

In Shanghai, at the riverside near Zhaojiabang, south of Xujiahui, many years of dredging had piled tons of river mud in a bend on the river. Eventually, this formed a small hill which people called Tushanwan ('wan' means 'bay', Tushanwan means a bay formed by local soil'). In 1864, the Catholic Church leveled part of the hill and on the site built a massive and well-equipped orphanage named the Tushanwan Orphanage. That was 140 years ago.

By now, the name of Tushanwan has long since vanished and been forgotten. The main building and all other construction extensions, after more than half a century of urban development, have been entirely replaced by sweeping highways and skyscrapers. The only building remaining, which has witnessed so many changes and all vicissitudes in life through all these years, is a three-storey red brick house. It was built by the elderly Mr. Ma Xiangbo 马相伯 and was the main school building in the Orphanage, now located on Pu Hui Tong Road. Tushanwan has certainly been a window for West meeting East, because a great number of innovations, new handicrafts and modern techniques originated here in this part of China. Tushanwan has been the cradle for many early Western-style painters, sculptors and photographers. Among them, Zhang Chongren 张充仁 was by all means one of the most prominent artists yet his childhood growing up in Tushanwan is known to few.

This great artist, Zhang Chongren, was born in China in the early twentieth century. He became one of the founders of modern Chinese sculpture, as famous as Liu Kaiqu 刘开渠. People used to address both artists as Zhang from the South and Liu from the North. Not only one of the most famous sculptors, he was also a very talented painter, art historian and educationalist who showed great love for his motherland. He made tremendous contributions and was considered a master in various fields such as sketching, watercolour paintings, oil paintings, Chinese paintings, strip cartoons, photography, sculptures, translation and education. He not only introduced Western arts into China, he also tried to bring the essence of Chinese culture to the West. He was the envoy for East meeting West and was the first Chinese sculptor to break through into Europe. As early as the 1930's, the statue cast by Master Zhang was erected on the top of the Century Palace in Brussels. He worked together with George Remi Herge, the famous Belgium artist and creator of Tintin in the comic strip story "Tintin in the Far East: The Blue Lotus", which was the first artistic work to expose the evil ambitions of Imperial Japan invading China in the prelude to the outbreak

of the Second World War. Herge also incorporated the figure of Zhang in another Tintin comic strip entitled: "Tintin in Tibet". Among the 24 Tintin comic strips, Master Zhang is the only real-life figure to be featured. Tintin's Adventures have been translated into more than 60 languages, with more than one hundred and sixty million copies. In the West, Master Zhang was known to over one hundred million people. Without doubt he has been very influential. It is quite unusual or perhaps unique for a master in China to achieve such prestige, both as an artist and as a respected scholar: this despite the fact that Zhang Chongren was educated and raised by those so-called "imperialists" in Tushanwan, who "cloaked themselves in a religious guise", as was alleged during the Cultural Revolution. He was accused as a real bourgeois intellectual from the Fine Arts of the West. Even though he had tried very hard to acquire new knowledge, changing his ideology entirely, as he attempted to keep up with the rapidly changing cultural situation, still he was not popular for many years. Nonetheless, in these process, he had created numerous masterpieces which showed how the arts of East and West could learn and borrow from one another.

All these marvelous works, whether his sculptures or his paintings, reflected the reality of the contemporary scene. Owing to the interference from the fanatic leftists, these works were simply neglected and overlooked. Worse was to come during the Cultural Revolution, as Zhang was considered to be a counter-revolutionary. Many of his works were either destroyed or smashed. Broken-hearted and deeply saddened, Master Zhang did not completely despair. He insisted on trying not to be manipulated by the people and kept himself independent from the masses. Only by doing so he might be able to pursue his dreams in art. He kept seizing opportunities, using his own hands to record those historical events, crafting them into works of immortal art. Finally, at the age of 70, he witnessed the arrival of reform. It was just like dying tree welcoming the dawn of Spring, but sadly it was much belated. By then he had already retired and his sculptures belonged to the School of Realism, a trend no longer considered mainstream in sculpture. Thus his work, neglected before for so long, remained disregarded to a marginal zone.

In 1981 Master Zhang was invited to give lectures in Brussels. His reunion with the cartoonist Herge, after almost half a century's separation, created great impact across Europe. The King of Belgium gave a banquet in his honour, while the Queen of Belgium paid him a personal visit.. Many people in Europe were keen to meet this master who had influenced generations of artists there. During

his three month's stay in Europe, he received as much media coverage as a foreign political leader. In 1985, he was once again invited to France to give lectures. Although he was already in his 80s, because of his consistent dedication to the arts, Zhang accepted the invitation, considering it as his mission to seek out friends in Europe with whom he could share ideas.. He wished to fulfill his aesthetic dreams and realized his creative aspirations in his remaining years.

Whilst in Paris, he created sculptures for the artist Herge, the musician Debussy and even the French president Mitterrand: certainly a uniquely exciting event to have the French President as model. Undoubtedly, with his artistic achievements and attractive personality, Master Zhang captured Europeans' hearts. Paris, the Capital of Arts, once more experienced 'Zhang Chong-ren fever'. Even in his declining years, the reputable artist, while residing in Europe, did not turn his back on his motherland, as he created sculptures of Deng Xiaoping 邓小平, Mao Dun 茅盾, Ba Jin 巴金, Wu Hufan 吴湖帆, Nie Er 聂耳 and Jian Qingfu 简庆福 and many more besides. Even at the age of 89, from his sick bed, he created a sculpture named 'The return of the flawless Jade to Zhao' to celebrate the Restoration of Chinese Sovereignty over Hong Kong. The Chinese leaders Zhu Rongji 朱镕基 and Jiang Zemin 江泽民 received him in Paris and according him high prestige. In 1998, Zhang Chongren passed away in Paris: To honour this foreign master, France held a state funeral for him.

Zhang Chongren was an artist of the the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout most of his life, he had frequently experienced great hardships and discomforts. But with his own hands he repeatedly created sculptures bearing witness to those eras. When the 21<sup>st</sup> century arrived, for the first time, the Taiwan National Museum of the History of Art held an exhibition reviewing Zhang Chongren's artistic creations and published books consisting of his writing about arts. Later on, the City of Shanghai established a Zhang Chongren memorial home and a Zhang Chongren Art Research and Exchange Centre. They published three books relating to Zhang's art work, entitled: "The artistic life of Zhang Chongren", "The Study of Zhang Chongren" and "Zhang Chongren, the Artist" respectively. The museum also released a documentary film about his life. Last year, Shanghai held a grand memorial ceremony to celebrate Zhang Chongren's 100th birth anniversary. This year, there have been activities to commemorate his death ten years ago. Zhang Chongren Fever is steadily heating up. However, this belated recognition and reputation has only occurred in Shanghai, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. He has seldom been mentioned in the most famous classic publications of art history. In fact, he is almost unknown to most people.

Undoubtedly, Zhang Chongren was the most outstanding Chinese artist of the last century. When thinking of all the unfair treatment he had received in China, in contrast with the overwhelming adulation given in the West, I cannot but help to mention another artist Xu Baoqing 徐保慶(1926 – 2007). Master Xu, who died last year, was the founder of the Shanghainese-style Huangyang Wood carvings. He was the last student of Tushanwan. For nearly 70 years Xu had been working quietly on his highly regarded crafts. Throughout his life, he had been very poor and lived in an extremely humble room. He received no sponsorship and even had to pay himself to publish his wood-carving albums. Xu claimed that it was mainly because of his connection with Tushanwan! Thus, in order to draw a real picture of Tushanwan and award the historical place deserved by those successors in Tushanwan, it is certainly most important for us to wipe away the dust of history and reveal more details of the history of Zhang Chongren.

Zhang Chongren was born in 1907 in Xujiahui, a place strongly associated with artistic culture. His father was a wood- carver and had studied sketches, Western painting and wood carving in Tushan Bay when he was young. Chong's mother was an embroidery worker and worked in the factory run by the Holy Mother Convent in Xujiahui . The couple lived nearby, at the Wudi Toujin, in a small cottage built by the Church in the late 19th century for the orphans to move into when they had grown up and were starting their own family. There were five cottages in a row, each containing an attic, with one cottage assigned to each family. Zhang grew up in this environment. As a child, he would watch his father carving and his mother doing embroidery work. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, he was influenced by them and began at a very early age to take an interest in carving and painting. Sadly, Zhong's mother passed away when he was only 4 years old, so his father sent him to the Tushanwan orphanage. This orphanage was founded by Western missionaries and included school, painting institute, handicraft room, printing workshop as well as accommodation for the orphans. The children received education, vocational trainings and opportunities to work. In fact, this was China's very first institution teaching Western art.

The famous painter Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿 had once written in 1942: 'The Catholic Church came to China and Xujiahui was considered as one of their bases. It contributed immensely in the crossover between Eastern and Western culture. Since the school taught Western Painting, it certainly could be regarded as the cradle of Western Painting in China.' It was here that Master Zhang had spent his childhood and received his first Western painting lessons. In 1914, Zhong

attended the primary school, the St. Louis School next to Tushanwan. The principal was Brother Tanaka 田见龙一 (1885-1978), himself a Japanese orphan, who had grown up in the Tushanwan Orphanage and become a brilliant student of Brother Liu Dezhai. Brother Tanaka was not only a talented painter, he had a profound knowledge of art. Many well-known modern Chinese artists such as Zhou Xiang 周湘 (teacher of Liu Haisu 刘海粟 and Xu Beihong), Xu Yongqing 徐泳清, and Zhang Yuguang 张聿光 were all his students. Despite this, he was never interested in either fame or money, he simply preferred to work quietly in the church and dedicating himself to educational task. Once Brother Tanaka had discovered Zhang's artistic talent, during the third grade, he personally taught Zhang knowledge of art every afternoon after school until 1920. Zhang then graduated from primary school and received their top award in art.

In the 1930s, Tanaka was transferred to the painting institute, where he continued to give special assistance to artistically talented pupils. Last year, I visited Xu Baoqing 徐宝庆, by then an elderly sculptor over 80-years old. He lost his father when only one year old and his mother when he was 3, at which time he was sent to Tushanwan. Xu Baoqing regarded Tanaka as his Mentor and said: "although a Japanese by parentage he grew up in Tushanwan and was simply one of us, a native Shanghainese who maintaining his Chinese nationality. Even during the Japanese Military Occupation, he refused the repeated requests of the Japanese Regime to work for them. Brother Tanaka's life-long aim was to help the orphans in every way and to provide them with education. Despite this, in the 1950s, he was denounced as an imperialist disguised under the cloak of religion and was expelled from China. All of us who came from Tushan, during the Cultural Revolution, were condemned as imperialist agents and traitors, suffering severely as a result. The accusations were totally unfounded and was lacked any justification.'

After Zhang completed primary school, he wanted to attend the Painting Institute of Tushanwan to study painting. Since there was no vacancies in the institute, he was recommended by Brother Tanaka to join the orphanage's printing shop. He became an apprentice in their photo offset section, with Father Enry (1865-1939), an Irish priest, being his teacher. Father Enry had lost his mother at the age of 3, when he joined the orphanage. He was a classmate of Brother Tanaka and like him was born in Shanghai, which he never left until his death. Therefore he can be rightly considered as a native Shanghainese. Father Enry had great respect for his teacher Liu Dezhai 刘德斋, so he took the name 'An Jingzhai' 安敬斋, meaning 'respecting Zhai'. Father Enry was proficient in several foreign

languages, talented in painting and mastered the art of photography as well as offset printing. As early as 1876, the printing shop in Tushanwan had already introduced printing techniques such as stone-printing and collotype printing into their workshop. Later they developed further and acquired more equipment like the color-copperplate and zincography machine. It was the first printing shop in the Far East using printing techniques from collotype and zincograph to produce printed materials. Father Enry was well versed in both photography and the techniques of collotype. When books with illustrations using his collotype technique reached France, the French photographers were all amazed and impressed by the exquisite and artistic workmanship. Even today we can still find articles in French journals praising his achievements in the use of collotype for photography in those early days. He was acclaimed as the best collotype master in the Far East. Zhang Chongren, then apprenticed in the photo offset area, began his training by rinsing the negatives with water in the darkroom. One year later, he began to learn how to make pictures and modify negatives. By that time, when the Museum of Xujiahui had become quite famous in the Far East, Zhang was assigned to make pictures for the specimens of birds collected by the Museum. He modified the negatives so carefully that the profiles and feathers of each bird appeared as very vivid and natural. Hardly anyone could find any trace of artificial changes in them, even under a magnifying glass. Zhang also learnt both Chemistry and Physics. Without any doubt, being a talented and diligent young man, it did not take long before he mastered the technique of photography and photo offset printing. He attracted the attention of his teachers and Father Enry realized that Zhang possessed a keen interest in painting, so he decided in 1921 to give Zhang two extra hours of tuition each morning to learn painting and French. In order to lay a solid foundation for Chinese painting, they began by practicing to hold brushes and making copies from the Painting Albums of Jiezi Garden. Gradually they switched to Western painting. First Zhang made pencil lines to copy pencil sketches of the French painter 阿尔加什涅, later he learnt how to use charcoal pens to make sketches from plaster statues. There were more than 60 albums from 阿尔加什涅 in different categories: patterns, flowers, landscapes, figures, animals and so on. Father Enry on the one hand requested him to copy the great painters' compositions and at the same time, taught Zhang to do outdoor sketches, still-life paintings and figure drawings, so that he could be more masterful in both sketches and drawings. After that Zhang learnt watercolor painting from Father Enry. This time he had to copy compositions from another French painter (B). He completed the work so brilliantly that it was not easy for people to distinguish the difference. Quite often on dry and bright Sundays,

Father Enry would carry the drawing tools and take Zhang out practicing sketch. Farmers, villages, cultivating and harvesting, all themes from the rural scenery, were their favorites. Needless to say, these activities proved to give a very positive impact on Zhang by strengthening his skills in painting.

While providing students with thorough training in Western art, Tushanwan treasured Chinese painting as well. As Chinese paintings involve mainly artistic conceptions in their compositions, with colouring derived from the artist's moods, it is not necessary to be at all realistic. For western art, taking water colour as an example, the variations of light and colour are very significant and the styles are much more oriented towards realism. Each style has charms and beauties of its own. Beginning with Brother Lu Bodou 陆伯都, the first teacher in charge of the Tushanwan Art Institute, his successor Brother Liu Dezhai and his students, such as Xu Yongqing, An Jingzhai, and Tanaka De: all started by learning Chinese painting first, then graduated to Western painting. Passing down such an excellent heritage, eventually the tradition of watercolour painting with a touch of Chinese characteristics became solidly established.

Brother Liu Dezhai of the Tushanwan was especially excelled at painting landscapes with watercolour. He had trained the first generation of Western-style painters. Xu Yongqing (1880–1953) whose parents died when he was very young entered the orphanage at the age of 9. Brother Liu suggested that he should learn only watercolour paintings by copying works from the French painter (A). That was rather a demanding task. Moreover, Brother Liu recommended him to meet the most famous Chinese painters Ren Bainian 任百年 and Wu Changshuo 吴昌硕. By having contacts with these Chinese painting masters, Xu learnt the refined skills of handling the brush tips whilst painting. Eventually, he grasped the essence of Chinese painting and could master both the tip and the front of the brush even better than painters in Europe.

At the beginning of the last century, in 1909, China already had Western-style painters of world standard. Xu Yongqing was now considered as the first master in watercolour painting in China. Xu was the classmate of Brother Liu and was very impressed by the talent and diligence of Zhang Chongren. Nevertheless, he never taught him, as Zhang's only teachers were Father Enry and Brother Tanaka. Zhang Chongren followed closely what his teacher had taught him. He tried to achieve a harmonious blend of West with East. On the one hand the methods he used to paint watercolours was from (A), and (A's) style was very close to Chinese painting: concept-oriented and free from theme or topic. One could find within most of his watercolour works not only the touch and features of Western

painting, but quite clearly the skills of Chinese painting could be detected. The artist was expressing his feeling and intuition of beauty by using a mixture of realism and abstract features. In a way, this was also how Zhang successfully carried forward the tradition of the particular style of watercolour painting he had inherited from Tushanwan. An excellent example of East subtly met with the West. The themes of Zhang's paintings covered many different subjects: landscapes, still life, animals and figures. He could paint anything at hand and whatever he painted, they were simply masterpieces. Among them, the paintings of still life and figures were especially unique. They were quite similar to the Chinese style, mostly without background and lots of blank space in the paintings. Yet the theme could clearly be seen, no matter whether flowers or birds, just a few strokes and yet bright colours and subtle hues become apparent. They were so real and solid, light and carefree, of one piece and yet coherent. They were definitely amazing and simply could be acclaimed as outstanding works of art.

As Zhang Chongren achieved tremendous results in his watercolour paintings, he obviously earned admiration and recognition by some of his seniors fellow students such as Xu Yongqing. Zhang was very much encouraged by them and became more self-confident. At the age of 15, he began to explore another area in art: oil painting from Father Enry. Tushanwan had quite a collection of reproductions of oil paintings in different religious themes. Zhang certainly had many opportunities to copy and studied all these highly regarded compositions. Under the guidance of his instructor, he made rapid progress. By the time he was 19 and had been learning oil painting for 4 years, Father Enry brought him all the profiles of priests who had been working at the Catholic cathedral in Xujiahu. Father Enry asked Zhang to copy all these 20 paintings into 24 inch oil paintings. The figures in Zhang's paintings were not only brimming with life and vivid, they even seemed to reveal the heart and soul of the figures.

Some of the Western priests saw the compositions and were amazed at the excellence of his work, claiming that the paintings were as superb as the Rafaelite style from the Italian Renaissance period. From 1926 onwards, these oil paintings were put on display on the courtyard wall at St. Ignatius Cathedral in Xujiahui. Over 40 years, many people had the chance to enjoy these artistic achievements and show their appreciation until the late sixties, when the works were all burnt during the fury of the Cultural Revolution.

During the time Zhang Chongren stayed in Tushawan, he also met with the elderly and very famous scholar of renown Ma Xiangbo, who, also being a Catholic and patriot, was by chance on a retreat in the third floor of the school



building in Tushanwan. Zhang became his frequent visitor, listening to him talking about history and anecdotes both of China and the broader World. In addition, Professor Ma taught him Chinese Calligraphy, covering classical Chinese, Confucius and other great thinkers from the pre-Qing dynasties. The elderly scholar showed him great affection, advising him to study “ Zhuangzi 莊子” because the teachings of Zhuangzi can help painters to develop the artistic temperament, enriching their imagination towards more subtle artistic creations. Zhang, having entered Tushanwan at 4 and left at 20, had gained over sixteen years very solid foundations in many different fields, paintings, photography, offset printing, classical Chinese, philosophy as well as French language. He was nourished by well blended culture of the East and the West and was exposed consistently to the best from both cultures. That was how throughout all his life, as shown in his compositions, he could absorb the cultures of both sides, and mastering them so brilliantly.

In 1928, Zhang succeeded Gou Gongzhen, taking over the editorship of the Shanghai Weekly Pictorial Magazine. Though very young in age and green as grass, the professional knowledge he had acquired while he was in Tushanwan certainly had equipped him outstandingly. He could handle this task as readily as a potter can mould clay in his hands. His accomplishments in photography and painting meant he quickly became noticed. Together with some other famous photographers, such as Zhang Pongzhou 张蓬舟 and Liu Xucang 刘旭沧, he established the Shanghai Artistic Photo Club. With Lang Jingsha 郎静山, he founded the China Photography Society, the very first photographic art organization in Shanghai. One of the artistic photos taken by him titled “ Feeling in the chill” had won an award in the Shanghai Photo Exhibition. Working on the Pictorial magazine definitely had helped him to become acquainted with the world outside of Tushanwan. However it involved much administrative work, which made Zhang realized that his routine workload would prevent him from preparing himself to go abroad for further study.

In the spring of 1938, Zhang visited Mr. 贝尔思, a Belgian in charge of the Sino-Belgian Boxer Indemnity, bringing with him some artistic photos and paintings to show. Mr. 贝尔思 carefully examined his works and was greatly impressed. He took out some of his own photos and asked Zhang to take a look. Zhang without hesitation pointed out some problems in photos' layout. Mr. 贝尔思 took Zhang's comments very well and recognized Zhang's great talent in photography. He commented to Zhang: “ Your paintings are so fresh

and vigorous indeed and you are so talented that I just don't understand why would you want to study abroad?" He right away gave Zhang a cheque for \$200 and suggested him to go to Hangzhou 杭州 and Putuo Mountains 普陀山 to make some portraits and sketches of these two scenic spots. We could see that almost one century ago, in the late 1920s, Zhang's achievements were already widely regarded and highly praised, attaining increasing prestige in Shanghai.

In October 1931, Zhang, who had only been educated to primary school level, but with very fluent French and masterful painting skills acquired from Tushanwan Orphanage, passed the entrance examination and was admitted to the Brussels Royal Fine Arts Academy. He attended the advanced level of the Oil Painting class and became a student of Professor Bastien. Two months later, he won the second prize in a probation examination. Without much effort he had been awarded the scholarship from the Sino-Belgium Boxer Indemnity Fund run by the Belgian government. In addition, his painting 'Turbulence in the Chilled Wind' was chosen to be exhibited in the Brussels Expo. The next year, Zhang moved to study the advanced class of sculpture and again people were all impressed by his excellent performance. In 1935, he received two golden awards from both his Highness the King Albert of Belgium as well as from the Brussels City government. When he returned to China from Belgium, he decided to run an academy in fine art, the very first in China, along the same lines as Tushanwan. The "Chongren Painting Workshop" was established and the main objective of this project was to provide students with the opportunity to learn painting and sculpture, whilst studying academically the same time. Over a thirty year period, Zhang successfully taught more than three hundred outstanding students, including two who became very famous and internationally renowned photographers: Jian Qingfu 简庆福 and Liu Xucang 刘旭沧. Jian, though already 87 years old, still remains very active in the field of photography. He has contributed enormously by promoting the modernization of the art of Photography in China. As for Liu: tragically he was persecuted and killed during the Cultural Revolution. Many other notable oil painters such as Yu Keming 余克明, Chen Yifei 陈逸飞, Qiu Ruimin 邱瑞敏, Huang Wenpei 黄文佩, and Wu Zhiyuan 吴知源, watercolour painters Wang Hun 王琿, Ha Ding 哈定, He Zhenzhi 何振志, Xu Yuanzhang 徐元章 as well as sculptors Ying Qianqian 应芊芊, Chen Mo 沉默, Zhao ZhiRong 赵志荣, Yan Youren 严友人 and the well acknowledged connoisseur Wang Jiqian 王季迁 to name but a few. They had been all students of Zhang Chongren. Zhang made outstanding achievements in the art of sculpture as well as immense contributions in the field

of watercolour paintings. In 1986, there was a big celebration for his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in Belgium. His life accomplishments were covered by many media and the “Liberal Post” wrote, “the style of Master Zhang’s watercolour paintings is so inspiring that it certainly served as an excellent example of the fusion of East meeting West. In 1990, the French edition of Zhang’s biography: “The Blue Lotus : Zhang’s hometown” was published in France. In Paris, there was a grand press conference exhibiting many of Zhang’s artistic works: very classic and a unique form skillfully blending West and East in works of sculpture and watercolours. This sensational event drew a huge response from many art lovers. Madam Mitterrand, the French President’s wife, attended the conference in person, delivering a speech. She praised Zhang’s eminent and illustrious contribution in fine arts.

Zhang Chongren was the second generation of watercolour artist educated by Tushanwan. He served as the link between past and future periods. Together with many other prominent watercolour painting masters of his time such as Xu Yongqing, Zhang Yuguang, Yan Wenliang 颜文梁, Li Yongsan 李咏森, Zhang Meisun 张眉蓀, Pan Sitong 潘思同, Cheng Ji 程及 and Ran Xi 冉熙, Zhang had created a school in watercolour painting characterized by the Chinese approach to brushwork. The Art of Chinese watercolour painting was thereby raised to an outstanding level internationally.

At present, all these elderly artists from Tushanwan including Zhang Chongren have passed away, while the artists taught by them are soon to retire from active creation of further artworks. We are most delighted and happy to see that the artists of the fourth and the fifth generations are working hard, pursuing their visions of an even brighter era in a much more welcoming and fertile soil for the path of fine arts. Their future is promising !

While we are reminiscing about our pioneers in watercolour paintings from Tushanwan, Liu Dezhai, An Jingzhai, Tanaka De and the French priest Father Frere Couper, another figure just came to my mind. He was Brother Yu Kai 余凯 (1892-1984), the last superintendent of Tushanwan. He entered Tushanwan Ophanage at the age of eleven. He was also expert in watercolour paintings. He had a collection of reproductions of watercolour paintings from the French painter 维涅尔. In those days, painters like Li Yongsan, Zhang Meisun and Zhang Chongren often went to chat with him and created copies of 维涅尔’s paintings. When Zhang returned to China in 1981, once more together with Li

Yongsan, he revisited the elderly priest who was by then 90 years old. They had so much to talk about, their feeling, knowledge and experiences gained from watercolour paintings during their artistic lives: and least but not last their deepest life-long affections for their common home: Tushanwan.

Even though every one of these distinguished artists has long gone, however, the fabulous creations of Zhang Chongren still stand in many locations: towering above the roof of the Century Palace in Belgium, prominently placed in the Elysee Palace in Paris as well as in the Debussy Memorial Hall, exhibited in the ancient French cultural city of Angouleme and closer to home, in the former French Quarter on the splendid Huaihai Road in Shanghai.

One can find his self-crafted handprint placed together with those world renowned art masters Rodin and Picasso in the French Art Museum. The Zhang Chongren Memorial Hall in Qibao, Shanghai, contains many of his paintings and sculptures. Each artistic creation in the exhibition witnesses the splendid artistic paths taken by our artists of the last century. Zhang Chongren will remain imprinted on our minds; nor can we ignore or forget the undeniable and unique contribution of Tushanwan in our history of modern arts.

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