

羅維大
題人老石白歲三十九

MODERN
CHINESE PAINTINGS

BY

DAVID KWOK

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

1955

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Litho in U. S. A.

FOREWORD

I have been asked to write a foreword to this collection of some of David Kwok's recent paintings, and I do so with pleasure. Only twenty-five years ago such paintings might not have been understood nor appreciated in America, but today, with our recently acquired freedom of expression, we can immediately enjoy, and to a great extent, understand his work. It is vital and worthwhile and does much to break down artificial barriers deriving from racial misunderstandings.

Like all skilled Chinese artists and literati, David Kwok's performance is based on a mastery of the brush, so complete as to be almost incomprehensible to us. Like the great Chinese painters of all ages he "writes" his pictures, and we, on the other side of the world, can "read" them.

Our current preoccupation with understatement does much to condition us for enjoyment of his work: it greatly suggests and slightly delineates, and there is always a pervading humor and joy in existence.

Mr. Kwok has been studying occidental techniques and has doubtless mastered many of them, but I am sure he will never succumb to the temptation of trying to combine the techniques of two hemispheres.

CHARLES FABENS KELLEY

Assistant Director and Curator of Oriental Art
The Art Institute of Chicago

AN INTRODUCTION TO DAVID KWOK AND HIS PAINTINGS

Among many contemporary artists of China, David Kwok (Kuo Ta-wei) is one of the most promising young painters of the traditional school. While many of the others limit themselves to imitating earlier painters or have been influenced by Western techniques, Mr. Kwok's painting represents a new discipline of the classical style. He has inherited the traditional method, but enriches it with his new techniques and ideas. His simple and vigorous strokes, prolific and elegant, stand out in the so-called *Hsieh-i* or expressionistic style of Chinese painting.

Born in Peking in 1919, Mr. Kwok comes of an artist family of Shantung. He studied under many veteran artists and is one of the few favorite pupils of the great painter Ch'i Pai-shih, whose works are frequently exhibited and received the highest esteem in Europe and America. Mr. Kwok became interested in art when he was very young, and began his training in traditional brush work under the master Ch'i when he was fifteen. During three years of hard work, his creative ability was combined with Ch'i's refined techniques to consolidate the foundations of his art. At seventeen he attended the National Institute of Fine Arts in Nanking. At the end of his first semester three of his paintings—"Lotus Flower", "Dragonfly", and "Tadpoles"—were selected by the Chinese Artists' Association to represent China at the International Exhibit of Modern Arts in Paris in 1936. After his graduation, Mr. Kwok taught for three years at the National Institute and five years as professor of Chinese painting at the Kiangsi Provincial Institute of Fine Arts.

Since 1949, Mr. Kwok has been a resident of Hongkong, where he has held two exhibits of his paintings in 1952 and 1953. In his second exhibit, which was sponsored by the British Council and supported by the Governor of Hongkong, he was extremely successful. More than half of his seventy paintings then exhibited were acquired by Chinese and European collectors at the opening of the show.

In the Spring of 1954 the United States Government awarded Mr. Kwok a scholarship for the study of Occidental art in America. He studied first at Iowa State University and later at Columbia University, learning theories and techniques of Western art to enrich his powers of observation and creativeness. During this period, by invitation, he gave demonstrations over television networks and toured various cities to hold exhibits and demonstrations of his brush-work. A formal one-man exhibit of his works is scheduled at the Art Institute of Chicago from March

first to April tenth, 1955. Some of his paintings have been acquired by art museums as representative pieces of modern Chinese art.

A collection of twenty reproductions of Mr. Kwok's paintings, most of them bearing inscriptions by his teacher Ch'i Pai-shih, was published in Hongkong in 1953. His free and elegant style as represented in this album gives a very delightful impression to all who see it. Some of his more recent works are published here as the second collection of reproductions of his paintings. They show a great variety of subjects, depicted by his talented brush. He not only specializes in drawing flowers, plants, and many small living creatures, as his teacher did, but also paints birds, animals, human figures, and genre, sometimes with a trenchant sense of humor and humanity.

For the full understanding of his paintings, the inscriptions written by his teacher Ch'i Pai-shih are not only beautiful as calligraphy, but also helpful in understanding Kwok's works. In many of the inscriptions, Ch'i praises his student in such terms as "how perfect these few strokes" or "your work excels mine." Art, however, is born of creativeness and cannot develop through mere imitation. Kwok's originality and creativeness are well recognized and attested by his teacher. In endorsing the painting "Mushroom", Ch'i has written: "Ta-wei does not like to imitate others in painting, which is the distinguishing characteristic of an outstanding life." On another painting, "Bottle-gourd" (plate 8), Ch'i says: "It shows competence if one does not follow the pattern that could be followed easily." Ch'i frequently compares Kwok's works with those of Pa Ta Shan Jen, the famous painter of the seventeenth century from whose style both Ch'i and Kwok inherit. On the picture "Turtle" (plate 3), Ch'i notes that Pa Ta "could not have this new idea." On "Black Lotus" Ch'i comments that "not only is he prolific of ideas, but his techniques also surpass the others." Kwok's unusual ability can be seen in one of his masterpieces, "Dog Fight" (plate 18), which, while vividly depicting the dogs' muscles and ribs by a few unretouched brush strokes, also presents a satire on human behavior. Ch'i has noted on this picture: "The only one who paints domestic animals so remarkably is my student (Ta-wei); if there is anyone else who can do this, I have never heard of him." All of these comments indicate how highly the works of this young artist are valued by the great master of modern Chinese painting.

TSUEN-HSUIN TSIEN

The University of Chicago
March 1, 1955

LIST OF PLATES

- 1 DOG UNDER FENCE
- 2 BAMBOO AND SPARROWS
- 3 TURTLE
- 4 YOUNG BAMBOO
- 5 FEEDING TIME
- 6 MORNING-GLORY
- 7 DANCING FROGS
- 8 BOTTLE-GOURD
- 9 LOTUS IN ONE STROKE
- 10 MOTHERLY LOVE
- 11 KINGFISHER PERCHING ON DRIED LOTUS
- 12 CORMORANT
- 13 CICADA ON WILLOW BRANCH
- 14 BAMBOO AND BIRD
- 15 YOUNG DUCKS
- 16 LOTUS
- 17 STEELYARD SCALES
- 18 DOG FIGHT
- 19 SORROWFUL PARTING
- 20 MONKEY SHOW

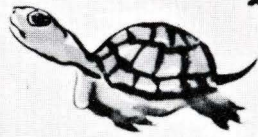


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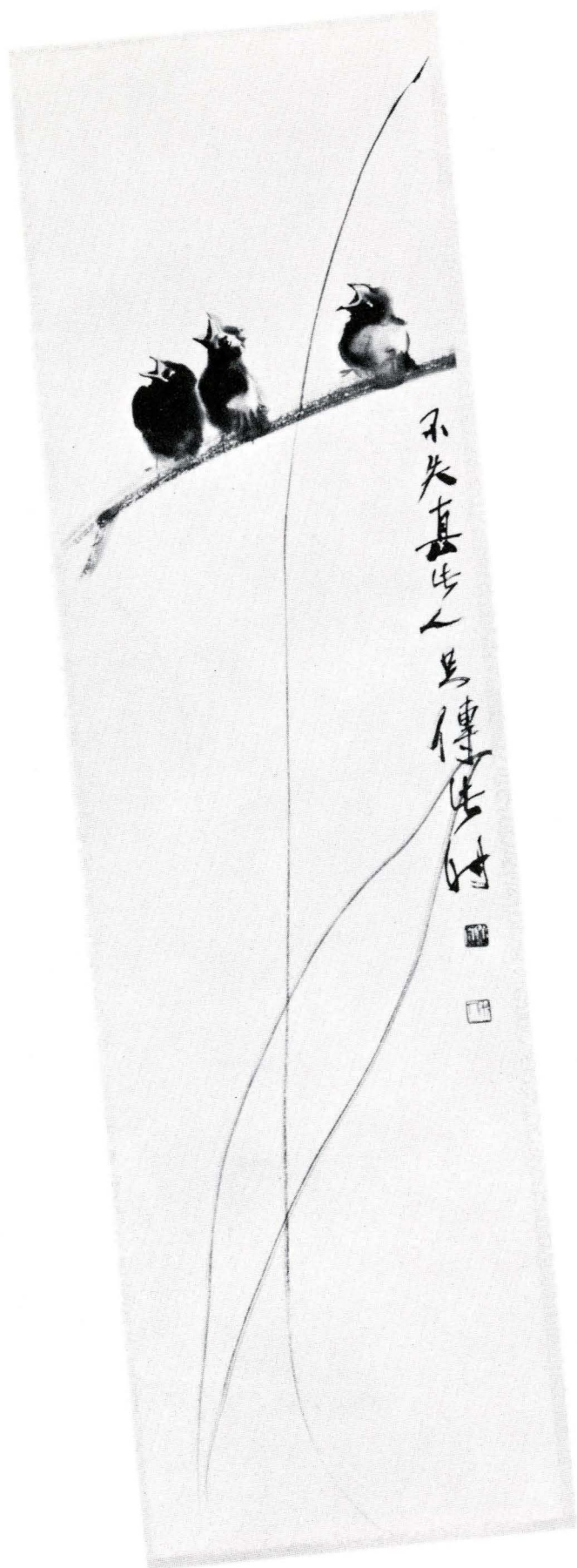
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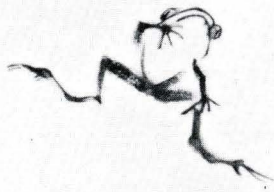
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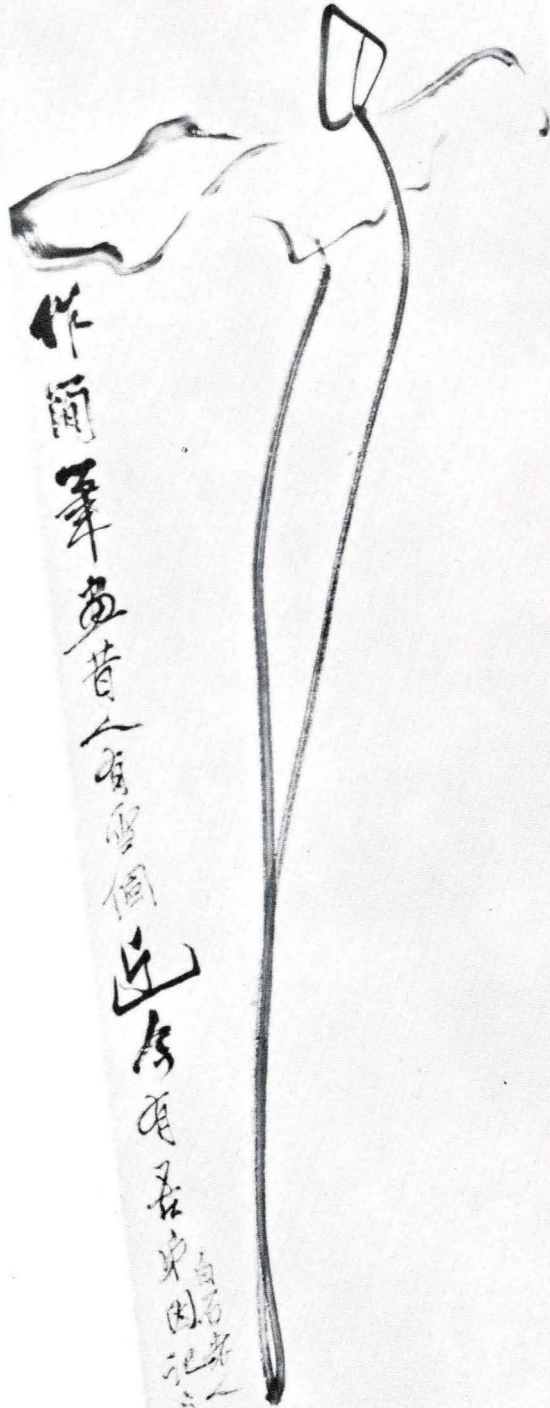


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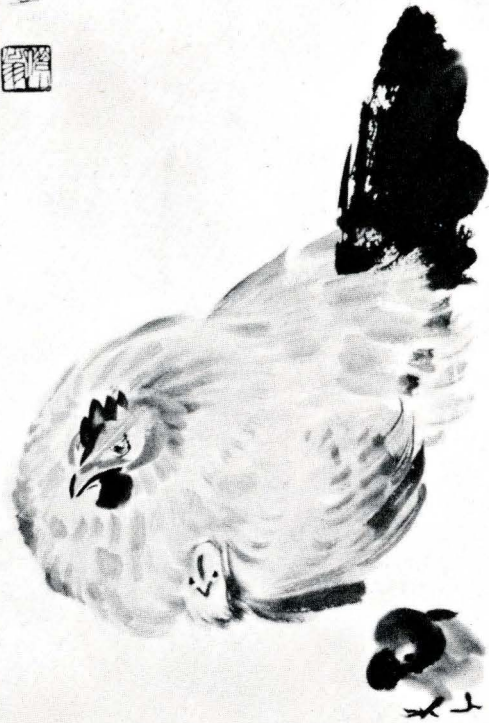


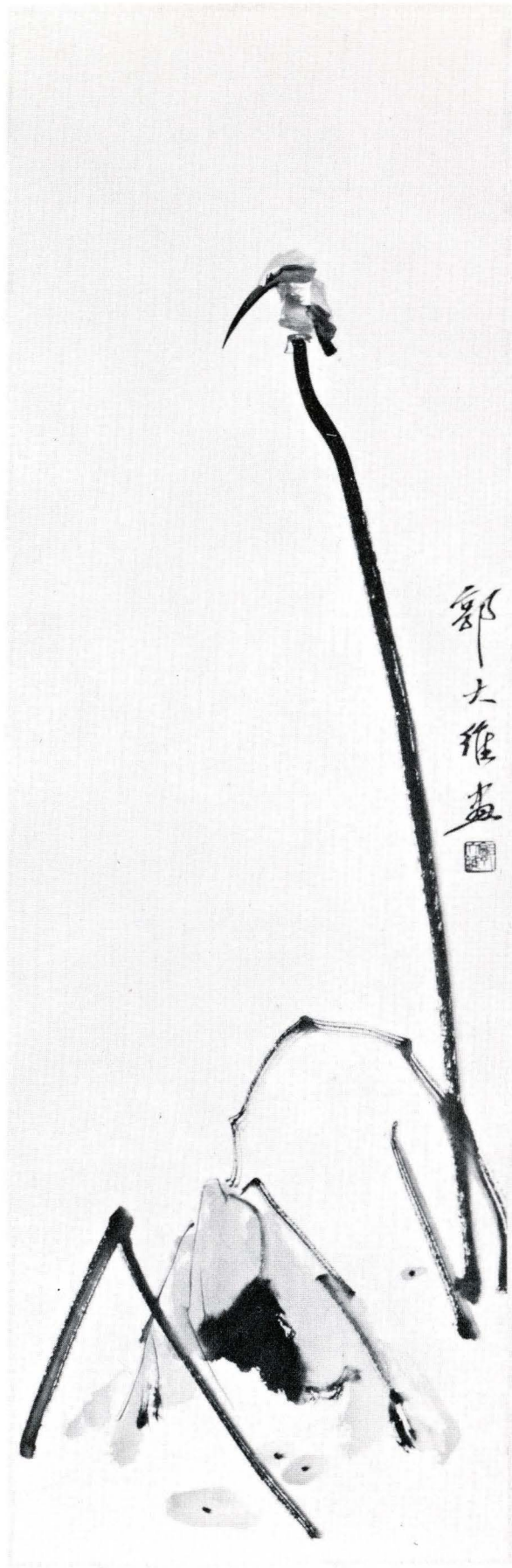
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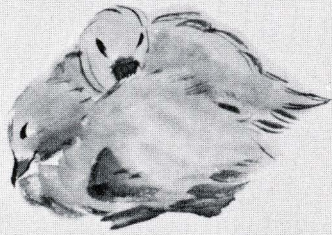


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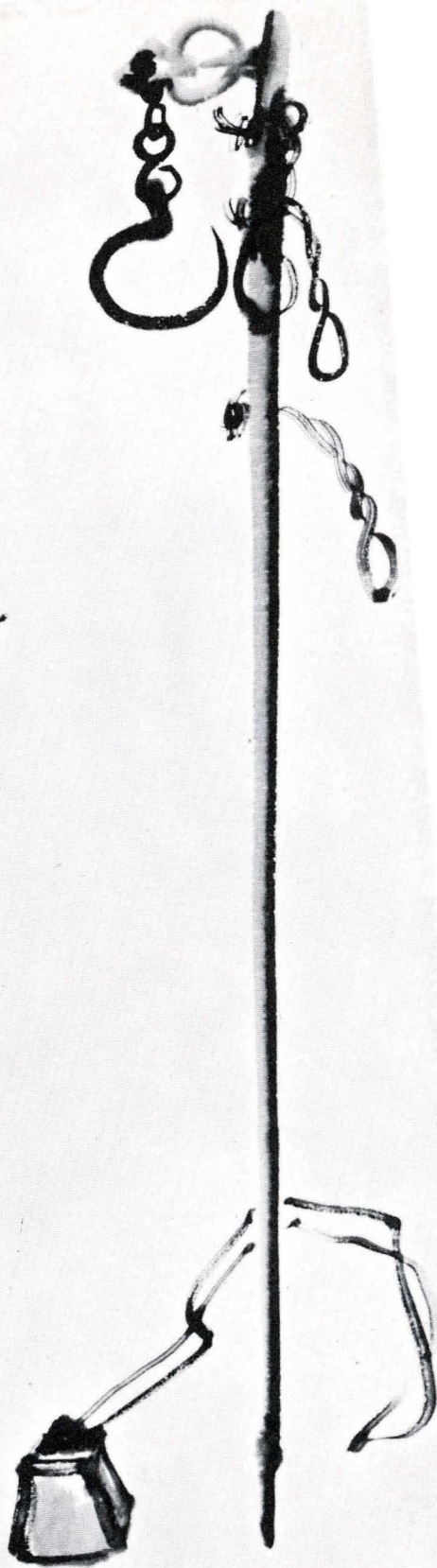
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