

LS Lec.notes 6. Five Dynasties Landscape Painting: The Great Masters

Before continuing to talk abt the great masters of LS ptg in the Five Dynasties period, I want to show two very dif. ptgs of period:

- 6.1.1, 6.1.2. **"Deer in an Autumn Forest", "Deer Among Red-leafed Maples." Two hanging scrolls, Palace Museum, Taipei; originally panels of a screen, Liao dynasty? Skira 68, T&V 7-24, CAT 5-6, Siren 142-3. Liao, or Kihitans—as mentioned at end of previous lecture: from old name for their regime, Khitai, came European word Cathay. (Show side by side, 2103 at left, 167 at right. Talk abt whole composition, of which these are parts.) They exchanged tribute etc. with Sung. Sent screen of this kind to Sung emperor. These must be left and right of center (explain why)

- 6.1.3-6. Four details from these. In discussing these ptgs in the essay I contrib. to the 1986 Met Mus catalog *Possessing the Past*, exhib. of ptgs from the Nat'l Palace Mus in Taipei, I cite an 11th cent. writer giving the advice that you can tell a good ptg from a bad one by running your finger over it: if you can feel the pigment, it's not a good ptg. So, heavy build-up of pigment into kind of relief common in earlier periods, had gone out of fashion by Sung times. Liao old-fashioned in this and other ways. Still can be seen in some Jap. screen ptgs,; also religious fig in Boston MFA, acquired by Tseng Hsien-ch'i? like this. (Showed a LS by a Liao artist at end of previous lecture.)

- 6.2.1, 6.2.2. (One after the other, full-screen) Landscape wall ptgs in tomb of Wang Chuzhi, died A.D. 923. Ink monochrome. In Hebei Province in north. Reliable work of period. Texturing and shading freely applied to earth forms (etc.) Nothing that shakes our prior knowledge of LS of this period.

- 6.3.1. Fragment of LS from Central Asia—still another late T'ang or shortly after; shows same system of shading from fold to fold. Even shading, not in separate, repeated brushstrokes—that came after. Cylindrical tree trunks. All kinds of evidence, then, points to this as basis of new ink-monochrome mode of LS arising in this period.

- 6.3.2. slide of double picture from *Urinasu*, or *Ikuro Zasshi*, private magazine pub. in mid-1930s by Okumura Ikurô. This is in fifth and last issue, article on "Mts and Pictures of Mts," juxtaposing photos of real Ch LS with ptgs of it. Here, right part is taken from LS ascribed to Fan K'uan in Japan—don't have slide of original, not important as ptg—and left side is from photo taken in NE China, showing eroded loess slope. Very

revealing—artists had natural basis for this convention. This is something we all do—photos beside ptgs—dumkopfs point to them and say “Look, look, the artists are only ptg what they see—what’s all this stuff abt style?” Observation made by outsiders and beginners; no one who gets seriously into the subject could say that. Huge dif. in LS style in dif places and times, while real LS doesn’t change so much—another simple but needed point.

Two more diversions before we come to the great masters:

- 6.4.1. Anon., after 10th cent. composition? “Fishing in the Clear Stream.” Has much of archaic in it, but used for monumental composition. Llinear, unnaturally clear, w/o texturing etc. Transitional work of some kind, datable to 10th cent. or so—or close copy after. Reprod. in second chapter of my *Compelling Image* book.

- 6.5.1. Other one: Anon., after 9th-10th cent. composition? “Immortals Dwellings on Pine-hung Cliffs.” Both NPM, Taipei. Discovered in 1959 when C.C.Wang, Li Lin-ts’an and I were going through Palace Mus. collection in Taichung-never published. Called Anon. Sung. Like Chan Tzu-ch’ien-attrib. “Outing in Spring,” divided by river: one shore w. lots of detail, other less. Here, nearer and further. But foreground much too close-up for really early composition—easy entrance into ptg. a later feature.

Drawing: in line like “Emp. Ming-huang’s Journey” etc.—

- 6.5.2 – 6.5.5. Four details, one after other.

- 6.6.1. (Att. Ching Hao, *Kuanglu Mt.*) Now, on to five famous landscape masters of Five Dynasties period. Along with Li Ssu-hsun and Chao-tao and Wang Wei in T’ang, recog. as forefathers of landscape ptg by later historians and critics: lists of them always go: Ching/Kuan, Tung/Chû, Li (Ch’eng.) One could write substantial book about them just from info. and opinions that Chinese writers give us abt them, abt. ptgs attrib. to them, etc. A lot of this is in Loehr’s book, translations etc.—worth reading for that. And with what would we illustrate it? Do we have one ptg safely by any one of them? No. One ptg safely *after* one of them? No. Not even anything so well recorded, w. such strong provenance, and so plausibly attributable as Chao Kan scroll is. Lots of attributions to them: all serious collectors wanted to own examples of their work; people who had old ptgs in their styles, or imaginably in their styles, strongly tempted to attrib. them to Ching and Kuan, Tung and Chû, Li Ch’eng, sometimes w.

added signatures. Modern forger Chang Ta-ch'ien did all of them except Ching Hao: Kuan T'ung in Boston MFA, Chü-jan in British Museum, Li Ch'eng and Tung Yuan in—I'll stop there.

But a number of old and fine landscapes survive that go under their names, we'll look at some of them in the rest of this lecture. Loehr, Barnhart, take them much more seriously, as you'll find in reading. I would see them mostly as good examples of works done by artists in local schools founded by famous masters. What we call, in auction catalogs etc., "School of Li Ch'eng" etc. Honest appellation.

What I've been showing is ptg ascribed to Ching Hao, oldest of the five. Impressive ptg, over 6' tall, effect of great space and height. But later I'll go on to say why it isn't by him, or even close to him.

Ching Hao (Jing Hao) Born ca. 855, died ca. 915. . From Honan, in north. Well-educated man. Became a recluse in late T'ang, acc. to story. Credited w. essay on landscape: still extant.

- 6.6.2. (black-and-white image) Attrib. Jing Hao (late 9th-early 10th cent.) "The Kuanglu Mountain." Nat'l Palace Mus., Taipei. 3000 85, Loehr 44, Siren 144.

This ptg belongs, I think, in Northern Sung period, I'll bring it back when we talk about ptg of that period in next lecture, to show why.

(For essay on landscape attrib. to Jing Hao, see Bush&Shih pp. 145-8, 159-60, 164-5, 170-1. Also trans. By K. Munakata, see below).

- 6.6.3, 6.6.4. Two details, one after other. Discuss.

Me on camera, talk for a time:

Annotated translation of Jing Hao-attributed text: Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of the Brush*. Artibus Asiae Supplementum XXXI, Ascona, 1974.

Will talk abt this text, summarize it, w/o reading much from it.

Narrator in text, a young student of ptg, meets an old recluse in the mts—maybe meant for Ching Hao himself—who gives him the "secrets" of ptg landscape. Old man affirms the importance of capturing some pictorial truth, some deep understanding of nature, instead of just transcribing appearances. He distinguishes between *Hua*, outward appearance, and *Shih*, substance. Gives four classes of ptg: in descending rank, *shen* (divine), *miao* (marvelous, or sublime), *ch'i* (distinctive, or

strange) and *ch'iao* (skilful). He introduces terminology and concepts from geomancy, study of underlying currents of energy in earth (whatever): *ch'i*, spirit, and *shih*, energy. He discusses earlier ptrs, praising Wang Wei, contrasting him w. Li Ssu-hsün (already those two have come to represent forward-looking and backward-looking, regressive vs. progressive, tendencies in LS ptg. Praises Wu Tao-tzu for power of brush, but says he lacks ink; another ptr, Hsiang Jung, praised for ink but w/o bone in brush. Eulogizes the old pine tree, somewhat anthropomorphizing it.

He lists six "essentials" of ptg—like Hsieh Ho's Six Laws, but directed at *creation* of ptg rather than as criticism. Six Essentials are: *Ch'i* (Spirit), *Yün* (Resonance—"hidden things take shape, the ptg is not vulgar.") These are of course the same as in Hsieh Ho's First Law. Then: *Ssu* (Thought: "select and depict the most essential points") and *Ching* (Scene, seasonal aspects.) These are specific to landscape: underlying meaning vs. overt visual content. (C.C.Wang always used "scenery" as what you shouldn't look at in ptg—should pay attn to brushwork instead.) Ching Hao's Six Essentials end with: *Pi* (Brush, "free and flexible, flying and moving") and *Mo* (Ink—"shallow and deep, its colors natural")—these pertain of course to execution, creation of ptg..

Overall, these point to where LS is going at this time: reduction of visual variety, toward great unification that will somehow reflect unity and order of universe, as it was coming to be understood in Neo-Confucian philosophy. In style, this meant reduction or elimination of color, move into ink monochrome; in brushwork, it meant creating system of brushstrokes that produces an orderly system of forms, organized into a composition that reflects the artist's comprehension of an orderly natural world. It meant the creation of great systems of texturing earth and rock surfaces, brushwork systems for rendering forms such as trees and rocks and mountain peaks in ways that would unify picture into a coherent vision of nature, of the physical world. Fundamental problem facing landscapist: translation, or transmutation, of observed scenery of nature into systems of brushwork and forms that embody, or express, an understanding of natural phenomena. Nature presented, not as collection of individual forms, but as organic structure. What we will see in this and the following lecture will reveal how great landscapists of China's greatest period of LS ptg carried out this grand project, creating what we call monumental LS, in ptgs that can be taken, if we want, as pictorial

expressions of Neo-Confucian thought. I don't want to over-stress that—philosophy didn't create ptg style, any more than history does or any other outside factor does. Artists create styles. But Neo-Confucianism, I believe, is the world-view that underlies this huge collective project.

Back to looking at paintings.

- 6.7.1. attrib. to Ching Hao: "Landscape with Travelers", Nelson Gal., K.C. Loehr 43. Archaistic work, much later. Loehr reproduces, Barnhart?
- 6.7.2, 6.7.3. Two details, one at a time. Discuss. White is meant to look like underdrawing, presumably, but . . ."Signature" reading Hung-ku-tzu (name used by Ching Hao) written on it.

Kuan T'ung (Guan Tong): rival of Ching Hao; paired w. him by later critics. Also active in first quarter of 10th cent.

- 6.8.1. Attrib. Guan Tong, active early 10th cent. "Travelers in the Mountains." NPM. Loehr 45, CAT 13. Fine early ptg, more plausible than most of others we're seeing as work of 10th cent., pre-Northern Sung. Old attrib. to Guan Tong.

Hsüan-ho hua-p'u writes of him: "Kuan T'ung's ptgs are done in a fluent fashion with a small brush, and the more sketchy the brushwork, the stronger was the life-breath, the simpler the scenery the deeper seemed the thoughts. His pictures had a profound meaning; they were noble and pure, like T'ao Yuan-ming's poetry and Ho Jo's music. No ordinary painter could do such things."

Loehr: "Said to have begun by imitating Ching Hao; later turned to older masters for inspiration. In late years arrived at a free, unlabored, sketchy style of great expressiveness."

- 6.8.2-7. Six details, show beside whole at left. In details, point out: dif. between these bare trees and those in "Ching Hao." Thick-line drawing of figs and houses, almost cartoon-like when blown up like this. But in context of whole ptg, meant to be viewed from farther away, look natural—need to be drawn heavy. Above: early form of texture strokes? Not clearly developed yet. Could be transitional- Generally, plausible as pre-Song ptg.

- 6.9.1, Attrib. Guan Tong, "Autumn Mts. At Dusk," NPM. 3000 86. 11th cent. ptg, by style; prob. part of series, maybe screen. These were common in early period; often single panels survive.
- 6.9.2 – 3, Two details, show beside whole. Discuss. Show ascending path, temple roof.

Tung Yüan (Dong Yuan) (active under So. Tang, died 962), attributed. Great and mysterious master. He held official post, as Asst. Director of Imperial Parks in southern state of Nan-T'ang; credited with, among other things, establishing Jiangnan (Yangtze Delta region) school of landscape..

- 6.10.1 – 2. (Show together, join?) "LS of the Xiao-Xiang Region". PM, Beijing. Siren 163-6. "Hemp-fiber" texture strokes (*pima-cun*). "Alum rocks" (*fantou*)/ Terms invented by critics of later centuries to describe features of his LS style.
- Deeply unlike LS we've seen up to now, such as Emp. Minghuang's Journey: No narrative content; figures small, and play small part in composition. Plainest possible scenery—like real hills of Chiang-nan.
- Dick (Richard) Barnhart pub. study of this ptg, in 1970 titled "Marriage of the Lord of the River," in which he argued, persuasively, that ... (etc.)
- 6.10.3 – 6, four details, shown successively. Discuss.

- 6.11.1, 6.11.2. (Side by side) "Winter LS", Kurokawa col., Ashiya, Japan. 3000 89, Loehr 62. Insc. by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (etc.)
- P'ing-yuan*, flat-distance, landscape. (Middle Sung writer devised "three distances," of which this is one.) Marshy ground, stretches to horizon, which is above upper margin of ptg. Hillocks rise from this, repeated shapes:
- 6.11.3,4. (side by side) Whole in softer image; detail. These reveal truth of what we are told by later critics: that ptgs meant to be seen from distance.

No attempt at variety: the very opposite, monotony. One doesn't enjoy details so much as take in the ptg as a whole. Rough style, no display of skill. "Arouses deep thoughts?" Can understand why they write this about him.

READ: An early 11th cent. writer sums up pretty much all we know about him: "The principal master of his time was Tung Yuan, an excellent ptr skilled in ptg the mists of autumn and far open views. He represents the real hills of the Chiang-nan region,[Yangtze delta region], and did not

make any extraordinary cliffs. Most of Yuan's pictures are meant to be seen at a distance, because their brushwork was very rough. Seen in a close view the objects in his pictures do not seem right, but when one looks at them from a distance, the scenery and all the objects stand out clearly and beautifully, arousing deep feelings and carrying the thoughts far away . . ."

(Not showing: handscroll, "Summer Mts.," Shanghai Mus., 3000 88. Others.)

- 6.12.1. This is one leaf in album of reduced-size copies ("Hsiao-chung hsien-ta") made for the artist-collector Wang Shih-min in the mid-17th century, with facing inscriptions by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang. Reprod. in my *Compelling Image* book. Preserves composition, at least, of ptg that was considered at that time to be a genuine work of Dong Yuan. (Discuss briefly).

- 6.13.1. I shouldn't leave Dong Yuan without mentioning that there are a number of forgeries of his work, and also of Dong Yuan's pupil Chû-jan whom we'll consider next, by the great modern forger Chang Ta-ch'ien. (This is photo of Chang in his late years, with his daughter Sing, who was my student.) He understood great demand by collectors, in Japan and abroad but also in China, for works by these two, and helped to supply the demand, and make money, by forging their works w. great skill. I knew Chang from the time I was a Fulbright student in Japan in 1954, and became aware of his forgeries of early paintings later in that year. Several of them were owned by a Hong Kong collector named J. D. Chen, Ch'en Jen-tao; these are said to be now owned by Tokyo dealer. One now-famous one by Chang, a would-be Tung Yuan, has passed into the collection of a major U.S. Museum. You can find out about these on my website, jamescahill.info: a lecture, CLP 16, and a long list with notes of ptgs I take to be forgeries by him, under "Chang Ta-ch'ien's Forgeries." Read and look there; won't repeat here, or show the paintings.

Chû-jan (Juran) (pupil of Dong Yuan, active ca. 960-980). Monk in Nanking temple; on fall of So. T'ang, went to K'ai-feng, early Sung capital, w. Li Hou-chu, settled there. So active late 5 Dyn, beg. of No. Sung.

- 6.14.1 beside 6.12.1. "Mountains and Woods." NPM. 3000 90, Loehr 65.

Close in composition to 17c copy of Tung Yuan ptg I showed earlier. Not a count agst the ptg attrib to Chû-jan; fine ptg, but probably work of slightly later period in Chû-jan style. Trees treated in deep, misty groves; mountain masses convincingly monumental, etc.—all features of 11th cent. style. But I could be wrong. Lumps in mountaintops more convincing as geological forms—and shapes of mountains favorite of No. Sung ptrs, but could have been earlier. Part of series, screen? No figures or bldgs, just path leading into depth. Leave open. Fine work, anyway.

- 6.15.1. Attrib. Chû-jan, “Asking About the *Tao* in the Autumn Mts.” CAT 15, Siren 168. This, by contrast, although famous and often-reproduced, is much duller. One could argue that this is deliberate monotony, as with Tung Yüan, but it seems to me real dullness—hard to distinguish them.

- 6.15.2 – 6.15.6. Five details, show one by one and discuss.

- 6.16.1. “Buddhist Retreat by Stream and Mountain,” Cleveland Museum. 3000 91. From screen, or series? (We saw these in previous lectures, in ptg of palace with ladies.) Written in upper right: Chû 5, meaning fifth in Chû-jan series or screen. 6-panel compositions by him recorded in *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u*. Fine ptg, very much worth having—Sherman Lee and Wai-kam Ho treasured it, rightly. Hard to find real early Ch LS for sale. Long, fine essay on this by Wai-kam Ho in *Eight Dynasties* catalog (of 1980 exhib. of ptgs from K.c. and Cleveland Museums.) He makes good point that Chû-jan, in late years when he came north to Kaifeng, fell under inf. of Li Ch'eng; this picture, he argues, shows that influence. Strong argument.

Otherwise, one might well feel that as would-be Chû-jan, has too much of look of 11th cent., like Kuo Hsi etc. Pockets of space, dramatic silhouetting of trees, look like elements of 11th cent. style. Also, lumpiness too extreme, mannered. General rule: sequence of ptgs w/in a given stylistic lineage (all attrib. to same ptr, often) can be established by assuming that any element of style or motif begins as a representational element, something that looks natural, makes sense as part of a picture, and that it gradually hardens, or degenerates, into an element of a *manner*, which the later artist learns when he learns “how to paint in the Tung Yüan style” (or whatever.) Regional schools are established by these great masters, with lots of followers doing imitations. We know of these from early texts. And most of what we have are works by these followers, sometimes centuries after master; and most of these come to be attributed to the master, because works by lesser followers, *xiaoming-jia*

in Chinese, weren't wanted by collectors. This is a reality abt Ch ptg that we have to live with.

Li Cheng (919-967)

Attributed ptgs:

- 6.15.1. "Small Wintry Grove" picture (*Hsiao han-lin t'u*), short handscroll in Liaoning Museum. (Story of Larry Sickman almost buying this and other ptgs: my "Responses and Remiiscences" no. 69.) Good example of kind of scene attrib. to Li Ch'eng. Poor slide; show another, not much better:

- 6.15.2. Tall trees, reaching out in both directions; old tree below, stretching to right; above this, hillocks pf earth indicating distance. Still not very informative abt Li Cheng style; I will show instead:

- 6.16.1. Another, same title, *Hsiao han-lin t'u*, this one in Nat'l Palace Mus., Taipei. Not properly attrib. to Li Ch'eng; called simply "Anon. Sung." But belongs among early ptgs representing Li Ch'eng style. Two men in lower l. hurrying thru LS.

Use this to talk abt him:

Li Ch'eng: active mid-10th cent. Came from family of scholars, distant descendants of T'ang imperial family, living in NE, Shantung Province. (Wai-kam Ho was doing research on him throughout his life: paper in 1970 Taipei symposium). Precocious; passed exams for official position, was active for a time in the capital, Kaifeng, around age 40, spent several years there. But didn't continue in that career: too fond of drinking, contemptuous of officialdom. Ended up living away from cities, making living as ptr, doing landscapes. But proud, independent: there was still some conflict bet scholar status and ptr's occupation, assoc. w. artisan class. Painted scenery of northern plains, espec. scenery of Shantung in Northeast: desolate LS w. bare trees, seeming to struggle for survival. Theme that fitted his temperament, his own situation in time. Near end of life, invited by patron to Huai-yang, died there, of drink, in 967.

- 6.16.2. Detail of tree at left side of group. Some sense of patterning, but mvts of brush strong, continuous energy flowing out from trunk to twigs.

- 6.16.3. Detail of right side of tree group. This has more of that quality of natural tangle that seems to have distinguished his best works. Maybe as close as we will get to Li Cheng.

11c. writer (Kuo Jo-hsû) writes of him: His atmosphere is mournful and thin, his misty forests are pure and desolate. His brush-point is as fine as a needle, his ink infinitely slight (subtle).

Later Sung writer (quoted by Loehr) writes: "It almost seemed as if [his LS] were not made w brush & ink."

Captured, it would seem, more of transient—light & shadow—and exhibited a new mastery of ink monochrome for effects of space.

Sense of struggle for survival: gives a certain severity, or austerity, but also strength, to ptg. In taste we can easily understand—I used to compare to shift from Tchaikowsky to Stravinsky in early 20c music—some artists of this time seem to have turned violently away from all prettiness, blandishments, charming details, colorful scenery, to strip nature down to bare bones. Technical means dev. by then were perfect for this. For Chinese, this style and type of subject symbolizes uncompromising, tough-mindedness, endurance through hardship.

- 6.17.1. *Trees on a Plain*. Private col., Japan. (Former Yamamoto col., later Inokuma col. In Yokkaichi.) Large hanging scroll, ink on silk. Fine work, seems original, i.e. not copy. But rocks have look of Kuo Hsi, century later--? Fine early ptg anyway, important part of our heritage of Li Ch'eng-style ptgs.

- 6.18.1. *Reading the Tablet*. Osaka Munic. Mus. Siren 143. Old copy. (Describe subject.) Supposed to be by Li Ch'eng with figures by another artist, Wang Hsiao—sometimes done so. Valuable as old copy.

Loehr has good discussion of Li Ch'eng, but then reproduces, to represent him, three ptgs that shouldn't be there—including an alb leaf by Wang Hui, 17c, recognizably his style. Ming-Ch'ing ptg not sufficiently studied in West in Loehr's time—Chinese connoisseur, such as C.C.Wang, could recognize immediately. But no Chinese of Wang's generation capable of art-historical analysis and writing that Loehr could do. So the great comprehensive history didn't get done.

- and, behind all these: problem of how to give import, human meaning, to LS ptg., make it something more than mere picture. All old problems, now confronting artists w. new urgency.

A bit on history, before we continue into LS of Sung dynasty. China unified again under Sung, from 960. In north, Liao continued in power, holding large area; Chinese fear them, pay tribute, to be left in peace. Apart from that, fairly strong in first half of dynasty: Northern Sung (960-1027.) Strong emperors, effective administration. But twd end of period, political factions in bitter strife, weakening monarchy.. Also, another nomadic people appear, the Jurchen Tartars—in early 12th cent., capture Chinese capital in north, Kaifeng, force Chinese south. After that, called So. Sung Period.

Urbanization: expansion of cities into greatest on earth. Has to do w. growth of LS ptg—as great 11th cent. LSist Kuo Hsi writes, LS ptd so that people kept in cities by their jobs and family responsibilities etc. can roam in imagination thru mts.—etc., much like idea behind essay by Tsung Ping discussed earlier, for Six Dynasties period. Still what I call “primary concept” of artistic expression in China..

Growth of what is called Neo-Confucianism. (Foreign term? Maybe taboo today. I’m talking in 1950s terms). Broadening, deepening of Confucian tradition, some elements taken into it from Taoism & Buddhism.

Cosmology: nature seen as operating acc. to vast order, pattern, called *li*. Natural order, something like that. Basic stuff of world was *ch’i*; coagulates into matter, dissolves, moves, acc. to *li*. All this makes up process called *ts’ao-hua*: creation, but also change. Important to thinking abt LS ptg: in ideal situation, ptr creates as nature does, w/o conscious purpose, so that his works have look of creations of nature, not man-made. How this was accomplished by great masters of No. Sung we’ll see.

Metaphysical dimensions to Neo-Confucianism, I don’t want to do more than mention: question of mind, nature of knowledge and how acquired, relat. between knower and thing known. Buddhism, espec. Ch’an or Zen Buddhism, continues strong; its inf on art is chiefly in So. Sung., I’ll talk abt it then.

Poetry, calligraphy, ceramics, all rise again to greatness. *Printing* important: more books available. More and more emph. on collecting, connoisseurship, antiquarianism.

In govt, full development of system of exams leading to governmental posts. Works well most of the time.
I used to recommend highly, still can, Peter Bol (Harvard): This Culture of Ours.
How all this affected ptg in Sung we'll talk abt in succeeding lectures.