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THE WAY FROM OUTSIDE IN
A Pedagogical Study of the Chestyakovian
System of Teaching Drawing and Its
Influence on Chinese Art Education

Lian Duan

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Education

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
January 1995

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ABSTRACT

THE WAY FROM OUTSIDE IN

A Pedagogical Study of the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing and Its Influence on Chinese Art Education

Lian Duan

This is a pedagogical study of the Chestyakovian system of teaching drawing and its influence on Chinese art education.

The Chestyakovian system had been the official system of art education in the former Soviet Union. It had also dominated Chinese art education during the 1950's and the first half of the 1960's, and was the most influential approach in China until the end of 1980's. Although this system was of great importance in the two countries, it has never been studied in the West before. In the course of this study, the author of this thesis raises two questions: What was the role of the Chestyakovian system in China? and, How could one adapt such a system to today's art education in China?

From the pedagogical perspective, the author does a historical, political, methodological, textual and biographical study of this system. Based on such a theoretical and practical study, the author answers the first question by suggesting that this system maintained the old Western tradition of Beaux Arts in China. The Chinese use of this system in the second half of this century can be seen as an adoption of the Western cultural and educational heritage. The answer offered to the second question is that Chinese art educators should give up all the political dogmas and the socialist realist principles of this system, but use its realist or representative aspect as one of the many ways to teach art.

This thesis is dedicated to
My mother
and
My wife
for their love and spiritual support

also dedicated to
My father
I wish he could know everything
about me and today

also to the memory of Peter Fuller
the art critic of Britain
who offered me
"Modern Painters Scholarship"
at the University of London

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	.....	x
List of Tables	.....	xiv
Chapter 1	Introduction	..... 1
Part 1	The Topic	..... 1
Part 2	The Background	..... 3
Part 3	The Methodology	..... 5
Part 4	A Justification	..... 6
Chapter 2	Brief Reviews of Drawing Systems in the West and the Historical Place of the Chestyakovian System	..... 10
Part 1	Definitions: Surveys of Drawing Systems and The Systems of Teaching Drawing	..... 10
2-1-1	Definitions	..... 10
2-1-2	Five Historical Approaches to Drawing in the West	..... 15
2-1-3	A Survey of the Purposes of Drawing	... 19

Part 2	The book <u>A Course of Drawing</u>	
	and the Historical Place of	
	the Chestyakovian system	..... 23
2-2-1	Background	..... 23
2-2-2	A Summary of <u>A Course of Drawing</u>	..... 25
2-2-3	The Historical Place of the	
	Chestyakovian System	..... 27
Chapter 3	The Pedagogical Philosophy	
	of the Chestyakovian System	..... 32
Part 1	The Curriculum Structure:	
	Skills versus Creativity	..... 32
3-1-1	The Organization of the Curriculum	.. 32
3-1-2	The Arrangement of the Five Stages	.. 38
3-1-3	Comments on the Curriculum Structure	.. 42
Part 2	A Socialist Realist Adaptation:	
	The Political Goals	..... 44
3-2-1	Means Serving Ends	..... 44
3-2-2	Ideological Dogmas	..... 47
3-2-3	Comments on the Political Goals	..... 51
Part 3	The Observation and Representation:	
	A Materialistic even Mechanical Method	. 53

3-3-1	The Theoretical Basis to Observation ..	53
3-3-2	The Methods of Observation and Representation	56
3-3-3	Comments on the Methodological Principles	63
Chapter 4	A Historical Review of the Chestyakovian Impact on China	66
Part 1	A Background to Modern Chinese Art Education	66
4-1-1	The Three Sources of Art and Art Education	66
4-1-2	The Political Influence	71
Part 2	The Chestyakovian System in China and the Development of Contemporary Chinese Art and Art Education	76
4-2-1	The Second Generation Artists	76
4-2-2	The Third Generation Artists and Contemporary Chinese Art	80
Part 3	Chinese Art Educators' Responses to the Chestyakovian System	86
4-3-1	Three Different Attitudes	86
4-3-2	Xu's Experiment of Teaching Drawing ...	90

Chapter 5	A Personal Experience of Learning Drawing	.....	96
Part 1	A Description	.....	96
5-1-1	My Teacher	.....	96
5-1-2	The Teaching and Learning	.....	99
5-1-3	Beyond Skill Training	.....	106
Part 2	An Interpretation	.....	109
5-2-1	The Only Road to Take	.....	109
5-2-2	The Possibility of Acceptance	.....	111
Part 3	An Evaluation and A Judgement	.....	114
5-3-1	The Teacher-Student Relationship	.....	114
5-3-2	A Judgement on Li and His Teaching	....	117
Chapter 6	Conclusion: The Value of the Chestyakovian System and the Value of My Study at Concordia University	.....	120
Bibliography		.....	124
Figures		.....	130
Appendix	Letters from National Library of Canada (13th July 1993) and The Library of Congress Washington D.C. (27th July 1993)	.....	150

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1

An ornamental model of plaster cast

(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 71)

..... 130

Figure 2

A work by a student from Moscow Middle School of Arts

(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 68)

..... 131

Figure 3

A small still life on table

(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 69)

..... 132

Figure 4

A drawing of interior scene or large still life

(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 70)

..... 133

Figure 5

A drawing of portrait: catching the anatomical structure

(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 97)

..... 134

Figure 6

A drawing of portrait: facial surfaces and the whole image

(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 98)

..... 135

Figure 7	
A drawing of figure in life environment	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 190)	
	.....13
Figure 8	
A sketch by Ilya Repin: Tolstoy working on his novel	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 182)	
	.....137
Figure 9	
A contour drawing by Preisler: an opposite example	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 13)	
	..... 138
Figure 10	
A sample of the Chestyakovian drawing:	
the first stage in drawing procedure	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 88)	
	..... 139
Figure 11	
A sample of the Chestyakovian drawing:	
drawing details as the following stage.	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 91)	
	..... 140
Figure 12	
A finished portrait: details and basic structure	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 93)	
	..... 141

Figure 13	
A life drawing by Sorikov	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 196)	
	..... 142
Figure 14	
A life drawing by Senov	
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 197)	
	..... 143
Figure 15	
<u>The Morning of Execution</u> (detail):	
a painting by Sorikov (Eotob, A.N., 1979, P.293)	
	..... 144
Figure 16	
<u>Ivan the Terrible Killing His Son</u> (detail):	
a painting by Repin (Eotob, A.N., 1979, P.280)	
	..... 145
Figure 17	
<u>David</u> , the plaster cast after Michelangelo	
(Wang, A.J., 1986, p. 3)	
	..... 146
Figure 18	
A drawing of portrait by a 17 year old art student of China	
(Collection of Prof. D. Pariser of Concordia University)	
	..... 147
Figure 19	
A drawing of still life set by Xu Bing:	

combination of "out door scene" and "in door scene"

(Xu, B., 1988, P. 38)

..... 148

Figure 20

David's eye, a drawing of a plaster cast after Michelangelo

(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 108)

..... 149

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Curriculum Structure: General structure	..... 33
Table 2	Curriculum Structure: Drawing a geometrical plaster cast	..... 34
Table 3	Curriculum Structure: Drawing a still life	..... 35
Table 4	Curriculum Structure: Drawing portraiture	..... 36
Table 5	Curriculum Structure: Drawing a human figure	..... 37
Table 6	Curriculum Structure: Drawing a fast sketch	..... 38

Chapter 1 Introduction

Part 1 The Topic

In this thesis, I would like to raise two related issues: What was the role of the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing in China? How could one adapt such a system to today's art education in China? The answers to these questions will come from my study of a Chestyakovian curriculum text, the book A Course of Drawing (Solov'ev, Smirnov and Alekseeva, 1958), from my historical exploration of the Chestyakovian impact in China, and my personal experience of learning drawing. Namely, from the pedagogical perspective, I carry out a historical, political, methodological, textual and biographical study of the Chestyakovian System.

Chinese art education emphasizes skill training. There are two systems for teaching skills in China. One is the Chinese traditional system of teaching art, another one is the western classical system. The Western system of teaching drawing came to China from France in the early part of this century. But in the 1950's, as a substitute, the Russian art education system came to China and replaced the French system.

Stemming from the European Renaissance, modern Russian art education was developed by Pavel Petrovich Chestyakov (1832-

1918) in the late 19th century. He emphasized students' representational skill in building a three-dimensional realistic image with deep-space perspective on a two-dimensional surface.

The Chinese tradition of skill training sees "inside spirit" as the soul of art. According to the Chinese tradition of education, a student, no matter what he or she is learning, must skilfully handle the relevant techniques first, then reach the "inside spirit" or creativity. This way of learning art is called "from outside in". The Chestyakovian system sees "outside shape" as the basis to art and art education, it is also a "from outside in" way. This was why, besides the fact that Russia and China were important allies in the 1950's and during the first half of the 1960's, the Russian method of teaching art easily dominated the area of Chinese art education. But since the 1980's until today, Chinese art education has been facing the challenge of a conceptual change-over from the Russian approach to a newer western method which is mainly a way of "from inside out". However, it is not easy to combine the two ways of "from outside in" and "from inside out" in the Chinese art education.

In the past, Western art education emphasized only skill training in the Beaux Arts tradition. But today, in North America, the method of art education is mostly "from inside

out", especially since the beginning of the Modernist art movement. For example, today's art education in North America emphasizes the development of creativity, no longer focusing on skill alone.

This thesis is a pedagogical study of the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing and its impact on Chinese art education, and an inquiry into the necessity and the ways of using this system in China today. In my eyes, this is a necessary precondition to develop a way to combine today's North American methods and the Chinese method of teaching drawing and then to construct a possible new framework that contains the advantages of both "Outside in" and "Inside out" for today's art education in China.

Therefore, this thesis has two main aspects, a theoretical study of the Chestyakovian System, and a practical study of the educational impact of this system in China.

Part 2 Personal Background

When I was a teenager, I learned classical drawing skills in private studios in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, and Lingfen, Shanxi Province, China, from 1973 to 1978. My first period of learning was from 1973 through 1975, during which my tutor

taught me by using the Chestyjakovian method. At the same time, I read A Course of Drawing, the book describing the drawing system of Chestyakov. After that period of learning drawing skills, I continued to study privately with other tutors who also used the Russian system as the basic curriculum.

When I entered the Art Education Program of Concordia University, I found that the basic concept of art education in the West was totally different from that in China. Historically, I understand that today's Western art education is based on ideas from the Modernist art movement. Many Western theorists see an aesthetic education and the fostering of creativity as more important than skill training.

But skill training is not valueless for a certain level or stage of learning art. There are some Western researchers who focus on children's drawing skills, especially gifted children's drawing skills. For example, a study (David Pariser, 1989) of the drawing skill of some well known artists, such as Lautrec, Klee, and Picasso, examined the aspects of skill development and the development of creativity in juvenile artists. Pariser asked how do gifted children acquire the skills for drawing? I wonder if skill training is necessary for today's art education if one no longer sees skill training as important as it was before? Such questions have haunted me whenever I do theoretical study or make studio works. This is

why I have chosen to research the topic of the Chestyakovian Drawing System.

Part 3 Methodology

This thesis consists of two sections, a theoretical study and a practical study.

In the theoretical section, an analytical and a synthetic discussion of the book A Course of Drawing will be done along with a summary-like introduction to the text. Such a discussion will deal with both ideological and methodological aspects. Although Chestyakov was neither a Socialist-Realist nor Communist, unfortunately, his curriculum of teaching drawing was adapted by the Soviet Communist authorities of art education. Thus, Soviet Marxism, actually Lenin-Stalinism, was squeezed into the curriculum. Therefore, a sociopolitical criticism on the ideology of the Chestyakovian System will be included in this section.

In the second section of my practical study, I will use my early experience of learning drawing to explore the impact of the Chestyakovian System in China.

Based on the theoretical study and practical study, my

answers to the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter will be elaborated in the concluding chapter. Furthermore, in the Conclusion, it will be shown that the educational value of the Chestyakovian System was that it kept and developed the Western tradition of classical art education which had lost its dominant place in the West since the beginning of the Modernist art movement, and it broadened the old tradition of western art education to China. The key point of my conclusion will be that, although representational training is still useful for a certain stage of learning art, this approach should not be the only way to teach art, but just one of many different ways.

Part 4 Justification

My study of the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing, the book A Course of Drawing, and its influence on Chinese art education, is a pioneer study in Canada. No previous research has been completed in this area. Information from The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. and The National Library of Canada indicates that no translation of this book exists in English, French or German (**Appendix**). Only the Chinese version exists as a translation from the Russian original.

However, some related research on drawing has been done

before. On the topic of the history of teaching drawing, a book Drawing and Education in German-Speaking Europe: 1800-1900 by Clive Ashwin (1981) offers a historical overview of the teaching of drawing in German-speaking Europe, and partly deals with the Preissler system of teaching drawing, which was indicated as an opposite to the Chestyakovian System in A Course of Drawing. In the aspect of Russian influence on Chinese art education, especially the influence of Chestyakovian System, some relevant materials can be found in the book A History of Modern Chinese Painting by Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan (1986). Some other books and articles, such as those listed in the Bibliography, have certain information as well.

The value of doing this thesis consists of two aspects, theoretical and practical. The theoretical value is described below.

Many drawing systems exist in the history of art education, most of them were studied by Western researchers of art education and art history. However, as the most important drawing system in Russia and China before the beginning of the 1980's, and as the only official system of teaching drawing during those days in the two countries, the Chestyakovian System is little known in the West. Today, with the collapse of the Soviet block, the fear of Communism no longer exists.

Therefore, it is time to explore what happened to art education in Communist countries. Furthermore, as the most influential curriculum of teaching drawing in the former East Block countries, the Chestyakovian System needs to be studied as a theoretical and historical document of pedagogy.

There is much Western literature on drawing which sees Chinese drawing as an unique system compared to the Western systems, such as Vernon Blake's The Art and Craft of Drawing (1971). In the "Introduction" to his book, Blake says, "In striking contrast with the vaguely formulated aesthetic tenets of Europe there exists on another portion of the globe a marvellously co-ordinated system of plastic laws... of China,..." (Vernon Blake, p. 10). As I mentioned before, there were two systems to teach art in China, the Chinese-tradition and the Western-tradition. Many Western researchers of art education studied the first system, including professor Ellen Winner (1991) of Boston College. A graduate student of Art Education from Concordia University, Liqin Tan (1993), completed an excellent study of the Chinese-traditional method of teaching art, which derived from his research on a gifted Chinese girl, Wang Yani. In contrast with their researches, now, I would like to explore the other prevalent method of teaching in China, the western tradition of teaching drawing.

The practical value of doing this thesis is described

below.

The Chestyakovian Drawing System derived from the Italian High Renaissance drawing systems. Keeping and developing the Western classical tradition of teaching drawing, this system emphasized skill training. Although today I believe many Western art educators no longer emphasize skill training, it is still helpful for the aesthetic development of juvenile students in a certain way.

In his editorial in the Journal of Aesthetic Education, Ralph Smith (1973) distinguished two types of criticism: argumentative and exploratory. In my opinion, there are also two similar types of thesis for academic degrees. The argumentative thesis is the type which focuses on debate by raising and answering certain questions, while the exploratory one is the type which focuses on description by searching and exposing certain issues. My thesis on the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing and its influence on Chinese art education is explorative, although some questions on this topic are raised and answered, others are not.

Chapter 2 Brief Reviews of Drawing Systems
 in the West and the Historical
 Place of Chestyakovian System

Part 1 Definitions:
 Surveys of Drawing Systems
 and Systems of Teaching Drawing

1. Definitions

In his Analects, Confucius (551?-479? B.C.), the father of Chinese philosophy, states that if a term had not been properly defined, any argument based on or involved with that term would be meaningless (Lin Yutang, 1967). Therefore, first I need to define the terms "drawing" and "the Chestyakovian System".

According to The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1992), "Drawing as formal artistic creation might be defined as the primarily linear rendition of objects in the visible world, as well as of concepts, thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and fantasies given visual form, of symbols and even of abstract forms. This definition, however, applies to all graphic arts and techniques that are characterized by an emphasis on form or shape rather than mass and colour, as in painting. Drawing as such differs from graphic printing processes in that a direct

relationship exists between production and result. Drawing, in short, is the end product of a successive effort applied directly to the carrier, which is usually paper." (P. 460).

The Encyclopedia Americana (1990) defines drawing as "...an image represented purely in line and therefore monochromatic." And "A drawing may be simply a line or series of lines, or it may be an image as fully developed as a painting." (P. 363).

The two definitions above give us two perspectives of the term "drawing". One is a specific sense; it sees drawing as an art form with linear and monochromatic approaches. The other is a general sense; it deals with drawing in a much broader way, and even includes certain types of artwork such as painting, etching and printing.

Philip Rawson (1969), the author of Drawing, claims whether we see drawing from the perspectives of technique of art style, quality of media, form, or from the perspective of method, the definition of drawing will take in a large area. However, he prefers a more concrete definition which he put in the beginning of his book Drawing: "Drawing I take to mean: that element in a work of art which is independent of colour or actual three-dimensional space, the underlying conceptual structure which may be indicated by tone alone." So the first

and basic understanding of drawing, according to Rawson, is "...pure monochrome drawing in its own right." (Philip Rawson, P. 1).

The difficulty with defining "drawing" is well-put by Edward Hill (1966) in the very beginning of his book The Language of Drawing. He says "Many common words whose meanings we take largely for granted prove, on close examination, to present a much broader, more effluent concept than we had been aware of. Drawing is such a word." Hill continues: "Few of us recognize the full sense of this term; instead we tend to apply thin and limited meaning, using drawing to present the particular idea with which we happen to be familiar." (Edward Hill, P. 1).

For the purpose of this thesis, I do not need a general definition of drawing. What I need is something specific and concrete. Thus, drawing, in terms of the Chestyakovian System, can be defined with the following description. In regard to its tools, drawing is related to mono-colour pencil, chalk, charcoal, conte, hard-point pens and many dry media. In regard to its carrier, drawing is mostly applied to paper. In regard to its technique, drawing is achieved with the methods of line-shading, massing, and rendering or the like. In regard to its appearance, drawing is seen as a work with deep-space perspective. Thus, I define drawing as one type of artwork,

which is done with the dry media of black and white or monocolour shading, which has an image with visual three-dimension on an actual two-dimensional surface. Such a definition excludes abstract drawing, because the topic of this thesis is about realist art.

My thesis topic is mainly set in the Chinese context. Therefore, an additional definition of "drawing" based upon Chinese ideas should be made. There is no truly equivalent Chinese word for the English "drawing". The closest Chinese word is "sumiao". The modern use of this word in China has started since the late 19th century. The prefix of this word "su-" means "mono-"; the verb "-miao" means "to draw". Linguistically, the meaning of "sumiao" is narrower than that of "drawing". The English word "drawing" consists of at least three categories of line-drawing, shading-drawing, and monocolour-painting. The Chinese word "sumiao" particularly refers to the second one, shading-drawing. Thus, the term "drawing" used in this thesis means chiaroscuro and deep-space perspective drawing. The term "drawing" of the Chestyakovian System refers to the Chinese definition of "sumiao".

Now, turning to the second term "the Chestyakovian System", I would like to discuss the relationship of "the Chestyakovian Drawing System" to "the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing". The first one is the content of the

Chestyakovian Curriculum, while the other one is pedagogy.

In the professional institutions of fine arts in China, the term "the Chestyakovian System" indicates both the Chestyakovian Drawing System and the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing. Within art circles in China, no specific difference exists between the two terms. However, the term "drawing system" refers to the way or method of making drawings, the final effect of drawing, or the style of drawing. While the term "teaching system" refers to the way or method of teaching, and the results of teaching. Obviously, the difference between the two is the object which the system deals with. Here, one objective is drawing, the other is teaching.

But in the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing, what had been taught was the Chestyakovian drawing skills or methods of drawing. In this case, the means and the ends of the Chestyakovian System were matched with each other. In other words, in the case of Chestyakov, the teaching system and the drawing system were interrelated and unified. Therefore, in this thesis, the term "the Chestyakovian System" refers to both the Chestyakovian drawing system and teaching system.

2. Five Historical Approaches to Drawing in the West

According to Richard Kenin (1974), modern Western drawing was established in the Italian Renaissance. Since then, by and large, five general systems of drawing have existed in the Western art world, they are Italian Renaissance drawing, Northern European drawing, French Classical drawing, Impressionist/Post-Impressionist drawing, and Modernist drawing. Each of them is related to a relevant teaching system.

The Italian Renaissance is divided chronologically into three periods, Early Renaissance, High Renaissance, and Late Renaissance. This is also true of the drawing in Renaissance Italy (Richard Kenin, 1974, and Francis Ames Lewis, 1980). Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) and Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520) are seen as the greatest old masters of drawing through the three periods. Although each artist employed his own distinct style of drawing, they shared the same art language, realistic observation and representation. In his study, Francis Ames-Lewis (1980) states "Copy-drawing was the ideal way to channel heterogeneous artistic talents and inclinations in a relatively uniform direction. It was also, of course, the most practical and inexpensive way for the young apprentice to acquire the manual skills he needed." (Francis Ames-Lewis, P.16) On this topic Lewis gives us examples: for "Ghiberti and Leonardo da Vinci

drawing was the declared foundation-stone of the artist's training, and control of the silverpoint and the pen was best learned by copying the master's drawings line by line." (Francis Ames-Lewis, P.16). Edward J. Olszewski (1981) indicates in his book The Draftsman's Eye that "the pupil was to copy the drawings of an accomplished artist, then to draw from reliefs, natural models, and finally the works of various masters. Copying provided practice for the eye and exercise for the hand." (Edward J. Olszewski, P.2). From those authors' remarks, we can learn that for the Italian Renaissance Drawing System, the main way of learning art for beginners was copying masters' works and plaster casts, then drawing from life.

The Northern European drawing system was found mainly in the Netherlands. The most influential draughtsmen in that system were Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669). Developing from the mannerisms of the Late Renaissance and partly from Albrecht Durer (1471-1528) of Germany, this system had kept the Renaissance tradition, developed the early Baroque language, and continued the Renaissance teaching tradition.

The classical French drawing system includes French Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism and Realism. The old masters of that period were Jean Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), and Honore

Daumier (1808-1879). During that period, the tradition of classical realist drawing and teaching drawing was completed with the foundation of educational institutions. France received the tradition of art education from Italy and broadened it to encompass all of Europe. French art education moved the emphasis of drawing from copying to drawing from plaster cast and nude.

The two artists worth mentioning of the Impressionist/Post-Impressionist period are Georges Seurat (1859-1891) and the Art Nouveau artist Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898). This historical stage of drawing was very important for the conceptual change-over at the end of the last century. Although drawing became a type of art as early as the Renaissance period, it only became separated from painting during the period of Impressionism. When Post-Impressionism emerged, previous realist scientific and disciplined observation and accurate representation of reality were no longer the main stream of drawing and teaching drawing.

The Modernist drawing system cannot really be seen as a unified system, because the most important characteristics of the Modernist doctrine were individuality and personality. Two opposite notions of drawing can be found in this Modernist system. One was new and the other was old. Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and other Avant-Garde artists developed their new

personal drawing styles which enriched the Modernist art language, although they were trained in the old way. Meanwhile, in terms of technique only, Kathe Kollwits (1867-1945), Andrew Wyeth (1917-) and certain modern Realists as well as surrealists, Pop artists and Photo-Realists, spoke in the old drawing language. Yet, the Modernist teaching system was totally different from that of before, as the new educational concept emphasized the student's potential creativity.

Comparing the pedagogical ideology and the methodology of teaching, it is easy to trace the descent of the Chestyakovian System from the Italian Renaissance system of draughtsmanship, and from the French Baroque. Dealing with the Chestyakovian System in their book A History of Modern Chinese Paining, Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan (1986) point out that the Chestyakovian System is an offshoot of the Bologna tradition of Renaissance Italy. Renaissance classical drawing was taught in the first art school, the Accademia degli Incamminati (Bologna, 1586). In the following years, other schools were established, which continued the Bologna tradition. By 1720, nineteen art academies had been founded in Europe. In Russia, the first art school, the St-Petersburg Art Academy was founded in the year 1724. In the context of educational development, the Russian way of teaching drawing naturally followed the Italian Bologna tradition and French classical tradition.

3. A Survey of the Purposes of Drawing

In regard to the purpose or function of drawing, art historian Genevieve Monnier (1979) states, in the book History of an Art: Drawing, that the main function of drawing was preparation for the final work through experiment. Using drawing, an artist can experience and consider the composition of a work and the like. Besides the function of preparation, Monnier said, there are two other main functions and purposes of drawing. One is the illustration, the other is the recording of observation. Historically, since the establishment of drawing as a type of art at the time of the Italian Renaissance, the other purpose of drawing was drawing for the sake of drawing itself. As for teaching, however, in Renaissance Europe drawing was seen as the first stage for the apprentice to learn art skills. In short, throughout its history, five main purposes or functions have existed for drawing; they are preparation, illustration, recording, drawing for its own right, and teaching. Yet, according to the Chestyakovian System, drawing had three key purposes: teaching, recording, and preparation.

In regard to teaching, the old master of Italian Renaissance draughtsmanship, Cennino Cennini, said "If you follow the course of one man through constant practice, your intelligence would have to be crude indeed for you not to get

some nourishment from it. Then you find if nature has granted you any imagination at all, that you will eventually acquire a style individual to yourself." (Edward Hill, P.108, 1966). For Chestyakov, drawing from life is the same thing as drawing from nature. But in his opinion, during the Renaissance, life drawing aimed to train a student's ability of observation and representation only. For the sake of teaching, Chestyakov's purpose went further than that of the Renaissance. Setting up and drawing a still life, in terms of the Chestyakovian System, offered a chance for the student to think about conceptual meaning through the arrangement of subject matter, to think about the composition, to express certain ideas, and of course, to think about the possible formal appearance and the final effect of the finished work. In other words, life drawing is not only used to train the student's abilities of observation and representation, but also to raise the ability of visual and artistic thinking.

In History of an Art: Drawing, Genevieve Monnier (1979) says "Drawing is a special way of apprehending the reality which the artist chooses to observe. He sets down certain details of his subject spontaneously, without necessarily having in mind any ultimate realization of this image, without seeing it as part of the creative process leading up to a finished work.... The draughtsman, observing reality at a given moment, may become the chronicler of a happening, the witness

of a season or of an atmospheric change, or the spectator of some instant whose fleeting image he is able to fix for ever on the page." (Jean Leymarie and Genevieve Monnier, P. 148). For Chestyakov, such a recording work was a way to train the student's ability of observation. In the Chestyakovian text A Course of Drawing, the authors emphasized the significance of observational recording, they cited Chestyakov, "The first thing a student should really learn is how to observe an actual object. This is essential but very difficult." (A. M. Solov'ev, G. B. Smirnov, and E. S. Alekseeva, P. 5). For the sake of recording, in addition to the training of ability, drawing is also a way to accumulate materials from life for art creation. Chestyakov's contemporaries and students had big collections of life drawings. One of his top students, the most important artist of the Touring Exhibition Group, Ilya Repin (1844-1930), did a hundred drawings from life for his famous painting "Volga Boatmen". Those drawings recorded his observations of the different people he used as his models. Actually, the masters of the Italian Renaissance applied the same approach to their art. In this case, the purpose of recording is related to the purpose of preparation.

Dealing with drawing and its purpose, Genevieve Monnier took Barocci's painting "Visitation" to present the procedure from drawing to finished work. In the book History of an Art: Drawing, Monnier said "Drawing may be seen as the ideal means

of showing the creative process behind a work of art in all its spontaneity, revealing the various stages of its conception from the very 'first idea' onward." She continued that "A rapid sketch of the first idea is worked up into a general disposition of the composition. Individual parts are then studied in detail, followed by the squaring up of the whole...." (Jean Leymarie and Genevieve Monnier, P. 79). In the late 19th century, almost all the known realist artists in Russia were students of Chestyakov and members of the Touring Exhibition Group. They used the same method to create artwork. In their eyes, drawing was an effective way to explore what they wanted to express and how to express it in a work of art. As I mentioned, Ilya Repin left many drawings which had been used for his preparation of paintings, such as his famous work Volga Boatmen. These drawings functioned exactly the same way as Barocci's drawings. Not only could Repin's drawings be compared with Barocci's drawings, but the Chestyakovian System was also comparable with the Italian Renaissance drawing system in terms of the way in which drawing was a preparation for painting.

In summation, the above historical descriptions and comparisons offer us the following conclusion. In terms of the purposes of drawing as well as the approaches to drawing, and also in terms of the ways of teaching drawing, the Chestyakovian System had much in common with the western

tradition, especially the traditions of Renaissance Italy and classical France. That is to say that the Chestyakovian System was basically derived from the western drawing systems, although it was a certain variation of it. Therefore, I will deal with the differences of the Chestyakovian system from the Western systems in the following part.

**Part 2 The Book A Course of Drawing
and the Historical Place of
the Chestyakovian System**

1. Background

Pavel Petrovich Chestyakov was the founder of modern Russian art education. He was born in 1832, taught drawing at St-Petersburg Academy of Art, and died in 1919. He had the strongest influence on modern Russian art, especially on the Realist art movement in the second half of the 19th century. Many well-known realist artists of the Touring Exhibition Group, or the Wanderers Group, were Chestyakov's students, such as Repin, Vassili Surikov (1848-1916), and Valentine Serov (1865-1911), who was also a student of Repin. During the official political and economic reform of the 1860's, young

Russian intellectuals who were influenced by the nationalist movement rose up to protect their traditional culture. The Wanderers Group artists employed realism, which was borrowed from Courbet and Millet of France, to represent Russian daily life, especially rural life in a changing society. Under these circumstances, the Chestyakovian System began to dominate the world of Russian art education.

The ancestor of modern Russian art education was Nosinko who started the realist method of teaching drawing. As his student, Chestyakov developed his pedagogical thoughts, formed and then completed a systematic method to teach drawing. This was the origin of Chetyakov's system.

After the founding of the Soviet Union in 1917, the Soviet education authority took this system, integrated it with socialist ideology, and used it as part of the official curriculum of art education. This ideologically revised system was called the Chestyakovian System.

During his life time, Chestyakov published some of his thoughts on art education, which were mainly recorded in some other authors' books on art education (Letter from The Library of Congress of Washington D.C., 27th July 1993), but he did not write any book to systematically elaborate his methodology of teaching drawing. Fortunately, his pedagogical ideas were

documented by his students. After the Second World War, some art education researchers in Russia studied and sorted out these documents. Among them, the book A Course of Drawing was most influential. It had been approved by the Soviet government for its Socialist Realist interpretation, even though it focused mainly on skill training. This book was first published in Moscow in 1953. As part of the official curriculum of teaching drawing, this book, or the Chestyakovian System, was adopted by the Chinese education authority. The Chinese translation of this book was published in Beijing in 1958 (A.M. Solov'ev, G.B. Smirnov and E.S. Alekseeva, Chinese version translated by Shi Shuren, People's Publishing House of Fine Arts, Beijing, 1958).

2. A Summary of A Course of Drawing

As the authors indicated in the preface, the book A Course of Drawing emphasized the right way to train for observation, representation, and visual thinking. The authors saw such training as a necessary precondition for students to acquire essential knowledge about art and to develop the basic skills of drawing. In order to elaborate the Chestyakovian System, in the first chapter of this book, "The Heritage of the Russian Drawing School", the authors outlined the educational tradition of the Russian Realist art school as the background

to the Chestyakovian System. Then in the following three chapters, the authors explained the essence of the Chestyakovian System.

In the second chapter, "The Educational Basis to Life Drawing", the key principles of the Chestyakovian System were elaborated in detail. The realist approach consisted of four principles: 1) Observing an object three-dimensionally, and representing the object with deep-space perspective. 2) Analyzing the structure of an object in order to understand the object more profoundly. 3) Forming the wholeness in a work of drawing, namely, drawing from whole to part and then from part to whole. 4) Emphasizing the typical characteristics of an object in the drawing.

In the third chapter, "The Rules of Drawing Perspective", a materialist principle of perspective was applied to drawing. That chapter was divided into two sections, "The Linear Perspective", and "The Lighting and Shading". In the first section, the Italian Renaissance theories about perspective and the 18th century French Beaux-Arts theories about perspective were studied and developed. In the second section, the relationship of light and shadow was studied, as well as its application to drawing. The two sections formulated a realistic drawing basis for observation and representation.

In the last chapter, "Practical Teaching", five basic stages of teaching and learning drawing were set up. This was a step-by-step procedure which the students had to follow. The first stage of learning was drawing still life, the second stage was drawing portraiture, the third was plaster cast, the fourth was human figure, and the fifth was the training of fast sketch skill. Examining the five stages, one can learn that, in contrast to the Italian Renaissance method of teaching drawing in a workshop, the Chestyakovian System emphasized life drawing from practical observation, but did not emphasize the copying of a master's work.

3. The Historical Place of the Chestyakovian System

By noting the similarities and differences of the Chestyakovian System and other European drawing systems, we can see where and how the Russian system fits within western systems.

The Chestyakovian System drew heavily on Italian Renaissance systems of teaching drawing by adopting many of the Renaissance rules of drawing and principles of teaching. The Renaissance rules about perspective, knowledge of human figure structural anatomy, studies of visual composition, techniques of using line and shading, etc..., were used to build the

structure of the Chestyakovian System. In addition, useful aspects of the developed French systems, particularly the formal factors of Baroque Grand Mannerism, were also absorbed by the Chestyakovian System. In the book A Course of Drawing, works of drawings by old masters, such as Michelangelo, Raphael, and Rembrandt, were used as examples, but not for copying.

Mikhail Alpatov (1950) discussed the earlier French cultural influence on Russia. In his book Russian Impact on Art, he indicated that in the second half of the 18th century, Russian intellectuals developed an interest in European culture. The Russian Emperor's reforms in the early 1860's aimed to put an end to Russia's long history of serfdom. In order to reach his goal, Peter the Great adopted many European reforms. As a result, western culture quickly became fashionable. For instance, in the upper class at that time, Russian aristocrats spoke French.

However, the Russian democratic thinkers and artists focused on the different realities of Russia and the West. Alpatov says: "In the 19th century the Russian thinkers had attained the heights of wide theoretical syntheses, but they never regarded reason as the supreme judge in questions of real life, as was the case in France. The Russian artists were familiar with the life of human emotions, and it is not for

nothing that our psychological novels were famous the world over,.... The Russians had long been distinguished by the practical nature of their minds, but they were far from the worship of mere experience like the English Positivists, with their mistrust in the perceptive capacities of the human mind for perception." (Mikhail Alpatov, P. 222). Therefore, influenced by, but still different from that of the West, the key point of the 19th century Russian philosophy and aesthetics was realism. While Europe followed Hegel's philosophy and aesthetics, Nikolai Chernishevsky (1828-1889) developed a realistic philosophy of art. His famous proposition for a dissertation on the aesthetic relationship between art and reality was that life was the beautiful, real life was the real beautiful. At that time, most young artists and democratic intellectuals were the followers of Chernishevsky. They pragmatically took something from European culture, and used it for Russian reality.

Peter the Great raised the issue of Europeanization, and European Neo-Classicism had a strong influence in Russia at that time, but Russian realists did not completely copy French Realism. In his study of Realist art, Alpatov found a difference between Repin and the French artists Courbet and Millet. "Repin displays the Russian understanding of realism", Alpatov writes on Repin's painting Volga Boatmen, "We are confronted with an image of the Russian people, who, with

unbroken force, from century to century, bore without losing their human dignity, the burden of their fate, building up their culture with song, creating their great state. Neither Courbet's Stonebreakers nor even the international symbolism of Millet's Gleaners has such universal significance." (Mikhail Alpatov. P. 253). Whether or not we agree with his comments on Courbet and Millet, through Alpatov's words, we find that what the Russian intellectuals were really interested in were the aspects of Western Realism which could inspire them to inquire into the actual social life in Russia.

Therefore, it is easy to understand that the Western new art movements like Neo-Impressionism and Post-Impressionism which focused on leisure life (Georges Seurat) and personal life (Vincent Van Gogh) did not interest the Realist artists in Russia. Although the span of his life covered the period of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, Chestyakov was not influenced by these new art movements. Furthermore, although Modernism had been in the main stream of Western art since the end of the 19th century, the Chestyakovian System did not acknowledge it. Chestyakov focused on European classical drawing and developed it into the Russian Realist drawing by combining the Western model with subject matters taken from Russian social life.

For the purpose of teaching, Chestyakov did not follow

his Italian and French forerunners entirely. As I indicated above, the Italian Renaissance draughtsmanship emphasized a procedure of copying masters' drawings as the first stage of learning art. Such a workshop procedure continued in the main stream of Western art until the end of the 19th century. Chestyakov emphasized observational drawing but not copying. In Chestyakov's eyes, drawing from real life was the only way to train students to see the objective world and to represent it realistically in art.

Due to the Modernist movement, in the last decades of the 19th century, the Western concept of art and art education had changed and developed in the direction of "from inside out" which emphasized creativity and not skill alone, while art education also focused on industrial design. At that time, the Chestyakovian System remained unchanged without undergoing pedagogical reform and without any influence from the Western Modernist movement.

Chapter 3 The Pedagogical Philosophy of the Chestyakovian System

Part 1 Curriculum Structure: Skill versus Creativity

1. The Organization of the Curriculum

In practical teaching, the Chestyakovian curriculum consists of different variations. As an official version among them, the book A Course of Drawing is the most comprehensive, hence the most useful one for us to study the curriculum structure of this System.

Based on A Course of Drawing , I would like to draw a structural skeleton of the Chestyakovian curriculum. Such structural maps will show us a whole picture and detailed pictures of every part of this curriculum.

As a general structure of Chestyakov's five stages of teaching and learning drawing, **Table 1** shows a whole map of the curriculum.

**Table 1 Curriculum Structure:
General Structure**

1 Geometrical Plaster Cast	Goal: Studies of Volume and Space, Lighting and shading, Main Characteristics, and Perspective.
2 Still Life	Goal: Studies of Composition, Proportion Measurement, Materiality/Tactility.
3 Portraiture	Goal: Studies of Facial Structure and Anatomy.
4 Human Figure	Goal: Studies of Anatomy, and Movement of Human Body.
5 Fast Sketch	Goal: Studies including Realistic Context.

According to A Course of Drawing, each of the above stages is divided into several sections. Every section has its particular goal. **Table 2** is a detailed representation of the first stage of cubic plaster cast training which exists in three categories: a single plaster cast, a cluster of plaster casts, and plaster casts of ornamental details.

Table 2 Curriculum Structure:

Drawing Geometrical Plaster Cast

1 Single Plaster Cast	Objectives: A single cast is easy for beginners to study the volume, lighting and shading.
2 Cluster of Plaster Casts	Objectives: A cluster of cubic casts raises the issues of composition, as well as space and the relationship of lighting and shading.
3 Cast of ornamental details (Figure 1)	Objectives: Based on the structure of the cubic model, the cast of ornamental details can let students study the main characteristics and other details.

Drawing still life is a link-stage between the geometrical plaster cast and the portraiture stages. In addition, drawing still life has its own significance in terms of skill training. For students, most knowledge and principles of drawing, and the basic skills and techniques of drawing are acquired at this stage. This stage roughly consists of three categories: small still life on a table, large still life in an interior, and drapery. The stages are shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3 Curriculum Structure:
Drawing Still Life**

<p>1 Small Still Life (on table)</p>	<p>Objectives: This is to train students' abilities of measuring proportion, catching materiality and tactility by shading, and dealing with composition (as well as exposing theme).</p>
<p>2 Large Still Life (interior)</p>	<p>Objectives: The further training of the above skills. Studies the relationship between natural light and shade.</p>
<p>3 Drapery</p>	<p>Objectives: Studies of textile textures, inner structure and movement of an object.</p>

At the third stage, studies of portraiture are also divided into two categories: plaster cast and life drawing. The first consists of two types of plaster cast, they are casts of facial features and casts of busts. **Table 4** details this stage.

**Table 4 Curriculum Structure:
Drawing Portraiture**

<p>1 Plaster Casts of Facial Features</p>	<p>Objectives: This type of plaster cast is one part of the human face; one sense organ, such as an eye or a mouth. This is a detailed study.</p>
<p>2 Plaster Casts of Busts</p>	<p>Objectives: Such a still model is used for students to precisely study human face and head.</p>
<p>3 Portrait</p>	<p>Objectives: This is the students' first chance to study a real live object. The aim is to comprehensively enhance all the drawing knowledge a student acquired before.</p>

The next stage leads to the area of drawing a human figure. In terms of the training of skill and technique, this is the most important stage, while it is also the most difficult stage for students to complete. This stage is divided into two categories as well. They are shown in **Table 5**.

**Table 5 Curriculum Structure:
Drawing Human Figure**

<p>1 Plaster Casts of Torso and Figure</p>	<p>Objectives: This anatomical study of the human body structure is a preparation for advanced studies of figure and composition.</p>
<p>2 Human Body</p>	<p>Objectives: This life drawing is designed for students to deal with complicated situation and large composition.</p>

The curriculum structure of the Chestyakovian System looks like a circle. In the first stage of drawing a cubic plaster cast, the main structure or volume is emphasized. Then in the last stage of drawing fast sketches, the same emphasis recurs. With all the knowledge about drawing, the fast-sketch process brings students to the simple but important structure of an object, which is the starting point of the curriculum. However, the last simple stage is essentially different from the first simple stage. Upon reaching the last stage, students have already acquired the basic knowledge of drawing. Although mastering simple methods to catch the key structure of an object is the basic requirement of students at both the first

stage and last stage, the last stage leads students to real life, and away from studio models. **Table 6** is a representation of the last stage.

**Table 6 Curriculum Structure:
Drawing Fast Sketch**

1 Human Figure	Objectives: This is to relate what one learned in studio to real life, and to prepare for realistic work.
2 Landscape	Objectives: As above.
3 Any scenes	Objectives: This is to handle various situations of actual life.

2. The Arrangement of the Five Stages

The teaching process of the Chestyakovian System was well organized. As I mentioned before, the goal of this system was to train students representational skill so that they could

create realist works of art. Since the Renaissance, people have been the primary subject of Western culture. As a Realist, Chestyakov carried on this tradition. In Soviet socialist eyes, the collective masses were the central image of social life. In the Chestyakovian System, study of the images of men and women were the ultimate objective for students in learning drawing skills. Therefore, study of simplified images, the plaster casts, at the first stage was advocated in the Chestyakovian System.

The studies of geometric form were the student's first stage in learning to draw. The goal of the training at this stage is described in A Course of Drawing: "The first stage of learning drawing is studying geometrical objects. Such a study can help students to understand the variety of the structural principles of the objects around us. Based on the studies of geometrical objects, students can easily understand the structural volume of an object in deep space, understand the general principles of the effect of lighting and the principles about main characteristics of an object." (P. 67). **Figure 2** is a sample work from A Course of Drawing by a student of the Moscow Middle School of Arts. In this drawing, we can see the plaster casts being used as simplified symbols of all the real objects in our world. At this stage, a student can learn the ABC of volume and space, lighting and shading, main characteristic, and perspective.

As soon as students were able to handle the geometric objects, the second stage of learning, drawing still life, is taken up. Two types of still life were operative at this stage. Students learn from small still lifes first; this is usually set up on a table (**Figure 3**). Then follows the interior scene or large still life (which includes the drawing of drapery) (**Figure 4**). In addition to strengthening and studying further what students learned from drawing plaster casts, a student during this second stage can learn the basic process of assessing proportion, of rendering the materiality and the tactility of an object, (such as woodenness, softness, or transparency, as well as the principles of composition). Drawing still life is an important training technique for students in the process of acquiring the basic knowledge about composition, and about how to express a theme in a work of art through composition. As stated in A Course of Drawing, "The selection and organization of still life should be helpful for expressing the theme of a work. Such a training must enable students to make artwork in terms of composition." (P. 69).

The third stage in the process of learning to draw returns to the central issue of art as realistic and art as representing the human image, especially the portrait. For students, the aim of training at this stage is "...to acquire a clear and systematical knowledge about the structure of head and face; to study the perspective structure of head and face

from different angles." (P. 83). At this stage, the knowledge of anatomy is introduced to students. Based on such a knowledge, a student must have two concepts about drawing a portrait: 1) knowing the inner structure of the head, i.e., the anatomical structure of bones; 2) seeing the facial features and the whole face as a combination of different plane surfaces. **Figures 5 and 6** are sample works from A Course of Drawing, which show how to catch the anatomical structure and how to combine the different facial surfaces together as a whole image. Drawing portraits from ancient sculpture (plaster casts) and from life are two effective ways to reach the end of this stage.

Studies of the anatomy of the human figure, including studies of the structure and movement of the human body, are the main task for those students who are at the fourth stage. As the authors pointed out in A Course of Drawing, such professional knowledge is essential for art creation. Actually, this stage is almost a student's last stage of learning art. As the authors said, at the end of this stage, teachers should help students to relate their study to their future creations, namely, the setting of the human figures in a life environment (**Figure 7**).

The fast-sketch process is an effective way to master studies of real life. In the above four stages, all the

assignments are for "long-term work", varying from 5 hours to more than 50 hours. Only at the fifth stage, i.e., fast-sketching, is a "short-term work" involved, which varied from 5 minutes to 30 minutes. At this stage, besides drawing from observation, students are also required to draw from memory and imagination. Such drawings are based on the knowledge they acquired in the previous stages. If the nude models have no symbol showing their social status, then the people in real life can give students an opportunity to reflect such a social life in their fast sketch work. Hence, the sketch is the shortest way to reach the socialist realist aim. **Figure 8** is a sketch by Ilya Repin, it shows the situation of the famous Russian realist novelist Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) working on his writing.

3. Comments on the Curriculum Structure

In the Chestyakovian System, the focus is on the object (subject matter). Although Chestyakov once mentioned that the object existed in the actual world and also in the eyes of the observer, he did not pay attention to the relationship between the object and the student. In the Chestyakovian curriculum, what a student needs to do is to realistically represent the image of the object. The process of representation replaced exploration, and the scientific-like knowledge about the actual

world replaced the artist's emotion about the relation of his inner world to the outer world. Thus between the artist and the object there was no space for "creativity", no possibility for a personal statement. The subjectivity, personality, individuality of an artist, have much to do with creativity. Once the relationship of these factors are included in the exploration, art creation will be possible.

As a Materialist, Chestyakov emphasized the objectivity of scientific-like knowledge which was independent from any specific personal emotion the artist may have. However, an art psychologist, Peter Fuller, pointed out that the geometrical concepts in art, such as points, lines, planes, volumes, etc., did not originally come from the realization of three dimensions, but from the realization of emotional life (Peter Fuller, 1979). Therefore, it is possible to relate those concepts to the artist's emotion. But, because of its fixation on realist reflection, the Chestyakovian System was never willing to involve emotional life. The authors of A Course of Drawing said Chestyakov always mentioned the scientific quality of art. Although he knew art was not a natural science, he held such an opinion: "Art uses science, takes the scientific principles and knowledge for its own use. This is real art, this is artist's ability." (P. 7).

Although the Chestyakovian system kept and surely carried

forward the Renaissance tradition, it also lost itself in the triumph of realist reflection. In this curriculum, the space for personal emotion was displaced by scientific-like knowledge; it offered no room for student's potential creativity. Thus, this system stopped students' normal development at a certain stage; it made a possibly creative individual only a successful artisan. The reason for these unfortunate factors are implicit in the ideological goal of the system. According to socialist art philosophy, art creation was not for inventive personal expression, but for the collective ideology, for politics.

**Part 2 A Socialist Realist Adaptation:
 The Political Goals**

1. Means Serving Ends

As a principle of the Chestyakovian System, the means of art must serve its end. In other words, form should yield to the substance or content. In Chestyakov's opinion, if the method of art expression matched the subject of the work, or if the means and end of an artwork were perfectly unified, the work could be seen as an excellent work. Once Chestyakov said, "We need sublime thoughts, we also need highly skilled means to express such thoughts. Otherwise, the work will be

unimaginable." (A.M. Solov'ev, G.B. Smirnov, E.S. Alekseeva, 1958, P. 7).

The Soviet Socialist Realists overstated and revised the above principle for their development and use of the Chestyakovian System. According to Chestyakov, the "sublime thoughts" could be what an artist wanted to express in his or her artwork. In a specific sense, the "sublime thoughts" could also be certain ideas, such as Russian nationalist political opinions. But according to Soviet Socialist Realism, the "sublime thoughts" must be Socialist thoughts. The authors of A Course of Drawing said, "The task for Soviet artists is creating highly principled and high level ideological works of art." (A.M. Solov'ev, G.B. Smirnov, E.S. Alekseeva, 1958, P. 9). In terms of socialist realism, both principle and ideology are related to Socialist stance. A sample drawing of such a work in the book A Course of Drawing is "The Great Construction" by Bolomaniev and Keegal.

Such a political stance is the logical starting point of the Soviet art education and the Chestyakovian System.

The logic is as follows: 1) an artist must create works of art and such works must contain Socialist ideological content; 2) in order to express the Socialist ideology well, an artist must master professional skills; 3) the goal of Soviet art

education is to train such skills; 4) therefore, the Socialist art education serves Socialist politics, the means and ends are in perfect agreement with each other.

In accordance with the standards set by Soviet Socialist art ideology, only one type of art is acceptable: Realism; Socialist Realism. According to socialist art philosophy, art, as a historical phenomenon of human civilization, comes from actual life. Then, art should represent such a life, and should employ the method of realism to do so. In Soviet eyes, since Chestyakov kept and developed the old tradition of European Realism, his system could be accepted, but had to be adapted and revised to Socialist Realism.

On the subject of the characteristics of Realism, Vissarion Grigoryvich Belinsky (1811-1848), a well known Russian critic in the 19th century, says "The distinguished characteristic of Realism is being true to the reality. Realism does not want to distort real life any more, but copies it and re-builds it. Realism functions like a mirror, it reflects the rich phenomenon of life from a certain perspective." (Huang Weizhong, 1988, P. 28). Belinsky was not a socialist, but as one of the founders of modern Russian Realist theory, he partially exaggerated the mirror function of art. His exaggeration was politically magnified by his followers. One famous follower was Maxim Gorky (1868-1936). Novelist Gorky was

the founder of Soviet Socialist Realism. In 1934, Gorky chaired the first national conference of Soviet writers and artists. The constitution of that conference outlined the rule of Socialist Realism: "Artists are demanded to faithfully, historically, and concretely expose reality, such an exposition should be based on the revolutionary development of reality. The faithfulness, the historic significance, and the concretization must undertake the socialist task of art, i.e., ideologically educating and remoulding the people with Socialist spirit." (Huang Weizhong, P. 186). Under such a policy, the Chestyakovian System could not escape from serving the Soviet Socialist Realist goal.

The adaptation of Chestyakov's teaching method was based upon the above rule, which existed in two areas: the ideological and the methodological.

2. Ideological Dogmas

The word "adaptation" as used in this thesis refers to the ideological dogmas that the Socialists squeezed into the Chestyakov's system.

The Soviet Socialist Realists saw their role as the "real" Marxist art theorists. In their opinion, in both the present

actual life and the social history of human reality, the differences of classes surely exists. In other words, our human society consists of two different classes, the oppressor and the oppressed. Communists had established such a theory before they were in power. In Manifesto of the Communist Party (1968), Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895) say "People's opinions, ideas, and concepts, in one word, people's ideology, have been changed along with the change of their life conditions, their social relations, and their social existence," because the personality of people "is decided by their actual and very concrete class relationships." (Yi Qun, P. 87). In their eyes, the social reality or actual life is identified with the political mark of class. Therefore, realistically reflecting such a social life, art must be marked with class signs, signs as Socialist politics.

Karl Marx says, in his "Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1970), that art forms are listed together with legal, political, religious and philosophical forms, in short, the ideological forms which he conceives of as constituting the superstructure, which is ultimately determined by the mode of production of material life, the economic base, or the structure. So that Lenin, the ancestor of Soviet Communism, raised a political issue which proclaimed that art should be the "gears" and "screws" of the revolutionary "machine".

Thus, Socialist Realism declared three political principles applicable to art: class nature, party spirit, and affinity for the people. The class nature principle demands artists to represent the proletarian class; the party spirit principle demands artists to express the Communist viewpoints in works of art; while the affinity for the people principle demands artists to give up their own personal feelings and express the feelings of the masses in artwork.

The principles of ideology need corresponding principles of art creation. Such a creative principle is called the thematic content, or narrative work, which means that a work of art must show a scene or plot, must tell a story, and must contain a theme. Of course, the scene, the story, and the theme, contains a Socialist Realist politics. Historically, the principle of thematic content originated in the Western tradition. Rubens, Poussin and many other old masters had painted, sometimes symbolically, stories from Greek and Roman myths and the Bible. The Chestyakovian Drawing System, especially the observational drawing from still life, emphasized the embryo of thematic content in the exercises assigned to students. The setting up of a still life should be based on a certain idea, and the composition of the picture should embody the idea. For example, a violin as the subject matter and some music books tell a story about a music class. The authors of A Course of Drawing say "In the course of

teaching drawing, the instructor should explain the significance of the drawing exercise to students. Such an exercise is closely related to an artist's task of creation of artwork." (A.M. Solov'ev, G.B. Smirnov, E.S. Alekseeva, P. 9, 1958). In this case, the Chestyakovian System offered not only training in how to draw, but also training in how to express ideas.

At the time of Chestyakov, Russian Realist artists were concerned with ideology. Art historian Camilla Gray (1986) provides an example of the influence on Chestyakov's students. In her book The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922, she says "The thirteen artists...[were] inspired by ideals of 'bringing art to the people'. They called themselves the 'Wanderers' because they thought to put their ideals into practice by taking travelling exhibitions throughout the countryside. Like their contemporaries and friends the writers Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Turgenev, and the composers Moussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov, these artists sought to justify their activity by making their art 'useful' to society. They repudiated the philosophy of 'art for art's sake'....The 'Wanderers' interpreted the current idea that art should be an active force in the cause of social reform by placing emphasis on the subject-matter of their work." (Camilla Gray, PP. 9-10). Chernishevsky proclaimed that artists should use their work "to depict the peasant as the new hero, and his

innocence and the austerity of his life as the all-important theme. This mission of the 'Wanderers' to arouse compassion and sympathy for the common man was an unprecedented subject for art in Russia." (Camilla Gray, PP. 9-10). Because of such a social realist tradition, the Soviet Socialist Realist dogmas of ideology were unquestioningly accepted by the 20th century Soviet realist artists.

3. Comments on the Political Goals

In my opinion, a work of art should contain or convey certain ideas, emotions or the like. Although artwork is not philosophy, not social science or anything else but rather an aesthetic work, it should contain philosophical concepts and emotional appeal rather than just pleasing to the eyes, making it merely a meaningless work of "pretty art". As I understand it, today's Postmodernist art is very conceptual and philosophical; it concerns many practical and social issues which, in a specific sense, have political meanings. Postmodernism is not only an art trend, but also a socio-cultural trend. This is a "goal oriented" trend. The aesthetic function of communication and transference gives artists opportunities to express their personal and public opinions and emotions. For this reason I suggest that formal means should serve ideological ends.

However, ideological art should not be forcibly applied to all artists. Every artist has his or her own personal reason for making art. For his or her own good and also for the good of art, different artists should be able to employ authentic means as personal art languages.

Chestyakov maintained the principle of means serving ends, but he had never stipulated that the end of art must be a political dogma, although many of his students and contemporaries expressed their Nationalist opinions in their work. The Soviet adaptation of the Chestyakovian System took this system as a means for its political ends. In my eyes, the history of art education in Soviet Russia and in China shows that such an adaptation or squeezing of a methodology for drawing into a Socialist dogma narrowed art and art education, and actually made art and art education more arid. This is the main reason why socialist realist art became so insipid. In my personal opinion, therefore, the development of art and art education should not be restricted to the function of advertising any official dogma.

**Part 3 Observation and Representation:
 A Material even Mechanical Method**

1. Theoretical Basis to Observation

Methodologically speaking, in Soviet Russia, since the politics and the principles of art came from actual life, the observation of such a life needed to be realistic. Therefore, the systematic principle of observation developed and completed by Chestyakov was easily endorsed by the Socialist Realists.

American critic Meyer Howard Abrams (1953) writes in his book The Mirror and the Lamp that "Leonardo repeatedly appeals to a mirror to illustrate the relation to nature both of a painting and the mind of the painter. 'The mind of the painter should be like a mirror which always takes the colour of the thing that it reflects and which is filled by as many images as there are things placed before it....You can not be a good master unless you have a universal power of representing by your art all the varieties of the forms which nature produces' ". (P. 32). Because of its Renaissance origins, Chestyakov's principles of observation and representation were "mirror-like".

Socialist Realists divided art into two categories, Realism and Romanticism; while Abrams used symbols to divide

the two types of art: the mirror "from outside in" and the lamp "from inside out". According to Abrams, the lamp was Romanticism while the mirror was Realism. As a Realist and Materialist, Chestyakov perceived art as the realistic mirror. The function of the mirror was to reflect the objective world, the task of art was to show what the world looks like or how an object exists.

In his mimetic theory, Plato disagreed with Aristotle. Plato thought a carpenter of a bed copied the Idea of a bed which was in God's mind. An artist who made a picture of a bed copied the carpenter's bed. The bed of the carpenter was not the ideal bed, but just a reflection of God's Idea. Consequently, an artist's image of a bed was not the real carpenter's bed, but just a reflection of a reflection. Therefore, neither a mirror nor art could tell the truth. This was to say that there was no such a thing as Realism. However, Realists thought that a carpenter's bed was a real bed which existed in the actual world, and an artist's image of a bed was "real" too, that in fact a mirror does show the truth. Chestyakov believed in the truth of the mirror; he maintained that drawing was able to show a real world. In his eyes, the peak of art was the act of representing such a world realistically.

To reach this peak, a Realist artist must have knowledge

of the material world. Dealing with this topic, the authors of A Course of Drawing cite Chestyakov "The essential significance of drawing is to choose Realism as the methodology of observation." (P. 2). According to Chestyakov, since this world existed in three-dimensional space, an artist should draw such a world three-dimensionally. He said "We live in a world of shapes, so the knowledge about shape can help us to understand everything." (P. 2). In his opinion, if a student correctly caught the shape of an object in his or her work, this work was realistic and was a good work. Such an opinion was much like that of Chernishevsky. As I mentioned before, Chernishevsky once said the real life equalled the truly beautiful. Chestyakov told his students that "You should draw an object as it is in the real world, and also as it is in our eyes." (A.M. Solov'ev, G. B. Smirnov, and E. S. Alekseeva, P. 5) He also said "Do not worry about whether the drawing is beautiful or not. What you need to worry about is the object.... If you draw an object like the real one, your drawing will be beautiful, will be lively". (A.M. Solov'ev, G. B. Smirnov, and E. S. Alekseeva, P. 5). One of Chestyakov's students said that his master went between the objective world and the students, he assiduously taught students how to observe and how to understand the variety of this world. Chestyakov thought the natural world was a "big book" for artists to read. He established his theory about observation on the basis of such a world. Therefore, the authors of A course of Drawing

evaluated Chestyakov's theory as a natural theory.

2. Method of Observation and Representation

Chestyakov took the "from outside in" method to observe and represent objects. Different from Western Modernist art ideas, Chestyakov emphasized the process from outside to inside in teaching. In such a process, he formulated certain rules for drawing, they are described below.

Three-dimensions versus two-dimensions:

In the second chapter, I defined the term drawing as chiaroscuro and deep-space perspective work. According to Chestyakov, since the essence of our world or an object is three-dimensional, a student must create the illusion of three-dimensions in order to catch such an essence. From this point of view, Chestyakovian educators criticized another drawing system, the Preisler System. Johann Daniel Preisler (1872-1918) was an art teacher and art nouveau artist. Strongly influenced by Edvard Munch (1863-1944), Preisler developed a synthetic system of drawing in the last decade of 19th century and the first decade of 20th century in the German speaking European countries. He saw two-dimensional contour as the basis of learning art. He said a student must understand the importance

of the first step of two-dimensional drawing, otherwise the student "...would even appear to me like one who wants to reach the peak of a high mountain without beginning at the bottom." (Clive Ashwin, 1981, P. 161). For Preisler, the basis for the drawing process was the contour of an object. But art teachers of the Chestyakovian System were definitely against such an emphasis on contour. In their eyes, the so-called contour did not actually exist in any object. They regarded contour as a fake shape of an object, because it was two-dimensional. In contrast, Chestyakov's opinion was stated in A Course of Drawing, "When students start to study the volume of an object, the teacher must clearly tell them what the contour is, for contour always attracts these unexperienced students. Teachers must let students realize that contour does not have its own meaning, it belongs to the volume, it is one aspect of the volume of an object." (P. 11). Volume is the structural essence of a three-dimensional object. **Figure 9** is a contour drawing by Preisler, which was used as an opposing sample in A Course of Drawing. The authors of the book saw Preisler's drawing as "fictional" drawing, because Preisler did not shade his image. Shading, in the Chestyakovian System, is the basic method used to catch the volume, to build a three-dimensional image on a two-dimensional surface. **Figure 10** is a typical sample of a Chestyakovian drawing. This picture shows that even in the very beginning of making a drawing, "the bottom" of a "high mountain" must be shaded in order to get the third dimension.

Therefore, shading, or chiaroscuro, is the only way to reach the realistic world.

Structure supports shape:

Also, in the opinion of Chestyakovian teachers, Preisler did not propose the correct structure to support his shape; he used only the contour lines. Chestyakov says "No matter who he or she is, if one cannot see the volume of a shape, one cannot correctly draw any line." (A.M. Solov'ev, G. B. Smirnov, and E. S. Alekseeva, P. 13). In his eyes, an analysis of the structure of an object was an effective way for students to understand the volume of a shape. In a Chestyakovian workshop, the simplest object is a cubic plaster cast. Such a three-dimensional object exists with six plane surfaces. The mutual relationships of the six planes construct the object. This is the structure of an object. Planes can not be constructed by lines. Although sometimes we do see certain lines as the borders of an object, according to the Chestyakovian System, they are not real lines, but the perspectively reduced plane surfaces. On this topic, the authors of A Course of Drawing said "The so called contour line, or the border of a shape, is changeable. Any plane surface of a human figure or of an object can be seen as a contour line from a certain angle.... Therefore, contour line is nothing else but a reduced plane. This is why we should not start drawing with contour lines."

The authors told students "Contour line does not exist in the actual world. In our life drawing workshop, we can see the border of a shape, but it is a fictional line of contour." (P. 11). In the opinion of the Chestyakovian teachers, Preisler's contour lines did not suggest the structure of an object. Chestyakov's emphasis on volume was based not just upon the structural study of plane surfaces as Preisler advocates, but rather on the relationships among these surfaces in three dimensional objects. Such an emphasis revealed the law of the structure of an object. In Chestyakov's eyes, if a student understood the law of structural essence and the volume of an object, his or her drawing was realistic.

From whole to part and then from part return to whole:

How can a student get such an essence of volume? In addition to the realistic observation and analysis of the actual object with the knowledge of perspective and anatomy, the procedure of drawing, or the method of representation, is another important factor. According to the Chestyakovian System, when observing an object, a student must pay attention to the main structure first and not to any details. Similarly, when drawing an object, the student must catch the basic structure first. The basic structure is in the wholeness of an artwork as well as that of an object. In terms of drawing, basic structure includes both the relationships of different

planes and the main contrast of different tones. The different surfaces must be shaded differently from one another. The structural relationships among the planes are shown by the different tones on the different planes. Thus, if a student wants to represent the planes, the tones of the planes, and their relationships, he or she must represent the wholeness, or the "bottom" of a "high mountain". Getting the wholeness is the first step of the Chestyakovian procedure of drawing, which aims to reach the completeness of an artwork. The second step requires the drawing of details. Chestyakov thought the method of comparison was the best way to get the details and to enrich the wholeness. **Figure 11** is a sample work from A Course of Drawing; it shows how to draw details after the first step of wholeness. During the second step, i.e., that of adding details, Chestyakov asked students to compare the differences of tones on different surfaces. For the sake of drawing a portrait, no facial feature was structured by lines but by planes with different tones. Therefore, shading the tones was the appropriate means to attain a drawing with details. For example, in the first step of wholeness, three different planes may be embodied by three different tones; but in the second step, a student must find the different values of the tone on the same plane. As long as this is done, the single plane will be richer than before, and become a detailed plane. However, the most important factor here is keeping the detailed values within the same tone, no sub-values can go beyond the range of

tone of its overall plane. Therefore, the third step of the Chestyakovian drawing procedure was to return to a sense of wholeness, the enriched wholeness. **Figure 12** is a finished portrait from A Course of Drawing, it shows us that the detailed portrait in the final step still keeps the basic structure achieved during the first step.

Emphasis on the main characteristic:

For Chestyakov, stressing the main characteristic of an object but not the ordinary detail was a necessary way to return to the wholeness. In the case of the enriched details, I note that Chestyakovian Realism was different from contemporary Western Realism. In America, Andrew Wyeth's Realism, or Magic Realism, is perhaps the closest one to that of Chestyakov. But, in another sense, Wyeth saw all the details of his object as being of the same importance. In his drawing, almost everything is enriched with detail. The same thing happens to the works of Hyper-Realists and Photo-Realists. Chestyakov never asked his students to enrich everything with details. In Chestyakov's opinion, the main characteristic was revealed in the basic structure. In a work of drawing, if the other details were overstated, that work would lose its wholeness. Referring to this Chestyakov says "Although it is correct, it is not good." (A.M. Solov'ev, G. B. Smirnov, and E. S. Alekseeva, P. 3). He means overstatement is

not better than understatement. Chestyakov explains, "Drawing is the highest peak of art, but one can not climb the peak endlessly. He must stop at a proper stage, or he will go over, he will become a photographer." Commenting upon the works of his student Surikov, Chestyakov says "Do your best to approach the real object, but do not reach it. Otherwise, your drawing would not be as good as before." (A.M. Solov'ev, G. B. Smirnov, and E. S. Alekseeva, P. 3). As one rule of his method, Chestyakov demanded of his students to give up those details which did not reveal the main characteristic. In his eyes, the aesthetic value of realist art was in the main characteristic, or the typical character, in which the essence of the real world is embodied.

Focus perspective and the knowledge of anatomy:

Chestyakovian principles of realistic observation and representation were based, technically, on a one-point focus perspective. According to Chestyakov, only such a focus perspective was the scientific way to observe and represent. Chestyakov frequently reminded his students of the scientific nature of art. He maintained that art and science had the equal right to be called truthful, because art revealed the factual truth just as much as science did. He said, "Although art is not science, art uses science, art takes the scientific laws for its own use." (A.M. Solov'ev, P. 7, 1958). The principles

of the focus perspective which Chestyakov used for his system came from Renaissance Italy, Northern Europe and classical France.

In addition to the one-point focus perspective, anatomical knowledge of the human body offered the second scientific basis to support the Chestyakovian System. In the sense of plastic art, this knowledge was based on the ideas of Leonardo, Michelangelo, Hans Holbein the Younger (1497- 1543), Durer, and some other old masters.

3. Comments on the Methodological Principles

Chestyakov's emphasis on the main characteristic surpassed the simple "mirror" function. This was one advantage of his system. Long before Chestyakov, Western old masters emphasized the main characteristic as well, then Chestyakov carried forward these good qualities.

Another Chestyakovian other advantage was the emphasis on fostering students' ability to observe through detailed comparison. "Compare, compare, and compare again" was what the teachers of the Russian school repeatedly told their students. In the Chestyakovian System, comparison was the major method used to find the subtle differences of values, tones, and

details.

However, the above two factors also expose the disadvantages of the Chestyakovian System. The main characteristic of an object, the basic structure or the essence of volume do not depend on any individual artist's personal perception, but rather on their rational analysis, even physical analysis on the basis of knowledge of perspective and anatomy. The method of comparison aims to find factual or objective details; this neglects a student's personal conception of the subject. In short, the dismissal of personal perception, personal understanding, personal emotion, or the student's initiative, is the weakness of the Chestyakovian system. Personal creativity is a very important factor for western art educators, but the Chestyakovian system never emphasized it. This is why some critics said the Chestyakovian way of art education was to train skilful artisans, but not creative artists. Because of such a weakness, almost all Chestyakovian students employed the same method; they shared exactly the same style. Only experts can tell the differences among the top students of Chestyakov, such as Repin, Surikov and Senov. **Figures 13** and **14** are works of life drawing by Surikov and Senov. **Figures 15** and **16** are paintings by Surikov and Repin.

Returning to the topic of methods of observation and

representation, due to its realistic philosophy, the Chestyakovian emphasis on observation and representation were materialist and sometimes even mechanical. Chestyakov asked his students to draw only what they saw, this excluded the imaginative use of imagery. Such instruction denied a student's potential.

Chapter 4 A Historical Review of the Chestyakovian Impact on China

Part 1 A Background to Modern Chinese Art Education

1 Three Sources of Art and Art Education

As I mentioned in the introduction, art in China, at present, is divided into two categories, the Chinese traditional art and art in the western tradition. Modern Chinese art education is also divided into the same two categories.

Before the 20th century, the basis of Chinese art and art education was traditional ink-brush painting. By the end of the last century, Western influence, mainly from France, reached China and served as a second source. Since the early 1950's, a third source, Russian art and art education, more specifically, the Soviet Socialist Realist art and art education, began to dominate the Chinese art world and replaced the French counterpart.

According to A History of Modern Chinese Painting (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986), in the first category of Chinese-tradition art, Chinese art education has a long history

of the "master-apprentice" convention. Although the emphasis of Chinese art creation is on personal expression, the traditional way of teaching and learning focuses on skill training. According to the old philosophy of Chinese education, students must first learn how to skilfully handle the tools, master the techniques of art, learn all the skills and styles of the master, and then possibly develop their own art language. However, most traditional artists spoke in their ancestors' languages, and not their own. What those artists were proud of was their mastery of their teacher's styles; they were not interested in acquiring their own style. In order to master the old skills and techniques effectively, a special method of teaching and learning, namely, the "order-formula" method, was developed. In the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), a monumental work of Chinese art education was published. This was a book about the order-formula in the practice of teaching and learning called, The Mustard Seed Garden Painting Guide (1679). A graduate student of art education at Concordia University, Liqin Tan (1993), did a case study of the use of the order-formula convention. In his thesis, Tan gave us an analytic description of the method of traditional Chinese art education. Educated by such a method, many skilful artists do not have their own personal style, only a few masters do.

After the Opium War between China and Britain in 1840, Western culture started to influence China. In 1870, the

Chinese government sent the first group of more than one hundred young students to the United States to study "Western science". In the 1910's, by the end of Qing Dynasty, the "half bright and half shadowed face" of Western art (chiaroscuro) revolutionized the Chinese art world. At that time, in the second category of Western-tradition art, the French influence had reached China. In the early 20th century, some artists went to Paris to learn scientific Western art. Having completed their "master-apprentice" education at home, these artists found it was easy for them to get used to the education of the Renaissance tradition which was also "master-apprentice"-like and emphasized skill training. However, in terms of western art, the first decade of the 20th century was really a revolutionary period. Post-Impressionism and Modernism defined the main stream and were novel to Chinese students. Returning to China, some students brought home such new "-ism"s. Thus, until the end of 1940's, the Western influence in China was not only taken from Renaissance tradition and French Realism, but also from Modernism. Among these returned artists, Xu Beihong (1895-1953) was the most influential art educator in the 20th century in China. Xu studied academic art in Paris from 1919 to 1927 with the famous Naturalist artist Pascal Adolph Jean Dagnan-Bouveret (1852-1929). Two other influential art educators returning from France were Lin Fenmian (1900-1991) and Liu Haisu (1896-), they were greatly influenced by Post-Impressionism, Expressionism and Fauvism and advocated

Modernism to Chinese art education, but were politically persecuted in the second half of the 1950's.

Due to their common ideology and socio-political system, the People's Republic of China established an alliance with the Soviet Union in the early 1950's. In the area of art education, the Russian curriculum was transplanted into China; the Chestyakovian System was accepted as the only official system of art education. In 1953, the first group of Chinese art students left for the Soviet Union and studied at the Repin Academy of Fine Arts in St-Petersburg. Two years later, a Soviet art educator, K. M. Maximov, was invited to China to teach an art training programme at the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts, which was called the "Maximov Training Class". Although the programme lasted only two years, with the help of the Chinese political policy, it determinedly spread the Soviet influence throughout China, therefore displacing the French influence. The students of that programme became the "major force of education" in all the art educational institutes of China. The other "force" of art education were those who studied in the Soviet Union and had since returned home. Even today, these two "forces" are still active in the world of art education in China.

In the category of Western-tradition art, those who were influenced by French art during the early 1920's through the

late 1940's, regardless whether they were educated in France or other Western countries, were called the first generation of modern Chinese artists. The second generation artists completed their education in the 1950's and the 1960's in either the Soviet Union or at home. Consequently, all the third generation artists were educated in the Russian shadow, but later on, many of them had a chance to go to the West for the democratic fresh air of today's Western art. The golden age of the third generation took place in the late 1970's and the first half of the 1980's. In 1985 and 1986, the Chinese avant garde emerged as the fourth generation. At that time, the differences between the two categories of Chinese-tradition art and Western-tradition art started to disappear. All the artists of the fourth generation completed their Russian-influenced education in China. But soon after they finished their academic education, they rid themselves of the Russian shadow and taught themselves today's western art philosophy. After the democratic movement of 1989, the fifth generation or "post-89" artists emerged. Although their early education was still somewhat Russian influenced, as soon as they finished their education, they completely abandoned the Soviet convention, and studied today's Western art for their own individual artistic development.

2 The Political Influence

As I stated before, Marx listed art along with legal, political, religious, philosophical and other ideological forms together as the "superstructure". Thus, in the eyes of the Chinese Communists, art was as important as politics. During the "Cultural Revolution", art became a part of the political system. In the "Introduction" of his book Painting in the People's Republic of China: the Politics of Style, the author Arnold Chang (1980) says "In The People's Republic of China, where all aspects of society are directly related to politics, and where the creation of art is in itself considered a political act, this relationship [between politics and art] is more clearly defined than elsewhere.... In China, the government plays a direct and active role in overseeing the nation's artistic production, and in determining the criteria for critical judgement." (Chang, 1980, P. 1).

In the early 1950's, an important political fact of Chinese art policy was to transplant the Soviet art establishment. According to the Soviet art policy, only realism was acceptable. It was such a policy that supported the opinion of Xu Beihong. Xu once said "Renoir is vulgar, Cezanne is meagre, Matisse is inferior;.... Picasso's talent is wasted." (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, P. 68). As early as the mid 1930's, when Xu visited the Soviet Union, he found that

Russian Realism had much in common with French Realism. Once appointed director of the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1949, Xu started to establish classical Realism as the basic philosophy for Chinese art education. At the same time, some other famous art educators returned from France, such as Lin Fenmian and Liu Haisu who were promoters of Western Modernism, and were banished by the Communist educational authority.

Xu died in 1953, but the Realism he established lived on. However, this was no longer French Realism, but Russian Realism. In the 1950's, "Total Sovietization" became a political and social wave in China. In 1957, the official art magazine Art Monthly published an editorial in the 11th issue, which proclaimed "Chinese artists must cherish the advanced achievements of the Soviet art for ever, must take those Soviet artists as our own models, who satisfied the people's aesthetic requirements and educated the people with Communist ideology." (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, P.237). In that year, more than 80 Soviet art books were translated into Chinese and published in China, and more than 700,000 copies in total were issued. (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, P.238).

In addition to Xu Beihong, Maximov was the second most influential person to advocate Realism in China. Maximov's educational principle consisted of two points, they were 1) Socialist Realism as political ideology, and 2) the

Chestyakovian System as pedagogical methodology. It is well known that Centralization was a form of Communist politics. In the area of art education, the Socialist Realist Chestyakovian System was the only choice for Chinese art educators. In 1955, the Chinese Ministry of Education held a national conference on the teaching of drawing. In that conference, the educational authorities and art educators discussed such issues as "the Realist direction of drawing", "the methodology of teaching drawing", "the organization of teaching and research", and "the steps of drawing". The main topic of that conference was "how to learn the Soviet experience of teaching drawing". (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, P.243). Returned from his visit to China, Grachev, the director of the Fine Arts Research Institute of Soviet Union, said "When I visited the art schools in China, I confessed that their pedagogical methodology was the same as ours". (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, P.244). Twenty five years later, the Chinese educational authority admitted to the mistake of "Total Sovietization". At the end of 1979, "The Second National Conference of Teaching Drawing at the University Level" issued a report which gave this comment on the above wave of "Total Sovietization" in art education: "The First National Conference of Teaching Drawing held in Beijing in 1955 promoted the Soviet teaching method and the drawing system of Chestyakov..... Such a scientific and systematic method functioned positively in propelling our teaching of drawing forward. However, due to the historical

wave of 'Total Sovietization', we did not consider how to combine the Russian system with the Chinese experience of teaching drawing, but officially issued administrative orders to use such a system. Thus, we limited our art education to only one model." (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, P.242).

In the early 1960's, the Soviet government started to criticize Stalinism. In the Chinese eyes, the Soviet Communist government changed their "colour", they became traitors, they wanted to ban Socialism and go the way of Capitalism. Thus, the "brotherhood relationship" between China and Soviet was broken in the mid 1960's. However, the ideological divergence was just an excuse for Mao to get rid of Soviet control. During this period, political issues were very sensitive in China. Mao launched "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in 1966 to protect China from capitalization and from the "Soviet's Revised Marxism and Socialist Imperialism". Actually, this was also an excuse for Mao to protect himself from being over powered by other Communist leaders. Mao forced political issues for all the Chinese people, and saw the art community as one of the most dangerous threats to his power. He once said that there were certain writers who used novels as tools against the Communist party, and he then proceeded to politically persecute many artists.

Dealing with the political influence on Chinese art, an American art historian Joan Lebold Cohen (1987), the author of The New Chinese Painting: 1949-1986, says, political control is one of the major problems for Chinese artists. "As long as the party line [Communist policy] defines the artistic line, art takes on an artificially inflated importance. To set up criteria for 'right art' and 'wrong art' is to construct a political time bomb. It is simply not possible to suppress all of the stubbornly independent or naively adventurous artists who will go beyond stated limits. Inevitably, those artists will be harshly criticized, and if any ill-fated person particularly offends the art establishment and does not promptly repent, show respect, and correct his errors, that artist will be somehow punished and his future will be gravely disadvantaged. He may become a dissident or feel forced to go into exile." (Cohen, 1987, P. 150).

Under such circumstances, no one could escape from political interference. For example, in 1957, 44 professors of the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts were charged as "rightists", the enemies of Communism, including the director of the school. Ten years later, during the Cultural Revolution, because of the rift within the Sino-Soviet relationship, almost all the professors who studied in both, Russia and in the programme of the "Maximov Training Class" were seen as the Sovietized Revisionists, and many of them were sent to the

countryside to take part in the "re-education", the euphemism for hard labor. Among the three hundred faculty members of the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts, more than one hundred were charged as traitors, spies, Nationalists and basically labelled as enemies. All the art schools, at any level in China, were closed until 1977. The "Cultural Revolution" was put to an end in 1976, the year of Mao's death. In the following year, art schools officially reopened. This was the year when "all neglected tasks needed to be undertaken"; in that year, the Chinese educational policy was to restore the old curriculum. However, the old Chinese tradition was still seen as a feudalist tradition while the French Realism was Western capitalist or bourgeois stereotype. Thus, without any other choice, the educational authorities had to let the Chestyakovian system back into art schools in China.

**Part 2 The Chestyakovian System in China
 and the Development of Contemporary
 Chinese Art and Art Education**

1. The Second Generation Artists

In the report of the First National Conference of Teaching Drawing, the Chestyakovian curriculum was officially issued to

art schools in China: "In the respect of basic skill training, in order to help students to understand the volume and structure, drawing geometric models should be the first stage. Then draw still life and plaster casts....When students reached the stage of drawing portraiture, let them study the anatomic structure, For the students of the last year grade, the skill training should relate to art creation." (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, PP. 243-244.) Through such a report, we find that the curriculum of skill training had nothing to do with the fostering of creativity during student's first three years of learning art.

Because the Chestyakovian System was the official one in China, skill training was of course the main objective in art schools. In the book A History of Modern Chinese Painting (Zhang and Li, 1986), the authors describe a scene in a studio class: "As soon as one entered the drawing studio, what he or she heard was the sound of pencils scratching on papers. Every student was holding a bunch of pencils ranging from 6H to 6B and using them to shade the papers without any blank space. Walking in the studio, the instructor frequently repeated that 'pay attention to the three shading levels and the five tone levels.' 'Be careful of the sense of space in your drawing, you must feel you can put your hand in between the plaster cast and the background drapery.' 'Please make sense of the materiality and tactility, imagine you can hear the sound from the plaster

cast if you knock it on your paper.'... All the artists trained during that period were very familiar with such instructions.... This was provided by the Russian academic education in the second half of the 19th century.... This was not to train artists but to train skilful artisans." (Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan, 1986, PP. 244-245.)

The above description is of the studio situation which formed many second generation artists and who in turn taught art in the same environment. Due to their very disciplined training, most artists of the second generation acquired perfect skills. Some of them made highly political even propaganda works of art, but many of them refrained, they were just good teachers but not good artists. This was very common of the artists of the second generation. Some critics and art historians thought the political dogma to be an obstacle to their freedom and creative ability. I think this is one aspect of the whole truth. The other aspect is that their fixation on skill was also an obstacle to their freedom of imagination and creative ability. In order to find out the whole truth, Zhang Shaoxia and Li Xiaoshan (1986) interviewed some art professors of the second generation, who studied art in the Soviet Union. In A History of Modern Chinese Painting (1986, P. 255), the authors say they visited a well-known professor of art (but not a known artist) in the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts. The professor showed them many exercise works done in Russia

when he was a student there. These drawings (still life, nudes) and paintings (landscapes, portraits) were breath-takingly beautiful in terms of shading and colouring and absolutely perfect in terms of skill and technique. But the problem was that this professor had never created a successful piece, "a work of art". From this story, I learned at least two points. First, according to the Socialist Realism, a so called artwork must not be an exercise work, but a narrative work with political messages. Thus, many non-political and self-expressive artists were denied as successful artists. Second, many second generation artists have excellent knowledge about how to do exercise works in school studios, but they really did not know how to create a work of art, and did not know how to express themselves in their personal art language.

In 1982, there was a national art exhibition in the Historical Museum of China in Beijing, which was to celebrate the sixty first anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party. Sixty-one artists of the second generation each showed a painting at the exhibition. All the works were narrative paintings about the history of Chinese Communist Party and portraits of the party leaders. On the political level, many big figures of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, foreign diplomats and some western artists had been invited to the vernissage. One American artist complemented the curator of the exhibition in front of all these influential

people by saying that any artist who could create so many excellent works and show all of them in this exhibition must be a truly great painter. The curator said "No" to the American artist and told him that the 61 works were painted by 61 different artists. This story soon became a joke in the Chinese art community; it was said that the stupid American made a correct comment on the exhibition, so wise in fact, that the curator did not catch the hidden meaning.

I have to say that the One-style-only policy was a real tragedy for the second generation artists who were the victims of the Chestyakovian System.

2 The Third Generation Artists and Contemporary Chinese Art

Different from the artists of the second generation, the third generation artists managed to free themselves somewhat from stifling political control. Artists could criticize the "Cultural Revolution" but could not criticize the Communist party and the government in their works.

As soon as the ten-year-long political winter of the "Cultural Revolution" was over, the "art spring" of the late 1970's and the early 1980's began. During this period, most

artists of the third generation studied in art institutes and created a great amount of works based on their experiences in the "Cultural Revolution" and their spiritual wounds. Although their works deeply touched the hearts of the Chinese people with their true feelings, the artistic practice of the third generation artists was seen as the peak of modern Chinese art and a triumph of modern Chinese art education. Again, these artists also found that they did not have their own personal art language. Like their teachers (the second generation), they still employed the same style: socialist realism, or in Chinese official terms, the Combination of Revolutionary Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism.

The system of art education for the third generation was still Chestyakovian. As we know, although the Soviet curriculum was banned in the mid 1960's, the Chestyakovian system was still influential. In the late 1970's, the main task in rebuilding Chinese art education was resuming the Russian method. As I described in the last chapter, the last step of Chestyakovian training was drawing nudes. However, in the eyes of communism, nudes as subject matter were "rotten capitalist art"; so, no one dared to resume it. Not until 1979 did the professors of the Chinese Central Academy of the Fine Arts come to the end of their patience and launched a controversial campaign to regain the right to draw nudes. In that year, an art magazine of the Academy, Studies of Fine Arts, published a

special issue on the necessity of drawing nudes and spread the campaign nationwide. The government kept silent this time, and the educational authorities did not agree or disagree with the campaign. Thus, gradually the Chestyakovian nude drawing returned to all the art schools in China.

As it was for the second generation, the perfect skill became an unbearable burden as well as a great treasure to the third generation artists who were also fixated on their fine skills. Although the artists knew they should develop their own language, they did not want to give up their cherished treasure. However, some artists thought learning or borrowing modern art languages from western artists was necessary for the development of their own language. Among these third generation artists, Luo Zhongli (1950-) and He Duolin (1948-) were the most successful. The two tried to go beyond the Russian convention, but they did not go beyond the realist convention. As Cohen (1987) describes, Luo "...particularly admires Millet... and follows Millet's academic approach. But Luo's greatest artistic triumph in a contemporary mode is as Photorealist. He saw a painting by the American Photorealist Chuck Close reproduced in a Chinese art magazine, and... experimented and created the oversized face called 'My Father'." (P. 106), which was seen as the most important work of the third generation artists. He Duolin was a classmate of Luo in Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts. He borrowed the Magical

Realism from another modern American artist Andrew Wyeth. Due to He and the support of his followers, the "Wyeth Wave" became the most beloved realist style in China during the first half of the 1980's.

In a certain sense, such as in terms of personal feeling, I would like to say that some of the third generation artists developed their own art language; but in terms of style, I cannot say they have their own unique language. Furthermore, although they intentionally tried to overstep the Chestyakovian tradition, they still walked in the cage of Realism. I do not mean to suggest that Realism is a negative tradition, but I do suggest that Realism, especially Soviet Socialist Realism and the Chestyakovian convention, limited Chinese artists to a small world. This is why, even today, there are still many young artists in China who want to come to the west to see what happened and what is happening in the art world outside of China.

The fourth generation artists, who were also educated under the strong influence of the Chestyakovian System, went beyond the Russian convention and the realist tradition. However, it was very difficult for them to develop their own personal language because the education they completed in art schools provided only skill and knowledge, it had little to do with creativity. Therefore, in terms of going beyond realism,

what they actually did was just copy Western Modernism. In 1989, there was a controversial national exhibition called "Avant Garde/China" held at the National Gallery of China in Beijing (this exhibition was interrupted and closed by police using the excuse of security in February 1989). Some optimistic critics said the artists of the fourth generation "ran" and finished the whole distance in ten years, that which had taken Western Modernists almost a hundred years to "walk". It meant that the young Chinese artists must take the same way of western modernists and copy the western modernist style, and then possibly find the Chinese way. Thus, making comment on the fourth generation art, an American critic says today's Chinese avant garde is a "Chinese body in western clothes". (Andrew Solomon, 1993, P. 46.)

The fifth generation, those who emerged after the 1989 democratic movement and also completed their education under the Russian influence, is a hotchpotch. Clearly realizing the language problem of their forerunners, some of the fifth generation artists simply gave up both the Russian Realism and Western Modernism but they were not able to acquire their own "-ism"s. Some went back to the old Chinese tradition while others went back to the old European tradition (**Figure 17**). Today they are still in the process of creating and searching for their own language.

The sixth generation has yet to establish itself, hence I can not say anything about the Chinese art education of the future. However, I recently received some materials about a 17 year old Chinese art student from a professor of art education at Concordia University. This student is Zhu Haihua, who is currently studying art at a professional art school in Shanghai, China. Zhu's works done in her childhood have been said to be "excellent" due to her childishly rich imagination and natural expression. But after she got into the art school and started to receive her academic training, something changed. From her drawings (**Figure 18**), I can not say she has anything special or different from other art students. In any art school, other students of the same age can draw as well as she does. Unfortunately, I find that her style of drawing is fashioned after the Chestyakovian style of drawing, and I believe she has been taught with the Chestyakovian System.

Here, I do not suggest that the Chestyakovian System is an improper system, I simply mean to say that Chinese art education should not limit itself to that system only, but must give students more choices in their artistic development.

Part 3 Chinese Art Educators' Responses to the Chestyakovian System

1. Three Different Attitudes

The Chestyakovian rigid way of training skill aroused controversy in Chinese art education during the mid 1980's. Some art educators wanted to use today's western methods to teach drawing, while others tried to defend the Russian principles. But most approved of a middle ground between the radical reformers and the conservative defenders.

Emphasis on the fast sketch is a good choice for those who opted for the middle ground. On the one hand, we know that the political principle of Socialist Realism related art to social life, and saw the fast sketch as the best way for artists to be involved in daily life. On the other hand, both teachers and students found that drawing fast sketches was not as boring as doing the "long term" studio drawings, and furthermore, fast sketching was more expressive and more personal. Thus, some art schools put fast sketch in the same category as drawing. For example, in the entrance examination to the Preparatory School of the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts, the time allowed for the test of drawing is three hours, the test for the fast sketch is about 40 minutes; but both subjects receive an equal percentage in the total score of the examination.

A leading art journal in China, Studies of Fine Arts, published some articles on the teaching of drawing in its fourth issue of 1988. Those articles showed the three different perspectives about the reform of Chinese art education. Among them, Wang Dejuan's article and Xu Bing's article represented the two extreme positions.

The defenders of the Chestyakovian system knew that the system must be perfected in order for it to remain in today's art curriculum. Wang Dejuan, a teacher of drawing from the Preparatory School of the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts, had an article on this issue published in the journal Studies of Fine Arts in 1988. In her article entitled Summarizing the Object versus Copying the Object, Wang defended the necessity of the rigorous training of drawing skill while exposing the weakness of such training. She said in the studio workshop, the students were asked to draw an object like the object, such a requirement was no different than copying a photograph. Wang suggested that the teaching of drawing must train the students' ability to develop their own language of drawing. She defined "the beauty of the language of drawing" as the movement of strokes; the relationship of tones of black, white and grey; the rhythm of darkness and brightness; the contrast of lightness and heavy;...etc.. She also pointed out that the purpose and requirement for drawing practice in that school were not clear, this was why the Chestyakovian System drew a

lot of criticism. To protect the Russian system, she appealed to emphasis on the beauty of the drawing language. Wang emphasized the beauty of language, but did not mention a student's personal language, because Russian Realism needs a standard language, not variations of it.

Contrary to the art educators of the older generation, the young teachers have their own opinion about teaching drawing. Xu Bing is one of the well known fourth generation artists and a teacher of drawing from the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts. In a special issue of the journal Studies of Fine Arts Xu had his article Training of Drawing published, which elaborated on his experimental opinion and teaching practices in drawing.

Xu did not agree with the Chestyakovian opinion that the training of drawing skill was the basic way to make a student a great artist. He thought a proper way to keep doing something could help a student to understand the relationship of himself (the subject) and what he was working on (the object). Xu's opinion was a little metaphysical. He said this was just like the buddhist self-cultivation. Through such cultivation, one might get a sudden realization, and enter the highest realm of art. Xu took the Japanese bonsai, the Art of Flower, as an example, he said "The Japanese bonsai artists always think about how to make the potted flowers more lovely and pleasant.

They play with the flowers day by day, month by month, year by year. Finally, they reach such a realm that no matter how they put the flowers together in a pot, the flowers will certainly be lovely and pleasant." (Xu Bing, 1988, P. 36). Xu also gave us another example of Qi Baishi (1860-1957), the most famous artist of traditional Chinese painting in the first half of this century. Qi did not receive any skill training of drawing, but he made many seals and called himself "the old man of three hundred seals". Xu said, "Qi kept thinking about the compositions of his works of seals, the strokes of his seals, and the feelings of his seals. From thinking about those things while working on his work, Qi got his basic training in art." (Xu Bing, P. 36).

When speaking of the academic, systematic and rigorous training of drawing skill, Xu said when he looked back at his old exercise works of drawing he had done when he had been a student, he realized that many of those drawings were a "waste", because they had nothing to do with his understanding of the relationship of subject and object, or with his realization of art. These works were simply for training skill; just to sharpen his pencils on papers. Xu meant that the Chestyakovian focus of skill training was not right for a student's artistic development. Thus, based on his personal experience, as a teacher of drawing, Xu held an experimental workshop of drawing for his students, which is described in the

following section.

2. Xu's Experiment of Teaching Drawing

Basic information:

Born in 1955 and presently living in New York City, Xu Bing used to be an associate professor of Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. In November 1987, he organized a workshop of drawing training for the first year students of that Academy. His report about that workshop was published in a quarterly art journal Studies of Fine Arts, No. 4. 1988. The following materials about Xu's workshop are from his report entitled Training of Drawing: A Broad Sense and A Narrow Sense.

Objective of this experiment:

Through Chestyakovian training, art students can figure out a certain formula for drawing. Following such a formula, one can draw anything without careful observation and thinking. Thus, although such a formula can help one to easily capture the basic structure of an object, and easily catch the tones and values, as well as the main characteristics, Xu did not think this was good for students' artistic development.

Furthermore, because of such a formula, most of a student's work looks the same, and works by different students are also similar.

In order to help students to develop their own personal language of drawing, this experimental project aims to obstruct students' conventional way of observation, thinking, and drawing, and force them to find their own ways to observe, to think, and to draw.

Subject matters:

In his drawing studio, Xu made two sets of still life for his students.

One is a huge body of a tree root which is upside down on a table with white table cloth, surrounded by some dry leaves and twined with string.

The other is a plaster cast wrapped with newspapers and cross-tied with string. The wrapping paper is torn and part of the plaster cast is shown. A dark-red drapery is used as background.

Analysis of the first setting:

The first still life is a combination of an "out-door-scene" (tree root) and an "in-door-scene" (tree root as still life on table) which creates a surrealist and abnormal atmosphere. The string twined around the tree root is irrational. This unusual setting forces students to give up their conventional way of thinking and makes them inquire into why this setting is so and how to express their wonderment. **(Figure 19)**

Analysis of the workshop:

In light of the unusual settings, students face their first problem: from where and how to begin to draw such a still life? The Chestyakovian knowledge about drawing is not enough for them to understand the two settings; it does not tell them how to deal with an illogical setting. Thus, students have to try to solve all the problems themselves and consequently develop their own methods.

Some students gave up the Chestyakovian tools and techniques, such as pencil, charcoal, massing and rendering; and instead chose watercolour, pen, knife, and collage to "draw".

Some students did not follow the Chestyakovian principle of "from whole to part and then from part return to whole", but started from "part" and emphasized certain details which impressed them but did not emphasize the basic structure or main characteristics.

Such a creative "breakthrough" showed students' initiative in doing studio work, which is different from the Chestyakovian studio practice. In the boring long term Chestyakovian workshop, students work in a passive mood and lose their interest and initiative.

A telephone interview with Xu:

In order to make sure the motivation and aim of Xu's workshop, I did a telephone interview (Montreal - New York) with Xu Bing on 3rd July 1994.

Xu confirmed two points about his project:

First, Chestyakovian training of drawing is not a study of art, but a skill training of art-workers. The progress based on such a training is from simple skill to finer skill. It has nothing to do with understanding of art, with aesthetic education, with personal way of visual expression. In certain

sense, Xu would like to say that such a training is a waste, it wastes students' potential creativity and stifles their personality.

Second, Xu's studio project aims to block the old way of Chestyakovian observation, thinking and working, to help students regain their artistic personality and identity, to raise their creativity.

Conclusion of the experiment:

Through the above workshop, students become interested in the use of innovative views to see this world; interested in their own personal understanding of the world and not only in what is explained in guide books. Such practice makes it possible for students to develop their own language.

Therefore, Xu said "I almost see a link between the basic training of drawing and the fostering of art creativity." (Xu Bing, 1988, P. 39).

In my opinion, Xu's idea about his workshop and his way of conducting that training project originated from the point of view of the radical reformers. However, looking at the students' works (Figure 19), I have to say that the method Xu's

students used to do their drawings was still based on the Chestyakovian method. Such a contradiction suggests that Xu's attempt of educational reform could not start from an original point of view. The Chestyakovian System was deeply rooted in Chinese soil, it created an Archimedean dilemma for Chinese art educators. Archimedes (287?-212? B.C.) said if he had a fulcrum sufficiently far from the earth, then he could move the earth. But Archimedes could not leave the surface of the earth, just as Xu could not step out of the Chestyakovian System.

Chapter 5 A Personal Experience of Learning Drawing

Most third-generation artists and many fourth-generation artists had been self-taught before they entered art schools. In terms of the Chinese tradition, "self-taught" usually means private education (This is why I agree with Liqin Tan that, although she was said to be a self-taught artist, Wang Yani definitely received her skill training from certain private tutors). Modern Chinese art education consists of two aspects, school education and non-school education. Following my exploration of the school education in the last chapter, I will use my personal experience of learning drawing to deal with the private education in order to complete my study of the Chestyakovian impact on China. Elliot W. Eisner (1991), a well known theorist of art education, distinguished four dimensions of educational criticism. In his book The Enlightened Eye, Eisner defines the four dimensions as description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematic or judgement. My study of private education is presented according to such approaches.

Part 1 A Description

1. The Teacher

I began to study art with my first private tutor in the

summer of 1973 when I finished my primary schooling and waited to begin the secondary level. Like most other teenagers, I enjoyed doing some works of art, mainly copying and imitating posters. At the beginning of that year's summer vacation, my mother asked me to organize an agenda about what I intended to do during the two-month vacation and draw up a daily schedule. As a journalist, she hoped I would study writing and calligraphy with her, but ultimately she was disappointed. She found that what I liked most were reading and drawing. She then changed her mind and asked me to go out with my friends and draw a landscape from nature everyday.

One day, in the presence of my mother, a lady came to my room to see what I had drawn. Upon inspecting a poster of two people reading a magazine I had copied from a newspaper, which I liked so much and had hung on the wall, the lady did not give me praise I expected, she said "I appreciate your love of art, but I can't praise you for your work, because it was not drawn well." Realizing I was sad, before she left, the lady said: "I would like to introduce you to a good teacher in the near future."

Approximately one week later, during the afternoon while I was reading a Russian novel, the teacher came. He was a young man called Li, who was in his early 20's and taught art and mathematics in a high school. I still remember the long and

pleasant talk we had that afternoon. Sometimes Li talked about himself with my parents, and sometimes he discussed art anecdotes with me. Anything he told me was new, interesting and attractive. He said when he was a teenager, he did not have a private tutor to study art with, he just visited art teachers' studios to see what they did and how they were doing. However, he was not welcome by all the artists. Sometimes, he had to hide outside the window of the artist's studio, and steal a glance when the artist turned his back. Nineteen seventy three was one of the critical years of the "Cultural Revolution", when the political campaign against the Confucian School was launched by Mao. Under such a political atmosphere, no one dared to talk about foreign art, even Russian art. But Li did. He talked about Russian Realism and the Wanderers' Group, talked about Russian unofficial Constructivism and French Impressionism. In his defense, Li said: "We view the works of bourgeois art and even the works of Capitalist reactionary art, we also view the works of yellow (decadent) art, because we need to learn something from them." I did not understand all that he spoke of, but my parents were very scared, because such a topic and idea could result in one being charged as a Counterrevolutionary in those days.

Li was from an academic family. His mother taught in a primary school, his only brother taught literature and art in a high school as well, his girlfriend also taught in a high

school. His father had been an education official before 1949 and was executed by the Communist government in the 1950's. In light of his father's shadow, Li did not expect to get any promotion in his career, he had to dedicate his life to education only. But during the "Cultural Revolution", there was no real education in China, thus, he had to put all his enthusiasm into private teaching

Li and I felt like old friends at our first meeting. When I started to speak to him, I always addressed him respectfully as "teacher". However, Li saw me as an equal, not as a pupil. In that year, I was at the tender age of 13. My life experience consisted only of what I had seen as a child. According to Chinese tradition and custom, a child can not be a friend of an adult. Li was the first one who saw me not as a child, but as a real friend. Our friendship became a great advantage to me when I began to study art.

2. The Teaching and Learning

After our first meeting, I started my private education which was based on the Chestyakovian curriculum. Li told me that I must take at least two years to learn drawing, then I would begin to learn painting while continuing my drawing exercise; after four years of such practice, I could try to

create artwork and still continue my practice of drawing and painting.

The outline of the drawing training Li made for me was as follows.

(1) The first stage, 1 year:

Drawing still-life.

A. do 5 contour drawings of still-life every day: 1-2 months;

B. do 1 or 2 simple drawings of still-life every day: 1 month;

C. do 1 drawing (not as simple as before) of still-life every day: 2 months;

D. do 2-3 comprehensive drawings of still-lives every week: 6 months;

E. do 1 drawing of interior still-life every week: 2 months.

(2) The second stage, 3-6 months:

Drawing plaster cast.

A. draw two simplified plaster casts every week: 1-2 months;

B. draw 1 plaster cast after old masters' sculpture

every week: 2-4 months;

(3) The third stage, 5-10 months:

Drawing portraiture.

- A. draw as many portrait as one can every week;
- B. learn to use different media: pencil, charcoal, conte, ink or mono-colour;
- C. learn to master different techniques:
line drawing, massing....

(4) The fourth stage:

Drawing fast sketches.

- A. applied at the same time of the third session;
- B. draw as many fast sketches as one can.

According to this schedule, my drawing workshop was divided into four stages: drawing still-life, drawing plaster cast, drawing portraiture, and practicing fast sketch. The first stage of drawing still life was completed without any trouble, but the second stage presented quite a big problem. For the teaching and learning at this stage, different types of plaster cast were needed. However, we had no way to get what we wanted. In the book A Course of Drawing (1958), all the drawings of plaster cast were after the Western sculptures, such as the works of ancient Greece or Renaissance Italy. Li told me that because of the ethnical difference, for our study

of volume and structure, western facial structure was more useful than that of Chinese; therefore, we must use Western plaster casts as our models. Furthermore, such models of plaster cast should take after masterpieces, such as the works by Michelangelo, because, as Li said, the old masters did their works very precisely in terms of anatomical structure. But during the "Cultural Revolution", anything related to the West was seen as bourgeois or capitalist, so it was impossible for us to get any Western-style plaster casts. During those days, a plaster cast was a holy icon for the Chinese, only one person could be embodied through it, that person was Mao. We could find statues and busts of Mao everywhere, but ultimately they really were not useful as models. One day Li talked about my study and showed me some prints of the drawings illustrating Western plaster cast. I pointed at a drawing of the bust of Apollo and said that for sure this one was bourgeois because the hair style was not proletarian. Li was stumped for a while, then he said no, there were no bourgeois or capitalists during the days of Apollo. I knew nothing about that, and at that point, the lack of models had really upset me. Fortunately, my mother got a plaster cast of an eye which was a part of Michelangelo's David. Li and I were very glad, Li said no one could tell whether an eye was bourgeois or proletarian (*Figure 20*).

We encountered another problem which was never solved.

According to the Chestyakovian curriculum, after drawing portraiture, the last stage should be spent drawing nudes. During the "Cultural Revolution", Chinese people saw nudity in art, female or male, as Capitalist decadence, even a work portraying a clothed beautiful woman could be seen as pornography, because "beautiful" could be interpreted as "sexy" or "seductive" by the proletarian mind. This is why the women in most works of art produced during the "Cultural Revolution" were not beautiful, nor feminine. Due to such an environment, we had no way of finding a person who dared to be nude model. Thus, as a substitute, the practice of fast sketching was introduced. Li asked me to sketch in any circumstance, such as waiting in the theatre, being at friend's house, visiting a factory, travelling to the countryside, etc..

According to the Chestyakovian opinion, the different values of tone are the basic materials needed in building a three-dimensional-like image on a flat paper. The Chestyakovian method used to find the differences of values is comparison. Faced with a setting of a still-life which contained three apples with drapery as background, Li told me that the first thing I must do was to capture the main contrast of the whole composition. This is the first step of "from whole to part and then from part return to the whole". Li asked me to slightly close my eyes to see the basic contrast between the apples and the background drapery. Then, upon reaching the

second step, I must get the different tones among the three apples. For the purpose of drawing details, I must go even further to find the different values of tone on the same surface of an apple. Sometimes I found it was not easy to get such differences. In order to help me to develop my ability to identify the subtle differences, Li made a special set of still life which consisted of a white porcelain cup on a piece of white paper as the subject matter, and a piece of white drapery as the background. Li said the different tones of such three white objects were visible but very subtle, we could not get the right scale of the contrast among the three without comparative analysis. He said only comparison could help us to find the subtle differences of values of tone. After the second step of drawing details, comparison could also help us to adjust the whole relationship of different tones at the third step. Li used a sentence from the book A Course of Drawing (1958) as his motto, "compare, compare, and compare again".

In Li's opinion, technique is an important factor in the skill of drawing. At the beginning of my first session of drawing still life, Li asked me to do a special exercise which illustrated the use of parallel lines to shade. One kind of parallel lines were drawn in exactly the same way --the same in length, the same in thickness, and the same in shading; some lines were the same in rhythm --from strong to weak, from fat to thin, or from dark to bright. Li told me about technique;

such as how to use an eraser to brighten certain parts in a dark area, and how to use it to enliven the stiff lines. Li enjoyed talking about the beautiful lines of Raphael, Michelangelo and Ingres, while he himself liked to use a paper-roll-stick to soften the line shades.

The familiarity with materials is another factor in drawing skill. The appearance of pencil effects is different from that of charcoal. Li suggested I use a pencil to draw still-life, because pencil was easy to handle for drawing details; meanwhile, he suggested I use charcoal to draw portraits, because charcoal was helpful to get subtle values of tone.

Two years later, as soon as I finished my drawing session, I left my home town and moved to another province with my parents. I continued studying art with other private tutors, but I did not establish friendships with them. They were my parents' friends, not mine. Fortunately, I kept my communication with Li, sent him works every two weeks, and got his feedback regularly. Even today, we still write to each other, but of course, Li no longer teaches me how to draw.

By recounting the above stories about my study of drawing as a child, I am trying to show the negative influence of Chinese politics on art education, and also show the positive

influence of the friendship between a teacher and his student .

3. Beyond Skill Training

Li's teachings were totally Chestyakovian and very disciplined. I cannot forget that sometimes, in order to finish an assignment of a long term drawing of still-life, he insisted that I draw until midnight in his studio while he and his girlfriend discussed Russian literature. I was attracted by their discussions and became an "eavesdropper". However, Li also liked to converse about the same with me. Although Li took delight in describing the scientific character of the Chestyakovian system, he also enjoyed speaking on other topics beside Chestyakov with great relish. His favourite topics were the "-ism"s of modern art, criticism, novels and poetry. Such discussions with me were very relaxed, and provided a break from the strict training of drawing.

Once, during a conversation, I asked Li why there were so many "-ism"s in the world of art. I thought Realism was enough for art, because only Realism could be understood and could be judged by skill and likeness. Li said, although we employed one style of Realism, the Western artists liked to take different styles; and although we did not like the other "-ism"s, we must know about them. In fact, before the 1980's, there was only

one "-ism" in Communist China, the Socialist Realism, or the Combination of Revolutionary Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism as it was called. As a teenager, I could not understand the meaning of art history, but I liked to talk about it with Li. My family had a good collection of literature, while Li also had a great collection but his consisted of art. When Li came to my home, he always borrowed some books from me, and when I went to his home, I always lost myself in his art collections. Through Li's collections of reproductions, I met some western masters such as Raphael, Manet and many Russian Realists like Repin, Sorikov and Levitan. Based on these artists and their works, we discussed what kind of art was good and what was not good. Li preferred Realist rather than Cubist; he enjoyed the Impressionist analysis of light, and tried to do some half-realist half-Impressionist landscapes.

In addition to art history, Li also liked to talk about criticism with me. This was not a theoretical discussion but a practical one. Upon viewing a reproduced Russian painting, A Lieutenant's Love Proposing, Li analyzed the arrangement of the groups of figures and the whole composition and told me why this painting was visually powerful. Li's analysis of another Russian painting, An Unmatched Marriage, was also unforgettable. In the foreground of the painting, an old aristocrat was placing a ring on a young girl's finger. The old

man was weak and in shadow, the girl was healthy but sad and in candle light. Li analyzed the use of light and its effect on revealing the artist's attitude. Today I can not recall the artists' names, but I will never forget the images of the paintings. Li had some books on Russian Realist art, mostly collections of critical essays. I read most of them, but at such a young age, I did not totally understand. However, such discussions and reading materials gave me my first knowledge of art criticism.

Besides visual art, Li loved literature and music; he wrote poems and played violin. Perhaps my interest in literature and writing was motivated by Li, which eventually made me chose literature and criticism as my undergraduate major.

All of the above, in my opinion, were close to today's theory of Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE). I believe, if Li had just given me skill training but nothing else, his instruction would have been boring, and there would have been no friendship between us. Actually, this was exactly what had happened in my experience with the other private tutors. Furthermore, if Li had just trained my drawing skill, my interest in art might have been destroyed. It was this personal experience which led me to support the DBAE theory wholeheartedly and without hesitation upon my first reading.

Part 2 An Interpretation

1. The Only Road to Take

There were two reasons for Li to use the Chestyakovian System as our curriculum. First, he was educated with such a system; he understood and agreed with the Chestyakovian method. Second, he had no other choices but to accept this system.

Li was mostly a self-taught artist and art teacher. He did not attend any formal art school but only some training classes. He thought he needed more knowledge about art and had a great enthusiasm for reading about art. However, in regard to theory, most of his readings were about Russian realism. Consequently, in regard to practice, he focused his skill enhancement on the Chestyakovian method. Becoming a high school teacher, Li saw such self-education and self-enhancement as very important for his career.

As I indicated in Chapter four, the French influence on Chinese art education was overpowered by the Russian influence in the mid-1950's. Although the Sino-Soviet brotherhood relationship was broken in the following decade, the Russian influence remained; the second generation artists were still the "main force" of art and art education in China. During the

ten years of the "Cultural Revolution", although all the art schools were shut down, private art education kept going everywhere. In regard to the aspect of art philosophy and pedagogical methodology, the Chinese art world was still overshadowed by the second generation artists and ultimately by the Soviet pattern. In such circumstances, if any art teacher wanted to have private teaching lessons and use certain methods to teach, he or she had no more choices but to use the Chestyakovian System. Li could not avoid the given choice and he also thought the Chestyakovian System was the best one for skill training because of its scientific nature.

Li enjoyed the scientific nature of Russian Realism and the strenuous skill training. He lent me the book A Course of Drawing (1958), and explained to me the principles of that system. Li told me that, although the Chestyakovian book was loaded down with too many trivial details, and it was too complicated and hard to understand, the skill training based on the Chestyakovian curriculum was definitely necessary. Using his own experience, he put even more details in his teaching plan. For example, between the stages of drawing still life and drawing plaster cast, he inserted a transitional exercise which was drawing simplified plaster cast. With this exercise, Li elaborated the effect of lighting, the subtle differences of tones and values, the relationship of mass and shadow. I believe such training was useful for an inexperienced pupil to

acquire the necessary skills, but I have to say that, sometimes, it was really uninspiring. Fortunately, Li's discussions of art history, criticism and other topics enlivened the dull training.

I did not know if Li intentionally wanted to use these interesting topics to enliven the boring skill training or not. No matter what the true reason was, his combination of skill training and discussion of art worked well for me.

2. The Possibility of Acceptance

I do not think that children under the age of 12 can tolerate Chestyakovian training. In my opinion, It is only acceptable for older adolescents.

When I was learning to draw with Li, I realized the importance of age. It was not only about the possibility of acceptance, but also about what level of skill I could reach at a certain age. I did not know if Li realized that or not, but I remember he mentioned the significant relationship of age and artistic development. As I understood, it was good for a child to start learning art as early as possible. Because the skill training stages took four years, those who started earlier could finish such a training and enter the stage of creation

earlier. This meant that a child could have more potential to succeed in the future. I started my formal learning of art at the age of 13, I wished I had started it at 12 even 11. Of course I had no idea about the relationship of possibility of acceptance and age. I did not know that young children's interest and enthusiasm in art could be "turned off" by the boring hard work and dull skill training.

I also realized the importance of formal education. Like most other children, I began to do artwork so early that I can not tell at what age I started. At the primary school I attended, the art teacher organized exhibitions of children's art works every semester. The exhibitions consisted of two parts. The average works were shown inside the school, the exceptional works were shown outside. Thus, the children were naturally divided into two groups, one was good at art, the other was not. My works were always shown outside. I had some schoolmates who were also good in art and their works were shown outside as well. As primary school pupils, we learned art without any special plan, we just copied some posters that we found interesting. As soon as I finished my primary schooling and started to learn drawing with Li, differences between some of my friends and myself appeared. Some friends stopped creating art altogether, some continued but only made copies and imitations, while yet others had their own private tutors and started to learn either western art or Chinese art.

Comparing the differences among us, I realized that if one was really interested in art and wanted to keep such a hobby, one must learn formally. The term "formally" means that such a learning must be based on a certain curriculum, must have a project which is planned by an experienced art teacher.

I also realized that, for the learning stage, the training of drawing skill should be based on the Chestyakovian curriculum. At that time, I thought only the Chestyakovian curriculum was effective for children in order to be allowed to enter the real world of art, and that the education based on such a system was the real art education. But through the works of my other friends who were learning traditional Chinese painting, I also found that their training of brush work was interesting too, because it was not only training of skill, but also the creation of real artwork. The drawings I did were just exercise works which showed my skill only, but my friends' works exhibited their abilities of both skill and creativity. Thus, I thought, perhaps the better way to learn art was by doing two things at the same time, i.e., learning drawing skills and trying brush work. However, I had never tried to combine the two.

Through their teaching experiences, many Chinese artists and art teachers believe that the training of traditional brush work is much more attractive and interesting for young children

than the training of drawing skill. Today, many Chinese children at a very young age, ranging from 4 to 7 years old, are sent to art classes to learn brush painting. As soon as they reach the age of 10, some start to receive the formal training of Chinese traditional art; and some start to learn drawing skill at the age of 12 or 13. The curriculum for drawing training is mainly based on the Chestyakovian curriculum.

Part 3 An Evaluation and A Judgement

1. The Teacher-Student Relationship

In China, a joke is told among students: a linguistic teacher asks students to give examples of antonyms, one student says "enemy and friend", another one says "teacher and student". As a tradition of Chinese education, teachers keep a certain distance from students to show "the dignity of master of teaching". However, there was no such distance between Li and I. After I left my home town, I started to receive letters from Li. In his letters to me, Li always wrote "your friend" before his signature, and in effect, really saw himself as a friend of mine. According to Chinese tradition, friendship is usually established between the persons who are at the same age or belong to the same generation. Li was about 10 years older

than me; as my teacher, he belonged to the older generation, but we saw each other as equal friends.

I cherish my friendship with Li, because Li was the first person who did not consider me a child. He discussed art with me as he would with an adult friend. His confidence in me convinced me of my maturity.

I think, perhaps such a teacher-student friendship can be explained by referring to the British psychoanalytic theories of "Infant-Mother Relations" and "Potential Space". In his Art and Psychoanalysis (1979), Peter Fuller (1947-1990), a British art critic, says, a baby lives in an ideal environment in the first weeks of life after his birth; he identifies himself with his mother, because he thinks he still lives within his mother like he did before his birth. But during the following weeks, the baby gradually realizes the difference between himself and his mother. He learns about his independent subjectivity and his mother's objectivity. This is to say that the baby finds a potential space between himself and his mother. In terms of Donald Woods Winnicott (1982), an influential British contemporary psychologist, this space is "the third area of human life". Fuller indicates the aesthetic significance of such a space: "The capacity to explore and investigate this 'potential space' in a situation of trust, allows the individual to develop his internal sense of place and

integration, his sense of external reality, and his ability to act imaginatively and creatively upon the latter." (P. Fuller, 1979, PP. 202-203). Here, what I am really interested in is the concept of "potential space" and the answer to why this space is potential for personal identity and creativity.

Winnicott mentions that the potential space exists between the subjective object and the object as objectively perceived, between me-extensions and the non-me. Thus, according to Fuller's interpretation of Winnicott, the potential space between baby and mother "...was the precursor of that between the child and the family, and eventually of that between the individual and society, or the world." Fuller says, "In Winnicott's view, one development derived from the 'potential space' was thus, for the adult, the location of cultural experience itself. The 'potential space' could be looked upon as sacred 'to the individual experiences creative living'....the individual can explore the interplay between himself and the world, and can create imaginative transformations of this world,...." (P. Fuller, 1979, P. 204).

As a new experience of life, my friendship with Li opened a wider world for me; Li helped me to step out of the narrower world of school and family; he helped me to receive new knowledge, to realize the possibility of my personal identity and to find a new-me. All this was possible due to Li's art

education. Because of such a personal experience, I do not think art education consists of skill training alone. Skill training is one of the means to reach the goal of development and creativity.

Thus, I would like to say that a good relationship between teacher and student is important for adolescents to acquire aesthetic knowledge and develop artistically.

2. A Judgement on Li and His Teaching

China's closed-door policy during the "Cultural Revolution" limited Li's perspective. Although he did not like the political dogma, he had to take the way of socialist realism for his art and teaching. Under such a circumstance, in order to avoid political intervention, Li only focused on the improvement of skill.

Because he was limited to realistic skills, Li did not reach the realm of free-creation, therefore, I can not say Li is a good artist. But in my opinion, an art teacher does not have to be a good artist, and a good artist is not always a good teacher. However, Li had certain advantages in his art career, they were his interest in knowledge of other subjects, not pertaining to visual art, such as his knowledge about

literature, music and even mathematics.

Although Li is not a good artist, he is a good art teacher, because he related his teachings to other knowledge. His relationship with students is another positive factor in his teachings. The story of Li's teaching technique raises the following questions: should an art educator give students the knowledge of both art and things other than art, at random? Should he discuss and view masterpieces with students without any special plan, or must he have a specific plan? Although Li did not have any plan to formally talk about art with me, the theory of DBAE has such a plan.

Whether or not Li intentionally and purposely discussed art to enliven the often dull skill training, my judgement of Li is based on the result of his teaching. Although Li knew nothing about DBAE, and he had nothing to do with it, he seemed to have the same goal as DBAE in his teaching practices. I will not discuss the debate on DBAE in this thesis, but I do support such a theory.

The case of Li's technique also raises another issue about the quality of an art educator. A good teacher should clearly be aware of why and how to use a certain curriculum; a good teacher must teach students in accordance with their aptitudes; a good teacher must be aware of the importance of self-

education which is not only the skill of doing art, but mainly all sorts of knowledge about art and other related subjects.

Chapter 6 Conclusion:

The Value of the Chestyakovian System and the Value of My Study at Concordia University

At the beginning of this thesis I asked two questions: What was the role of the Chestyakovian System of Teaching Drawing in China? And how could one adapt such a system to today's art education in China? Through my theoretical and practical studies of the Chestyakovian System and its impact in China, the first question can be answered as follows:

The Chestyakovian System maintained and broadened the old Western tradition of Beaux Arts in China. In historical perspective, I would like to say that the Chinese use of the Chestyakovian System during the second half of this century can be seen as an adoption of the Western cultural and educational heritage. In 1984, the Chinese government invited American business man, Robert Hefner III, to China. In the National Gallery of China in Beijing, Hefner visited the Sixth National Exhibition of Fine Arts. Upon viewing the art works, he was surprised by the style and skill of the western realistic tradition which was no longer favoured in the modern West but still popular in China. Hefner was determined to introduce the western-tradition Chinese art to the West and opened the Hefner Gallery in New York, especially for third generation artists from China. In March 1987, the Exhibition of

Contemporary Chinese Oil Paintings was held in the Hefner Gallery. Since then, Hefner has invited and helped many known Chinese artists to visit the United States. Hefner is the first person to open the world of Chinese Western-tradition art to the West, and make the West aware that such a tradition still carries on in China.

In terms of art education, the use of the Chestyakovian System in China also carried on the old Western tradition of teaching art, which can be seen as a positive aspect of the Chinese use of this system. But I must point out the negative aspect. The Chinese art educators enjoy the common point between the Chestyakovian System and the Chinese tradition, i.e., skill training as a way from outside in to teach art. The Chinese enjoyment and fixation on such a method was an obstacle in terms of an individual's artistic development, today's pedagogical development, and learning the western modernist idea of art education, which is from inside out way.

Another negative aspect of the Chestyakovian System was the political dogma which hampered and jeopardized the normal development of Chinese art education. During the heyday of "Total Sovietization" in the second half of the 1950's, there was a slogan in the Chinese art world which went as follows "The Communist leaders offer political ideas, the masses offer the life experiences, the artists offer art skills." In those

days, such Three-Combination was a policy for art creation. Therefore, as an answer to the second question, I would like to say that the Chinese art educators should give up all political dogmas and Socialist Realist principles, but maintain the use of the Realist or representative aspect of the Chestyakovian System as one of many ways to teach art. Despite the political dogma, realism is still useful for today's art education, because we must give a transition to the reform of Chinese art education. To use the Chestyakovian System for today's art education in China, one must clearly keep in mind that this system is simply a skill training curriculum, hence it does not cover everything which deals with art education. The realist way of teaching drawing should be an open system, it should be able to gain any useful advantages from the other systems. Thus, the different systems can bring out the best in one another, and then complete themselves. Today's Postmodern society is a varied society, today's Postmodern culture is a multicultural, the way of art education in China must keep pace with today's pedagogical development.

My above opinion is totally different from before. Although I entered the graduate program of art education at Concordia University in 1991, and began to work on my thesis proposal last year, I had still seen skill as the basis to art creation and skill training as the precondition to art education until I finished my proposal at the beginning of

1994. As a result of my studies at Concordia University, my study of art history for my thesis preparation, my contemplation about today's art and art education, and my re-evaluation about my personal experience in learning art, I eventually changed my mind. I no longer see skill as the fundamental and most important factor of art, I no longer see skill training as the primary factor for art education. I see skill and skill training as one of the many factors involved in art and art education.

My three-year study at Concordia is almost over. I now consider such a mind-transformation as more significant than knowledge-acquiring. For me, knowledge is important because I will use it in the future, but I know this is only one aspect of my studies here. I think I can acquire most knowledge through self-study, but without my study here I doubt I would have had such a change of mind. I believe a new mind is the precondition to receive new knowledge. Thus, the change of mind is more important than acquiring knowledge.

Today, I believe that art, artistic development, and creativity come from both practical experience of expression and spiritual inspiration which is based on personal expressive practice; that art, artistic development, and creativity are ignited by the sudden realization of truth. Real art has never come from physical training of skill alone.

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FIGURES



Figure 1
An ornamental model of plaster cast
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 71)



Figure 2
A work by a student from Moscow Middle School of Arts
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 68)



Figure 3
A small still life on table
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 69)



Figure 4
A drawing of interior scene or large still life
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 70)

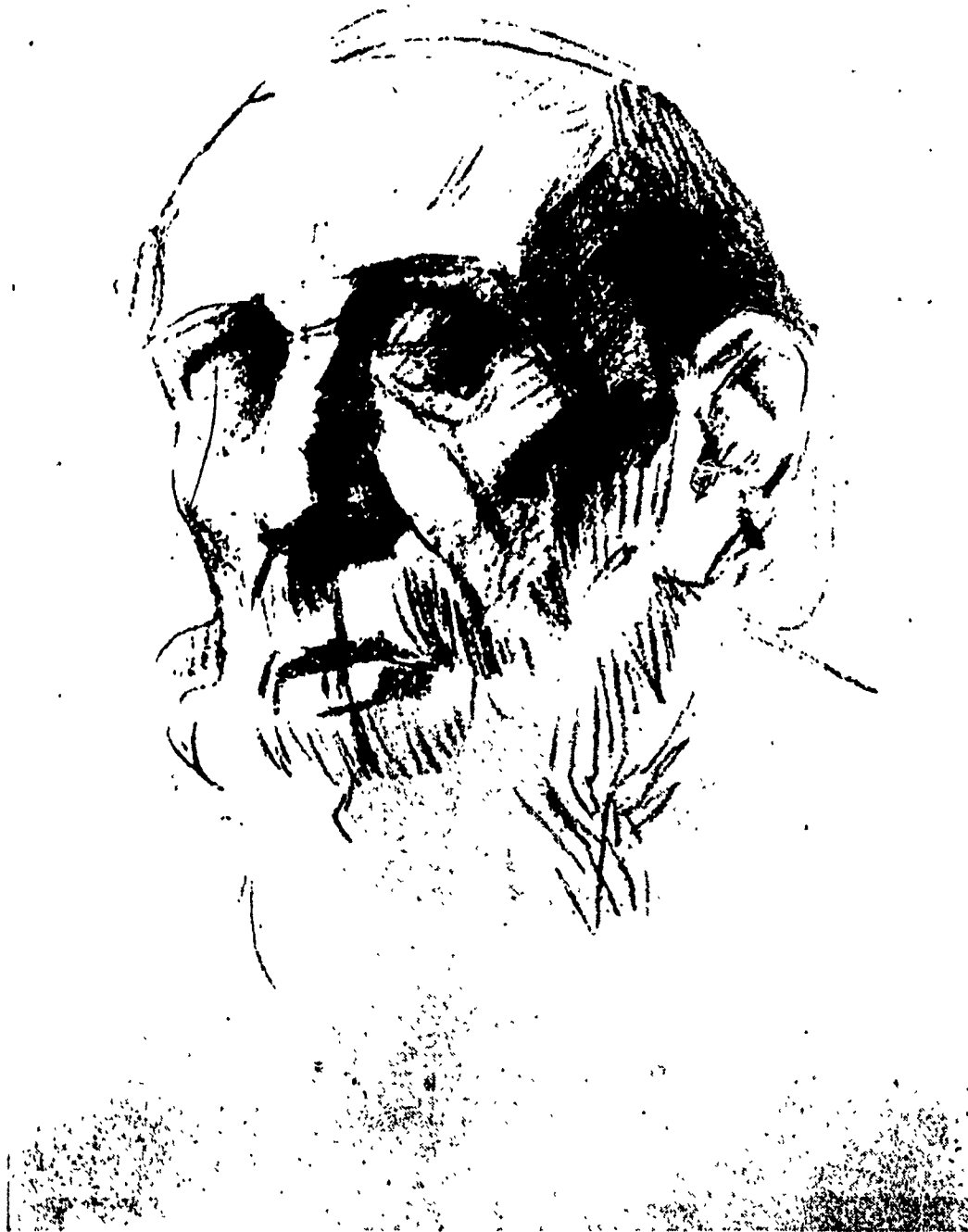


Figure 5
A drawing of portrait: catching the anatomical structure
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 97)

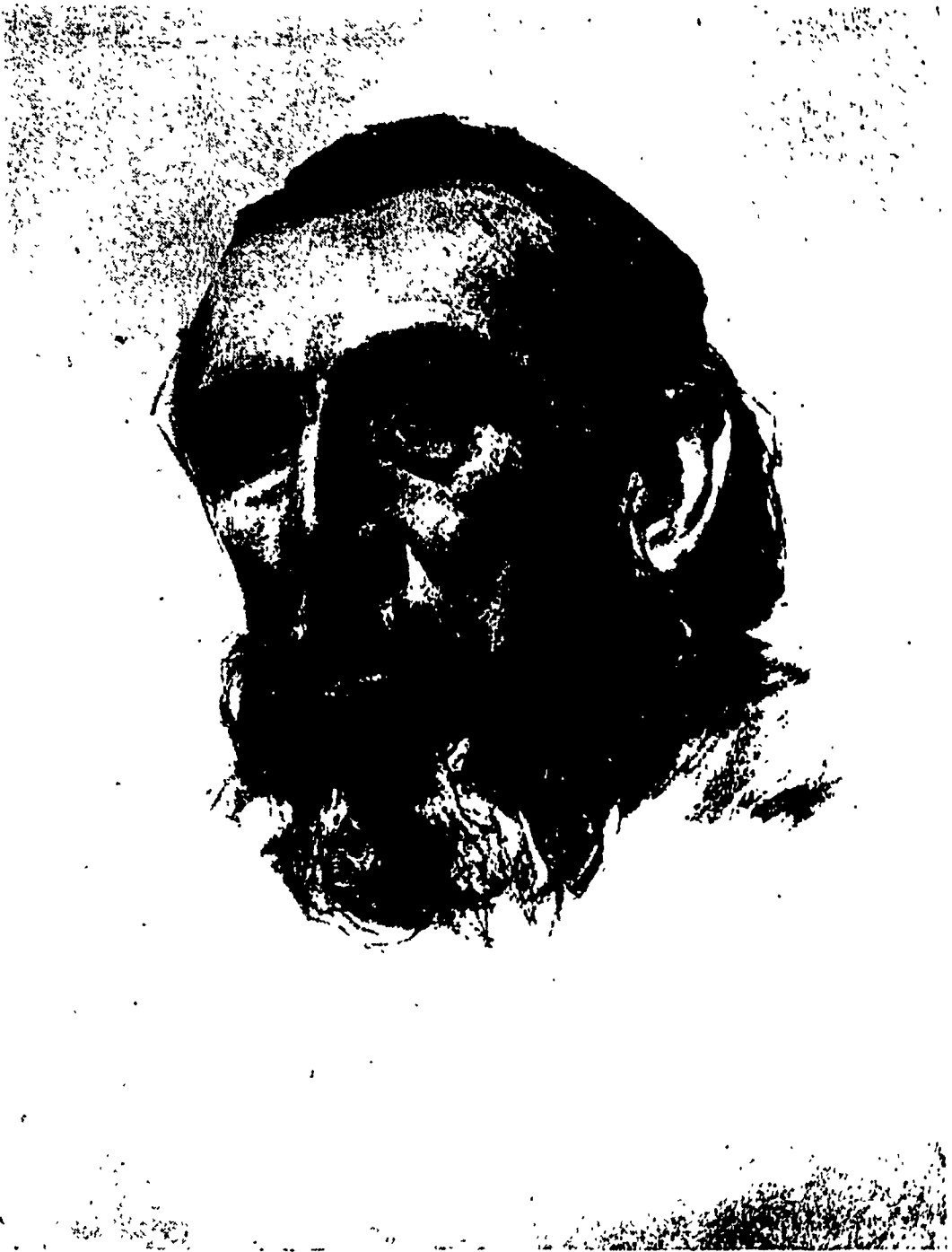


Figure 6
A drawing of portrait: facial surfaces and the whole image
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 98)



Figure 7 A drawing of figure in life environment
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 190)



Figure 8
A sketch by Ilya Repin: Tolstoy working on his novel
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 182)



Figure 9
A contour drawing by Preisler: an opposite example
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 13)



Figure 10
A sample of the Chestyakovian drawing:
the first stage in drawing procedure
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 88)



Figure 11
A sample of the Chestyakovian drawing:
drawing details as the following stage.
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 91)



Figure 12
A finished portrait: details and basic structure
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 93)



Figure 13
A life drawing by Sorikov
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 196)



Figure 14
A life drawing by Senov
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 197)



Figure 15
The Morning of Execution (detail):
a painting by Sorikov (Eotob, A.N., 1979, P.293)



Figure 16
Ivan the Terrible Killing His Son (detail):
a painting by Repin (Eotob, A.N., 1979, P.280)



Figure 17
David, the plaster cast after Michelangelo
(Wang, A.J., 1986, p. 3)



Figure 18
A drawing of portrait by a 17 year old art student in China
(Collection of Prof. D. Pariser of Concordia University)



Figure 19
A drawing of still life set by Xu Bing:
combination of "out door scene" and "in door scene"
(Xu, B., 1988, P. 38)

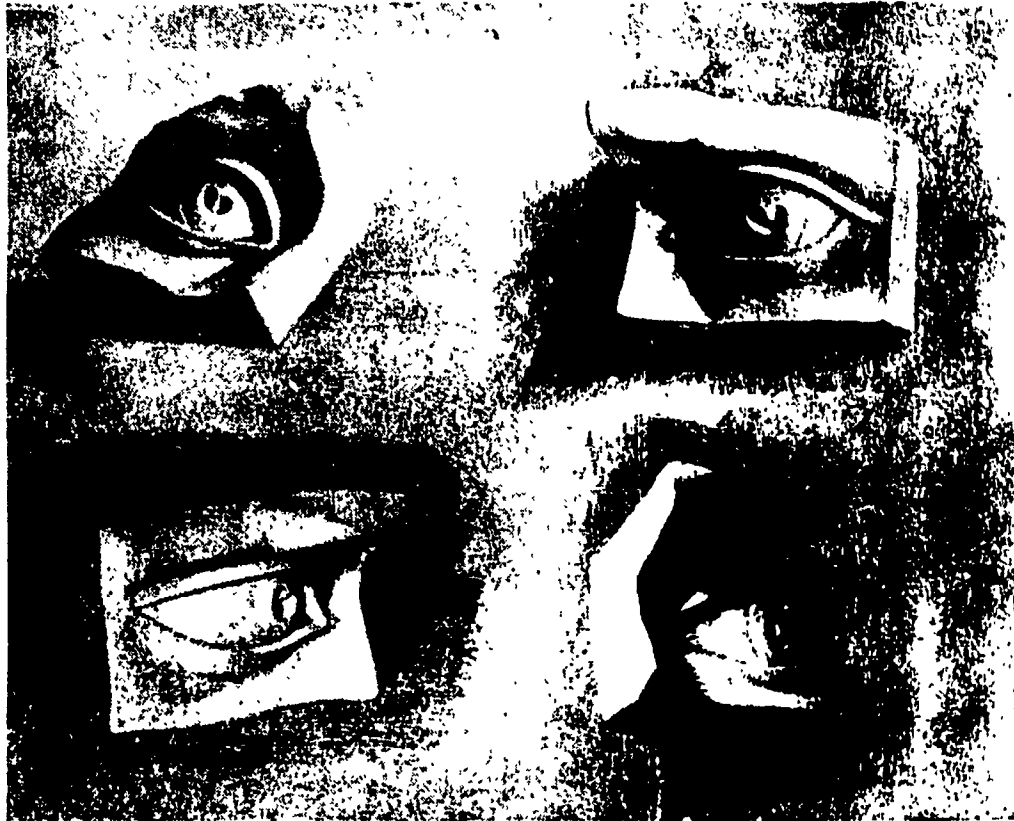


Figure 20
David's eye, a drawing of a plaster cast after Michelangelo
(Solov'ev, A.M., Smirnov, G.B., Alekseeva, E.S., 1958, P. 108)

Appendix

1. A Letter from National Library of Canada,
13th July 1993.
2. A Letter from The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
27th July 1993.