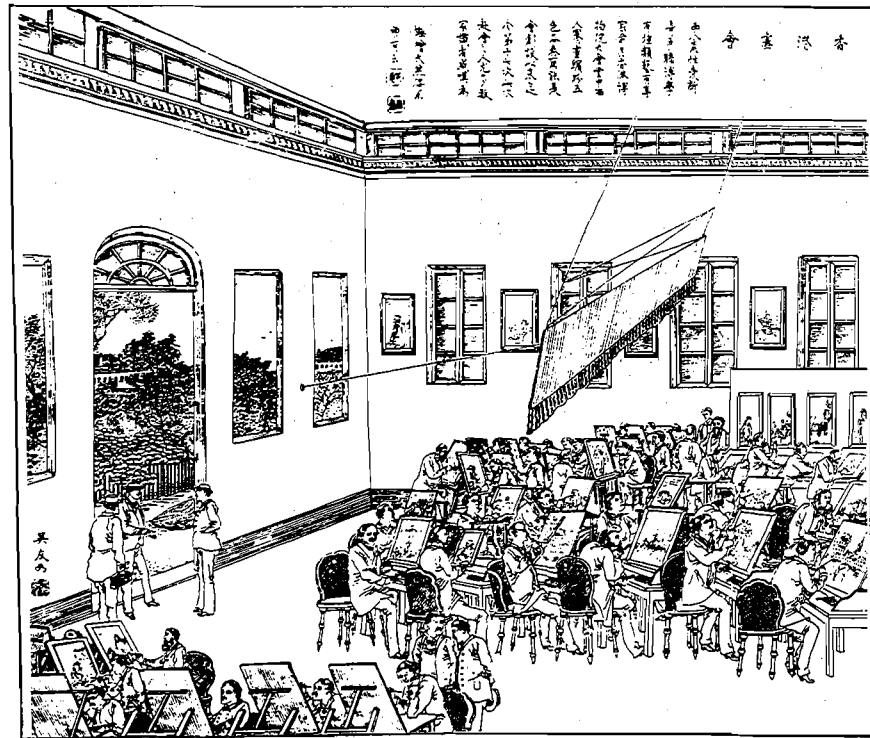


點石齋畫報四則

Selections from the *Dianshizhai Pictorial*

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A Painting Contest in Hong Kong

WESTERN PEOPLE are constantly seeking out the strange and new, and enjoy showing off their talents and erudition. Their learning is divided into multitudinous subjects, each of which can boast its own specialists.

Last month in the main assembly hall of the Hong Kong Museum, many Western and Chinese painters gathered for a painting competition. Numerous elaborate paintings were dashed off on the spot, many of which displayed uncommon skill.

This is the seventeenth time that this competition has been held. The number of contestants was larger than ever before. Those in the know venture the opinion that in terms of excellence this particular gathering was unprecedented.

The Dianshizhai Pictorial was published in Shanghai in the late nineteenth century.



Redeeming A Giant Tortoise

A CERTAIN Western gentleman in Hong Kong caught an unusually large tortoise. When he put it on display, all who saw it were deeply impressed and claimed that it was no ordinary reptile. They also asserted that it was probably a supernatural being, and to keep it in captivity would incur divine wrath. The Western gentleman, however, would not agree to let it go. Since he had already captured it, he argued, why should he release it for no good reason? Seeing that the Westerner would not give in, those who advocated its release collected a considerable sum of money and redeemed the tortoise from the foreigner. They then hired a band of musicians, and escorted it with great pomp to the sea and set it free. This is indeed absurd. Does a mere tortoise merit such respect and awe? Such occurrences may actually inspire tortoises, which should naturally be ashamed of the way they wag their tails in the mud, to become proud of themselves.

Much Ado About Nothing

A GENTLEMAN named Zou from Fujian came to Hong Kong for a visit and stayed with a friend. The day after his arrival, he said to his friend, "I know full well that you are a man of principle, yet why did you pay so little attention to who your neighbours were when you chose this house to live in?" His friend failed to understand what he meant. The visitor continued: "Last night I was unable to fall asleep on account of drinking a drop too much, and got up to relieve myself. On my way back, I strayed into your neighbour's yard. His house was brightly lit, and as I peered in through the window, I happened to observe two Chinese men molesting a Western woman. They were performing all sorts of ignominious acts, thrusting their hands under her skirt, putting their hands up her sleeves, and what not. Fearing that I might be caught looking at them, I hurried back."

At this the man's friend burst out laughing and said, "How dare they do such things! A father and son assaulting the same woman together, and in public to boot! Let's go and see what they are up to." The two of them went out into the yard, but all they could see were four or five workers in a tailor's shop making dresses in the Western style. The dresses were stretched over bamboo frames shaped like a woman's figure. The gentleman from Fujian now realized his error. He had been living in the countryside all his life and had never seen a tailor like that before. Besides, he had been intoxicated that night, and had mistaken the bamboo manikin for a real woman.





The Filial Piety of An Elephant

THERE IS a trained elephant in a circus troupe in Hong Kong which belongs to a circus performer named Fellini. The creature is so well-trained and naturally intelligent that it does not need to be handled by a keeper. The elephant can dance in a manner that is delightful to behold.

One day during a performance the elephant approached the circus band's piano but suddenly fled from it in fright. In great dismay, its keeper examined the piano and discovered that some of its parts were made out of the elephant's mother's tusks. No wonder it was so upset and ran away in distress!

This provides much food for thought. One hears of people who treat their parents so badly that they suffer from want. Naturally such people are held in contempt on account of their abominable conduct. Others show respect to their parents while they are alive, but scatter and even destroy their parents' possessions once they are dead. Very few people regard these objects with loving remembrance or treasure them forever.

There are worse cases: before a parent's coffin is removed to the family graveyard for burial, fights break out among the various siblings in total disregard for their common origin. There are numerous people of this ilk in our society nowadays! One cannot help thinking that in this respect human beings are indeed far inferior to elephants.