

Educating in the Arts

The Asian Experience:
Twenty-Four Essays

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Chapter 2

Masters and Pupils

The Rise of the Modern Art School in Asia: Some Key Issues Regarding Their Establishment, Curricula and Place in the Communities

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The modern-day art school in Asia, based on European models, is a symbol of the changes experienced in the region over the last century from feudal societies to meritocracies, where access to education by an increasingly larger group underpins the transformation to modern, open and (mostly) democratic cultures. The history of these art schools with their dominant leaders, their various focus – based on different perceptions of art practice and individual power, their responses to and role in local politics, their star students and staff and their rise and fall – have been very important throughout the region.

The growth of public teaching institutions and their central role in the artistic life of most countries of the region have been collapsed into a much shorter time-frame than in Europe. The new European-derived schools started early in Japan, the Philippines, India and Australia, and in turn gave those societies strong bases from which to leverage general support of the visual arts. Other countries followed in their own unique ways.

This chapter explores some key issues in this story: particularly, the reasons why a school was established, by whom, and the consequences of this, and the ongoing argument about teaching local or foreign (Western) traditions. It also covers the importance of the infrastructure of the school to the arts community, it being the only institution existing that supported artists in any way. Even when there was a revolt against the (frequent) conservatism of such a school, younger artists rebelled against the internal workings rather than more widespread sentiments. The art school was a focus of the arts establishment and a symbol of wider society control.

The model has been successful, in part, because local cultures in most countries of Asia are comfortable with the master–student relationship that was translated in the schools into an organized teaching hierarchy. The student group itself was also important – often making links that developed into major movements in their country. This has happened in the West too, but it seems to have been more important in Asia. It always helped that local cultures usually supported the idea of

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education itself. It was easier to suggest developing a school than, say, an art museum or gallery. It is also interesting how often the word 'school' is part of a major movement, as can be illustrated even by a literal translation of the revolutionary Monoha group in Japan in the 1960s as the 'School of Things'.

Teaching of art in Asia prior to the development of these European-derived schools was very varied. In East Asia, skills with the ink brush, whether for calligraphy or for the elegiac evocation of nature, were part of the accoutrements of a Confucian gentleman. He learnt from acknowledged masters with an emphasis on individual practice, a process which was assumed to continue through his life. There is a famous quotation of the Japanese artist Hokusai (1760–1849) describing his 'progress':

From the age of 5, I have had a mania for sketching the form of things. From about the age of 50 I produced a number of designs, yet of all I drew prior to the age of 70 there is truly nothing of great note. At the age of 72 I finally apprehended something of the true quality of birds, animals, insects, fish and the vital nature of grasses and trees. Therefore, at 80 years I shall have made some progress, at the age of 90 I shall have penetrated even further the deeper meaning of things, at 100 I shall have become truly marvellous, and at 110, each dot, each line shall surely possess a life of its own. (Colophon, Hokusai, 1834).

Artists of special skill and talent were fêted, their names known and their works treasured.

In contrast, artists in Mughal India, for example, learnt their skills as lesser mortals, often becoming artists through family connections or in family ateliers, and were usually regarded as artisans unless an individual of exceptional talent arose and was publicly recognized, when their names were sometimes recorded and their status elevated. While learning and scholarship were admired in Mughal times, the rulers employed others actually to undertake the practice of the arts.

In South East Asia, individual courts in Java admired the theatrical over the visual arts, and Islamic courts generally opposed the depiction of figurative images (an additional factor being that climatic conditions were inimical to the survival of images on paper or cloth). In Siam, mural painting on both secular and religious buildings was widely practised; however, this was also learnt in ateliers of lower-class – though skilled and appreciated – artisans. Pre-Hispanic societies in the Philippines focused more on wooden and three-dimensional creations for ceremonies. This was done by skilled members of each group, and learnt individually within each smaller community. The depiction of local life through textiles was valued, but individual makers rarely known, in part because textile making was the province of women.

1. The Establishment of the Schools

By their nature, the new art schools were revolutionary, just by their intention to open up avenues to study art. The founders – usually new governments or colonial rulers – decided to hire professional teachers, housed in purpose-built institutions with curricula written down, for a nominated period of study, usually for a group of students in a classroom, and with the idea of a qualification at the end, and the

whole being open, in principle at least, to 'everyone'. The founding fathers (indeed, no 'mothers' appear and the term 'everyone' excludes female students) were also inspired by the idea that these schools were being established for the general benefit of society overall. This was 'progress'. It was believed at the time that education was the answer to so much.

The students quickly formed the idea of being alumni of these institutions, and responded with varying degrees of pride, ownership and obligation, perhaps even more than has been the case in similar institutions in the West. Alumni status often helped establish younger artists. Even today in Korea, alumni of various schools are expected to help (even unknown) fellow alumni.

The curriculum was for the most part based on European models, with the idea of learning a range of skills alongside some theoretical and aesthetic rules or ideals. These were usually based on current ideas of European art, but, as we will see, local modifications to this were made. They then encouraged the study of Western art through the books and magazines they collected, an important factor in supporting the central influence of the knowledge of Western art even today.

A key distinction, however, between the art schools of the region is the reason why these were established and by whom.

Art schools in Japan were established by the Japanese as part of their own technologically focused, modernization process. They established schools in their colonies in Korea and Taiwan. The Chinese belatedly followed the idea of the Japanese and used Japanese knowledge to develop the teaching of art in China. In contrast, South Asian art schools, notably in India, were developed by colonial, Western rulers with a distinct 'craft' bias towards a non-technological, handmade, anti-intellectual agenda. Certainly, these art schools were not seen as tools for increasing India's capacity to compete with the best and the newest of the West. South East Asian schools were established for reasons unique to each country's history and experience.

The new Meiji Government in Japan wanted to introduce the utilitarian skills of the West. This included the drawing skills needed to interpret the engineering and technological innovations coming into the country. A scholar at the Institute of Western Studies, Kawakamai Togai, began to teach these skills from the early 1860s (Conant, 1995, p. 22). Studies at the Institute included understanding Western oil-painting techniques. A technical art school was established in Tokyo in 1876 with European teachers hired for this purpose. Antonio Fontanesi, the Italian painting master, taught sketching from plaster casts in charcoal and crayon, pencil sketching from nature, landscape and figure painting in oil. This early group of students was the first in Japanese history to undertake the systematic study of oil painting, and, of these, certain names stand out as important leaders. (Harada, 1968, p. 32).

A key issue was understanding the capacity of oil paint to create an illusion of light and space through atmospheric perspective, with examples centred on landscapes in the thick dark paint of the European mid-nineteenth century, especially Fontanesi's admired Barbizon School. Of course, not many examples of European painting existed in Japan, and those that were brought in were often of only average technique and inspiration. Gradually, however, information, travel and the quality of examples improved. In 1889, the Tokyo School of Fine Arts was established by the

Ministry of Education to train teachers, technicians and also artists. Since this time, the Japanese have always looked to France in particular as the centre of Western art and, because they in turn were so influential in the rest of North Asia, Paris remained the beacon for young Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Taiwanese artists seeking knowledge, until New York took over after World War II.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Chinese artists, like their compatriots, were aware that the world was changing and knew they had to respond. This was reinforced by 'little' Japan, which had so obviously responded to new Western ways, militarily defeating the Chinese in 1895. The European powers' subsequent defeat of Chinese imperial forces in 1900 only cemented this realization.

The teaching techniques of Western art were part of the reforms brought in very quickly to China and included drafting, map making and illustrating, often taught by Japanese instructors. New ideas were entrenched by the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. The first Western-based art curriculum in China was established in Nanjing in 1906, followed by Shanghai, and focused on what had been learnt of Parisian practice from Japanese sources. The first national art school opened in Beijing in 1918, and by 1919 included *guohua* (traditional Chinese brush painting), design and *xihua* (Western-style or oil painting). Young Chinese artists themselves turned to Western art as a way to invigorate a stagnating establishment and founded private schools, and pushed for change from within official institutions. As Joan Lebold Cohen writes (1987, p. 12):

The new methods of Western art education introduced drawing with pencils and charcoal, painting in oil on canvas, and using watercolour and gouache on non-absorbent paper instead of ink and colour washes on absorbent paper or silk. Other innovations included drawing from life (using draped and nude models) and from plaster casts and painting from arranged still lifes and landscapes. The use of nude models was considered scandalous, and progressive art educators such as Liu Haisu and Lin Fengmian were subjected to extreme hostility for introducing nude models into the Chinese art curriculum. This reached a climax in 1927 when a warlord who was incensed by what he deemed to be an affront to public morality attacked Liu Haisu for such a practice – and for exhibiting paintings of nudes. He threatened to close down the school [the Shanghai Fine Art Institute], but as good fortune would have it, the army of Chiang Kai-shek's Northern Expedition arrived to impose Nationalist party control, and the disapproving warlord was deposed.

In both Korea and Taiwan in the early years of the twentieth century, the colonial ruler, Japan, decided to influence cultural life throughout local infrastructure, and supported arts organizations and formal exhibition processes. Even more important, they spread their influence through education, sending Japanese art teachers to work in schools and then encouraging local artists to study in Japan. It is an important distinction, as students in tertiary institutions are older, more independent, often from more influential families that can afford such extended education, and they are also at an age to challenge authority. This is the time to control this group, especially if they come from states that are ruled with a tight colonial hand. Rather than establish schools where ferment can be less well controlled, it is more sensible to encourage young men of this age to come to the centre of cultural power. This, of course, is still part of cultural diplomacy, even in its more benign forms, today. Then, too, it was an effective strategy. Not only were any revolutionary tendencies

of these students controlled: even now, as then, although intrinsically Chinese, Taiwanese artists, remain beguiled by Japanese cultural life, and Koreans continue their love/hate relationship with their former colonial rulers.

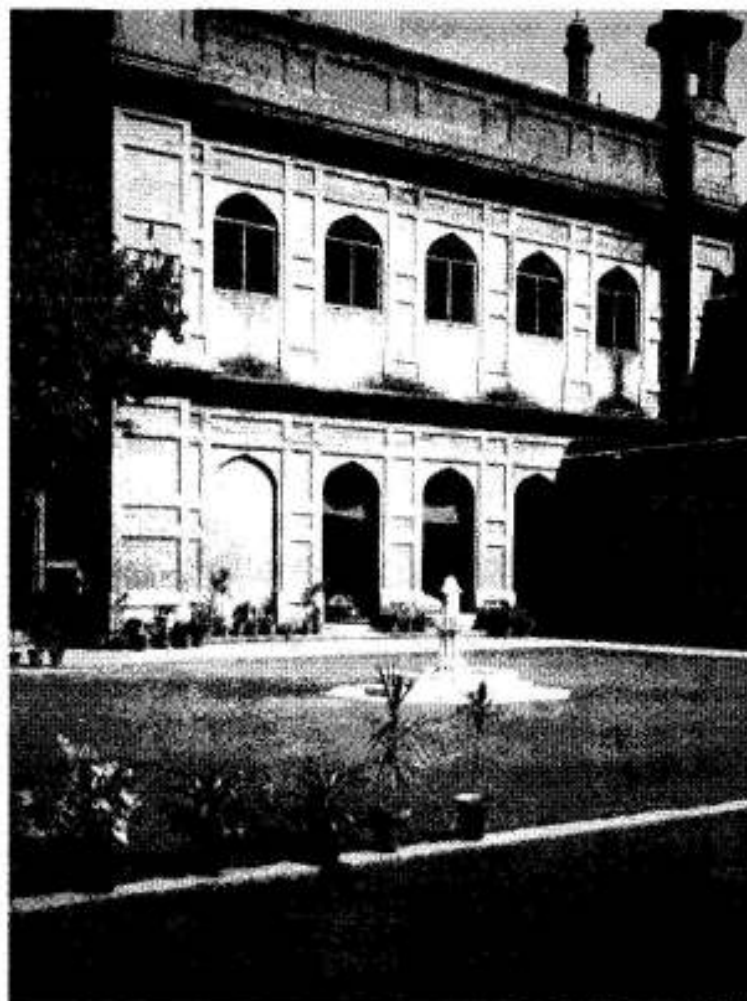
This also meant that the main art schools today in Korea and Taiwan grew after the Japanese had left. Seoul National University was established in 1946 and HongK University in 1950, while in Taiwan it took until the 1980s for the now dominant National Institute for the Arts to consolidate.

In the early years of the century, Tokyo was the centre of avant-garde activity in North Asia. The influence of their artists was the dominating force on the surrounding countries until World War II. What was happening in avant-garde Europe was reinterpreted through the imagery of the Japanese and passed on to those eager to hear about what was new in Korea, Taiwan and China. The attitudes that had established the art schools for their own purpose also stimulated travel, exploration, the growth of other institutions and a general, curious energy palpable in Japan during this period.

The history of the art school in India is in clear contrast to what happened in Japan. At the turn of the twentieth century, three elements were present in the art of the subcontinent, which continue to be influential. The first is the long and proud tradition of Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic visual culture (notable in the sculpture, particularly of the first two and the painting of the third). The second is the British overlay, especially in the infrastructure of art schools and museums, but also in providing a market for some artists' work and, increasingly, in providing knowledge of European art practices technically, stylistically and conceptually. The third is the strong and continuous local folk or tribal visual culture that feeds the wide arena of popular culture and crafts practice, and which has nourished the other two at various important times throughout the century.

As in other parts of Asia and the colonial world, the establishment of art schools in the European manner was a key point of change in local arts practice. However, in the subcontinent there was a local twist of difference. The Japanese (and therefore the rest of the East Asians) had focused their learning of Western ways in Paris, in the salons and academies of 'high art'. For the Indians, England was the Western teacher, and England, unlike France, was in the grip of the 'Arts and Crafts' movement – when decoration, the love of the handmade and the general exoticism about countries such as India prevailed in the face of increasing industrialization. In contrast Japan and her East Asian colonies the motivation for introducing art schools was to increase local understanding of Western conceptual and elite models, in the subcontinent it was, in part, to encourage the preservation and development of handmade goods. The paternalist decision was made in British interest, not Indian, and had an ongoing effect on art training. The schools set up in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lahore were modelled on the Department of Arts and Sciences in South Kensington, rather than on the Royal Academy, with a corresponding focus on promoting local crafts. That these models of British art education in India provided centres of learning for young people interested in art, places to exhibit their work, and jobs for local artists returning from study from Europe – and remain pivotal institutions for art and artists – heightens the importance of the credo on which they were established.

Fig. 2.1 National College of Art, Lahore, *photo by A. Carroll, 1998*



Ernest Binfield Havell came to Bengal in 1896 to head the Calcutta School of Art. Like many other British teachers, his own training promoted the romance of the Arts and Crafts movement and he saw the elevation of handmade crafts as central to the vitality of Indian creative life. The force of the ideologues for a Bengal school – the Bengal Renaissance – with the structure of the art school, and the support and talents of the wealthy and culturally dominant Tagore family, encouraged others to come to Calcutta and provided a focus for artistic activity. In turn, the energy of this centre spread outwards to the disparate and often fragmented art worlds in other cities. Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), a key figure who took over the leadership of the art school after Havell returned to England in 1906, was important in introducing the study of both the content and technique of Mughal miniatures to the artists of Calcutta – an overt refocusing on ‘local’ traditions. This is a good example of the fluidity of influences even within what others might see as homogeneous cultures, as of course Calcutta had never been a centre of Mughal culture and examples had to be brought in. He was followed by others like Nandalal Bose (1882–1966) and Jamini Roy (1887–1974) who turned to local folk practices for models. Ironically, the idea of a Pan-Asian aesthetic was developed in Calcutta during these years, fed by visitors from Japan who practised traditional

Fig. 2.2 National College of Art, Lahore, student painting traditional Mughal technique, *photo by P. Aitken, 2002*



Japanese painting techniques. The Japanese were seen as conservatives in their own world and their Pan-Asian desires never flowered, but the essence of the art developed in Calcutta has been at the basis of Indian art throughout the last 100 years. The artists who had flocked to Calcutta, like Asit Halder, Kshitindranath Majumdar, Samarendra Gupta, Suren Kar and K. Venkatappa, were among those who evolved their own 'Indian' style of painting and carried it to centres such as Lucknow, Benares, Lahore, Allahabad and Mysore. Through the 1920s and 1930s they spread the ideas of Tagore generally and into the art schools. They became known as 'Abanpathis': the 'followers of Abanindranath's path'. Throughout the century, Japanese artists kept pushing for the new, and looking outwards, while at the other end of the scale Indian artists kept looking backwards and inwards to local traditions. Until Indian art, has been very focused on painted narratives and Indian affairs, recently out of pace with the rest of the region.

The lack of any arts establishment in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) led to locally based individual practice, flaring suddenly in the 1940s and 1950s, and then diminishing, leaving little for others to build on. This brief flame of the so-called '43 Group' were artists mostly from wealthy families who saw the Slade in London as their natural teaching institution – or the JJ School in Bombay as a second – rather than any local school. Today, this lack of a strong art school infrastructure in Sri Lanka is still a major reason for the lack of a vibrant arts community there.

The schools in South East Asia had various reasons for their development, which were again predicated on local contexts and cultural positioning, and again with important consequences. The Philippines had been colonized from the seventeenth century. It was a wealthy country and there was much intermarriage of Spanish and locals. Universities had been established early in the colonial years and an Academy of Drawing (tied formally to the Royal Academy in Madrid in 1850) had been founded in 1821. The wealthy classes often lived in large, airy and elegant houses full of locally made artworks. Portraits of great power and poignancy remain, as well as sculptures and drawings of townscapes and daily life, including those of Damian Domingo (1800–1834), early mestizo Director of the drawing academy. The art schools of the archipelago, run by Filipinos, are typical of schools that are the centre of arts power and authority in their country.

Another important school, now based at Silpakorn University, developed in Thailand, the only independent state in South East Asia. The nineteenth century kings of what was then called Siam had taken the 'Japanese way' of wanting to modernize and bring new technologies into the country on their own terms. The art and artists of Europe were invited to Siam to develop a practice parallel to traditional painting and sculpture, with the two strands remaining the basis of Thai art.

The main person in the development of modern Thai art was Italian academic sculptor Corrado Feroci (1892–1962), who arrived in 1923 and worked at first under the aegis of the monarchy, and then led the move to develop the School of Fine Arts, established in 1933. The school was the first real attempt to encourage young Thai people as a group to aspire to the life of an artist. It became the focus for art teaching and activity for the next 50 years. It is only in recent times that other institutions and organizations have diffused this school's role and influence.

Vietnam was finally brought under French control in 1884, and 2 years later the new rulers opened a painting class in Hanoi. The key change of artistic pace was the establishment of the Gia Dinh College of Fine Arts in Saigon in 1913 and, more importantly, the *École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de l'Indochine* in Hanoi in 1925, both based on purely French lines. Thus the 'School of Paris' was established in Vietnam conceptually and in practice, and has come back today as a dominant force.

The Hanoi *École* (the School of Fine Arts) was founded and directed by Frenchman Victor Tardieu (1870–1937) until the year he died. It remains the main art school in Indochina (together with Hue, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Penh and Vientiane), and all are the key centres for art activity in each city, though Hanoi remains pre-eminent in both position and influence on artists of the region.

In Malaya/Singapore, the pressure for an art school came from local artist groups, refugees and settlers from China, bringing in their ideas of schools from Shanghai



Fig. 2.3 *École des Beaux Arts, Hanoi, photo by A. Carroll, 1990*

and other centres, including those in Europe after periods of study there. It started from small beginnings of artists meeting together in Kuala Lumpur, leading to the first art school, the Nanyang Academy, which was established in Singapore in 1937, just before the Japanese invasion. The leading art school in the peninsula for many years, it can be seen as an extension of the academies set up in China in the 1920s but with an increasing interest in developing local subject matter.

In Indonesia, the first schools were for the small Dutch colonial population and only after independence were larger art schools established for local students. This period after liberation was important for the development of the institutional base of art in Indonesia. The Academy of Art (Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia: ASRI) in Yogyakarta was established in 1950, following that of the Bandung School of Art (Institut Teknologi Bandung: ITB) in 1947. The Bandung School, its teachers, students and followers developed a very different, internationalist, pro-Western aesthetic, much more interested in abstraction than the figurative, narrative school in Yogyakarta where stories of local central Javanese life predominated.

The marked difference between the integration into Filipino life of the Spaniards, with the early establishment there of art schools run by and for locals, and their late establishment in Indonesia only after the Dutch had left, is symptomatic of the difference of attitude of the two colonial powers. The Dutch had been content to live outside local communities, focusing, because of trade, on the coast and not interfering with local religious beliefs or local customs, unlike the Spaniards who were intent on winning hearts and minds.

In Australia, art schools were established on the British model, very similar to those in India along the 'South Kensington' model of promoting the 'twin objectives of cultural and economic development'. Henry Cole, head of the first school of art in Hobart, which was established in 1884, said the aim was that by educating the general public in art, they would 'demand good design in manufactures and be willing to pay for them' (see *Tasmanian School of Art, History*, n.d. I am indebted

to Professor David Williams, ANU School of Art, for guidance on this material). The vocational role for art in Sydney saw a school develop in 1859 as part of the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts. In contrast, the schools attached to the new 'national' galleries (all Australian states prior to Federation in 1901 were given this autonomous nomenclature) had a more refined nature and were focused more on the fine arts than on design or industry. They were also established relatively early in these colonies' histories, so that, for example, the National Gallery School (now the Victorian College of the Arts) in Melbourne was established in 1867, just 32 years after the first European settlers came to the site of the city.

2. The Rivalry of the Local and the Foreign

The advent of the public art school, whether initially based on technical training or the higher arts, meant the arrival of the European model. The control of the curricula, as we have seen, was dependent on the wider aspirations and power situation of each place. However, the matter of the local tradition and whether to teach it in parallel with Western styles was an issue from the beginning and continues to be so today. In the early days it was a wider political issue – centring on the importance or otherwise of local traditions *per se* and whether they were acknowledged and promoted at all. In recent years, there has been a more pragmatic response, namely, how to include specific traditional techniques within the curricula offered.

The development of curricula in Japanese art schools at the end of the nineteenth century is an overt example of the political. American Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) arrived in Japan in 1878 and became influential in his passionate advocacy



Fig. 2.4 Central School of Art, Beijing, photo by A. Carroll, 1994

of the superiority of Japanese traditional forms over Western-style art in Japan. He founded the New Japanese-Style Painting Movement with Tenshin Okakura (1862–1913) and helped to found the Tokyo Art School in 1889, specifically excluding *yoga* or Western-style art from the curriculum. This school promoted traditional painting, wood sculpture and lacquer work. The force of the West was, however, unstoppable. A greater and greater number of young artists were travelling to Europe to study and paint, and by the 1890s, this work was being seen increasingly in Tokyo. The Tokyo Art School subsequently reversed its policy against teaching Western-style art in 1896.

In China, the establishment of the main schools in the main cities was dominated to a strong degree by the interests of their directors. They were variously interested in Western-style art or traditional Chinese painting, and this flowed through to curricula and student work. One example is the head of the new art academy in Beijing in 1926, Lin Fengmian (1900–1991), who had studied in Europe but had been influenced by not only European art but also classical Chinese works seen in collections there. Recognizing the complexity of the issue, in 1927 he went on to found an academy in Hangzhou, the aims of which were, boldly: 'To introduce Western art; to reform traditional art; to reconcile Chinese and Western art; to create contemporary art'. (Sullivan, 1996, p. 49)

Other schools in North Asia, like Hongik University in Seoul, teach traditional brush painting today alongside Western techniques. As we have seen, Thailand, like the Japanese, had kept control of its institutions, and from the beginning its School of Fine Arts developed as a European academy, but with due deference for traditional Thai forms, which were included as separate areas of study. Despite this, Corrado Feroci's Italian training – classical, Academic and figurative – dominated the works during his period of control, with only sometimes a particular Thai detail included in the works of art made. Feroci changed his name to Silpa Bhirasri and wrote about different types of art in Thailand, but in formalist and personal terms:

Thai artists express themselves in different ways corresponding to their natural temperament. Some, as we have said, are inspired and represent the daily life of the Thai, as the old painters did. Others attempt to modernize traditional painting by changing the miniature-like character into an ampler vision of the subject. There are painters whose ambition is to float in philosophical spheres, while others, on the contrary, are realistic or impressionistic. (Bhirasri, 1989, p. 23)

The impetus for the introduction of Western models of art education was totally different in Vietnam, but the results had similarities with Thailand because the key director of the art school was so influential. Like Feroci, Victor Tardieu was also personally interested in local traditions. The French-based methods of teaching laid down in the 1920s remain alive in Hanoi: drawing from the model, composition and theory, but while Tardieu was himself a painter in the European Academic tradition, as seen in his murals for the University of Hanoi showing the history of Vietnam, he also encouraged work in the traditional media of lacquer and silk painting. He collected reproductions of Tang and Sung dynasty silk paintings, silk and brushes from China and special local paper and lacquer materials. This was crucial in helping the two techniques to become an important part of Vietnamese art, especially in the middle decades of the century.

In Singapore, after World War II, the Nanyang Academy reformed in 1946, again following the precepts of the Chinese art academies – teaching both Chinese traditional brush painting and Western-style art – and achieved its glory days in the 1950s under the leadership of Lim Hak Tai (1893–1963).

In the subcontinent, where control, as said before, was in the hands of the Europeans, the issues were much less sensitively handled. Critic Salima Hashmi writes of the official dismissal of local traditions in current day Pakistan (then India), specifically of the Mayo School of Arts (now the National College of Arts), established in Lahore in 1875, with Lockwood Kipling (1837–1911) as its first director:

[T]he content of The Mayo School curriculum reflected the contradictions between the local art tradition and the dominant British aesthetic. The continuity and richness of the varied local painting tradition was taken over by the Victorian predilection for the academic and sentimental in art. (Hashmi, 1997, p. 10.)

As previously noted, the Bengal Renaissance had been important for its insistence on looking to Asian and local sources in the face of this pressure, an understandable result of the situation in India at the turn of the century. Abanindranath Tagore wrote how Indians needed to discuss:

Asian art. In other words, it is essential to conduct a comparative study of the traditions stretching from Turkey to Japan, from the northern limits of the Tartar kingdoms of China at one end to the southern ocean at the other. Then we must turn our attention to the manner in which Buddhist art had left its mark in a glorious unity of Asiatic art. If we visit China, or Japan, or the Turkish desert, we will find traces of inspiration from Indian relief sculpture ... (Mitter, 1994, p. 266).

Ironically, it has been the Lahore art school which, in recent years, has been a model of introducing a specific local tradition and enabling it to develop into an acknowledged part of global practice: the courtly art of miniature painting. This was taught in a very traditional way at the NCR until the early 1990s, when artists started to transform the devices of fine brushwork, specially prepared *wasli* paper, jewel-like water-based colours and the tradition of showing local scenes from the secular to courtly life, into contemporary ways. They developed both iconography and technique. Paintings made in this traditional way from the early 1990s include the modern buildings and chaotic traffic of modern life in Lahore. Artists working in this technique are included in some of the most important events on the global/Western arts calendar, and, interestingly, are exhibited without reference to any specific cultural background. Mughal miniature painting is finally a 'global' technique.

This 'success' of the Mughal miniature painting technique was achieved by individuals living outside their original culture. In the twentieth century, when other Asian art techniques were influential outside Asia- in the 1960s (as a result both of the counterculture reactions to the academy), leading to interests in 'other' belief systems like Buddhism and Zen, or views of the world like Tantric arts, or the interest in calligraphy of Abstract Expressionist artists in America such as Mark Tobey- this development occurred because individuals were interested, not through the Asian art schools. The conduit for this interest has been expatriates from Asia living in the West, or Westerners who had come individually to learn under certain

masters, as was the case in Japan. With minor exceptions, the art schools in Asia have not attracted outsiders to learn their specialist techniques.

3. Art Schools as Centres of Artistic Life – and Ferment

Because they were often the only focus for artists, and younger artists in particular, the intellectual attitude, energy and activities of the art schools and their leading staff members became even more important in the artistic development of each society. Often senior positions in the schools were the only institutional roles offered for artists – with accompanying salaries and usually high status. Certainly the influence of teachers in the schools was extremely important. A brief study of the staff and alumni of schools from Baroda to Manila, and Bandung to Beijing are testament for the importance of the schools to the history of art in their communities. It can also be said that the collective activity of the art school was in accord with the collective sympathies existing in many Asian societies and this helped their success.

That they were part of the education system certainly helped their establishment and support. The art schools in China and Vietnam during the long years of war mid-century were so important to their constituents that teachers and students were physically relocated around the country avoiding the areas of major conflict, setting up centres for art in safer places until they were forced to move on.

The control of the artistic life of a city through the schools and the individuals who led them is demonstrated by what happened in Manila in the decades before World War II. The School of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines (UP) had been directed by leading academically minded painters of idealized genre painting: Fabian de la Rosa (1869–1937) from 1925 to 1937, followed by his cousin Fernando Amorsolo (1892–1972), who was director there until the 1950s. This control was too long and too conservative. Almost in protest, a new school at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) was established in 1935 by leading the modernist artist Victorio Edades (1895–1985). Edades introduced an American curriculum, including art history, languages and optional scientific studies for the students, and UST ‘became the spearhead of modern art’ in the country (Kalaw-Ledesma, 1979, p. 93).

The Asian hierarchy of teacher and follower made the system both accepted and potentially conservative. In the West questioning a teacher is usual; in Asia it is often culturally impossible. This makes protest against such teachers even more noteworthy. A rare example was in Vietnam in 1937, when sculptor Evariste Jonchère (1892–1956) came from France and took over the Directorship of the *École* until 1945. While his own work was more modernist than that of Tardieu, the previous director, he retained a more conservative belief that the Vietnamese could be trained only as artisans, a point of view certain to make already politicized students further question colonial authority, and take action. In 1938, students including Tran Van Can (1910–94) and Nguyen Do Cung (1912–77), challenged Jonchère to compare his own sculpture to that of the local pagodas and communal houses for ‘vigour, meaning and originality’ (Hantover, 1991 p. 21).

What happened in Thailand is in contrast with the Vietnamese situation and again reflects a broader political reality. Because European art had been encouraged in Bangkok within a Thai system controlled by the highly respected monarchy, there was neither a rise of nationalist feeling against the European colonist, and the accompanying visual repertoire of images (as happened in the Philippines) nor were there groups of artists and students, in schools set up by the colonists, ready to talk and ferment (as happened in Vietnam). Ironically, it can be said that this has hindered Thai art, making it a much more conventional and controlled art environment, especially before the 1990s when things started to change.

In the smaller countries of Asia, the art schools are often still the only centres for support for artists, despite their struggles to sustain themselves financially. An example of this is the Laotian National School of Fine Arts set up in Vientiane in 1958. Another is in Bangladesh, which is not a small country, although it has a volatile recent history. The Dhaka Art School was established in the new capital of what was then East Bengal in 1948, and has continued on despite the economic situation there.

4. And in More Recent Times

Arts schools in Asia have been either very stable, like UP and Silpakorn, or have changed due to political pressure, as occurred most obviously in China. Certainly, the realities of the schools throughout the period changed as the economies and political infrastructures have changed. Korea was one of the poorest countries of the world in the 1950s, but the new schools helped gradually to develop and consolidate a now flourishing arts scene.

Similarly, in India, a new school at the Maharaja Sayajiro University (MS University) in Baroda, a medium-sized city in Gujarat between Bombay and Delhi, was established in 1950, following Independence. This became a central teaching institution for art and remains a centre for artists. The 'Baroda' style has become a noticeable facet of Indian art. Other schools, such as LaSalle-SIA in Singapore, have developed out of community enthusiasm – growing exponentially over the last few years from its roots as a Catholic boys' school. The focus for artists in Asia today is a global dialogue. The challenge for the schools is both to maintain pace and to provide the background and capacity for their students to move successfully both locally and internationally.

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