng boasted, other restorers “came from society” and just didn't have the level of trustworthiness that the administrators bestowed on the guards at Anhui.⁸⁴⁵

Books, Cultural Relics, and the Restoration of Lu Xun's Tomb], March, 1969 – December 1969, B172-3-28, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁴⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, April 6th, 2010.

⁸⁴¹ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

⁸⁴² Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

⁸⁴³ Interview with Feng Xiaogeng, April 6th, 2010.

⁸⁴⁴ Interview with Feng Xiaogeng, April 6th, 2010.

⁸⁴⁵ Interview with Feng Xiaogeng, April 6th, 2010.

Take Charge

The Class of 1952 quickly found themselves working jobs that their former superiors vacated, or could no longer perform given Cultural Revolution politics. When the Shanghai Museum resumed normal operations in 1972, its biggest concern was installing programs that matched the Gang of Four's criteria: "Promulgate the objects that workers and the people created."⁸⁴⁶ The museum's existing exhibitions faced vitriolic criticism from Gang of Four supporters.⁸⁴⁷ The ancient antiquities galleries, for example, "were criticized for displaying religious objects because when people see Buddhas they prostrate and start kowtowing", and had to be shut down.⁸⁴⁸ The urgent need to reinvent the museum and its exhibitions made the Class of 1952 realize that they, more than ever, were the ones that determined the museum's future.⁸⁴⁹

Under Gang of Four rule, all museum exhibitions "had to talk about how excellent laboring citizens created history".⁸⁵⁰ Both written content and gallery scripts went through an official approval process. That meant meeting the expectations of Mao Zedong's wife Jiang

⁸⁴⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁴⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁴⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁴⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁵⁰ Interview with Zhu Shuni, January 15th, 2010. For period coverage of these exhibitions in the international press see Robert J. Fornaro, "Ideology and Archaeology in China," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 11, no. 20 (1976): 743-745.

Qing, leader of the Gang of Four and gatekeeper for public cultural displays in the PRC. The Class of 1952 kept proposals conservative. “Beijing did an archeology exhibition, so then Shanghai also did an archeology exhibit.”⁸⁵¹ Before the exhibitions premiered, inspectors listened to gallery guides recite narratives meant for local, national, as well as international guests.⁸⁵² The process even made seasoned guides nervous – many were seen repeating tour scripts to themselves before inspections.⁸⁵³

Exhibitions that supported PRC drives for land rights and workers’ solidarity got approved easily. The Ancient Chinese Ethnic Minorities' Bronzes And Arts And Crafts exhibition even got industry participation. The museum invited workers from the Shanghai Metalworks Factory and the Shanghai Ceramics Factory for special “panel discussions and special viewings.”⁸⁵⁴ The panels stressed the history of Chinese civilization in the Xisha or Paracel islands, an archipelago that China, Taiwan, and Vietnam all wanted sovereignty over. Every visitor, domestic or foreign, heard gallery guides recite that recent excavations “demonstrate that Chinese people have lived and worked in the south sea islands for hundreds

⁸⁵¹ Interview with Zhu Shuni, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁵² *Shanghai shi wenhua xitong gewei hui (chou), shi wenguan hui deng guanyu juban chutu wenwu, zhongguo taoci, qintong qi zhanlan ji* <Shanghai shi Qing shaonian meishu zhanlan> *deng de baogao, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Administration Revolutionary Board (Preparatory), Municipal Cultural Relics Administration, etc's Report and Rescripts Regarding Preparations for Exhibitions on Excavated Relics, Chinese Ceramics and <Shanghai Municipal Youth Arts Exhibition>] February 1972 – December 1972, B172-3-55, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁵³ Interview with Zhu Shuni, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁵⁴ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubai <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, hui fu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

and thousands of years.”⁸⁵⁵

The launch of Jiang Qing's 1973 Criticize Lin (Biao), Criticize Confucius Campaign, however, made things difficult for museum staff. “She wanted to use the Legalists' things as an example, and wanted the calligraphy and painting exhibitions to reflect this historic struggle.”⁸⁵⁶

The municipality needed a show to galvanize “the great industrial, agricultural, and military masses...to use Marxist-Leninism and Maoist ideas to infiltrate the resource grounds for ancient Chinese painting.”⁸⁵⁷ The Class of 1952 couldn't do it. As Li Junjie pointed out, “calligraphy and painting are *made* by intellectuals!”⁸⁵⁸

The painting exhibition was a disaster. The municipal inspection team panned everything.⁸⁵⁹ The museum staff had to revise all plans. When the show finally opened in 1975,

⁸⁵⁵ *Shanghai shi wenguanhui, shi wenhua ju guanyu choubei <mao zhuxi zai hu gemin huodong shi ji zhanlan>, huifu zhanchu <shanghai gemin yizhi yiji zhanlai>, xiugai 'zhongguo taoci chenlie' deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Administration And Municipal Cultural Bureau's Notices and Edits on the Preparation of <Chairman Mao's Historical Revolutionary Activity in Shanghai>, Re-exhibition of <Shanghai Historic Revolutionary Locations> and Edits to “Chinese Ceramics Display, etc], March 1976 – December 1976, B172-3-214, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁵⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁵⁷ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju gewei hui, shi wenguan hui deng guanyu ju ban <Qin zhan>, <pilin picong tupian zhan>, xiugai <zhongguo huihua chenlie>, <zhongguo qingtongqi chenlie> deng de qingshi, pifu*, [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Revolutionary Director's Board and the Municipal Cultural Relics Administrative Board, Etc's Proposals and Rescripts on Preparing the <Qin Exhibition>, <Anti-Lin Biao, Anti-Confucius Images Exhibition>, Edits to <Chinese Paintings Exhibition>, <Chinese Bronzes Exhibition>, Etc] February 1974 – October 1974, B172-3-130, SMA, Shanghai; For contemporary overseas assessments of the campaign's scale and impact see Hsieh Chen-Ping, “Another Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution?” *Asian Affairs*, 1, no. 6 (1974): 390-401; Tong Zhang and Barry Schwartz, “Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A Study in Collective Memory,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 11, no. 2 (1997): 189-212.

⁸⁵⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁵⁹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju gewei hui, shi wenguan hui deng guanyu ju ban <Qin zhan>, <pilin picong tupian zhan>, xiugai <zhongguo huihua chenlie>, <zhongguo qingtongqi chenlie> deng de qingshi, pifu* [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Revolutionary Director's Board and the Municipal Cultural Relics Administrative Board, Etc's Proposals and Rescripts on Preparing the <Qin Exhibition>, <Anti-Lin Biao, Anti-Confucius Images Exhibition>, Edits to <Chinese Paintings Exhibition>, <Chinese Bronzes Exhibition>, Etc] February 1974 –

visitors walked away confused. A Jiangnan Ship Building Factory representative “couldn't tell how much education I got from today's exhibition, I don't know what it's all about, what am I supposed to do when I leave?”⁸⁶⁰ Workers from the three upper harbor districts felt “Confucian paintings...took the dominant spot, it makes me feel like the right doesn't crush the wrong.”⁸⁶¹ Furthermore, visitors clamored for more contemporary Chinese paintings. “The Cultural Revolution had been going on for eight years, good paintings must be in abundance”.⁸⁶² The museum, however, had no interest in paintings postdating 1795 because it did not see those categories of art as integral to Chinese cultural heritage. The Class of 1952 had to admit failure.

The painting fiasco put the museum under intense scrutiny. When city officials visited, they complained that conservation standards “did not reflect what the city wanted”.⁸⁶³

Inspectors complained that “even with sealed doors and windows, a de-humidifier can only take

October 1974, B172-3-130, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁶⁰ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju gewei hui, shi wenguan hui deng guanyu ju ban <Qin zhan>, <pilin picong tupian zhan>, xiugai <zhongguo huihua chenlie>, <zhongguo qingtongqi chenlie> deng de qingshi, pifu* [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Revolutionary Director's Board and the Municipal Cultural Relics Administrative Board, Etc's Proposals and Rescripts on Preparing the <Qin Exhibition>, <Anti-Lin Biao, Anti-Confucius Images Exhibition>, Edits to <Chinese Paintings Exhibition>, <Chinese Bronzes Exhibition>, Etc] February 1974 – October 1974, B172-3-130, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁶¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju gewei hui, shi wenguan hui deng guanyu ju ban <Qin zhan>, <pilin picong tupian zhan>, xiugai <zhongguo huihua chenlie>, <zhongguo qingtongqi chenlie> deng de qingshi, pifu* [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Revolutionary Director's Board and the Municipal Cultural Relics Administrative Board, Etc's Proposals and Rescripts on Preparing the <Qin Exhibition>, <Anti-Lin Biao, Anti-Confucius Images Exhibition>, Edits to <Chinese Paintings Exhibition>, <Chinese Bronzes Exhibition>, Etc] February 1974 – October 1974, B172-3-130, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁶² *Shanghai shi wenhua ju gewei hui, shi wenguan hui deng guanyu ju ban <Qin zhan>, <pilin picong tupian zhan>, xiugai <zhongguo huihua chenlie>, <zhongguo qingtongqi chenlie> deng de qingshi, pifu* [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau's Revolutionary Director's Board and the Municipal Cultural Relics Administrative Board, Etc's Proposals and Rescripts on Preparing the <Qin Exhibition>, <Anti-Lin Biao, Anti-Confucius Images Exhibition>, Edits to <Chinese Paintings Exhibition>, <Chinese Bronzes Exhibition>, Etc] February 1974 – October 1974, B172-3-130, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁶³ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

care of a space of 30 square meters, so it's only effective in our storerooms.”⁸⁶⁴ They found out that every week, gallery guides helped haul “these huge rocks of lime that we put next to the exhibition rooms to suck out the humidity”, a method that inspectors found unscientific and backward.⁸⁶⁵ Critiques quickly escalated to attacks. The municipality soon asserted that the museum staff made no progress in socialist enlightenment despite participating in Cultural Revolution campaigns.⁸⁶⁶ To the staff's horror, “they said that the Shanghai Museum has not reformed, our thoughts cannot keep up with the times.”⁸⁶⁷

The municipality proposed that the museum overhaul its infrastructure. City officials wanted to “send peasants and soldiers into the pool of Shanghai Museum workers” and replace the Class of 1952.⁸⁶⁸ This plan not only showed up in personal communications between museum and municipal employees, but also in official reports on institutional progress. Municipal surveys concluded “we should allow the industrial, agricultural and military masses to participate...add new blood into museum work.”⁸⁶⁹

The Class of 1952 perceived these demands as threats. They had just experienced, and escaped, years of difficult campaigns. They had also just established a foothold in the work unit

⁸⁶⁴ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu henxiu jiading “qiuxia pu”, “zhenru si” ji xiugai huihua chenlie wenzi shuomin, qingtong qi chuxian fenzhuang xiu qingkuang de baogao* [Shanghai Municipal Cultural Bureau, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board's Report Regarding the Restoration of Jiading's Autumn Colors Orchard, Zhenru Temple, Editing the Painting Exhibition's Wording and explanations, and Condition Report on Bronzes Powderized with Rust] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-176, SMA, Shanghai.

⁸⁶⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

⁸⁶⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁶⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁶⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁶⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

in which they invested most of their careers. Any administrative changes made from the outside loosened their footholds. Their profession was under threat.

The Class of 1972

The Class of 1952 undertook a project to reinvent the Shanghai Museum. Using the same language that municipal inspectors employed in their critiques, the Class of 1952 argued that they knew the best way to get “new blood in the museum”.⁸⁷⁰ They alone had the skill sets to select and train new recruits, and prevent the PRC’s Red antiquarians from dying out.⁸⁷¹

Zhu Shuyi and Yang Hui assembled detailed recruitment plans. The Class of 1952 had specific goals in mind. They considered existing candidates, Sent-down youths who left school to work in the municipal reeducation program known as *chadui luohu* (commune inserts), useless riffraff because their formal education stopped in 1966.⁸⁷² Instead, the museum staff wanted to recruit “a group of people who were sent down in '66...at least if they were the class of 1966 they graduated from high school.”⁸⁷³

⁸⁷⁰ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁷¹ This managerial tactic is consistent with that in other sectors. For examples see James A. Wall, Jr., “Managers in the People’s Republic of China”, *The Executive*, 4, no. 2 (1990): 19-32;

⁸⁷² Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁸⁷³ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009. This selective recruitment practice is the opposite of that reported by studies on education in the country at large Nirmal Kumar Chandra “Education in China: From the Cultural Revolution to Four Modernisations”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22, no. 19/21, (1987): AN121-AN125+AN127-AN136; Zhong Deng and Donald J. Treiman, “The Impact of the Cultural Revolution on Trends in Educational Attainment in the People’s Republic of China” *American Journal of Sociology*, 103, no. 2 (1997): 391-428; Parig Digan “Education in China, 1966-1971” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 60, no. 239/240 (1971): 347-358; Stewart E. Fraser and John N. Hawkins, “Chinese Education: Revolution & Development”, *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 53, no. 8 (1972): 487-500; Shelah Gilbert Leader, “The Communist Youth League and the Cultural Revolution”, *Asian Survey*, 14, no. 8 (1974): 700-715; Lijun Song, “The Effect of the Cultural Revolution on Educational Homogamy in Urban China”, *Social Forces*, 88, no. 1, (2009): 257-270;

Zhu and Yang had to search widely to find young high school graduates. The pair had to obtain the Ministry of Labor's permission just to find out where these youths were. "Some places...that we went to to look for these employees there was no transportation, Yang Hui and I had to walk for several hours to get down there."⁸⁷⁴ The recruits had to pass rigorous inspections. The municipality only allowed work unit transfers for young people of innocuous family backgrounds, with industrial/agricultural work experience, and favorable recommendations from their local production unit.

By autumn of 1972, the Shanghai Museum got thirty recruits from Nanhui county, located forty-seven miles (seventy-five KM) southeast of downtown Shanghai.⁸⁷⁵ The Nanhui commune administrators gave the museum full access to its personnel files, which "talked about family background, their education, the labor society's conclusions on the workers themselves...whether they were activists".⁸⁷⁶ Zhu and Yang used these files to select "the top of the bunch...because we wanted some good people."⁸⁷⁷

The municipality were satisfied with Zhu and Yang's selections.⁸⁷⁸ Before admitting the Class of 1972, municipal inspectors "would say, oh the intellectuals have not found reform yet."⁸⁷⁹ Identifying the right recruits, however, showed that the museum understood the

Cultural Revolution. As Li Junjie explained, once the Class of 1952 integrated the Class of 1972

⁸⁷⁴ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁷⁵ Interview with Xu Yongxiang, July 8th, 2009.

⁸⁷⁶ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

⁸⁷⁷ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

⁸⁷⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁸⁷⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

into museum administration, “we were allowed to work with the public propaganda division”, a managerial transition that signaled true corroboration from the municipality.⁸⁸⁰

The Class of 1972 included ten women and twenty men between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, all of whom roomed and boarded in the museum. The museum staff had to create dormitories. “These kids were from Nanhui. They had no place to stay in Shanghai.”⁸⁸¹ The women shared one giant room, while the men had several smaller rooms. “The girls lived on the 7th floor and the boys lived on the 8th and 9th” floors” of the museum.⁸⁸²

The new recruits felt chosen. Municipal officials visited and dubbed them the museum's Crimson Successors, going as far as to tell “them at an official conference that they were there to reform the intellectuals at the Shanghai museum”.⁸⁸³ When I asked Qiu Jinxian, a member of the Class of 1972, whether it was difficult to adjust to Shanghai she replied no. “We were the Crimson Successors, we were especially favored, the previous batches of recruits talked about us in a slightly jealous way.”⁸⁸⁴

For the first six months, the Class of 1972 took classes with the Class of 1952 and hunted for apprenticeships. There were classes in “ancient Chinese language, history...bronze, calligraphy and painting, and ceramics.”⁸⁸⁵ New hires were mentored around the clock. When the junior employees “got up and had to have their exercises” early in the morning, the Class of

⁸⁸⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁸⁸¹ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁸² Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁸⁸³ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁸⁸⁴ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁸⁸⁵ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

1952 were there.⁸⁸⁶ The recruits had all seven days of the week planned.⁸⁸⁷ Even recreational activities had an educational component. Whenever the museum sponsored outdoor exhibitions Zhu Shuyi “went with [the new hires], waited in line...and then when we were done looking at the exhibition we walked all the way back, like we were going to school.”⁸⁸⁸ These activities helped integrate the Crimson Successors into metropolitan life, which many had never experienced prior to joining the museum.

The Class of 1952 designed apprenticeships for the new recruits.⁸⁸⁹ Wang Youzhi, for example, wanted to do archeology. Zhu Shuyi recalls asking Wang, “why do you like archeology, I said you guys don't know, archeology is a pretty tough job.”⁸⁹⁰ Wang replied “since I was a little boy. When other people were digging up coffins and things like that I would get all excited.”⁸⁹¹ Zhu reported this to the archeology department, which agreed to train him.⁸⁹²

Some rotated through several departments in order to “find out what interested us.”⁸⁹³

The Class of 1952 designed a part exam, part interview process to ensure that undecided members of the Class of 1972 “got the kinds of jobs they wanted, and that the jobs that they

⁸⁸⁶ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁸⁷ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁸⁸ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁸⁹ For published apprenticeship accounts see Lao Jixiong, “Zhongguo gudai shuhua xunhui jianding zu de nanwang huiyi” [The Chinese Ancient Painting And Calligraphy Authentication Grand Tour's Unforgettable Moments] *Jiancha Fengyun* [Inspection Series] no. 3, (2011): 81-83; Si Wei, “Xiutao buci uitian you dao, ji Shanghai bowoguan wenwu xiufu zhuanjia Hu Jianyi” [Restoring Ceramics The Right Way, Remembering The Shanghai Museum's Cultural Relics Restorer Hu Jianyi] *Shanghai Yishujia* [Shanghai Artists], no. 6, (2001): 61-65.

⁸⁹⁰ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁹¹ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁹² Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁹³ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

selected for themselves matched their capabilities.”⁸⁹⁴ Qiu Jinxian settled on the Conservation Workshop. She started her day brushing paper for the repair masters. “After dinner in the canteen we went back to the repair room to practice, went to bed at 9 or 10PM, then got up the next morning to work again.”⁸⁹⁵ Exam scores determined salaries. “Some went from forty-two to forty-five RMB a month. I remember starting at thirty-six, then we went to forty-two.”⁸⁹⁶ The Class of 1972 did well. When Qiu “left the Shanghai museum in 1987 I was at a salary of eighty-six RMB a month.”⁸⁹⁷ By way of comparison, high school teachers made between forty and fifty RMB a month.

The Class of 1972 had better career prospects, on average, than their cohorts. Between 1968 to 1972, more than twenty million urbanites between the ages of sixteen and twenty were taken out of school and resettled in the countryside. Their lack of formal education and training made the Sent-down youths some of the most socially and economically vulnerable individuals in China. Many received no education in a time when the rest of the world, which would soon come to recruit and invest in the PRC, studied, trained, and worked in industries.⁸⁹⁸ The Class

⁸⁹⁴ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁸⁹⁵ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁸⁹⁶ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁸⁹⁷ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁸⁹⁸ Aimin Chen, “Urbanization in China and the Case of Fujian Province” *Modern China*, 32, no. 1 (2006): 99-130; Dongping Han “Impact of the Cultural Revolution on Rural Education and Economic Development: The Case of Jimo County” *Modern China*, 27, no. 1 (2001): 59-90; Eva P. W. Hung and Stephen W. K. Chiu “The Lost Generation: Life Course Dynamics and Xiagang in China” *Modern China*, 29, no. 2 (2003): 204-236; Mark Sidel “University Enrolment in the People’s Republic of China, 1977-1981: The Examination Model Returns”, *Comparative Education*, 18, no. 3 (1982): 257-269; Guobin Yang “China’s Zhiqing Generation: Nostalgia, Identity, and Cultural Resistance in the 1990s” *Modern China*, 29, no. 3 (2003): 267-296;

of 1972, however, received enough formal training to enable them to “become the people who took over major positions” at the Shanghai Museum.⁸⁹⁹

The new recruits' apprenticeships also marked the passing of their teachers' teachers – the Shanghai Museum's senior staff. Within the decade, the majority of individuals who taught Shanghai's original antiquarian training program, such as ceramics specialist Ma Zefu (1894 – 1976), stele specialist and former museum President Xu Senyu (1888 – 1971), bronze specialist Jiang Dayi (1904 – 1981), and painting specialist Shen Jianzhi (1901 – 1975), succumbed to disease.⁹⁰⁰ The Class of 1952 reach out to their teachers. Throughout 1975, Zhong Yinlan visited Shen Jianzhi and helped him obtain end-of-life care. When medical services refused to drive Shen to the hospital she and another colleague found a canvas sheet, put Shen in the middle, and carried him to a facility on Siping road.⁹⁰¹ Jiang Dayi asked Chen Peifen, his student, to help take care of his son, a mute who was in his late fifties. Chen said “okay, I can do that, I'll take responsibility.”⁹⁰²

The Class of 1952 got a sense of institutional continuity from taking care of their teachers and training the Class of 1972.⁹⁰³ Xu Yonxiang “shared the same office” with Customs

⁸⁹⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

⁹⁰⁰ For more detailed information on which Class of 1952 apprentices paired up with which old misters, see *Wenhua bu guanyu shanghai bowuguan fangmei yanjiu shiyan de pifu ge jianguan shizhounian qingzhu huodong de baogao, 1963 – 1972 nian keyan guihua* [The Cultural Affairs Administration's Responses to the Shanghai Museum's Mold-Prevention Experiments and Report on the Celebration Plans For The State's Ten Year Anniversary, Science and Research Plans For 1963 – 1972] December 20th, 1961 – January 14th, 1963, B172-5-564, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁰¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

⁹⁰² Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

⁹⁰³ This is consistent with findings in other cultural industries. For examples see Yuxiao Wu, “Cultural Capital, the

inspector Shen Jinxin, who trained the former in antiquities appraisal.⁹⁰⁴ After occupying the same office for fifteen years, Shen retired, at which point Xu took over at Customs. Qiu Jinxian, who left the PRC in 1987 and now works in Chinese Painting Conservation at the British Museum, stays in contact with her Conservation Workshop mentors.⁹⁰⁵ When she first left the PRC “my teacher gave me the set of all the repair materials that I brought to Britain.”⁹⁰⁶ When she visits Shanghai “he still gives me stuff.”⁹⁰⁷ In other words, the two classes maintained relationships that lasted well beyond the Class of 1952's retirement, and take pride in each other's accomplishments. When I interviewed Zhu Shuyi, for example, she insisted on showing off group photos and boasted that even those members of the Class of 1972 who went overseas still “send me something every year.”⁹⁰⁸

Overseas Delivery

Zhong Yinlan started appraising Arts and Crafts Company stock a few months after she gave birth to her first child in 1972. She had to work all over southeastern China and traveling put her out. “The living conditions were very bad” and she “had no milk”.⁹⁰⁹ She could only come home four days a month so her mother took care of the newborn. They made “thin porridge, put it in a milk bottle and fed him that way”.⁹¹⁰

State, and Educational Inequality in China, 1949–1996”, *Sociological Perspectives*, 51, no. 1 (2008): 201-227

⁹⁰⁴ Interview with Xu Yonxiang, July 8th, 2009.

⁹⁰⁵ Qiu started her position at the British Museum in 1988.

⁹⁰⁶ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁹⁰⁷ Interview with Qiu Jinxian, August 10th, 2009.

⁹⁰⁸ Interview with Zhu Shuyi, January 15th, 2010.

⁹⁰⁹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁹¹⁰ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

The appraisers inspected stock in Shanghai, Suzhou, as well as Arts and Crafts Company “storage facilities...in Ningbo”, a seaport city in Zhejiang province.⁹¹¹ The company kept “these little structures nearby, like small alleyways and shacks.”⁹¹² The staff lived in these shacks for the duration of their audit. There was no furniture, so they created makeshift beds by putting a board between two chairs. Winters “were so cold...we would wash our towels at night, and in the morning the towels would have turned to ice!”⁹¹³

The auditors had to work outdoors because the storehouses had no electricity. Zhong and her cohorts huddled under eaves or gathered in courtyards because the light there was good. They took turns bringing antiquities outside for inspections, then back inside for storage.

Shanghai Museum employees also packed and inspected Arts and Craft Company stock at municipal sorting stations. Shen Minren was one of a three-person team that the museum sent to pack up at Puxi road in the mid-1970s. The three were told to put everything into boxes for the Arts and Crafts Company. “They had all this stuff left over... big piles on the floors.”⁹¹⁴ Once the boxes were ready the three waited for the company to “send someone over, we signed it, they took it, and they sold it” overseas.⁹¹⁵

Dealers who got invited to buy direct from Arts and Crafts Company warehouses confirm that the corporation kept their stock in similar conditions throughout the country.

⁹¹¹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁹¹² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁹¹³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁹¹⁴ Interview with Shen Minren, June 16th, 2011.

⁹¹⁵ Interview with Shen Minren, June 16th, 2011.

Hugh Moss, one of the few British art dealers who got invited to the company's Beijing warehouses, describes his experience as follows. He arrived in 1974. An entourage of “minders...took me to a little warehouse on the western, northwestern, edge of Beijing, full of snuff bottles which were my main interest.”⁹¹⁶ There, Moss saw “literally, dozens and dozens of cardboard boxes, full of snuff bottles. No wrapping no nothing. It looked like they had just been shoved in there.”⁹¹⁷ Moss' Hong Kong contacts confirmed that “most of them would then go by the box to the Hong Kong dealers who would then shift through it, send it to their glass guy get all the little chips out and polish them and they would come out just fine at the end of the day.”⁹¹⁸ The quality of Arts and Crafts Company stock varied from spectacular to quotidian. Whether through the Canton Fair or direct sales, this was what sorting and purchasing stations all over the PRC supplied the Arts and Crafts Company, and in turn, the export antiquities trade.

The demand for export antiquities soon changed the look of art dealerships in the PRC. By the time Zhu Junbo started working at Duoyun Xian in 1973, it bore no resemblance the store in which Sun Jiecong received her delegation of unidentified officials back in 1966. In Sun's day the store had three operational floors and a purchasing station in the back. The first floor sold scholar's studio implements. “There were bronzes and stones, stele rubbings, pens.”⁹¹⁹ The second floor stocked calligraphy and painting and the third floor was office space. By the

⁹¹⁶ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

⁹¹⁷ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

⁹¹⁸ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

⁹¹⁹ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

time Zhu started, “we closed the upper and lower floors” and just had the purchasing station.⁹²⁰

The painting and calligraphy gallery got converted into a foreigners-only salon. The staff put up some paintings and made it clear that “these things can only be sold to foreigners, not Chinese people.”⁹²¹ In fact, “only foreigners can go upstairs, if you were local you could not go upstairs.”⁹²²

The Arts and Crafts Company made the antiquities trade one of the few work units in Shanghai with the authority to receive foreign visitors.⁹²³ Dealers had to pay special attention to the well being of non-Chinese customers. Whenever the “big noses” walked up to Duoyun Xian, Zhu and his cohorts had to “deter local residents from gathering and watching”.⁹²⁴ Employees got constant reminders to conduct themselves “without servility, but also without obnoxiousness”.⁹²⁵

⁹²⁰ Interview with Sun Jiecong, April 28th, 2010.

⁹²¹ Interview with Sun Jiecong, April 28th, 2010.

⁹²² Interview with Sun Jiecong, April 28th, 2010.

⁹²³ *Shanghaishi diyi shangye ju guanyu guwan shichang chukou menshi bu gaiwei zhuan gong waibin canguan goumai de qingshi baogao* [Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce's Request and Report Regarding The Chinese Curio Market's Export Division Converting To Exclusive Sales And Browsing For Foreign Visitors] August 17th, 1966, B123-6-1518-40, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹²⁴ *Shanghaishi diyi shangye ju guanyu guwan shichang chukou menshi bu gaiwei zhuan gong waibin canguan goumai de qingshi baogao* [Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce's Request and Report Regarding The Chinese Curio Market's Export Division Converting To Exclusive Sales And Browsing For Foreign Visitors] August 17th, 1966, B123-6-1518-40, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹²⁵ *Shangye bu, shige hui, Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, wailun gongsi deng guangyu youyi shangdian shangpin, gongyipin, jinkou tengzhi, waiguan ren yuan xiedai jinkou wuzi shougou zuojia, diaojia de zanxing banfa, guiding de baobao, tongzhi he gaoxiu fu buzhang zai Beijing zhaokai bage diqu wailun gongyin, youyi shangdian shangpin jiage de zuotanhui de zongjie fayan* [The Commission of Commerce, Municipal Revolutionary Board, Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, China Ocean Shipping Supply Company and Others' Meeting Regarding Temporary Plans For Pricing, Price Changes, Regulation Reports, and Notifications For Friendship Store Merchandise, Arts and Crafts, Imported Bamboo, and Foreign Commission Personnel Carrying Import Items, And Conclusive Remarks At Associate Commission Head Gaoxiu's Beijing Conference On Ocean Shipping Supplies and Friendship Store Merchandise Pricing For Eight Regions] February 14th, 1972, B123-8-

Antiquities purchasing stations became Shanghai's de-facto pawn shops. Cultural Revolution-era salaries were a pittance. Zhu Junbo, for example, earned 17 RMB a month.⁹²⁶

He explained that,

“Your salary was calculated by how much grain you had to buy, how many liang of oil, how many liang of meat...There's grain purchasing coupons and grain purchasing cards, and you guard this with your life...So what happens if someone gets sick? You have to get the money somehow, so if you have something in the family then you sell it. And you can only sell to the state.”⁹²⁷

Chinese who sold antiquities to purchasing stations went with all manners of personal documentation. The municipality tracked people through these records, making note of those who sold unusually large quantities.⁹²⁸ Private art dealing was forbidden and these records helped regulate the market. The only way to exchange antiquities for cash was through purchasing stations. “It was like a part of civic security...you have to sell to state-owned companies.”⁹²⁹ The policy caused contention - sellers muttered that the PRC State kept earnings low and purchasing stations regulated for the same reason; to extract as much as possible from the private sector.⁹³⁰

708, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹²⁶ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2010.

⁹²⁷ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2010.

⁹²⁸ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju zhuanfa guojia wenwu guanli ju 'duo waiguo ren, huajiao, gangao tongbao xiedai, youji wenwu chukou zan xing guanli banfa' deng de tongzhi* [Shanghai Cultural Bureau Forwards State Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Notification On 'Temporary Regulations Regarding Foreigners, Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macao Wombmates' Carrying and Mailing Cultural Relics Overseas', Etc] May 1973 – November 1973, B172-3-79, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹²⁹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁹³⁰ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2010.

Appraisal Conflicts

Museum employees soon identified two issues in the export trade. Firstly, they objected to selling in bulk. The onionskin catalogs organized sales by price. Buyers who ordered from the catalog “can say you give me one hundred objects from the ten RMB category, one hundred objects from the twenty RMB category, because for this order I want two hundred items.”⁹³¹ The Class of 1952 asserted that bulk sales minimized profits. Some also suggested that bulk sales encouraged mistakes. “Everyone knew that during the Cultural Revolution they were raiding, even overseas, they knew that they were taking all the precious materials.”⁹³² Therefore, “Japanese and Hong Kong people...suspected that there were good things in there”, and “if they can take one good thing out of the hundred or thousands of things, then they're making bank.”⁹³³

The museum raised bulk sales as an official complaint to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage.⁹³⁴ The staff described bulk buyers as “the mice that fell into the rice pot, so thrilled!”⁹³⁵ Wholesale prices made the PRC lose profits while “those Southeast Asians, those Hong Kong people, they made a bucket-load of money.”⁹³⁶ The museum staff insisted that the Arts and Crafts Company sell antiquities piecemeal, in order to maximize profits over time.

The State Administration of Cultural Heritage agreed. The museum soon received

⁹³¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

⁹³² Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁹³³ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

⁹³⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁹³⁵ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.

⁹³⁶ Interview with Lu Songlin, September 24th, 2009.

“notification saying that 'Arts and Crafts Company cannot export in bulk.’”⁹³⁷ Canton Fair representatives had to “sell fewer at higher prices, keeping a thin stream [of product] that flows longterm.”⁹³⁸ The museum also gained more authority over export transactions.⁹³⁹ All Arts and Crafts Company stock in the eastern China came under the Shanghai Museum's watch and the staff could bar any of it from export.⁹⁴⁰ Zhong Yinlan and her cohorts even started traveling to the Canton Fair, where they appraised stock before merchandise went on display.⁹⁴¹

The Shanghai Museum's second objection targeted the 1795 demarcation. Appraisers felt the demarcation made too much available for sale overseas. The museum staff warned that if this trend continued, “we would have nothing left, a big gap in collections of modern Chinese art.”⁹⁴² They argued that existing export practices allowed non-Chinese nations to become more advanced scholars of modern Chinese art than the Chinese themselves. “In the future if we're

⁹³⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁹³⁸ *Guowu Yuan, Shangye bu, Shanghai haiguan, Shanghai shi diyi shangye ju, wailun gongsi guanyu pizhuan jiaqiang wenwu, shangye guanli he baohu zhence ji chukou gongyipin ticai, kucun chuli yijian, waixi chuanyuan, minhang jiwu Yuan gouwu xiedai chujin guanli wenti, waiyu shisheng lai youji shangdian shixu de yijian de tongzhi, baogao, pifu* [State Department, Ministry of Commerce, Shanghai Customs, Shanghai First Municipal Commission of Commerce, China Ocean Shipping Supply Company's Notifications, Reports, and Comments Regarding Strengthening Management of Cultural Relics, Commercial Regulations and Protecting Policies Regarding Export Arts and Crafts' Themes, Warehouse Processing, Foreign Ship Staff, and Domestic Staff's Taking Merchandise Beyond Borders, Comments On Foreign Language Students Interning At Friendship Stores] April 15th, 1974, B123-8-1030, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹³⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁹⁴⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

⁹⁴¹ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju zhuanfa guojia wenwu guanli ju 'duo waiguo ren, huajiao, gangao tongbao xiedai, youji wenwu chukou zan xing guanli banfa' deng de tongzhi* [Shanghai Cultural Bureau Forwards State Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Notification On 'Temporary Regulations Regarding Foreigners, Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macao Wombmates' Carrying and Mailing Cultural Relics Overseas', Etc] May 1973 – November 1973, B172-3-79, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁴² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, June 16th, 2009.

going to study Chinese art history, then you will have to go overseas, especially to Japan.”⁹⁴³

Thus, museum staff requested that paintings by twentieth-century artists, such as Wu Hufan, Qi Baishi, and Xu Beihong, as well as Qing painters whose careers spanned the 1795 demarcation, be selectively barred from export.

Some fragments of data do seem to confirm the Shanghai Museum employees' warnings. Starting in 1960, Mary Shen, a British Chinese who worked for Collett's Bookstore, made bi-annual trips to China to buy export antiquities for the British market.⁹⁴⁴ Located across the street from the British Museum, Collett's “had connections with the British communist party” and sold “prints, silk painting, paper cuts, enameled cups...you name the arts and crafts they sold it.”⁹⁴⁵ Shen “introduced the idea of sharing an interest in painting”, especially modern and contemporary Chinese painting, to the United Kingdom.⁹⁴⁶ From the perspective of British dealers, Shen began “dealing in Chinese paintings, Qi Baishi, Xu Beihong, people like that *long* before anybody ever heard of the names.”⁹⁴⁷ In fact, many British collectors developed an interest in modern Chinese paintings through Collett's. Shen's clients included Mary Tregear, keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, who created Oxford University's collection of modern Chinese art.

The Shanghai Museum's objection to the 1795 demarcation caught the attention of the

⁹⁴³ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁹⁴⁴ Interview with Helen Shepard (daughter of Mary Shen), September 7th, 2009.

⁹⁴⁵ Interview with Helen Shepard, September 7th, 2009.

⁹⁴⁶ Interview with Helen Shepard, September 7th, 2009.

⁹⁴⁷ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

State Administration of Cultural Heritage. The staff got permission to conduct detailed appraisal projects on specific painters.⁹⁴⁸ Appraisers targeted “Ba-da's objects, or Wu Hufan's things...established a time line” for new export demarcations. They also looked for iconic or representative works of art for all modern and contemporary Chinese artists, which the museum barred from export. In effect, the appraisal projects established a new canon for Chinese art postdating 1795. “Some if you see that name then it can't be exported, some, the very fine objects can't be exported, their run of the mill creations can be exported.”⁹⁴⁹

Takeover

The Shanghai Museum's successful intervention in art exports convinced PRC officials to give the museum more authority over Shanghai's art trade. In 1974, PRC Premier Zhou Enlai “signed a document...which allowed the Chinese Curio Markets to reopen” under the museum's management.⁹⁵⁰ The document mandated that “cultural relics stores currently under the leadership of foreign commerce departments be transferred to cultural institution leadership.”⁹⁵¹ After working for the Arts and Crafts Company for years, art dealers in Shanghai could now return to their original work unit, albeit under different management. The same edict also decreed that the work unit's property, which the Arts and Crafts Company had acquired lump

⁹⁴⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁹⁴⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

⁹⁵⁰ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁹⁵¹ *Shanghai gemin weiyuan hui caimao zu guanyu jiejie wenwu shangdian yongfang de qingshi baogao* [Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Board's Request and Report Regarding The Resolution of Cultural Relic Store Housing] July 1973 – June 1976, B248-2-966, SMA, Shanghai.

sum in 1966, should be restituted to the Shanghai Museum.⁹⁵²

The museum put Jin Jiapin and Xia Shunkui in charge of negotiations with the Arts and Crafts Company. Jin and Xia “had to make sure that they would give us back the original real estate on Canton road and to give us back personnel so the store can reopen. Also, the stock that we gave over.”⁹⁵³ In short, everything that the Chinese Curio Markets owned before the merger, the museum wanted back.⁹⁵⁴

Jin and Xia made four specific demands. First, they wanted headcount. The Chinese Curio Markets “originally had 274 people, of which 105 still work at the Arts and Craft Company and the Friendship Store.”⁹⁵⁵ The museum wanted “at least thirty-five people to man the purchasing station, outside acquisitions, warehouse management, and administration.”⁹⁵⁶ Second, they wanted land. Jin and Xia wanted the Arts and Crafts Company to allot 1,826 m2 of space, which the Chinese Curio Markets would use as sales rooms, shipping depots, storage, and

⁹⁵² *Shanghai gemin weiyuan hui caimao zu guanyu jie jue wenwu shangdian yongfang de qingshi baogao* [Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Board's Request and Report Regarding The Resolution of Cultural Relic Store Housing] July 1973 – June 1976, B248-2-966, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁵³ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 28th, 2010.

⁹⁵⁴ *Shanghai gemin weiyuan hui caimao zu guanyu jie jue wenwu shangdian yongfang de qingshi baogao* [Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Board's Request and Report Regarding The Resolution of Cultural Relic Store Housing] July 1973 – June 1976, B248-2-966, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁵⁵ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shigewei hui dangan guan guanyu jieban Shanghai wenwu shangdian ji dui 'wenge' zhong xingchen de wenwu ziliao shouji baoguan yijian, baogao* [Shanghai Cultural Bureau And Municipal Revolutionary Committee's Objections and Reports Regarding The Transfer Of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Stores And The Acquisition Of Cultural Revolution Related Cultural Relics] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-176, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁵⁶ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shigewei hui dangan guan guanyu jieban Shanghai wenwu shangdian ji dui 'wenge' zhong xingchen de wenwu ziliao shouji baoguan yijian, baogao* [Shanghai Cultural Bureau And Municipal Revolutionary Committee's Objections and Reports Regarding The Transfer Of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Stores And The Acquisition Of Cultural Revolution Related Cultural Relics] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-176, SMA, Shanghai.

purchasing stations.⁹⁵⁷ Third, facilities. The work unit needed glass displays, counters, and storage containers so storefronts can “dress” merchandise.⁹⁵⁸ Lastly, cash. Inventory inspections revealed that the Arts and Crafts Company returned merchandise “in severe stages of damage...inspections show cultural relics have mold, rot, as well as wear and tare.”⁹⁵⁹ Jin stated this fourth demand in plain terms. “When I gave it to you it was good. Now it's rotten and moldy. You have to give us compensation.”⁹⁶⁰

Opposition to the museum's demands came from the top of the municipal hierarchy. Jin named Wang Hongwen, a member of the Gang of Four, as the main opponent to the Shanghai Museum's takeover of the art trade. When Jin confronted Wang, “I gave him that document from central administration and he started banging on the desk.” Wang managed export commerce and simply refused to have the museum takeover one of the most lucrative parts of his business. “He said I won't allow this, I only listen to Shanghai administration, I only pay attention to regional management. So the talks failed.”⁹⁶¹ While the museum began negotiating

⁹⁵⁷ *Shanghai gemin weiyuan hui caimao zu guanyu jiejie wenwu shangdian yongfang de qingshi baogao* [Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Board's Request and Report Regarding The Resolution of Cultural Relic Store Housing] July 1973 – June 1976, B248-2-966, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁵⁸ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shigewei hui dangan guan guanyu jieban Shanghai wenwu shangdian ji dui 'wenge' zhong xingchen de wenwu ziliao shouji baoguan yijian, baogao* [Shanghai Cultural Bureau And Municipal Revolutionary Committee's Objections and Reports Regarding The Transfer Of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Stores And The Acquisition Of Cultural Revolution Related Cultural Relics] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-176, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁵⁹ *Shanghai gemin weiyuan hui caimao zu guanyu jiejie wenwu shangdian yongfang de qingshi baogao* [Shanghai Municipal Revolutionary Board's Request and Report Regarding The Resolution of Cultural Relic Store Housing] July 1973 – June 1976, B248-2-966, SMA, Shanghai.

⁹⁶⁰ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁹⁶¹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

in 1974, “by the time the negotiations were done it was 1976.”⁹⁶² The Arts and Crafts Company’s municipal allies simply didn't want to let the company’s people, stock, or capital go to another work unit. Jin Jiapin literally had to wait until the Gang of Four fell before the Shanghai Museum complete negotiations.

During our interview, I asked Jin why the negotiations took so long. He turned towards me and squared his shoulders. “That stuff was considered a piece of fat bacon! It was very lucrative.”⁹⁶³ Fulfilling the museum's terms meant the Arts and Crafts Company had to relinquish more than one-third of its headcount in Shanghai, plus land and cash. The company also had to return more than four-hundred crates of antiquities, as well as more than twenty-thousand pieces of calligraphy and painting.⁹⁶⁴ Those concessions cut significantly into the company's profits.

On October, 1978, the Chinese Curio Markets officially resumed business under Shanghai Museum management.

Conclusion

After the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, the social and political assaults that once looked so devastating had been all but repelled. Cultural industries survived by providing a

⁹⁶² Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁹⁶³ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010.

⁹⁶⁴ *Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shigewei hui dangan guan guanyu jieban Shanghai wenwu shangdian ji dui 'wenge' zhong xingchen de wenwu ziliao shouji baoguan yijian, baogao* [Shanghai Cultural Bureau And Municipal Revolutionary Committee's Objections and Reports Regarding The Transfer Of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Stores And The Acquisition Of Cultural Revolution Related Cultural Relics] February 1975 – December 1975, B172-3-176, SMA, Shanghai.

steady flow of state revenues, seizing private property, and selling the very objects it proposed to preserve. At the dawn of the Reform era, however, those who visited China on Nixon's tails expressed shock at the shabby state of museums in the PRC. Many feared that the Communist regime had robbed China of its cultural heritage. Did the best collections of Chinese art now resided overseas?

To the contrary. The museum industry emerged on the other side of the Reform era decidedly intact. It was ready to articulate Chinese cultural heritage, as an institutional and commercial force, both at home and abroad.

There are, then four phases to the Cultural Revolution's extraordinary impact on the Shanghai Museum: the phase of expanding its collection through raids, the phase of employee professionalization, the mass-divestment of seized property overseas and, finally, the museum staff' regulation and eventual takeover of the art trade, which integrated new artists and categories of art into the Chinese art historical canon. There is nothing mysterious about the Shanghai Museum's participation in Cultural Revolution campaigns. It arose at a time when political conditions allowed cultural institutions to profit from local tensions, and state economic needs pushed the export trade to previously unprecedented heights. What is remarkable, however, is the level of organization that institutions like the Shanghai Museum managed to obtain in the process of participation, as well as the extent to which participation profited the museum, the Arts and Crafts Company, and the international market for Chinese

art. Hugh Moss, who bought on the cheap throughout the 1970s, confirmed that soon export art “weren't available at fifty quid. It was expensive.”⁹⁶⁵ By the time Alvin Lo started going to the Canton Fairs in 1979, sales representatives could block orders based on market trends. “They say from what you choose we'll let you know what can be exported...they would take a whole month going through what you selected, maybe one percent could come out.”⁹⁶⁶ In other words, from the perspective of the international market for Chinese art, the PRC quickly transformed from a wholesale supplier of Chinese art, to gatekeeper.

⁹⁶⁵ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

⁹⁶⁶ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 1020.

Chapter Five: Incomplete Restitution, 1976 – 1996



Figure 5.1. Photograph of Gu Youchu's old work unit apartment. Courtesy of Gu Youchu.

Getting By

Those who marvel at the PRC's leap towards economic prosperity since 1978 have failed to register the marks of poverty that lingered throughout the 1980s and 90s.⁹⁶⁷ Gu Youchu's

⁹⁶⁷ For a detailed assessment of this issue see Andrew G. Walder "Social Change in Post-Revolution China" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 15 (1989): 405-424.

For a select set of scholarship seeking to deal with the simultaneity of economic growth and persistent poverty in the PRC, see Stephen L. Morgan, "Richer and Taller: Stature and Living Standards in China, 1979-1995" *The China Journal*, no. 44 (2000): 1-39; Sheying Chen "Economic Reform and Social Change in China: Past, Present, and Future of the Economic State", *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 15, no. 4 (2002): 569-589; Robert L. Moore, "Generation Ku: Individualism and China's Millennial Youth" *Ethnology*,

kitchen characterizes this persistent condition of need (Figure 5.1).

Throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, Gu lived in a one-room studio on the third floor of a public housing complex in Huangpu district. His coal-stove sits in the lower right corner of Figure 5.1. There is no kitchen sink. Gu hauls water from the public faucet up three flights of stairs. He cleaned everyday, but a stubborn layer of dust covered everything – the unavoidable consequence of burning coal indoors.⁹⁶⁸

Poverty in the PRC looked different than poverty in Somalia or Haiti. Famines are a distant memory, but the a career in the state's work units didn't provide full bellies either. Meat, fish, vegetables, even cigarettes came from work unit-run stores, but the store shelves often had no stock for vouchers or money. Underneath his photograph, Gu Youchu writes the following:

“To live you have to have dignity, and not subject yourself to abuse. Take charge of your own fate, look carefully and think right, go on, that's hope. I got sick three times in my time at the Shanghai Museum, the above picture memorializes my living conditions as a bachelor. The Shanghai Museum got four opportunities to allot housing, but not once to me? If you have a house it's good on top of good, but homeless people stay homeless? That's why I took long-term sick leave, retired, and after retirement, found another way of earning money, bought my own place.”⁹⁶⁹

Gu's scribbles articulate his disappointment in a system that promised to provide a decent, minimal standard of living, but instead made poverty feel normal.⁹⁷⁰

44, no. 4 (2005): 357-376; Stanley Rosen, “The Victory of Materialism: Aspirations to Join China's Urban Moneyed Classes and the Commercialization of Education” *The China Journal*, no. 51 (2004): 27-51; Zheng Bijian, “China's 'Peaceful Rise' to Great-Power Status”, *Foreign Affairs*, 84, no. 5 (2005): 18-24; Aimin Chen “Urbanization in China and the Case of Fujian Province” *Modern China*, 32, no. 1 (2006): 99-130.

⁹⁶⁸ Interview with Gu Youchu, February 1st, 2010.

⁹⁶⁹ Work Portfolio of Gu Youchu, Private collection of Gu Youchu, photographed with permission.

⁹⁷⁰ For more on public displays of poverty and related sentiments of difficulty, see Weihua Wu and Xiying Wang “Cultural Performance and the Ethnography of Ku in China” *Positions: East Asia Cultural Critique*, 16, no. 2 (2008): 409-433

Women typically point to the fact that they had to nurse their children on thin rice porridge. As a childless divorcée, Gu points to his fingernails. They are dry and brittle with white, half moons spots – classic sign of calcium, iron, and protein deficiency. I expressed shock at the fact that they also bear scorch marks, but he says those came from work. He sometimes burns himself when reproducing bronze relics. I ask Gu why he takes private commissions if the Shanghai Museum still contracts him for bronze restoration. He replies he gets commissions *because* the museum keeps him on contract. His institutional association brings better business. It even paid for a new apartment. In other words, there is no separation between museum and art market for Gu Youchu.⁹⁷¹ He begrudges his work unit for taking him out of its housing lottery, but the museum's market contacts also allowed him to create his own housing lottery.⁹⁷²

This permeable boundary between museum and market is neither Capitalist nor Communist. Rather, the two have always developed in tandem in the PRC. The co-evolution of museum and market is a condition inherent to the invention of cultural heritage, as discussed through the lens of nationalization in Chapter One, market intervention in Chapter Two, and the commodification of confiscated property in Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Five investigates the internationalization of this permeable boundary by examining *luoshi zhengce*

⁹⁷¹ For similar findings see John Fitzgerald, “A New Cultural Revolution: The Commercialisation of Culture in China”, *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 11 (1984): 105-120; Deborah Davis, “Urban Consumer Culture” *The China Quarterly*, no. 183, (2005): 692- 709.

⁹⁷² For more on danwei allotment issues see Kam Wing Chan and Li Zhang “The *Hukou* System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes” *The China Quarterly*, 160, (1999): 818-855; Jonathan Unger and Anita Chan, “The Internal Politics of an Urban Chinese Work Community: A Case Study of Employee Influence on Decision-Making at a State-Owned Factory” *The China Journal*, no. 52, (2004): 1-24; Fei-Ling Wang, *Organizing Through Division And Exclusion: China Hukou System* (Stanford, 2005);

(restitution), a PRC compensation policy that paid indemnities for property seized between 1949 and 1976. I focus on the restitution of antiquities because, throughout the 1970s and 80s, it became a site of negotiation for individuals in a persistent condition of need. Money mattered in restitution, but exchanging seized antiquities for favors that only work units like the Shanghai Museum could bestow mattered more. Different constituents leveraged antiquities to obtain housing lottery privileges, new jobs, even special permission to sell their “cultural inheritance” overseas. Thus, the restitution of antiquities holds a prominent and particular place both in museological concerns such as preservation, canonization, and heritage, as well as commercial concerns such as profit, distribution, and availability.

This chapter also examines shifts in the museological fiction of donation, as mediated by the Shanghai Museum's enforcement of restitution. After 1976, the museum's intense focus on donor programming coincided with the implementation of restitution for Chinese living outside of mainland China. In conjunction with national-, provincial- and municipal-level constituents, the museum produced an astonishing range of cultural propaganda to encourage these individuals to donate restituted antiquities, as well as cash, to the PRC. Almost uniformly, these programs focused on consent. At the same time, the programs anchored themselves to existing tropes of donation, such as merit ceremonies and awards. These tropes, however, were retooled to highlight the overseas donors' willingness to consent to the Shanghai Museum's programs, investments, and presentation of cultural heritage. The cult of consent underlined the

museum's establishment of institutional partnerships with other countries, drove overseas funding, and transformed the museum from a national institution to international icon of cultural heritage.⁹⁷³ Consent made the Shanghai Museum's articulation of cultural heritage verifiable, and ultimately, indispensable.

Slow Start

Restitution came as a surprise to Shanghai Museum staff. Wang Qianbi found out as early as 1974, at a meeting with Shen Zhiyu and some other top administrators. Wang was an underground CCP member who had joined the party in 1945 and enjoyed a position of trust amongst municipal officials.⁹⁷⁴ Museum administrators tended to turn to him for sensitive matters like restitution. They told Wang about a central administration document called number 7101, which contained new decisions about Chinese who were targeted by political campaigns. The document decreed that “there was going to be restitution, and the targeted people were going to be given their things back”.⁹⁷⁵ In other words, the PRC was making plans to compensate individuals whose personal belongings got confiscated during the Cultural

⁹⁷³ For similar findings see Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, And Diplomacy*, (Berkeley, 2004); Jennifer Hubbert “(Re)collecting Mao: Memory and fetish in contemporary China”, *American Ethnologist*, 33, no. 2 (2006): 145-161; Edward X. Gu “Cultural Intellectuals and the Politics of the Cultural Public Space in Communist China (1979-1989): A Case Study of Three Intellectual Groups”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 58, no. 2 (1999): 389-431; Manoranjan Mohanty, “For Socialist Freedom: Students' Movement in China”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24, no. 24 (1989): 1329-1333; Helen Rees, “The age of consent: Traditional music, Intellectual Property and Changing Attitudes in the People's Republic of China”, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 12, no. 1 (2003): 137-171; Xin Zhao and Russell W. Belk, “Politicizing Consumer Culture: Advertising's Appropriation of Political Ideology in China's Social Transition”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 5, no. 2 (2008): 231-244;

⁹⁷⁴ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

⁹⁷⁵ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

Revolution, as well as in campaigns going back to the 1950s. Wang wasn't to spread the word – the information was too new.

Also in 1974, municipal officials that Chen Peifen could only identify as “them” came to the Shanghai Museum. The officials went to the fourth floor, where the museum kept all the confiscated antiquities in its custody. Chen had all the confiscations organized according to the estates and individuals from which the antiquities were seized. Except for a big desk in the middle, the fourth floor had boxes crammed up to the ceiling. The desk was literally full of gold. “There were a lot of gold coins that got collected...I just put it under there.”⁹⁷⁶ Only Chen and her clerks worked on the fourth floor. “They” came as a surprise.

⁹⁷⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.



Figure 5.2. Chen Peifen (second from right) and Shanghai Museum constituents in the seized antiquities area on the fourth floor of the Shanghai Museum (circa Cultural Revolution). Courtesy of Zheng Zhong.

“They” wanted Chen's ledger. The ledger contained itemized records that accounted for every antiquity that the museum had expropriated, from the gold coins under the desk to a pair of “hand-held spectacles, not the kind that you wear behind your ears.”⁹⁷⁷ Chen warned her visitors that the ledger didn't account for periodic loans. “Sometimes the Gang of Four would come and look at things, borrow them...when they were borrowed or taken out, I had no control over that.”⁹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the officials who checked her numbers reported that “nothing was missing.”⁹⁷⁹ In fact, “they counted some gold coins and came up with one extra”, so Chen amended her ledger.⁹⁸⁰ Then she relinquished the ledger and the officials left as suddenly as they

⁹⁷⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁹⁷⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁹⁷⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

⁹⁸⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

had come.⁹⁸¹

Ma Chengyuan, director of the bronze department, took Chen Peifen aside and explained why the visitors took her records. Ma had heard from Wang Qianbi, who revealed that Chen's visitors managed the Sorting Committee.⁹⁸² Wang told Ma about document 7101, the state directive that stated that the PRC planned to return the museum's appropriations to their original owners.⁹⁸³ This meant that the museum could no longer claim ownership over antiquities confiscated during Cultural Revolution, and arguably the political campaigns that preceded it. Ma made it clear that “we have to prepare for this policy”, or risk loosing out on a phenomenal cache of antiquities.⁹⁸⁴

Although the municipality collected Chen Peifen's ledgers as early as 1974, the Sorting Committee waited until the Cultural Revolution ended before initiating restitution. For both the museum and the individual seeking compensation, restitution “was a lot of work”.⁹⁸⁵ In order to initiate the process, individuals had to have their work unit “contact the Sorting Committee. They show the necessary documents. Then the Sorting Committee would take the objects out of their warehouse.”⁹⁸⁶ No individual could initiate the restitution process alone. Their work unit had to carry out the restitution process in the individual's stead. Furthermore, the municipality maintained a “no conflict” requirement. “You had to have no problems or

⁹⁸¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

⁹⁸² Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010

⁹⁸³ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010

⁹⁸⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

⁹⁸⁵ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010

⁹⁸⁶ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

conflicts, like if you were a counter-revolutionary then we couldn't just give your things back to you.”⁹⁸⁷ “No conflict” constituted the selective aspect of restitution – work units only applied for restitution on behalf of individuals who met this requirement.

In the immediate aftermath of the Gang of Four's collapse, very few individuals in obtaining restitution.⁹⁸⁸ Wang and his six underlings at the Puxi Road sorting station spent most of their time cataloging unprocessed confiscations. “It was mostly items that were confiscated but that were not organized or cataloged, and if they wanted those objects to be organized they had to give it to us.”⁹⁸⁹ Sorting procedures stayed the same. “All the things that the museum could have would be sent over to the museum, and the things that the museum didn't want could be sold through the Arts and Crafts Company. The books would go to the library.”⁹⁹⁰ There was less work in comparison to the Cultural Revolution years, when work unit representatives brought in confiscations by cargo truck. Deliveries of confiscated material from municipal work units, however, never stopped trickling into the sorting stations. “Every week there would be one person who was in charge of taking in objects, and then we spent the rest of

⁹⁸⁷ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

⁹⁸⁸ For a first hand account of the immediate aftermath of 1976 in Shanghai, see Ronald Suleski “Changing the Guard in Shanghai: October-November 1976”, *Asian Survey*, 17, no. 9 (1977): 886-897.

Select accounts of the broader implications of the Gang of Four's collapse include Keith Forster “China's Coup of October” *Modern China*, 18, no. 3 (1992): 263-303; Alexander C. Cook, *Unsettling Accounts: The Trial Of The Gang Of Four, Narratives Of Justice And Humanity In The Aftermath Of China's Cultural Revolution*, Unpublished Dissertation, Columbia University (New York, 2007);

⁹⁸⁹ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

⁹⁹⁰ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

the time organizing materials.”⁹⁹¹ Sorting stations remained an important link in the supply chain that brought commodified confiscations to market, and unless either restitution or overseas exports emptied the warehouses, the work of sorting, appraising, and cataloging continued.

The Special Acquisitions Team

Wang Qianbi opined that PRC administration delayed restitution as long as it could. It wasn't until 1979 that “we began giving everything back to their owners”.⁹⁹² This included the tedious task of going over inventories to figure out which confiscations had already been sold and which still sat in Arts and Crafts Company warehouses. If “they have not been sold, then they sent it back” and Sorting Committee members “had to check...who those objects belonged to.”⁹⁹³ The identification process also included checking museum records. Though the Shanghai Museum never sold any of the confiscated antiquities it held in custody, municipal officials had, as Chen Peifen already noted, borrowed select items.

The delay gave museum administrators time to establish a special acquisitions team. Initially, this team had only three members: Lu Songlin, who had just returned to the museum from Puxi Road, Li Hongye, who took part in the great Ethnic Minority Artifacts Acquisition Project back in 1960, and Shang Yehuang, who participated in the 1966 raids. Lu still remembers when he got called into President Shen Zhiyu's office. In very plain language, Shen

⁹⁹¹ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

⁹⁹² Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

⁹⁹³ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010.

explained that members of this team were going to do their best to intervene with restitution.

“That set of things, the raided things was all really nice. The museum wanted it...They wanted us to give the confiscations back to people, but also ask them to give it up.”⁹⁹⁴ Shanghai wanted to permanently acquire the confiscated antiquities that it had considered part of its collection for the past decades.

The special acquisitions team reported to Ma Chengyuan, also a pre-1945 Communist Party member and one of the contenders for the museum's President-ship (a position he eventually shared with Class of 1952 member Wang Qingzheng).⁹⁹⁵ Ma rallied everyone who participated in the raids to establish good relations with the individuals from whom antiquities were confiscated. As an institution of professional appraisers for the international Chinese art market, the museum staff understood the monetary and symbolic value of confiscated antiquities, perhaps better than the original owners themselves. The staff didn't want to give back anything of value, especially “because we knew how much was being given back.”⁹⁹⁶ Thus, on Ma's prompt, the staff went into motion. “We went around and asked: We would like you to donate or sell part of the collection to us. In exchange, we can help you with whatever it is you need help with.”⁹⁹⁷

⁹⁹⁴ Interview with Lu Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

⁹⁹⁵ Li Chaoyuan “Ma Chengyuan xiansheng de Zhongguo qingtongqi yanjiu” [Mr. Ma Chengyuan's Study Of Ancient Chinese Bronzes] *Shanghai wenbo luncong* [Shanghai Wenbo] no. 1, (2010): 17-25; Ma Zhefei “Ma Chengyuan Yu Shanghai Bowuguan” [Ma Chengyuan And The Shanghai Museum] *Zhongguo Bowuguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 4, (2004): 73-79.

⁹⁹⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

⁹⁹⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

The museum staff followed the same evaluation procedures that Shanghai had used since the early 1950s. Lu Songlin, Li Hongye, and Shang Yehuang attended roundtable discussions with specialists such as “Shen Jinxin, Xie Zhiliu, Chen Wei, these experts, these people with authority, including Ma Chengyuan. They set the prices” for all restitution offers.⁹⁹⁸ Lu explained that all offers were, to some extent, negotiable. “Some people haggled, say I don't think this is enough. So we had a bit of wiggle room. Say we opened with five hundred, well we had a bit, we can pay a bit more, six hundred it was okay.”⁹⁹⁹

Interestingly, the museum never made offers on entire collections. The staff selected specific antiquities out of an entire restitution package, at times promising individuals awaiting restitution that the Shanghai Museum had the power to speed up the restitution process if the individuals would consent to surrendering specific works of art. “Every time we're going to give things back, we pick out ahead of time what the museum already wanted.”¹⁰⁰⁰ The special acquisitions team paid especially close attention to these selections, for while the museum was willing to adjust acquisitions prices, it was not willing to negotiate which antiquities it acquired. According to Lu, the museum tended to choose antiquities made before 1795, particularly objects that did not already exist in the museum collection, or filled existing gaps in the museum's collection. These selections seldom exceed ten percent of any restitution package.

⁹⁹⁸ Interview with Li Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

⁹⁹⁹ Interview with Li Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Interview with Li Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

“It's not like we bought everything back, just the ones that the museum wanted.”¹⁰⁰¹

The International Chinese Art Market

After the PRC installed new economic policies in 1978, the price of Chinese art saw phenomenal growth. Zhu Junbo, who had just joined the Duoyun Xian management team, made thirty-six RMB a month that year. Compared to 1973, Zhu's salary rose 112 percent.¹⁰⁰² High school teachers, young museum administrators and shoe store managers earned about the same salary. It was enough to sustain he and his family, but not enough to buy anything on the Duoyun Xian sales floor.

Zhu observed that “customers who came before the Cultural Revolution were completely different from those who came after.”¹⁰⁰³ Chinese with newly restituted antiquities sold their possessions as fast as collectors and dealers, both domestic and foreign, came to buy them. For example, “parents whose children got into school overseas, but didn't have money to buy the plane ticket, didn't have money to pay for tuition, bring their things to sell to the Duoyun Xian.”¹⁰⁰⁴ Goals such as investing in one's own children took priority over reestablishing family art collections.

Sun Jiecong, who supervised Duoyun Xian through the 1970s and 80s, describes price inflation's impact on the Chinese art market as follows. In the 1960s she checked passports for

¹⁰⁰¹ Interview with Li Songlin, June 16th, 2011.

¹⁰⁰² Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

¹⁰⁰³ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

Duoyun Xian's foreigners-only salon. Most customers were “teachers at the foreign school, Germans and French.”¹⁰⁰⁵ One German came in regularly for contemporary Chinese paintings. “He said that his mom likes Chinese paintings...told him to save his money to buy painting and calligraphy, just buy Qi Baishi and Xu Beihong.”¹⁰⁰⁶ Every month, the German man visited and “his salary for one month can buy one Qi Baishi or one Xu Beihong...in 1965 he could buy a Qi Baishi for fifty or sixty RMB.”¹⁰⁰⁷ The man left during the Cultural Revolution and didn't come back until after 1978. Sun ran into him on the sales floor. “He said he couldn't believe it, now he's rich. He said he could never afford those paintings now.”¹⁰⁰⁸ Within a decade, Qi Baishi and Xu Beihong paintings had risen from fifty and sixty RMB to “tens of thousands.”¹⁰⁰⁹ He joked that museums in Germany offered to buy some of his paintings but his mother refused.¹⁰¹⁰ In fact, his mother saucily suggested that “if the German Museums want them they can spend the money to borrow them from the family.”¹⁰¹¹

Dealers of Chinese art from China, Britain, and the United States attest that Chinese art prices saw phenomenal inflation throughout the 1970s and 80s.¹⁰¹² According to Jim Lally, who

¹⁰⁰⁵ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹⁰¹⁰ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹⁰¹¹ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹⁰¹² Interview with Roger Keverne, August 17th, 2009; Interview with Paul Moss, September 2nd, 2009; Interview with Doninick Jellineck, August 13th, 2009; Interview with Carol Conver, October 19th, 2009, Interview with Lois Katz, October 22nd, 2009; Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009; Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

managed Chinese art sales for Sotheby's throughout this time, "you saw prices in London double, every year...in the early 1970s they were doubling every six months."¹⁰¹³ Some attribute the driving force to Japan's economic miracle, which gave Japanese collectors more spending power. Philip Constantinidi, of the Eskenazi Gallery in London, called it the Japanese boom. The Eskenazi family have been sourcing Chinese art in Western Europe since the 1960s. Constantinidi attests that since Giuseppe Eskenazi took sole charge of the London gallery in 1967, "trade with dealers from Japan were enormous. We sold enormous things to Japan."¹⁰¹⁴

Others attribute the rise in Chinese art prices to Sotheby's and Christie's new offices in Hong Kong, which opened in the 70s and 80s, respectively.¹⁰¹⁵ Both houses undercut traditional collector-dealer relations by introducing auctions, as well as price estimates for in-house appraisers. They openly marketed art collecting as an investment as well as an elite hobby, which brought a new set of individuals to the art market.¹⁰¹⁶

By the 1980s, however, it became clear that Chinese buyers were the primary force driving the rise of Chinese art prices across the globe. This collecting frenzy started in Hong

¹⁰¹³ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹⁰¹⁴ Interview with Philip Constantinidi, August 25th, 2009.

¹⁰¹⁵ Former auctioneer Julian Thompson opened Sotheby's first Far East office with Lane Crawford. The auction house kept its initial investment in Hong Kong conservative. Lane Crawford supplied the auction house with secretarial staff, offices, warehousing, etc for a percentage of Sotheby's auction profits. Christie's opened its offices in Hong Kong in 1986, teaming up with Swire and employing a shared-profits model similar to that between Sotheby's and Lane Crawford. Interview with Julian Thompson, September 4th, 2009; Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹⁰¹⁶ For examples of this phenomena, in particular how investing in art is marketed by business studies specialists at auction houses, see Iain Robertson, *A New Art from Emerging Markets* (Surrey, 2011); for more general studies of art market investment, see Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art* (Oxford, 2004); Katy Siegel and Paul Mattick, *Art Works: Money* (New York, 2004)

Kong. In comparison to the PRC, it was an island of plenty in an ocean of want. Hong Kong's shops, even its unskilled workers, enjoyed higher incomes, better diets and safer livelihoods than anywhere else on the mainland. Some of the Chinese who fled there after 1949 had already managed to build wealth. Jim Lally opined that these individuals flaunted new money – “it wasn't the scholars of yesteryear who became filthy rich. It was the bankers, the shippers, the property developers who knew nothing about art.”¹⁰¹⁷ Dealers and auction houses alike noticed immediately. “When they began buying in Hong Kong, the people who were selling in Hong Kong said Ooo, there's a man with a big fat wallet. Let's go talk to him.”¹⁰¹⁸ The Hong Kong collecting frenzy soon attracted young entrepreneurs from Europe and the United States, as well as seasoned dealers from the mainland, Japan, and South East Asia.

Furthermore, by the late 1970s international jet travel gave formerly local art markets, such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo, London, Paris, New York, and Beijing, immediate access to a fully elaborated international exchange.¹⁰¹⁹ Every dealer of Chinese art I interviewed credited jet travel for transforming their business. Lally literally watched as “the international travel boom” transformed regional enclaves.¹⁰²⁰ That's not to say that different regions sold the same kinds of collectables. Hong Kong, for example, “sold to tourists and sold to local people”, as did Shanghai.¹⁰²¹ English collectors tended to be retain an interest in “a lot of small things that

¹⁰¹⁷ Interview with Hugh Moss, September 27th, 2010.

¹⁰¹⁸ Interview with October 28th, 2009.

¹⁰¹⁹ For a history of commercial jet travel see Jenifer Leigh Van Vleck. *No Distant Places: Aviation and the Global American Century*. Unpublished PhD, Yale University, 2009.

¹⁰²⁰ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹⁰²¹ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

they could hold” in their hands, whereas new Japanese and Chinese wealth turned to

“large...titular pieces. Signature pieces. Big things that make a statement.”¹⁰²²

Frenzied buying linked these disparate markets of art together. Every enclave displayed “a lot of activity, lots of knowledgeable activity which had previously not been understood.”¹⁰²³

That is to say, collectors were engaging with not only dealers, but also museums, art catalogs, and craftsman in order to better discern the value of the works of art in which they were investing. Dealers who bought their stock in Hong Kong and the mainland were looking for all of the above-mentioned antiquities, to sell in all of the above enclaves.

The Chinese art boom meant more than dealers flying to Asia. Booming prices also drove Chinese, Japanese, British, and American collectors to travel to the Far East and buy independently. Jim Lally calls these individuals “serious collectors...these people coming for five years on these new jet planes, demonstrating their knowledge, demonstrating their passion for the art, and their willingness to pay for it.”¹⁰²⁴ From the perspective of thirty-six-RMB-a-month salesmen at Duoyun Xian, these people were walking bags of money.

Restitution Negotiations

The individuals that got restitutions were nobody's fool. They knew antiquities meant money. Some haggled with the museum for higher offers. The truly savvy ones, however, requested favors that *only* large work units like Shanghai's top cultural institutions could grant.

¹⁰²² Interview with Philip Constantinidi, August 25th, 2009.

¹⁰²³ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹⁰²⁴ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

“People wanted all kinds of different things” depending on their social, political, and economic needs.¹⁰²⁵ For example, some “wanted it noted in the newspapers that they were now cleared of all charges. They wanted recognition.”¹⁰²⁶ Others “wanted help getting their things back faster.”¹⁰²⁷ In those cases, the museum staff “had them be at the top of the list for getting things back.”¹⁰²⁸ Chen Peifen confirmed that between 1976 and 1980, the Shanghai Museum “stamped a lot of documents for” individuals negotiating restitution packages and “that's how we also got some objects.”¹⁰²⁹

The Class of 1952 applied specific negotiating techniques to restitution. When I asked my interviewees to share specific techniques, they revealed that they targeted widows.¹⁰³⁰ Zhong Yinlan explained that “wives outlived their husbands.”¹⁰³¹ While husbands tended to be the ones who assembled collections, wives tended to be the ones still alive in the 1980s. Furthermore, because the widows “minded the family, the children”, they tended to know less about the market potential of antiquities.¹⁰³² The special acquisitions team, therefore, had an advantage when negotiating with widows: the team could expect less struggle with price, and gain more

¹⁰²⁵ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

¹⁰²⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009. For collaborative findings in other professional sectors see Hong Yung Lee, “The Politics of Cadre Rehabilitation since the Cultural Revolution”, *Asian Survey*, 18, no. 9 (1978): 934-955

¹⁰²⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

¹⁰²⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

¹⁰²⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰³⁰ For examples of some successful donation cases that involved widows, see Zheng Zhong “Zan de yi ji kuai ran zizu cong Hu Huichun dao Fan Jirong wengxu jian shoucang jingshen de chuancheng” [Temporary Custodianship: Self Satisfaction From Hu Huichun To Fan Jirong, The Promise Of Collectors' Spirit, From Father-In-Law To Son-In-Law] *Shanghai wenbo luncong* [Shanghai Wenbo] no. 1, (2002): 8-15.

¹⁰³¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹⁰³² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

leverage by offering to procure favors for the widows' family and children, which may ultimately cost the museum less.

Li Junjie confirmed that the Class of 1952 visited the widows of private collectors repeatedly. "When we visit them we hope that they will sell some things, and some people say well I'll donate these items."¹⁰³³ Qiu Hui, the widow of Li Yinxuan (1911 - 1972), donated her husband's entire bronze collection. The Shanghai Museum seized the lot during the Cultural Revolution. Li called the museum himself when he saw Red Guards coming.¹⁰³⁴ Qiu Hui traded her restitutions for an expedited visa to join her son, Li Qing, in Canada.¹⁰³⁵ "She donated a selection of bronzes and other objects to the museum and we helped her leave the country. We arranged for her planet ticket, for her to get to the airport, everything."¹⁰³⁶ The museum staff even helped her navigate the embassy interview. "We went to upper administration and said this person gave the state so many antiquities", which sped up the state's decision to grant Qiu leave.¹⁰³⁷

The most difficult kind of request that the Shanghai Museum got was obtaining Shanghai *hukou* (household registration). In the 1980s and 90s, municipal household registration meant a break from difficult rural conditions, especially for families that got downgraded from relative comfort during the Cultural Revolution.¹⁰³⁸ Collectors whose

¹⁰³³ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

¹⁰³⁴ Zhong Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia* [Shanghai Collectors] (Shanghai, 2003): 376-377.

¹⁰³⁵ Zhong Zheng, *Haishang shoucangjia* [Shanghai Collectors] (Shanghai, 2003): 377.

¹⁰³⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

¹⁰³⁷ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹⁰³⁸ Anne McLaren, "The Educated Youth Return: The Poster Campaign in Shanghai from November 1978 to

children lost the right to live in Shanghai “wanted their family to come back from faraway regions of China.”¹⁰³⁹ Some even phrased their requests in emotional terms. “I want my son to come back to Shanghai...no matter what I want my child to be around me.”¹⁰⁴⁰ When the value of the antiquities made the work worth it, the museum got household registrations transferred. The museum “tells the municipality...say their children got sent to the farms. We get them back.”¹⁰⁴¹ In cases where the returnees also needed jobs as part of the transfer process, the museum “took the young people in for a while, then they can work for us for a while to establish their residences in Shanghai.”¹⁰⁴² Temporary museum jobs, like receptionist or cleaner, offered returnees much-needed transition time. Working at the museum also gave returnees networks from which they could look for other job opportunities, such as transferring to another work unit.¹⁰⁴³ Li Junjie observed that these services not only allowed the museum to gain select antiquities, it also ensured “good relations with donors over time, and collectors too.”¹⁰⁴⁴

Overseas Relations

In 1983, the Shanghai Museum began negotiating restitutions with overseas Chinese.¹⁰⁴⁵

March 1979” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 2 (1979): 1-20; Bin Yang, “We Want To Go Home! The Great Petition Of The Zhiqing, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, 1978-1979” *The China Quarterly*, no. 198, (2009): 401-421.

¹⁰³⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, July 3rd, 2009.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁴¹ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁴² Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010. For how the Shanghai Museum may have been able to do this, see Kam Wing Chan and Will Buckingham, “Is China Abolishing The Hukou System?” *The China Quarterly*, 195, (2008): 582-606.

¹⁰⁴³ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁴⁵ For examples of other studies that focus on overseas Chinese as a source for PRC initiatives before the so-called reform era, see Stephen Fitzgerald, “Overseas Chinese Affairs and the Cultural Revolution”, *The China*

Chen Peifen and Ma Chengyuan met J. M. Hu that year.¹⁰⁴⁶ Hu ran the Min Chiu Society, an exclusive group of Chinese art collectors in Hong Kong.¹⁰⁴⁷ The museum knew the man not only from his days as a playboy in Shanghai, but also because it raided the Hu family collection during the Cultural Revolution.¹⁰⁴⁸ In particular, the museum “took all the porcelain”, the category of art in which Hu maintained a focused interest.¹⁰⁴⁹

When they met in Hong Kong, Hu pulled Chen Peifen aside and said, “I don't need to speak to your leader, I want to talk to you privately, is that possible.”¹⁰⁵⁰ Overseas contact was closely scrutinized in the early 1980s, but Chen “had no qualms about that kind of thing...I said sure.”¹⁰⁵¹ Hu remained cautious. “He asked me if I was CCP, I said I was not.”¹⁰⁵² Satisfied, Hu invited Chen to his office.

Once inside, “he said where are my things?”¹⁰⁵³ News about restitution had reached Hong Kong and J. M. Hu wanted to find out how this worked for non-mainland residents. Chen replied “it's at the Shanghai museum...we can give it back to you but you would have to go

Quarterly, no. 40 (1969): 103-126; For reform era findings see Michael R. Godley, “The Sojourners: Returned Overseas Chinese in the People's Republic of China”, *Pacific Affairs*, 62, no. 3 (1989): 330-352;

¹⁰⁴⁶ J. M. Hu is also known as Hu Huichun. Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009.

¹⁰⁴⁷ For more on the Min Chiu Society, see Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Min Qiu Jin She, *The Grandeur of Chinese Art Treasures: Min Chiu Society Golden Jubilee Exhibition* (Xianggang, 2010); Eric Otto Wear, “The Sense Of Things: Chinese Art In The Lives Of Hong Kong Collectors And Connoisseurs”, in Gordon Mathews and Tai-Lok Liu, Eds., *Consuming Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2001): 173 – 204.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009; Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009; Interview with James Watt, October 14th, 2009.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Interview with James Watt, October 14th, 2009.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁵¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁵² Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁵³ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

to Shanghai, we can't give it back to you in Hong Kong.”¹⁰⁵⁴ The Shanghai Museum could, however, help arrange visa and travel accommodations such that non-residents can visit their antiquities “whenever you want”.¹⁰⁵⁵

Hu was unsatisfied with Chen's visitation rights and made two counter offers. He asked Chen to send him some photographs of his ceramics. He also asked about Ye Shuzhong, the former Vajrapani whose last known whereabouts were somewhere in Qinghai. Hu told Chen that he simply “want to know if [Ye]'s doing okay, if his family is okay, where is he now, and can I exchange some correspondence with him.”¹⁰⁵⁶

Chen agreed to look for Ye Shuzhong on J. M. Hu's behalf – though she warned him it might take time. Arrested art dealers were a sensitive issue. In fact, when she submitted her report on J. M. Hu for municipal administration, Chen only noted that “I am giving him pictures and asking about his ceramics from the house searches...the Ye Shuzhong thing I didn't report.”¹⁰⁵⁷ She felt comfortable talking to Hu in private, but implicating herself in a conversation about a known smuggler was too much.

It took Chen a long time to find Ye Shuzhong's descendants because she didn't want to risk search for them using official channels. She made private inquiries through family and friends. When she finally tracked the Ye family down she called first and biked right over. The

¹⁰⁵⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Interview with Chen Peifen, June 22nd, 2009

¹⁰⁵⁶ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

family lived in a public housing complex and “when I got there...I tell you their attitudes were pretty frightening.”¹⁰⁵⁸ Shimei, Ye Shuzhong's daughter, came to the door looking “so nervous, like what are you doing here.”¹⁰⁵⁹ Chen waited for some time before they would let her inside, and the family expressed no interest in letting her linger. “They didn't ask me to sit.”¹⁰⁶⁰

Chen Peifen told the Ye family that she had met J. M. Hu, who expressed an interest in reestablishing contact. The family accepted the piece of paper with J. M. Hu's contact information, but Chen suspects that they never attempted to write to him. Chen also made it clear that the family “have no social status any more. They all went to the factories to work, at the alleyway processing factory, that's about the worst industrial job you can get.”¹⁰⁶¹ I asked Chen why the family didn't just take Hu's information and call for help. Chen replied that having overseas contacts was as bad as having a smuggler in the family. “If you were sent outside Shanghai to do hard labor what does your family have left at all? They walked all over their alleyway every day asking for bit jobs to do.”¹⁰⁶² If J. M. Hu had lived past Hong Kong's return to the mainland, the Ye family might have reconnected with him. During the 1980s, however, “that wasn't how things were.”¹⁰⁶³ The past fifty-years' worth of purges had not become forgotten nightmares.

Resolving J. M. Hu's restitution took years. The collector wanted his antiquities in Hong

¹⁰⁵⁸ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁶¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁶² Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁶³ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

Kong. The Shanghai Museum refused. “At the time Hong Kong had not been given back” to the PRC.¹⁰⁶⁴

J. M. Hu's restitution remained unresolved until James Watt, the former Brooke Russell Astor Senior Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, interceded. “In 1986 or 1987 we opened our ancient china gallery . We invited Ma Chengyuan to the opening and I invited Ma Chengyuan to a dinner on his own, not with the other delegates.”¹⁰⁶⁵ At the dinner, Watt “said look I have a proposal for you.”¹⁰⁶⁶ Watt suggested that the Hu family “give his collection but the Shanghai Museum has to acknowledge the gift in the same way as western museums do. That is to say they could say this is donated by Hu Huichun Esquire.”¹⁰⁶⁷ Watt also proposed that the museum publish a catalog of Hu's collection as part of a grand donation ceremony. Both Shanghai and the Hu family agreed. On September 9th, 1989, the Shanghai Museum held a special exhibition honoring “one of the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board's first members and famous Hong Kong collector, Hu Huichun, for his donation of his Shanghai collection of Song dynasty Diao kiln moon-white glaze zun, Ming dynasty Xuande era blue-and-white figures vase, as well as seventy-six other precious cultural

¹⁰⁶⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁶⁵ James Watt held the Brooke Russel Astor Chairmanship of the Department of Asian Art and has worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art since 1985. Interview with James Watt, October 14th, 2009; For further information about James Watt's affiliations with Chinese collecting families see Metropolitan Museum If Art Publicity “Metropolitan Museum Of Art Announces James C. Y. Watt To Become Curator Emeritus” January 13th, 2011, Available at <<http://museumpublicity.com/2011/01/13/metropolitan-museum-of-art-announces-james-c-y-watt-to-become-curator-emeritus/>> [13 April, 2011]

¹⁰⁶⁶ Interview with James Watt, October 14th, 2009.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Interview with James Watt, October 14th, 2009.

relics to the Shanghai Museum.”¹⁰⁶⁸ The municipality not only gave the family high honors, they also made J. M. Hu a permanent member of the Shanghai Municipal Cultural Relics Management Board. The museum installed a red, wall-length plaque extolling J. M. Hu in its ceramics gallery, where his collection remains on display today. As of 2011, the J. M. Hu plaque remains the museum's only publicly visible gesture towards its enforcement of restitution in the decades following the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Some see the J. M. Hu plaque as an empty gesture; a face-saving trifle that the autocratic party-state granted in order to both keep its seized spoils and win overseas Chinese approval. “This is a game they played in China, they grabbed his stuff...they said here, we'll give you 100 Yuan for this dish, there, it's been paid.”¹⁰⁶⁹ From this perspective, J. M. Hu took the higher ground. “He, being a proud man, chose to turn it into a donation.”¹⁰⁷⁰ While this perspective has its proponents, erecting J. M. Hu as yet another example of Chinese autocracy not only erases the different constituents who enabled the resolution, but also discounts significant shifts in the PRC's museological fiction of donation.

I propose that restitution's shift from regional to international constituents transformed the fiction of donation from highlighting nationalism (as in the 1950s) to its current emphasis on *consent*.¹⁰⁷¹ Consent took center stage precisely because it enabled different constituents, in

¹⁰⁶⁸ Shanghai Gazetteer *Zhuanyue zhi: Shanghai wenwu bowuguan zhi: Dashiji* [Professional Gazetteers: Shanghai Cultural Relics Museum Gazetteer: Annals], Available <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node4467/node20331/index.html>> [June, 2011]

¹⁰⁶⁹ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹⁰⁷¹ For the nature of contemporary Chinese nationalism see Peter Hays Gries, Qingmin Zhang, H. Michael

China and overseas, to act as joint participants in the making of Chinese cultural heritage.¹⁰⁷² In this new language of cooperation, the Shanghai Museum argues that its preservation of seized property throughout the difficult Cultural Revolution years legitimizes its custodianship of Chinese cultural heritage. Participating in raids allowed Shanghai to do “the best job in preserving cultural relics out of the whole country”, an achievement that even non-mainland residents consented to, as evidenced by their donations.¹⁰⁷³

The cult of consent is all the more extraordinary for being anything *but* the idealized image of a preservationist institution. It implicates the museum staff in the systematic, nationwide seizure of privately-owned antiquities at the same time as it encourages international audiences to acknowledge that the staff “were doing what we were supposed to do. We were just care takers.”¹⁰⁷⁴ In contrast to all the violence and brutality that scar literature authors use to describe Cultural Revolution events, the cult of consent opens up a space in which participation

Crowson and Huajian Cai “Patriotism, Nationalism and China’s US Policy: Structures And Consequences Of Chinese National Identity” *The China Quarterly*, 205 (2011): 1-17;

For the rising focus on consent see Helen Rees, “The Age of Consent: Traditional Music, Intellectual Property and Ahanging Attitudes in the People’s Republic of China”, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 12, no. 1 (2003): 137-171;

¹⁰⁷² Chen Xiejun “Bowuguan chengshi de wenhua zhidian” [The Museum, An Urban Cultural Fulcrum] *Dongnan Wenhua* [Southeast Culture] no. 6, (2010): 17-22; Liu Chang, “Qiantan bowuguan ruhe zuo hao youxiao de wenhua chuanbo” [A Discussion Of How Museums Can Best Disseminate Civilization] *Bowuguan yanjiu* [Museum Research] no. 2, (2010): 37-39; Wang Shuqing, “Gugong bowuyuan gaige kaifang de renshi jichu” [The Foundations Of The Palace Museum’s Post-Reform Experience] *Zhongguo bowuguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 2, (1992): 28-32; Wang Xiuwen, “Guanyu bowoguan shehui xiaoyi yu jingji xiaoyi de tantao” [Regarding The Investigation Of Museological Cultural And Economic Effectiveness] *Beifang wenwu* [Northern Cultural Heritage] no. 3, (1988): 91-96;

¹⁰⁷³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

in Cultural Revolution campaigns represent, almost unmistakably, an image of conservation. Under consent, the museum's restitution negotiations, as well as the different constituents who brought the negotiations to fruition, all share credit in the making of Chinese cultural heritage. The raid participants saved heritage from destruction, the museum appraisers identified heritage's value, negotiators resident on the mainland and abroad made the museum's role in heritage creation tangible, while the subjects of restitution, in their act of donation, legitimized the museum's indispensability to Chinese cultural heritage.

What Money Can't Buy

The boom in Chinese art prices soon threatened to derail the museum's momentum. In order to maintain the premise that the museum was the best candidate with whom to negotiate restitutions, the museum staff offered special services to past and potential affiliates. Zhang Chengzong (1943 – 1996), a CCP agent and head of Shanghai's Cultural Relics Management Board, guaranteed full municipal cooperation. Zhang encouraged the Class of 1952 to “use cultural relics as a way to administer the organization.”¹⁰⁷⁵ Whenever they successfully convinced private collectors to donate or sell antiquities, Zhang “paid attention. He asked the municipality and bureau to give awards.”¹⁰⁷⁶ Municipal cooperation helped the museum establish restitutions packages that money couldn't buy.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

In 1984, the museum inaugurated a program called *wenwu zhiyou* (Friends of Cultural Relics).¹⁰⁷⁷ This program enabled Shanghai to issue social capital in the guise of cultural relics.¹⁰⁷⁸ Its activities included outings with specific municipal officials and museum curators; “to look at cultural protection sites, museums, and archaeological sites.”¹⁰⁷⁹ The museum staff used this program as a way to recruit new donors, as well as to display the benefits of museum affiliation. To celebrate J. M. Hu, for example, Friends of Cultural Relics took all the guests invited to the Hu Huichun donation ceremony on a curator-led trip to the Jingdezhen kilns in Jiangxi province. The trip won tremendous accolades from the overseas guests. James Watt reminisced that “they organized the only air conditioned train in all of south China reserved only for politburo members...the whole train full of people from all over the world. It was a very grand affair.”¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷⁷ You Zhenqun, “Bowuguan zhi you de xingzhi yu zhineng chutan” [An Exploration Of Friends Of Cultural Relics' Characteristics And Function] *Zhongguo bowoguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 3, (1990): 75-78.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Zhou Yongming, “Social Capital and Power: Entrepreneurial Elite and the State in Contemporary China” *Policy Sciences*, 33, no. 3/4, (2000): 323-340.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Interview with James Watt, October 14th, 2009.



Figure 5.3. A group photo of some Friends of Cultural Relics members taken at the Shanghai Museum's inauguration ceremony. Liu Jinji, whose painting and calligraphy collection were seized by the museum during the Cultural Revolution and the details of which are described in Chapter 3, sits third from the left. (1984) Courtesy of Zheng Zhong.

Friends of Cultural Relics programming targeted both museological and commercial interests. As Li Junjie explained, for collectors with means, “money wasn't the issue, it was the access.”¹⁰⁸¹ When Friends organized a trip to see the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Army, their guests “went downstairs into the tombs themselves.”¹⁰⁸² Given the PRC's strict excavation rules, to “see them at ground level that was like presidential treatment”.¹⁰⁸³ It set the potential donors apart from everyday visitors, who saw the tombs from a platform above the excavation site. Similarly, when Friends visited Dunhuang “we arranged things with the Dunhuang research center's director...they had someone who really knew what they were doing give them a talk.”¹⁰⁸⁴

¹⁰⁸¹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹⁰⁸² Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹⁰⁸³ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

The guests saw murals in uncrowded settings and gained access to many more grottoes than otherwise allowed.

Friends of Cultural Relics also made visiting the mainland easy. “You have to think, right after 1978, how difficult was it to get a hotel or train to Shanghai.”¹⁰⁸⁵ Friends affiliates, however, might “call on a Friday, say they are coming for the weekend.”¹⁰⁸⁶ Upon receiving the call, the Shanghai Museum staff “did so much back room work, renting a car, a hotel, plane tickets. We organized the restaurant to eat. The money we paid for it.”¹⁰⁸⁷ Staff “go to the airport to pick them up, take them to dinner. We open up the warehouse and show them the objects. Then we send them off.”¹⁰⁸⁸ From the perspective of potential donors, “they spent a great weekend in Shanghai, looking at cultural relics, and they didn't have to think.”¹⁰⁸⁹ The museum even made professional restoration services available through its Conservation Workshop, at no charge.

The rise in Chinese art prices soon outpaced the museum's ability to pay, or offer favors. Chen Peifen confirmed that “the later things were, the more difficult it became.”¹⁰⁹⁰ By the mid-1980s, individuals whom the acquisitions team approached “didn't want to do it anymore...They would say oh we want to keep these objects, our ancestors passed it down to us.”¹⁰⁹¹ Li Junjie

¹⁰⁸⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

¹⁰⁹¹ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

explained that negotiations stalled “because of the money.”¹⁰⁹² The international market demands for Chinese art made prices such that “they sell one of the items they had then it's worth fifty million or maybe ten million.”¹⁰⁹³ At those amounts, the Shanghai Museum could no longer compete. Furthermore, the museum collection began to reach the point at which it no longer needed objects beyond those which it already had. Thus, the restitution of confiscated property began to proceed with reduced museum interference.

Substitutions-in-kind

Wang Qianbi and his team thought that restitution would never end. In addition to the 320,000 pieces of confiscated property that the Arts and Crafts Company had sent over in 1981, the team also dealt the existing inventory at Puxi road, as well as that at eleven other sorting stations in the municipality.¹⁰⁹⁴ The sheer amount of objects, the majority of which post-dated 1795, overwhelmed Wang's team. In many cases, restitution packages couldn't provide the original confiscated items. Raid inventories just didn't make specific enough records and sorting station attendants failed to distinguish one seized item from the many others in their warehouse. As a result, most restitution packages offered substitutions-in-kind.

Sorting stations used substitutions as a standard solution for the restitution of unidentifiable inventory. According to this policy: “if I had a Wu Hufan painting, then we give

¹⁰⁹² Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

¹⁰⁹³ Interview with Zhu Junbo, December 17th, 2009.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Shanghai Gazetteer *Zhuanye zhi: Shanghai wenwu bowuguan zhi: Dashiji* [Professional Gazetteers: Shanghai Cultural Relics Museum Gazetteer: Annals], Available <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node4467/node20331/index.html>> [June, 2011]

you back a Wu Hufan painting, it may not be yours, but it was still a Wu Hufan.”¹⁰⁹⁵ In cases where “there was no object in kind, then they gave it back in quantity, if you had three paintings, then you can have three paintings back.”¹⁰⁹⁶ Finally, if the municipality had no substitutions-in-kind at all, sorting stations paid out in cash.

Cash compensation didn't take antiquities' market value into account. Wang Qianbi explained that “at the first, it was cheap, about one or two RMB per piece.”¹⁰⁹⁷ By the early 1980s the policy shifted to 12 RMB per object. The municipality justified this price with bad record keeping. “We couldn't see the object anymore, we wouldn't know the quality. There wasn't anything we could do.”¹⁰⁹⁸ By way of comparison, in the 1980s one RMB bought one kilogram's worth of hairtail fish, which most considered a fine dinner for a family of four. Twelve RMB paid for a year's tuition in junior high school. Therefore, from the municipality's perspective, its cash allowances were adequate given existing standards of living in the PRC.

The threat of getting cheated through substitutions-in-kind galvanized Shanghai residents to get restitution packages approved as soon as possible. Otherwise, what's theirs might get allotted to someone else's package. Private citizens leveraged documentation of all kinds. Guo Zhiyu, a Cultural Relics Management Board employee, found a painting that got confiscated from his house during the Cultural Revolution when he himself was helping the

¹⁰⁹⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010

¹⁰⁹⁸ Interview with Wang Qianbi, June 29th, 2010

Sorting Committee clear inventory in the late 1980s. The sorting station kept the painting in its substitutions section because the associated records didn't indicate any specific owner. The painting, however, had a colophon that read "to Mr. Zhiyu" from the painter, Huang Binhong.¹⁰⁹⁹ When Guo Zhiyu claimed the painting, the station attendant wanted proof. The colophon didn't have a last name. "Is this Guo Zhiyu or some other Zhiyu? They couldn't be sure."¹¹⁰⁰ Guo had proof indeed. The painter wrote Guo "a letter, and in the letter he said I have attached a small painting."¹¹⁰¹ Guo brought the letter, and the sorting station attendants "gave him back the painting."¹¹⁰²

Guo Zhiyu's case was the exception that proved the rule. Dark rumors about substitution fraud flooded Shanghai. The most common method of fraud was to use substitutions-in-kind to get antiquities with a higher value than that which was originally seized. "Lots of people asked people with good eyes, people who knew what they were doing, to go pick out things for them."¹¹⁰³ Other tricks included "pretending to be someone else" and retrieving ill-begotten restitutions.¹¹⁰⁴ Sun Jiecong, who inventoried the substitutions-in-kind antiquities that private collectors eventually sold to the state-run art markets, commented that "If you knew what you're doing then you're lucky, otherwise, you're out of luck. This was the way after the

¹⁰⁹⁹ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

¹¹⁰⁰ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

¹¹⁰¹ Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

¹¹⁰² Interview with Xia Shunkui, April 26th, 2010.

¹¹⁰³ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹¹⁰⁴ Interview with Chen Peifen, February 1st, 2010.

Cultural Revolution... things were pretty messy.”¹¹⁰⁵

The modern Chinese art historical canon

Restituted antiquities that postdated 1795 quickly appeared for sale on the international market for Chinese art. As Jim Lally observed, new wealth in the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) opened up “the most voracious appetite in the world for Chinese art.”¹¹⁰⁶ On the mainland, a SEZ designation made the region available for unprecedented foreign investment, incentivized by special tax provisions and greater trade independence.¹¹⁰⁷ Shanghai received its SEZ designation in 1984. The subsequent burst in new financial opportunities boosted activity in the domestic and export antiquities trade. Xu Yongxiang, a Shanghai Museum Customs inspector, remarked that “before 1978 there wasn't a lot of work at Customs. After 1978...there was more work, more things leaving the country.”¹¹⁰⁸ For every collector with an interest in buying a piece of Chinese cultural heritage, there was an equally enthusiastic seller who wanted to transform their restituted antiquities into investment capital.

As the inspection entity that regulated all export antiquities, the Shanghai Museum soon called for an official block on the nationwide divestment of antiquities postdating 1795. The Cultural Relics Management Bureau, the Shanghai Museum's political arm, wanted to designate

¹¹⁰⁵ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹¹⁰⁶ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹¹⁰⁷ Mark W. Frazier “China's Pension Reform and Its Discontents” *The China Journal*, no. 51, (2004): 97-114; Lance L. P. Gore “The Communist Legacy in Post-Mao Economic Growth” *The China Journal*, no. 41, (1999): 25-54; Margaret M. Pearson “The Erosion of Controls over Foreign Capital in China, 1979-1988: Having Their Cake and Eating It Too?” *Modern China*, 17, no. 1 (1991): 112-150;

¹¹⁰⁸ Interview with Xu Yongxiang, July 8th, 2009.

select specimens of post-1795 antiquities illegal for export. It proposed to shift the dividing line between Cultural Relics and Arts and Crafts from 1795 to 1911, “so nothing from the Qing can get out.”¹¹⁰⁹ The organization had already made headway in this endeavor. Customs checkpoints expanded from the original four cities (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangdong) to “fourteen entry points for the export of Cultural Relics”, which museum appraisers ran.¹¹¹⁰ The expansion of Customs checkpoints gave museum staff more power in municipal arts administration, because “we basically took over Customs' job in terms of allowing things to leave the country.”¹¹¹¹

The tightening of export regulations created two separate canons of modern Chinese art: one for the PRC and another for the international market. Artists active between 1795 and 1911, and whose creations once passed Customs inspections liberally, became difficult to collect outside the mainland. Regulations on contemporary works of art, such as the Qi Baishi and Xu Beihong paintings that Sun Jiecong's German friend bought monthly, also became restrictive. “There's a general rule for export about contemporary works. If there's good works by Qi Baishi then you can't sell it.”¹¹¹² Buyers had to get museum staff to stamp all the antiquities they intended to export from Shanghai Customs. Customs maintained specific no-export lists and cleared nothing without an appraiser's stamp. “If they see the name or whatever then they're

¹¹⁰⁹ Interview with Zhang Qinghao, December 24th, 2009.

¹¹¹⁰ Interview with Zhang Qinghao, December 24th, 2009.

¹¹¹¹ Interview with Zhang Qinghao, December 24th, 2009.

¹¹¹² Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009. The more controversial realm of contemporary Chinese art, however, does not receive similar treatment. John Clark “Official Reactions to Modern Art in China Since the Beijing Massacre”, *Pacific Affairs*, 65, no. 3 (1992): 334-352

going to look for the stamp. If they don't see the stamp they won't let it pass.”¹¹¹³

By far the most controversial export decision that the Shanghai Museum made in recent years is for the Wong Nan-p'ing collection. Wong (1924 – 1985) was a Hong Kong-based painting collector and dealer who fled from Shanghai in 1949.¹¹¹⁴ During the Cultural Revolution, the museum raided Wong's Shanghai estate, which contained a collection of paintings and calligraphy from the Ming and Qing dynasties. The paintings predated 1795. Restitution stated that Wong could collect his seized paintings and calligraphy from the Shanghai Museum, which held them in custody. As Wong was a Hong Kong resident, however, Cultural Relics laws forbade the works of art's removal from the mainland.

Wong suggested a trade. He owned two calligraphy compendia of great value: *Wong wengong wenji* (the Collected Writings Of Wong Anshi) and *Song Wang Anshi shu lengyan jingzhi yao juan* (Essential Scrolls Of Song Dynasty Wang Anshi's Buddhist Scriptural Calligraphy).¹¹¹⁵ He offered to donate both in return for permission to take two hundred works of art from his restitution package to Hong Kong. The Shanghai Museum considered this a lucrative offer. “Both the original print and the colophons” on Wong's two compendia indicated their authenticity.¹¹¹⁶ The museum even sent Xie Zhiliu “to Hong Kong to figure out whether the two

¹¹¹³ Interview with Sun Jiecong, December 20th, 2009.

¹¹¹⁴ For more on Wong Nan-p'ing, see Richard M. Barnhart and Qianshen Bai, *The Jade Studio: Masterpieces Of Ming and Qing Painting And Calligraphy From The Wong Nan-p'ing Collection* (New Haven, 1994).

¹¹¹⁵ Zheng Zhong “Wang Anshi liang zhong yizuo de huigui” The Return Of Two Relics Of Wang Anshi” *Dongfang wenyuan* [The Eastern Literary World], Available <<http://news.eastday.com/epublish/gb/paper81/1//hwz30998.htm>> [April, 2011]

¹¹¹⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

calligraphy pieces were real.”¹¹¹⁷ The painting specialist pronounced his approval. Thus, the museum agreed to negotiate with the Ministry of Culture on Wong's behalf.

The negotiation took years. Shanghai had to rally all its political connections, including a favor from National People's Congress member Hu Yaobang, in order to obtain clearance. The museum even assembled an official entourage for the exchange. Zhong Yinlan, Huang Xuanpei, and a Customs representative accompanied Wong Nan-p'ing's restitution package to Shenzhen to make sure that the works of art cleared Customs.¹¹¹⁸ Customs rebuffed them. “That group of things Customs didn't want to let go of...They weren't the best, but they were good, they could not be exported.”¹¹¹⁹ Shanghai had to have the Ministry of Culture call Shenzhen, or leave empty handed.¹¹²⁰ By the time Wong's restitution package finally arrived in Hong Kong, he had already passed away. His wife, Fang Shuyan, accepted and spoke on his behalf at the donation ceremony.¹¹²¹

The Shanghai Museum considered the Wong Nan-p'ing affair well worth the trouble. Wong's donation gave the museum its first work of art by the calligrapher Wang Anshi. The two compendia's sheer scale overwhelmed expectations. Zhong Yinlan, who participated in the Wong estate raid, remarked that although the two-hundred-piece exchange included “some nice

¹¹¹⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010. There remains some controversy over the fact that Xie Zhiliu and Wong Nan-p'ing are related. Some believe this relationship helped Wong negotiate with the museum.

¹¹¹⁸ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

¹¹¹⁹ Interview with Huang Xuanpei, January 12th, 2010.

¹¹²⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹¹²¹ Interview with Jin Jiapin, January 13th, 2010. This actions undertaken in this lengthy process resembles that found by scholars of the Chinese court mediation process. Philip C. C. Huang, “Court Mediation in China, Past and Present”, *Modern China*, 32, no. 3 (2006): 275-314;

collections”, getting the two compendia was a better deal.¹¹²² “They were pretty large, it wasn't just one volume mind you, it was twenty some volumes, they stacked really tall, and there were colophons by Wang Meng, it was extraordinary.”¹¹²³ In exchange, the Shanghai Museum simply let go of some exports that it had no intention of acquiring in the first place.

So far as overseas collectors were concerned, however, the Wong Nan-p'ing affair marked a phenomenal injection of new specimens into the international market for Chinese art. “Paintings have the widest possible audience” amongst Chinese art collectors.¹¹²⁴ Their profit margins outperform any other category of art. In 1994, the Yale University Art Gallery exhibited a portion of Wong Nan-p'ing's collection in their exhibition space, with an accompanying catalog.¹¹²⁵ The catalog touted Wong's re-assemblage of his collection in the years following the Cultural Revolution, as well as the paintings' significance in the history of modern Chinese art. One wonders what the long-term impact of these objects' release will be, both as they reflect the distinctions between PRC and non-PRC canons of modern Chinese art, as well as future sales potential on the international art market.

¹¹²² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

¹¹²³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, January 5th, 2010.

¹¹²⁴ Interview with Alvin Lo, June 14th, 2010. Lo's statement describes the situation both on the art market and in the field of Chinese art history. The major scholars of Chinese art, throughout the twentieth century, have either focused primarily on Chinese painting or written scholarship that uses Chinese painting as a spring board to talk about other categories of Chinese art. For select examples see James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth Century Chinese Paintings* (Cambridge, 1982); Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600 – 1900* (Cambridge, 1992); Jerome Silbergeld, *Contradictions: Artistic Life, the Socialist State, and the Chinese Painter Li Huasheng* (Seattle, 1993);

¹¹²⁵ Richard Barnhart and Bai Qianshen, *The Jade Studio: Masterpieces Of Ming And Qing Painting And Calligraphy From The Wong Nan-p'ing Collection* (New Haven, 1994).

The International Shanghai Museum

By 1985 the Shanghai Museum's need for a better location outstripped its need for more antiquities. The collection needed a new home, in particular one that offered modern facilities that would complement the extraordinary acquisitions that the Shanghai Museum had won since its last major move in the 1960s. #16 South Henan Road had not been renovated since 1959 and its facilities raised eyebrows. Visitors accustomed to institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum complained. They opined that Shanghai's collection "had been living in a drafty bank building," in display cases that also housed spider webs and dead flies.¹¹²⁶

Museum administrators began fund-raising for a new building. The municipality pledged eight million RMB and gave the Shanghai Museum permission to relocate to the middle of the People's Square, across Remin boulevard from the People's Park. The museum, however, had to raise the rest of the funds it needed for construction, landscaping, and interior modeling.¹¹²⁷

Jin Jiaping, the museum's head of human resources, used his municipal connections to get Museum Presidents Ma and Wang "long term visas...such that any time of the year they could go over to Hong Kong. They could exit and enter freely."¹¹²⁸ The museum approached an entrepreneur named Xian Xuantang, a collector that the museum had long courted through

¹¹²⁶ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹¹²⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹¹²⁸ Interview with Jin Jiaping, January 13th, 2010.

Friends of Cultural Relics.¹¹²⁹ Xian helped the Presidents set up a foundation called the Shanghai Museum New Building Trust, then “went around his friends to gather up money for the trust fund.”¹¹³⁰ The trust campaigned heavily amongst overseas Chinese, in particular those living in Hong Kong, London, and New York.

Li Junjie, who undertook much of the administrative tasks in the campaign for a new Shanghai Museum, asserted that the potential donors’ interest in antiquities enabled the museum staff to do effective fund-raising. For example, “every year on the first three days of the new years we would organize a cultural relics meeting.”¹¹³¹ There, donors, businessmen, and politicians mingled in the same space. Zhang Zhengzong's political pull attracted attendance from Hong Kong businessmen who wanted to invest in Shanghai. Furthermore, Zhang made sure that top officials like Jiang Zemin showed up. “He wrote, and Jiang Zhemin gave a date...well, if Jiang Zhemin came, then everyone else will come too.”¹¹³² Friends of Cultural Relics made sure that antiquities took center stage at these programs. Donors told stories about the antiquities they donated and the Chinese cultural heritage sites they visited on organized trips.

The museum made its monetary needs clear to potential donors. “We were doing

¹¹²⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010. This example of the monetary connection between the mainland and Hong Kong resonates with broader scholarly assessments of this period. See Amy Liu Mei Heung and David Zweig “Hong Kong's Contribution to Mainland China's Property Sector” *Asian Survey*, 51, no. 4 (2011): 739-768.

¹¹³⁰ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹¹³¹ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

¹¹³² Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009. For more on guanxi-building see Xuezi Guo, “Dimensions of Guanxi in Chinese Elite Politics” *The China Journal*, no. 46, (2001): 69-90; Jean C. Oi “Communism and Clientelism: Rural Politics in China”, *World Politics*, 37, no. 2 (1985): 238-266; Andrew G. Walder, “Social Change in Post-Revolution China” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 15 (1989): 405-424;

preparation work. If we don't do this, were they going to give us donations in the end? No.”¹¹³³

The trips and ongoing favors all served a purpose.¹¹³⁴ “This is how we did our long term relationships...we could talk about cultural relics...you can't just have small talk for more than an hour, you have to have something in common.”¹¹³⁵ Antiquities, in particular the museum's commitment to making antiquities an integral part of Chinese cultural heritage, held it all together.

As part of its fund-raising efforts, the museum offered to name galleries after specific donors. Each gallery came with a cost. “The bronze galleries, ceramics galleries, were 1,000,000 American dollars, the calligraphy and painting gallery was 50,000 American dollars...Sometimes the money was pooled together from several different people, and their names can all go on the gallery names.”¹¹³⁶ The museum also solicited funds for outdoor landscaping, as well as a VIP room for gala receptions.¹¹³⁷

Amongst the donors, overseas Shanghainese proved most willing to contribute. When Shanghai entrepreneur Diane Woo approached Patty Tang, the current head of Friends of the

¹¹³³ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹¹³⁴ For the overarching history of ideas about cash for favors in China see Hill Gates “Money for the Gods” *Modern China*, 13, no. 3, (1987): 259-277; For Shanghai Museum specific proposals see Jiao Zhenyuan “Shilun woguo bowuguan shiye zhong de jingji xiaoyi” [An Attempt To Discuss Our Country's Museum Industries' Economic Effectiveness] *Zhongguo bowuguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 4, (1986): 38-42; Liu Binbyuan “Kuangda bowuguan jinji shouru zhi yiyi tujing” [Expanding Museums' Means And Channels Of Economic Income] *Zhongguo Bowoguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 2, (1985):44-47; Ma Chengyuan and Gaojun “Wushi nian lai Shanghai bowuguan de wenwu shoucang” [Fifty Years Of Collecting At The Shanghai Museum] *Shilin* [Forest Of History] no. 1, (2004): 49-52, 72.

¹¹³⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹¹³⁶ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹¹³⁷ Interview with Patty Tang, October 22nd, 2009; Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009; Interview with Diane Woo, November 7th, 2009.

Shanghai Museum in America, she leveraged Tang's Shanghai ancestry. Woo “said you really should go back to China, it's a new country.”¹¹³⁸ Tang agreed and helped the museum raise funds for landscaping, outdoor sculptures, as well as to establish an exchange program with the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Many different Chinese allowed the lure of a celebrated cultural heritage to draw them to Shanghai. In the words of Jim Lally, “there are people who went back in the 1980s simply because they were in their eighties and would rather die in the Jinjiang hotel in Shanghai.”¹¹³⁹ After a life time’s worth of wandering overseas, these individuals wanted to return to their homeland and reconnect with the happier ghosts of their past. When I pressed Lally to articulate why donors chose the Shanghai Museum over other cultural institutions in the PRC, he highlighted the museum's commitment to cultural heritage.¹¹⁴⁰ “They were very committed to the idea of the art being important and they were struggling to recreate an atmosphere where the art could be available to the people and they could fulfill their role as protectors of the past in China.”¹¹⁴¹ In other words, the Shanghai Museum successfully established themselves as the custodians of Chinese cultural heritage, both in the minds of constituents in the PRC and abroad.

¹¹³⁸ Interview with Patty Tang, October 22nd, 2009.

¹¹³⁹ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

¹¹⁴⁰ For Chinese museum professionals' articulation of the same see Hu Jianzhong “Shanghai bowoguan xiandaihua bowoguan de linian” [Shanghai Museum – The Concept Of A Modernized Museum] *Zhongguo wenhuayichan* [Chinese Cultural Heritage] no. 4, (2005): 58-59; Ma Chengyuan “Shanghai bowoguan gongzuo huibao tigang” [An Outline Of The Shanghai Museum's Key Accomplishments] *Zhongguo bowoguan* [Chinese Museums] no. 3, (1991): 10-15.

¹¹⁴¹ Interview with Jim Lally, October 28th, 2009.

While it seems rash to speculate on the basis of individual testimony, the general sense that Shanghai was a leader in cultural heritage maintenance, and was a worthy investment for those interested in promoting Chinese cultural heritage, seem consistent with the museum's financial ledgers.

Figure 5.4. Donation Sums By Self-Proclaimed Location.

Number Of Donors By Location

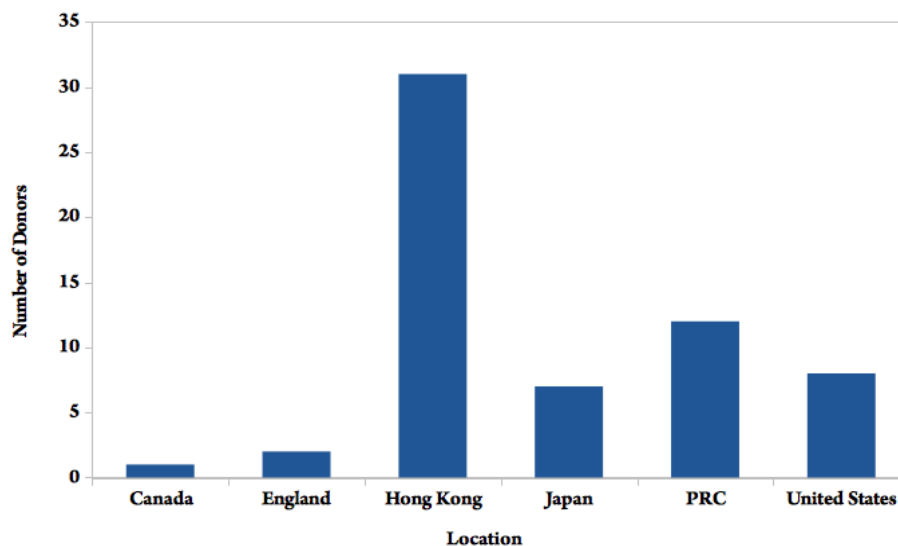


Figure 5.5. Number of Donors By Self-Proclaimed Location.

The chart entitled Donations Sums By Location (Figure 5.4) indicates that Hong Kong and American donors contributed most heavily towards the creation of the new museum.¹¹⁴² Hong Kong donors gave more than forty-eight million RMB, making up sixty-three percent of total contributions. Philanthropists such as Douglas Dillon and the Starr Foundation pushed total American contributions up to more than twenty-one million RMB, or twenty-eight percent. The rest of the money, by order of quantity, come from the PRC (3%), Japan (2%), England (2%), and Canada (1%). The chart entitled Number of Donors By Region (Figure 5.4) shows

¹¹⁴² Data for these figures comes from the Shanghai Museum Donors plaque, visible from the museum lobby at the entrance. The ledgers illustrate donations in their original currency. For the purposes of uniformity I converted the sums to RMB. Most donors, however, gave United States Dollars, the most favorable and widely-used foreign currency in the PRC during the mid to late 1990s.

that Hong Kong led the way in headcount. At thirty-one heads, donors from Hong Kong made up fifty-one percent of the Shanghai Museum's major contributors. In order of quantity, the rest of the donors self-identify as being from the PRC (20%), the United States (13%), Japan (11%), England (3%), and Canada (2%). The data in the two charts indicate that PRC donors represent a more significant proportion of the donor population than those from England, Japan, or further afield. Overseas donors, however, tended to give non-Chinese currency, such as Hong Kong Dollars, Japanese Yen, American Dollars, and British Pounds, which made their contributions more weighty by rate of exchange. The internationality of the donors at large, and the vastness of the sums they donated, however, suggest that philanthropists from the above regions supported the Shanghai Museum's custodianship of Chinese cultural heritage, in hard cash.

Compared to the prices for named galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum, the above-mentioned sums are paltry. As Patty Tang asserted, "I think they didn't know that you don't give something with a name for less than a million dollars, they were giving them away for fifty or 100."¹¹⁴³ Museum administrators, however, found that favorable exchange rates made the value of the donations more than adequate. Li Junjie boasted that "we did the new museum on 5.7 hundred million RMB."¹¹⁴⁴ The staff take particular pride that "it wasn't the museum who asked for this money, we had other people help us get the money."¹¹⁴⁵

¹¹⁴³ Interview with Patty Tang, October 22nd, 2009.

¹¹⁴⁴ Interview with Li Junjie, April 27th, 2010.

¹¹⁴⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

The Shanghai Museum New Building Trust, and the international set associated with the Trust, demonstrated that the museum had won global recognition.

How much prosperity was good for the Shanghai Museum? On the face of it, given the miserable condition of mainland museums in the twentieth century, this question is absurd. The Shanghai Museum's building, facilities, and collections enjoyed stronger publicity, better conservation resources, and more varieties of art than anywhere else in the country. Their only shared issue with comparable institutions on the mainland was the cost of general admissions (20 RMB), but even that was resolved by a municipal grant guaranteeing free admissions starting in 2009.¹¹⁴⁶ The institution's riches seemed invulnerable to the vicissitudes of the Asian Financial Crisis (1997 – 1998). Capital begot fame and fame begot more capital.

Far from denying itself acclaim, the museum took its collection on the road, shaping itself into an international institution in ways that other flagship PRC museums, such as the Palace Museum in Beijing and the Shenyang Palace Museum in Liaoning Province, proved slower to embrace. Shanghai establishing ongoing partnerships with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Terra Foundation for American Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the British Museum, and the Walt Disney Company – just to name a few. At the dawn of the twentieth century there seemed no limit, certainly geographically, to the Shanghai Museum's reach.

¹¹⁴⁶ Tao Tingting “Lun bowuguan mianfei kaifang hou de yingdui zhice” [Regarding Policy Responses To The Museum's Cost-Free Admissions] *Dazhong wenyi* [Literature And Art For The Masses] no. 24, (2010): 198-199.

Amongst the museum staff, however, the museum's international turn only deepened the existing rift between the old guard and the younger generation of museum employees.¹¹⁴⁷ Although the museum had plenty of cash, the institution no longer privileged practical experience as it did in the past. Employees who want hands-on training bemoaned the fact that the museum no longer makes its entire collection, specifically the storerooms, available for general study. New hires “are very good at analytical skills and descriptions, they can say oh these are the characteristics of Qing dynasty objects, these are the characteristics of Ming dynasty objects...But they've seen very little. Most of the things they've seen are fakes.”¹¹⁴⁸ The privileging of credentials over skill has robbed the staff of antiquarianism, specifically the appraisal skills on which the old guard built their careers. “That's a key difference. The older generation didn't write much down, but they knew what they were looking at.”¹¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

However controversial restitution and open campaigns to exchange favors for cash remain in the public discourse, one disputes the significance of the Shanghai museum's achievements in terms of acquisition and institution building over the past thirty years. Three generations of museum staff, from disparate backgrounds and often under threat from one

¹¹⁴⁷ For more on the impact of institutional culture on PRC employees, see David J. Davies, “Wal-Mao: The Discipline of Corporate Culture and Studying Success at Wal-Mart China” *The China Journal*, no. 58 (2007): 1-27.

¹¹⁴⁸ Interview with Shen Minren, September 24th, 2009.

¹¹⁴⁹ Interview with Shen Minren, September 24th, 2009.

another's political and administrative ambitions, worked collaboratively to create one of the three largest repositories of Chinese art in the world. In each of its three locations, the Shanghai Museum's physical presence denoted the collection's significance as a link between mainland and overseas collectors, its relevance to regional and international finance, as well as its custodianship of cultural heritage. Many cultural institutions harbor similar ambitions. Few realize these ambitions within a few decades, and fewer still wield that unique combination of municipal support, popular interest, and international recognition that differentiate regional favorites from international icons.

Shanghai's achievement of these ambitions, however, only highlights the tensions that its high status has imposed on the very individuals who have brought into being. While the museum's collection is superb, the staff unanimously complain that the objects themselves are more difficult to access than ever before in the museum's history. Members of the Class of 1952 opine that the antiquarian training program that galvanized their professionalization succeeded because any employee could simply enter the museum's storerooms and study whatever antiquity they wanted. The post-1996 institutionalization of new bureaucratic and security procedures at the Shanghai Museum, however, keep museum employees, especially younger employees, from gaining access to the antiquities they wish to study. For the older generation of museum employees, both the Class of 1952 and 1972, these limitations seem to fly in the face of the privileging of hands-on skills that brought the museum to fame in the first place. How can

the nation's professional art appraisers and interpreters do their jobs if they do not have hands-on experience with their chosen objects of study? More importantly, how can museum professionals be trusted to purchase authentic works of art if they do not have regular experience handling comparable works of art in the museum's own collection?

The slackening emphasis on hands-on skills point to a larger shift in skill evaluation amongst museum professionals. Increasingly, the push to internationalize at PRC cultural institutions have come hand in hand with a push for museum professionals to publish research. In fact, the Shanghai Museum evaluates the distribution of raises, bonuses, and even makes hiring decisions based on the number of publications its staff produce each year. This criteria for upward mobility puts employees with limited literacy, specifically those older connoisseurs and conservators who have never had to contend with the pressures and politics of obtaining publications, in an indefensible position. As a result, those employees facing reduced upward mobility are increasingly marketing their hand-skills on the private sector. The conservator whose dingy kitchen and passionate personal manifesto introduced this chapter is one prominent example of this phenomenon. Similarly, members of the curatorial team take commissions for art appraisals from private collectors and companies, while members of the administrative staff manage, or run, art auction companies and museum consultancies on the side.

The above-mentioned personnel changes have raised serious questions for the Shanghai

Museum's future leadership. Given the turn towards a closed museum system, particularly insofar as the study of artifacts are concerned, the museum staff wonder how the administration will train its next generation of connoisseurs. Similarly, given the turn towards publications, the museum staff wonder what will become of those museum departments that require expert hand skills, such as conservation and reproduction. The persistent struggle over the cultivation and evaluation of skills, as well as the criteria for professionalization, may well be the Shanghai Museum's new link between high culture and ordinary people. While in the 1950s, museum exhibitions provided the lens through which ordinary Chinese engaged with newly nationalized artifacts of cultural heritage, in the 1990s, privatized schemes for heritage commodification link increasingly passionate art consumers with newly canonized categories of Chinese civilization.

Conclusion: Family Values

The Cult of Consent

The Shanghai Museum portrays the Gu family bequest as one of its great foundations. The family traces their collecting legacy back to 1841, when Gu Wenbin achieved a *Jinshi* degree, the highest honor in the Qing imperial exams. The history of Gu family collecting stretched across four generations. By the end of the Qing dynasty, their Suzhou estate contained more than one thousand ancient books, paintings, and calligraphy.¹¹⁵⁰ The Gu clan called it the Guoyun Lou collection, after the building in which the objects were housed.

On August 16th, 1937, one of the bombs that the Japanese Imperial Army detonated in Suzhou destroyed the Gu family living room. The clan kept a panic room, a secure space only accessible through a tunnel that connected two courtyards. Gu Gongxiong, the family patriarch, dropped a cache of paintings and calligraphy in the room, packed up his wife and kids, and fled for Shanghai.¹¹⁵¹

Shen Tongyue, Gu Gongxiong's widow, contacted the Shanghai Museum in 1951. She donated the Guoyun Lou collection in the name of her husband and five children. Between 1951 and 1959, the family presented the museum with 308 pieces of painting and calligraphy,

¹¹⁵⁰ Yinlan Zhong, “xiahui yuanying” [Radiant Reflections Over The Abyss] in Shanghai Bowu Guan Ed., *Gu Gongxiong Jiashu Juanzeng Shanghai Bowu Guan Guoyun Lou Shujua Jicui* [Collected Calligraphy And Painting From The Guoyun Lou Which The Gu Gongxiong Family Donated To The Shanghai Museum] (Shanghai, 2002): 8 – 9.

¹¹⁵¹ Zhongwu Zhang and Ning Fan, “Guoyun Lou Cangpin De Minyun” [The Fate Of The Guoyun Lou Collection], *Suzhou zazhi* [Suzhou Magazine] no. 3, (2010): 63 – 64.

which appraisers evaluated at 100,000 RMB.¹¹⁵² The Municipality granted the Gu clan a merit award of 10,000RMB, as well as a special exhibition featuring select pieces.¹¹⁵³ As with all 1950s donations, the municipality praised the family's nationalism. The Shanghai Museum continues to claim that the family's faith in China spurred the donation.

The Gu family got raided from all sides during the Cultural Revolution. The Suzhou Museum, Revolutionary Rebels at each of the five descendants' various work units, and even one of the daughter-in-laws' work units came and filled seven trucks with the family's possessions, which went to the Suzhou municipal sorting committee.¹¹⁵⁴ The family was shunned by all cultural institutions and the descendants were stripped of their Shanghai affiliations.¹¹⁵⁵ When Shen Tongyue died, no one visited.¹¹⁵⁶

In 1996, the Shanghai Museum reestablished contact with the Gu clan as part of donor relations programming for the inauguration of its new building. The children looked like anybody else by then. They lived with old furniture and barely had one black and white television set between them.¹¹⁵⁷ Members of the Class of 1952 reassembled the Gu clan and

¹¹⁵² *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu jieshou juanxian wenwu bin yu ui biao Zhang de qingshi baogao, pifu* [The Ministry Of Culture, Shanghai Municipal Department Of Cultural Affairs, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Requests, Reports, And Rescripts Regarding The Acceptance of Donations And The Granting Of Merit Awards] January 12th, 1959 – December 17th, 1959, B172-5-98, SMA, Shanghai.

¹¹⁵³ *Wenhua bu, Shanghai shi wenhua ju, shi wenguan hui guanyu jieshou juanxian wenwu bin yu ui biao Zhang de qingshi baogao, pifu* [The Ministry Of Culture, Shanghai Municipal Department Of Cultural Affairs, Municipal Cultural Relics Management Bureau's Requests, Reports, And Rescripts Regarding The Acceptance of Donations And The Granting Of Merit Awards] January 12th, 1959 – December 17th, 1959, B172-5-98, SMA, Shanghai.

¹¹⁵⁴ Zhongwu Zhang and Ning Fan, "Guoyun Lou Cangpin De Minyun" [The Fate Of The Guoyun Lou Collection], *Suzhou zazhi* [Suzhou Magazine] no. 3, (2010): 65.

¹¹⁵⁵ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

¹¹⁵⁶ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹¹⁵⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, June 29th, 2009.

reunited them in Shanghai for an exhibition entitled *Guoyun Lou Juanzeng Shuhua Jinpin Huigu Zhan* (Retrospective Exhibition Of Select Paintings And Calligraphy Donated By Guoyun Lou).¹¹⁵⁸ The museum paid for everything: “Return plane tickets, living spaces, and when they got here we also received them. Then when they left, I think everyone got 100,000rmb each.”¹¹⁵⁹ That's the equivalent of the Guoyun Lou collection's original evaluated worth.

In its donation literature, the Shanghai Museum proposes that it takes better care of donors than the donors' own families.¹¹⁶⁰ After all, the institution has more wealth, stability, and infrastructural support. For example, the museum pays health care costs for one of Shen Tongyue's daughters. Zhong Yinlan, who visits the daughter regularly, explained that “the daughter has Alzheimer's. She and her husband are in their 80s and 90s. They're at the hospital in Suzhou.”¹¹⁶¹ Shanghai pays for their on-site nurse and “all the medical bills that can't be reimbursed” by the state.¹¹⁶² As of 2010, the daughter was approaching ninety and the museum intended to “pay for her medical bills until she dies.”¹¹⁶³ When I asked Zhong Yinlan why the museum is willing to do this, she told me “their father did a lot for the Shanghai Museum and the

¹¹⁵⁸ Xiejun Chen, “qianyan” [Foreword] in Shanghai Bowu Guan Ed., *Gu Gongxiong Jiashu Juanzeng Shanghai Bowu Guan Guoyun Lou Shuhua Jicui* [Collected Calligraphy And Painting From The Guoyun Lou Which The Gu Gongxiong Family Donated To The Shanghai Museum] (Shanghai, 2002): 1; The exhibition even traveled to Hong Kong. For details see Yiwen “Shanghai bowuguan Guoyun Lou zhan zai gang juban” [Shanghai Museum's Guoyun Lou Exhibition Opens In Hong Kong] *Shanghai wenbo luncong* [Shanghai Wenbo] no. 2, (2003): 96.

¹¹⁵⁹ Interview with Li Junjie, January 21st, 2010.

¹¹⁶⁰ Fang Weifu, “Fan Jirong jiqi juanzeng de jiu jian qingtongqi” [Fan Jirong And The Nine Ancient Bronze Relics He Donated] *Shoucangjia* [Collector] no. 2, (2010): 16-20; Li Xia, “Shanghai bowuguan chungui” [Occurrences At The Shanghai Museum] *Shanghai dangan* [Shanghai Archives] no. 1, (1997): 18-19.

¹¹⁶¹ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹¹⁶² Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹¹⁶³ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

daughter accompanied the mother to all the big museum functions.”¹¹⁶⁴ When I pressed her for why the museum supported *this* daughter as opposed to the four other children, Zhong Yinlan explained that this daughter also donated some paintings to the museum. She had “paintings by the Four Wangs, they have four paintings. During the Cultural Revolution they hid those paintings. Once the revolution was over they donated those paintings to the Shanghai Museum.”¹¹⁶⁵ When I asked whether health care supplements constituted payment from the museum, Zhong Yinlan insisted they do not. “These people, they're just good people.”¹¹⁶⁶ Li Junjie added that the Gu's were more than good, they were “real collectors, these guys from the old times...these are real collectors.”¹¹⁶⁷

Constructing the Gu family as “real collectors” erases density of constituents that make up the museological fiction of donation.¹¹⁶⁸ The cash awards that the Gus received throughout the decades further enshrouds donations with merit and ceremony. The difficulty here is not simply that doing so contrives the erasure of provenance, or that it created cultural heritage in provenance's stead. The difficulty is that both are presumed as *natural*, and even *necessary*. For example, when the Guoyun Lou catalog introduces specific paintings, it do not mention which member of the Gu family owned, inscribed, or donated the work of art. The catalog simply

¹¹⁶⁴ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹¹⁶⁵ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹¹⁶⁶ Interview with Zhong Yinlan, July 10th, 2009.

¹¹⁶⁷ Interview with Li Junjie, July 7th, 2009.

¹¹⁶⁸ Perry Link “The Limits of Cultural Reform in Deng Xiaoping's China” *Modern China*, 13, no. 2 (1987): 115-176; Jamie Morgan, “Distinguishing Truth, Knowledge, and Belief: A Philosophical Contribution to the Problem of Images of China” *Modern China*, 30, no. 3 (2004): 398-427; David Shambaugh “China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy” *The China Journal*, no. 57 (2007): 25-58

refers the reader, as well as the gallery visitor, to similar artifacts in the Chinese art historical canon: painters such as Zhao Menfu, or the Wu school of painters in Suzhou.¹¹⁶⁹ What these references conceal are the density of roles that the Gus *also* played in collecting. Gu Gongxiong, the donor-in-name, was one among many in the Gu clan who sold, commissioned, designed, and negotiated the meaning and value of their antiquities with their respective associates, regional cultural institutions, and municipal governments. The Shanghai Museum played no role in raiding the Gu estate, but its publications literally seized the Gu bequest's identity. It appropriated the multiple layers of gray that marked the Guoyun Lou bequest by referring to the antiquities as donations. Furthermore, the museum requisitioned the right of identification for donors as a population. Its employees reserve the right to call some donors “real collectors”, and others – nothing at all.

As previously mentioned, the Shanghai Museum calls the various techniques that it uses to maintain its donation fictions “collector psychology”. These techniques include regular visits, merit awards, gifts, special ceremonies and exhibitions, as well as inclusion in the museum's various celebratory dinners and parties. In the years following the opening of the new museum, these techniques have expanded to ongoing health care payments and even real estate allotments. None of these techniques register with visitors as they walk past the new galleries.

¹¹⁶⁹ Yinlan Zhong, “xiahui yuanying” [Radiant Reflections Over The Abyss] in Shanghai Bowu Guan Ed., *Gu Gongxiong Jiashu Juanzeng Shanghai Bowu Guan Guoyun Lou Shujua Jicui* [Collected Calligraphy And Painting From The Guoyun Lou Which The Gu Gongxiong Family Donated To The Shanghai Museum] (Shanghai, 2002): 11 – 12.

Nevertheless, the techniques glue different constituents together. Indeed, the museum cannot celebrate its successes if donors do not attend its parties, grant interviews, or indeed, need favors. Similarly, the donors cannot wear their honors if the museum did not generate publicity, or needed exemplars to prove itself worthy of more donors, bequests, and recognition. In fact, to donors, museum staff, and even visitors who bother to read the celebratory plaques, the fact that a philanthropic act took place is *not* a fiction, but a tangible, quantifiable, reality. Thus, in the case of the Shanghai Museum, the fiction of donation has created something absolutely verifiable, and that thing is *consent*. Consent, on both the museum and the “donor” end, matters, precisely because it builds a stage upon which appropriation and incomplete restitution can be recast as preservationist, nationalistic, and philanthropic.¹¹⁷⁰

Hence, let us not look upon the Shanghai Museum's operative fiction as a singular event that occurs under the autocratic Communist regime, but a new way in which cultural institutions justify the creation of cultural heritage internationally. The PRC's ceremonies, merit payments, and special treatment for donors of national patrimony do not differ from “Dation” or “Acceptance in Lieu” schemes at British and French national museums, which offer similar art-for-cash options. In the French case, the Dation (a legal term for giving something in payment

¹¹⁷⁰ For similar findings see Albert Feuerwerker, “Chinese History and the Foreign Relations of Contemporary China” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 402, (1972): 1-14; Edward Friedman, “Reconstructing China's National Identity: A Southern Alternative to Mao- Era Anti-Imperialist Nationalism”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 53, no. 1 (1994): 67-91; Katherine Palmer Kaup, “Regionalism versus Ethniconationalism in the People's Republic of China”, *The China Quarterly*, no. 172 (2002): 863-884; Anne F. Thurston, “Victims of China's Cultural Revolution: The Invisible Wounds: Part II”, *Pacific Affairs*, 58, no. 1 (1985): 5-27;

of another that is due) implements a special tax provision that allows individuals to donate art in lieu of paying inheritance tax, with the goal to “promote the conservation of national artistic heritage.”¹¹⁷¹ To quote the Musée d’Orsay, whose Collection Development website includes the aforementioned “Dation” as one of nineteen different schemes of collection development, a French taxpayer may make his offer

“to the tax authorities, and it is then examined by the Inter-ministerial Commission of approval for the conservation of the national artistic heritage. Subject to the recommendation of the commission, the Minister for the Budget decides whether to accept or refuse the work offered, and notifies the taxpayer, who then acknowledges receipt. Having become the property of the State, the work then enters the national collections.”¹¹⁷²

All these schemes recognize antiquities providers as philanthropists and their antiquities, once vetted and accepted, as property of the national patrimony. When antiquities obtained through these schemes appear in British and French national museums, they also have no provenance. At best, they appear with a label advertising the merits of donating national patrimony. Furthermore, the antiquities vetting process involves a familiar collaboration of museum and market: The Inter-ministerial commission that evaluates offers includes two representatives from the Ministry for Budget, as well as two representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Communication.¹¹⁷³

¹¹⁷¹ Musée d’Orsay “Collection Development” Available <<http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/acquisitions/collection-development.html>> [20 June, 2011]

¹¹⁷² Musée d’Orsay “400th Anniversary Of The 'Acceptance In Lieu' Scheme” Available <<http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/acquisitions/40th-anniversary-of-the-acceptance-in-lieu-scheme.html>> [20 June, 2011]

¹¹⁷³ Musée d’Orsay “400th Anniversary Of The 'Acceptance In Lieu' Scheme” Available <<http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/acquisitions/40th-anniversary-of-the-acceptance-in-lieu-scheme.html>> [20 June,

If we recognize the invention of cultural heritage in “Capitalist” institutions like British and French national museums, then we are forced recognize the same in the “Communist” Shanghai Museum. Similarly, we are compelled to recognize the fictive quality of donations in both. The Guoyun Lou bequest not only defines the Shanghai Museum's creation of Chinese cultural heritage, but also the international creation of a world cultural heritage, one country at a time. Indeed, the elegant fiction of donation is embedded in the very existence of national museums, which consistently represent themselves as the custodians of heritage, the innovators of preservation, and the global repositories of our mutual past. This is as true of “democratic” cultural institutions as it is of “autocratic” ones, especially as both purport to partake in the identification of heritage. Populated with donors and yet donor-less, the Shanghai Museum collection thus enters the world heritage movement.

No one denies that Chinese people in the PRC have had a difficult twentieth century experience. Shanghai's private collectors found themselves in socially and politically harrowing situations, much of which I can never fully comprehend. In my research, however, I have found little to support the presumption that the systematic seizure of art in the PRC marks special sites of alienation, redemption, or nationalism. Nor have I found the many constituents at Shanghai Museum more humane or privileged than their equivalents at other museums. If any of the above properties hold for Shanghai, then I have found the same to be true of museum employees, art dealers, collectors, visitors, and municipal officials outside the putatively

autocratic context of the People's Republic of China.

In the Shanghai museum, two important processes mediate the Chinese art historical canon. Firstly, the museum and the art market co-create value. Both add new categories of art to the collecting palette, identifying iconic artists and objects for the canon. The second process is restitution, an ambiguous policy that places the ownership of Chinese cultural heritage under constant negotiation. While the restitution negotiations outlined in Chapter 5 claim to have resolved lingering issues over appropriation, the Chinese art market's explosive growth since 1978 has only elicited more dissatisfaction amongst Chinese who feel they sold their restitutions for too little, too soon. This is why framing antiquities as cultural heritage proves so effective – so long as objects remain in institutions that revere them as part of a canon and their original owners as philanthropists, the fluctuations of the art market disappear and the consolation of consent returns.

Under the banner of national patrimony, the remarkable thing about museums is that they seem to distinguish price from value. Visitors often do not pay for entry, curators do not engage with commerce, and dealers have no reach in the museum's hallowed galleries – commodities don't exhibit in museums lest the exhibition be seen as part of an advertising ploy. Nevertheless, museums openly ask for money through donation campaigns and exhibition tours, retired curators authenticate antiquities for a fee or even consult with state-owned auction houses like Hantai, and dealers willing to donate specific antiquities can often watch as their

titles transform from commercial, to philanthropic, to academic (Take, for example, Wong Nan-p'ing's transformation from a painting dealer to a collector to the subject of a Yale University museum catalog). For those who seek a concrete answer to what is and is not an irrefutably "priceless" object of value, this situation is at once intuitively simple and conceptually complex. Indeed, the Shanghai Museum's history reminds us that canonicity is an identifier that different individuals, including art dealers, collectors, municipal officials, customs officers, museum employees, and even we ourselves, have long trained each other to accept. On the one hand, the market is what the museum assigns to commodify antiquities outside the canon. On the other hand, the canon is utterly beholden to market transactions.

As this dissertation has shown, immutable greatest hits, exemplary donors, and a clear distinction between museum and market are precisely what Chinese cultural heritage, as presented by the Shanghai Museum, lacks. In this respect, the cast of characters that I have presented in conjunction with the museum's history are all part of a larger, co-creative process, in which state and non-state actors, from both museum and market, in China and overseas, have made up the defining elements of Chinese cultural heritage as they went along. Yet, for the most part, none of these constituents appear immortalized on museum plaques. Their individual histories prove too sensitive for the Shanghai Museum to explore. The only entities that do appear, without fail, are antiquities, which allow us to imagine a cultural heritage without provenance, but at the same time full of the labor of different constituents whose identities are

erased as a *necessity* of art appreciation. Indeed there is something compelling, even liberating, in the idea that anyone can enter a museum, observe the objects therein, and leave with the intangible, yet indelible, mark of a civilization that extends thousands of years into the past, and will exist so long as we consent to its value. While we may not be able to fix one specific object to the entire expanse of Five Thousand Years of Chinese Civilization, consenting to its canonicity marks the first step in that process.

Glossary of Chinese Terms

<i>chadui luohu</i>	插队落户	commune inserts
<i>da shoucangjia</i>	大收藏家	big collector
<i>danwei</i>	单位	work unit
<i>fencai</i>	粉彩	famille rose
<i>geli shencha</i>	隔离审查	segregated examination
<i>guanxi</i>	关系	relations
<i>guobao</i>	国宝	national treasures
<i>guojia wenwu jianding weiyuan hui</i>	国家文物鉴定委员会	national committee of cultural relics
<i>Guomindang</i>	国民党	Nationalist Party
<i>Guoyun Lou juanzeng shuhua jingpin huigu zhan</i>	过云楼捐献赠书画精品回顾展	retrospective exhibition of select paintings and calligraphy donated by Guoyun Lou
<i>Guwan</i>	古玩	Arts and crafts
<i>huaqiao dasha</i>	华侨大厦	overseas Chinese mansion
<i>hukou</i>	户口	household registration
<i>jianpolan</i>	捡破烂	rag-pickers
<i>jianshang jia</i>	鉴赏家	connoisseurs
<i>jieshou</i>	接收	acceptances
<i>jinshi degree</i>	进士	highest honors on the civil examinations
<i>kaiyang</i>	开洋	dried baby shrimp
<i>laobao</i>	老保	old conservatives
<i>laoshifu</i>	老师傅	master artisan
<i>laoxiansheng</i>	老先生	venerable sir
<i>liangbai jian</i>	两百件	two hundred items
<i>luoshi zhengce</i>	落实政策	restitution
<i>momo tou</i>	姆姆头	cleaning staff or nurse (Shanghainese phrase)
<i>nianfen</i>	年份	year date
<i>qingyou</i>	青釉	indigo glaze
<i>que</i>	缺	chip or a big crack
<i>sanbai jian</i>	三百件	three hundred items
<i>shang an tong fang sheng</i>	商鞅铜方升	Qin standard
<i>song Wang Anshi shu</i>	宋王安石楞严经旨要卷	essential scrolls Of Song Dynasty Wang Anshi's buddhist
<i>lengyan jingzhi yao juan</i>		

<i>tong ci yu za</i>	铜磁玉杂	scriptural calligraphy bronzes, ceramics, jades, miscellaneous
<i>Wang wengong wenji</i>	王文公文集	collected writings of Wang Anshi
<i>wenwu</i>	文物	cultural relics, and alternately, cultural heritage
<i>wenwu zhiyou</i>	文物之友	friends of cultural relics
<i>wubai jian</i>	五百件	five hundred items
<i>yibai jian</i>	一百件	one hundred items
<i>yiqian jian</i>	一千件	one thousand items
<i>zei gaowen</i>	擻高温	baking in heat (Shanghainese phrase)
<i>zhaofan pai</i>	造反派	revolutionary rebels
<i>zhuanjia</i>	专家	experts

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