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Now we have arrived at last at a period from which we have landscape ptgs preserved that are reliably by great recorded artists; two of them even signed by those artists. So I can begin to speak more securely about the style of the artist, and how his followers in their works continued some features of his style while losing others. Northern Song monumental landscape stands, in my estimation, as a high point in the whole history of Chinese painting, and up there with Gothic cathedrals, or the music of Bach, among the greatest works of man. Whether I can convince you of that is a different question; the paintings are not showy, and perhaps will seem at first rather plain. I remember being asked, more than once, why the great landscape by Fan Kuan *is* such a great work, and not finding it an easy question to answer. But I will attempt to start you, at least, on the way to understanding and appreciating these paintings.

LS.LectNotes.7A: Northern Song Landscape Painting, Part I

TALKING:

Northern Song: a period (960-1127), not a place. Capital in north, at Kaifeng. Later, moved to south: Hangzhou, below Yangtze. Periods named after location of capital; after territory ruled by Han Chinese. Will talk in next lecture about the great change, loss of north to another nomadic people, the Jurchen or Chin, in time of Emperor Hui-tsung.

Northern Song is great period for landscape painting—maybe greatest period, judging from works preserved. Personal judgment, but also agrees w. Chinese writings, which see 10th—11th cent. as high point. And 10th cent., as we saw, quite problematic, so far as reliable works by great masters go.

I take Northern Song LS to be a collective achievement w/in world art that is up with, say, Gothic cathedrals in Europe, or religious ptg of the Renaissance—one of grand moments. Still belongs w/in a traditional development, in which artists don't (yet) make radical departures early and easily. They begin, typically, by learning and imitating style of some predecessor, then gradually move into own style. Do this, as Chinese accounts of the time and later tell it, in Gombrichian manner of progress: artist learns from so-and-so, then turns to learning from real LS. To recognize this is *not*, then, as I said at beginning, an "Orientalist" imposition of western concepts of conquest of space etc. onto Chinese materials.

Important to emphasize: Ch. ptrs of time, and writers about them in early period, are entirely respectful of nature; artists don't play freely with it for personal expressive purposes, as they will later. Nature isn't pushed around. Aim of artists appears to be a relatively objective presentation of a grand, coherent vision, or visual understanding of the natural world.

Certain assumptions underlie my discussions, which are worth stating again.

- Morphology of forms seems to follow certain patterns, a seeming logic, which permits us to set up stylistic series on internal evidence. Dangers in doing this, I'm perfectly aware of, but seems to me worth doing, even

necessary. Was done by great art historians for European art long ago; and no amount of derision and discrediting can change that. What I'm attempting will fall far short of their achievement, but I still believe it's necessary to try, and I feel as qualified to do it as anyone extant, more than most.

- In China, there was both danger and virtue in departure from inherited forms and from nature (as anywhere). In this period and through rest of Sung, great ptrs in their different ways all remain relatively faithful to nature, in context of their time. Radical and deliberate departures come later, beginning in early Yuan (read first chapter of my Hills Beyond a River.)

- Ch.ptg after Sung, that is, becomes more & more occupied with non-representational, anti-naturalistic forms and techniques. What these are, what main directions are, is subject of my article "Some Thoughts on the History and Post-History of Chinese Painting," on my website as CLP 34, also pub. In *Archives of Asian Art* for 2005.

Now, on to look at the ptgs.

(Should mention before going on: in my old lectures used to put on slides and discuss group of LS woodcuts, datable to very beginning of Sung—971-983. Attached to Bud. sutras. Loehr wrote book abt them, after they were acquired by Harvard while he taught there. Important; but very backward-looking, not truly indicative of 10th cent. achievements in ptg. I'm leaving these out.)

SLIDES:

Yen Wen-kuei (Yan Wengui) (late 10th-early 11th cent.)

He was born in the south, Chekiang, but active in north, served in court academy in capital,, Kaifeng, w. position of *chih-hou*,

- 7.1.1. 7.1.2. "Temples on a Mountainside." (color slide, photo, together.) Loehr 67, Siren 171. Signed; also w. his title? I remember so. Needs serious study. But in my opinion, it's the *first ptg we've seen w. reliable signature that allows firm attribution to particular artist*. All the more remarkable that it's been ignored by most Chinese art historians.
- 7.1.3 (replaces 7.1.2 at right). What is new about this? (among ptgs really of the periods they are attrib. to, that is):

- Great reduction in variety; repetition of forms, consistency of brushwork, unifies the picture.
- *Effect* of light-and-shadow, but no consistent light source.
- Shading by applications of *ts'un* (texture strokes) from contours inward.
- Contour drawing of fluctuating breadth: thickening and thinning.
- Lots of bldgs and detail, but subordinated, thoroughly integrated into comp.
- A few touches of very light color, but mostly ink monochrome.

All these will be standard features of great No. Sung monumental LS, as we'll see. They belong w/in the achievement of Yen Wen-kuei? And also of Fan K'uan? More or less contemporary. But also no doubt anticipated in some 5 Dyn. LS ptg, by great masters, that we don't have.

- 7.1.4 – 7.1.8. Four details, shown beside 7.1.1. Talk about them.

Figures: very small, but important. Must be able to find way upward, twd. temple. Sense of grandeur in their small scale. (saw this in LS attrib. to Kuan T'ung of 5 Dynasties.

Above, mt. peaks: given some sense of volume by slanting tops, receding sides, viewer can see their thickness. But not strongly shaded.

- Dark waterfall: sense of mystery important here: nature seen as awesome, not a pleasure-park as in Chan Tzu-ch'ien. Great dif.: old part-by-part reading & enjoyment of LS vs. new *comprehensive* view. Latter is far more ambitious and difficult achievement—implies, or necessitates, total integration in work of art as expression of unified, comprehensive view of nature.

2 → - 7.1.9, 7.1.10. Bring back here: "Ching Hao, "Chû-jan" LS from from lecture 6. (side by side, w. Yen Wen-kuei?) Unlikely that they are really of 10th cent., pre-Sung: follow No. Sung model.

✓ - 7.2.1. Landscape handscroll, former Abe col., Osaka Munic. Museum. Signed. 3000 95. This is first half of ptg in ink and light colors on paper. (First important early LS on paper we've seen?) Well preserved, can see details easily. Sense of strong wind, blowing trees.

✓ - 7.2.2. Last half of scroll. Insc. at end. Includes his rank? Similar mountain forms to hanging scroll on silk; ptd in much finer brushwork. That's normal, handscroll to be seen close-up. Slanting tops to masses - -

✓ - 7.2.3. Moving in closer: Much more variety in scenery, less austere than hanging scroll by Yen Wen-kuei. More sense of atmosphere: trees

silhouetted agst fog, blown by wind. People arriving at inn in upper right; travelers on mules in lower left. Pictorial, in way hanging scroll isn't. Is this because of dif. in period? I have called it early 12 cent.; never quite sure. Very fine & important ptg, anyway.

(For others associated with him, see Wen Fong, *Summer Mountains*, New York, 1975.) But if I remember right, he downplays the one I emphasize—or passes it off as later imitation. Little agreement even among authorities.

Fan Kuan (late 10th-early 11th cent.)

- 7.3.1. "Traveling Among Streams and Mountains". NPM. Signed. Skira 31&33, 3000 94, T&V 7-19, Loehr 48-50, CAT 18, Siren 154. (Copy, by Wang Hui, Qing? Siren 155.)

Next truly great master after Li Ch'eng was Fan K'uan. Has distinction of ptg one of two finest surviving Ch LS (now on screen, I'll talk abt it in a moment.) He was northerner, born in Shensi Prov in northwest. born mid-10th cent, died after 1026. Noted for stern nature, uncompromising temperament. Story: began by imitating Li Ch'eng; but then said to self, Didn't Li Ch'eng learn directly from things [in nature]? I will take things themselves as my teachers. But a still better teacher is my heart/mind." Went to live in depths of mts., we read, studied clouds & mists & changing effects of sun & wind, darkening and clearing skies. Absorbed these into mind, set them forth [i.e. his understanding of them] in his brush. "And such were his cliffs & gorges that they instantly make one feel as if walking along a path in the shade of mts., and, however great the heat, one shivered with cold and wished for a covering. Therefore it was commonly said that K'uan was able to transmit the spirit of the mts." Essentially same concept of artistic expression we have in Tsung Ping etc., updated so as to reflect greater achievements now possible.

Ptg that fulfills completely the expectations built up by these writings.. Nearly 7' tall! Ink only on silk. Tripartite composition, both laterally and in depth: (show) Whether or not later than Yen Wen-kuei ptg (not clear), represents huge leap upward, so to speak: (describe)—sudden jump from small FG & middleground forms to massive bluff. Distance less at stake here than height, bulk. Understandably, became very famous, much

copied. (Copies often shown in KK, i/o orig.; one of copies went to London for 1935-36 exhib.)

- 7.3.2 - 7.3.6. Five details, show one after another, beside whole at left. Talk abt them. In lower part: signature, discovered by Li Lin-ts'an. Signatures at this time inconspicuous, hidden. Later: prominent. Figs. small; detail subordinated to whole effect. Doesn't encourage spatial exploration: that mode over with. Pretty much everything presented full-frontally.

Still tripartite also in theme: still secular-to-religious-to pure LS. And still uses slanting-top masses: both middle-ground earth mass and huge bluff. But where in Yen Wen-kuei ^{is} ptg these increase as one rises upward, one-two-three-four, in Fan K'uan ptg it's one-two-fifty! Sudden, breath-taking ascent.

Critic of time writes about him: "His were true rocks, and old trees rose right up under is brush. If one seeks his *ch'i-yün* (spirit-consonance), it goes beyond mere appearances. He did not rely on adornments, and took no guidance from older masters, but formed his own ideas, working like creation [in nature]. Therefore, he should be ranked in the Divine Class." Important concept: ptr creates as nature does, w'o purpose or volition.

Last slide: repeated contours, but not ^{artificial} unnatural. Gombrich's idea; artist takes inherited conventions, adjusts or corrects them in accordance with his observation of natural forms, seems exemplified here. Gombrich-bashers should be sentenced to spend long hours gazing at ptgs like this one. ~~Are~~ the forms of ptg, since they are all conventions, all equally true-to-nature ^{is} Nonsense, dumb idea.

That's
argument,
that

Chinese account for this effect, when it works ideally as here, by likening artistic creation to creation in nature, *ts'ao-hua*. Creation in nature ~~done~~ happens w/o planning, purpose, so everything in it looks (by definition) natural. Artist's creation can't ordinarily escape looking man-made; only if he can somehow attain state of mind that eliminates *purposefulness* will he create as nature does, transcend artifice, and achieve this rare effect of naturalness, rightness. Profound idea, which we shouldn't pass off too quickly as incompatible with our thinking about art.

- 7.4.1. Beside 7.3.1, still on left. "Sitting Alone By the Stream." NPM. Siren 153, Possessing Pl. 62. This was in 1996 "Possessing the Past" exhib at Met, from Nat'l Palace Mus in Taipei—it replaced real Fan K'uan when that and other great masterworks had to be withdrawn, after protests in Taiwan.

- 7.4.2 – 7.4.5, four details, now beside 7.4.1. Talk abt them. Impressive ptg, dramatic; strong chiaroscuro, fitful lighting, Patterned treatment of trees, etc. But lacks the ultimately satisfying qualities of real Fan K'uan; work by later follower who learned style. How we distinguish follower's work from original master's: representational features of style have turned into learned conventions, elements of school manner. Could in principle line up series of followers' works, if we had them, watch this process over time . . . I used to do that in class, or extra hours.

Others attrib. to Fan K'uan:

- 7.5.1. Copy by Wang Hui, 17c, or some other Orthodox-school artist. Palace Museum; used to be exhib. sometimes as Fan K'uan. This or similar one went to 1935-6 Chinese art exhib. in London; part of what Ch. govt. sent. Early ptgs nearly all bad; set back Ch ptg studies for decades.

- 7.5.2. Snow landscape, NPM. Siren 156. One of a number of early Fan K'uan-school landscapes; one could line them up and discuss later phases of school. One in Freer datable to early Yuan. I used to do this; haven't time for it now. *Conventions of Fan Kuan mode exaggerated*

- 7.5.3. Another, I think Crawford col? Now Met. Belongs to other compositional type, asymmetrical, recession on one side, ascent on other. Fine early school work.

- 7.5.4.. "Fan K'uan" LS in Tianjin Museum. Published w. much fanfare by Chinese when discovered there; taken to be equal to great ptg in Taipei. Signature on it (some problem w. it, don't remember.) Story: Jane Debevoise. Note joins of silk: three width.

- 7.5.5.. River Shore in Snow, fan-shaped album leaf. Attr. to Fan K'uan. Siren 157. Southern Sung Academy style; fine in its way. Boxton MFA.

~~(Reconsider here: Nelson Gallery "Li Cheng": same period? A bit later?)~~

Xu Daoning (Hsû Tao-ning) (ca. 1000-after 1066.) Next major master in lineage of Li Ch'eng. Active in early to mid-11th cent. Achieved some renown in his day, but not considered one of the greats. Still, one of the finest Northern Sung LS we have is attrib. to him, may well be by him.

Handscroll: "Fishing in the Mt. Stream," in Nelson Gal, KC. Another great Sickman acquisition. Ink & very slight color on silk.

- 7.8.1, 7.8.2. Show side by side? Stretching across screen. 117 on left, 118 on right. "Fishing in a Mountain Stream. Nelson Gal., K.C. 3000 112, Loehr 68, Siren 158.

Attribution only, no signature; but believable. Best example we have of landscape handscroll from this period. Tripartite, balanced form, like Fan K'uan etc.: FG elements at beg & end, two long recessions along river valleys; central mass.

- 7.8.3. Tangled old trees, closest objects in ptg but still distant from viewer. Flag indicates a stopping place, an inn. Then long vista across valley. (Student once pointed out: a glacial valley! Scooped by masses of ice. Like Yosemite.) Diminution of trees into distance—further ones stick-like, dimming of ink tone conveys distance. A few houses, mid-left of this slide.

- 7.8.4. Beginning close-up. Magnificent rendering of old trees. No simple, schematic patterning: natural in best sense. Hardest thing to do.

- 7.8.5. Central section, w huge massif towering past top of scroll. Small houses again at left, middle-distance. Path w. bridges leads through scroll, allows viewer to find way along it.

- 7.8.6. Diagonal rock formations look odd, but probably some geological basis for them. Shading i/o texture strokes, which would look odd seen close-up in handscroll; also, not rocky surface.

- 7.8.7. Next sec'n: valley w. meandering river, diminishing trees, more peaks far in distance. Viewing it is moving experience.

Mi Fu, famous literati critic later in century who was spokesman for new attitudes that put an effective end to this greatest age of landscape, *like* pronounced Hsü Tao-ning to be "plebeian," not worth looking at. (Profound wrongness of much of scholar-amateur school's self-serving rhetoric is something we're just now coming to realize. At least some of us are. This kind of ptg was totally beyond their abilities, so they derided it. Like some critics in 20c: a French artist in 1950s, can't remember his name (popular then but has faded away) who announced that he wouldn't walk across the street to see a Renaissance painting.

- 7.8.8. Last section. (A bit missing at bottom). Traveler on mule, w. hat; servant carries luggage, making way along raised pathway bridge. As in Chao Kan scroll, some move through the scene, others work (fish) or dwell there. Wonderful spaciousness, sense of clear, cold air.

- 7.8.9. Fishermen in boats, up close. Enlarged this way, thick-line drawing makes it cartoon-like, but just right in context of large scroll (abt 20")

tall.) But see how ripples in water are drawn w. great sensitivity, no simple repetition.

- 7.8.10. Detail of lower part of ending. Touch of anecdotal at end: merchant is trying to get his donkey to get into boat so they can cross. But doesn't detract from grandeur, profound seriousness, of whole scroll.

- 7.9.1, 7.9.2. LS w. Bare Trees and Temple. Fujii Yurinkan, Kyoto. (Barnhart reads as: "Evening Bell from Distant Temple.") Siren 159. Show side by side, for whole composition? Or successively? Either OK. Other old scroll ptg ascribed to Hsü Tao-ning. Marc Wilson, who writes long and fine essay abt KC scroll in 8 Dynasties catalog (lots of quotations from early writers), unaccountably accepts this as Hsü's work and makes it earlier work than KC scroll. I don't think it can possibly be by Hsü Tao-ning. (Explain why.) Profoundly different in whole conception. How?

- 7.9.3. Detail of left end. Note: *people looking at landscape*. Momentous change, of which we'll see other examples: divides picture into gazers vs. gazed-at. Places ptg, I think, some time after Hsü Tao-ning's period of activity. We'll see other ptgs exhibiting this new phenomenon and I'll talk abt it more. Changes whole character of LS ptg, not all for the better.

- 7.10.1, 7.10.2. "Dense Snow on a Mountain Pass." NPM. Loehr 72.

~~Another, CAT 19.~~ ?

Whole and detail, together or successively. Loehr shouldn't have published; another work by Wang Hui, again. Once one understands his style, his imitations of old styles immediately recognizable. In detail, show *foot*. That Wang Hui's works could have passed in his time as works by great Sung masters, and have continued to be reproduced as their work ever since, fooling lots of people, tells us something about Chinese connoisseurship—which, as I've said, is very strong for Yuan and later ptg, in which recognizing artist's hand and style are the point, but less strong for Sung and earlier.

All for this first half of lecture serve; second half will feature the last really major master w'in the Northern Sung monumental landscape tradition: Kuo Hsi.

LS loses
traversable
complete-world
character,
becomes
object of gaze.

LS.LectNotes.7: Northern Song Landscape

Northern Song: a period (960-1127), not a place.

Yan Wengui (late 10th-early 11th cent.)

- "Temples on a Mountainside." Signed. Loehr 67.
- Landscape handscroll, former Abe col., Osaka Munic. Museum. Signed. 3000 95.

(For others associated with him, see Wen Fong, *Summer Mountains*, New York, 1975.)

Fan Kuan (late 10th-early 11th cent.)

- "Traveling Among Streams and Mountains". NPM. Signed. Skira 31&33, 3000 94, T&V 7-19, Loehr 48-50.
- "Sitting Alone By the Stream." NPM.
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(Reconsider here: Nelson Gallery "Li Cheng": same period? A bit later?)

Xu Daoning (Hsû Tao-ning) (ca. 1000-after 1066.)

- "Fishing in a Mountain Stream. Nelson Gal., K.C. 3000 112, Loehr 68,
- LS w. Bare Trees and Temple. Fujii Yurinkan, Kyoto. (Barnhart reads as: "Evening Bell from Distant Temple.")
- "Dense Snow on a Mountain Pass." NPM. Loehr 72.

Guo Xi (Kuo Hsi) (ca. 1001-ca. 1090)

- "Early Spring," signed, dtd. 1072. NPM. Skira 36, 3000 109, T&V 7-20, Loehr 73.
 - "Autumn in the River Valley." Freer Gallery. Skira 37, Loehr 74 A-D.
 - "Lowlands with Trees," Met. Mus., former Crawford Col.
 - "Snowy Hills," Toledo Museum of Art. Fine school work, Yuan dynasty?
 - "Ravine in Winter." Shanghai Museum. Panel of screen?
- (Anon. school work, "LS of Min Mountains."
(Various later imitations.)

Trans. of most of Guo Xi essay, "Linqun gaozhi," including "Huaji" section, scattered through Bush & Shih.)