

9C talking
head

9C: The Southern Song Academy

- Replace present beginning of Lecture 9C, make it TH, to 01:39: "Well, there are a great number of album leaves. . . " etc. Put on, for this, images of Album Leaves books, sometimes opened? You decide. This to 02:45: "OK, I'm putting on the screen now . . ." etc., as before.

This third part of Lecture 9 will be devoted to various works by artists of the Southern Song Academy. The works of these masters call for a somewhat different treatment than those of the literati artists who were the main subjects of the previous lecture. Literati artists assumed certain attitudes, value criteria, acquaintance w. previous ptg., in the viewers of their works; so their paintings require explanation, today, if one is to see their point--filling in, that is, something of what people of their time, in their circle, knew & felt, which we ordinarily *don't* know. Paintings by Academy masters, by contrast, mostly don't require any such explanation. Where one can put a few of literati artists' works on screen & talk endlessly about them (as I did), one could put on a series of the Academy ptr's works and say very little about them--the paintings can almost be left to speak for themselves. Max Loehr used to dream of an art history without words: one just puts images of the works of art on the screen and keeps silent. I'm not quite ready to do that, so I'll go on talking, however needlessly, for the next hour and a half or so.

9A
talking head

9A.TH Li Tang and His Followers

Now, as we move into a new age of LS ptg, we encounter another of the great Song masters of LS, Li Tang—and, fortunately, another from whom we have a major, signed work, which moreover is dated. We'll see several other paintings associated with him, and we'll see one with an old attribution to an earlier master which I myself re-attributed and published long ago as probably by Li Tang. We'll see several signed and reliable works by followers of his within the Academy, which allow us not only to construct an oeuvre for the artist himself, but also to chart out his following over perhaps two generations. This is all very new, and allows an art-historical neatness beyond what I could achieve in the earlier lectures. It's a neat enough pattern even to permit us to reject a famous and fine pair of paintings, one of them with a purported Li Tang signature, which used to be taken seriously by many scholars as works by Li Tang, but now can be clearly seen to be much later, dating to around the end of Song. I'll also begin showing photos of real landscapes beside the painted pictures for comparison, to show how the artists transformed what they saw in nature into artistic forms. All these pleasures and revelations—I hope they'll be that--await you in what follows, Lecture 9A.

LS.LectNotes.9B. The Southern Sung AcademyMisc. Subjects in So., Sung Academy Painting:

Works by So. Sung Academy masters call for somewhat dif. treatment than literati ptg who were main subjects of previous lecture; speak for themselves much more. Literati artists assumed certain attitudes, value criteria, acquaintance w. previous ptg, in viewers of their works; require explanation, today, if one is to see their point--filling in, that is, something of what people of time, in their circle, knew & felt, which we ordinarily don't. Academy ptrs works require no such explan. Where one can put a few of literati artists' works on screen & talk endlessly abt them (as I did), could put on series of Academy ptr's works and say very little--as I shall, mostly.

Great number of album leaves, fan ptgs and others, survive from ^{So.} Sung, most of them in Chinese and Japanese collections—they were easy to preserve, in albums, and popular among collectors. Could make whole series out of them—hundreds. My exhibition *Album Leaves from the Sung and Yuan Dynasties* (China Institute, New York, 1970) had 25 Sung leaves, of which only four will appear in these lectures. Also my *Chinese Album Leaves* (Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery, 1961) with some thirty leaves, only one in these lectures. And big volumes of full-size color reproductions of those in China pub. by Palace Museum, Beijing, Shanghai and Liaoning Museums. And large number in books pub. by National Palace Mus., Taipei.

- 9.24.1-2. Acad. ptg vs. Ch'iao Chung-ch'ang. Split from this time. Ptrs themselves, critics, conscious of it, in a consciousness that changes whole char of ptg. Super-realism, or "magic realism," as if continuing to assert the primacy of actual appearances of things, playing down style; vs. ^{indiv.} literati ptg that draws away from representational concept of ptg and techniques on which it was based; in theory and practice, favoring rougher brushwork, tendency twd abstract and calligraphic form, that are in principle expressive of the artist's inner life. Archaism: which removes picture from subject by dropping screen of style between. This split, embodying important differences, will persist for rest of Ch ptg history, since So. Sung Academy style, as a collective style, becomes basis for all conservative, representationally-directed ptg afterwards. And, strange as it may seem to us, most of that ptg, work of So Sung artists working w/in Academy or outside it in related styles, was downgraded, even scorned,

by Ch. critics of later centuries. Much of best of it survives in Japan. Ch collectors and critics collected and paid attn to works by name artists of that period, including some who worked in imperial academy, felt these were worth preserving. But not much else.

- 9.24.3. Three boys at North Sea Lodge, top of Huangshan. Talk abt tradition.

I spoke in previous lecture abt how certain positions have a built-in rhetorical advantage, w/o being in any real sense better—poetic ptg, spontaneous, “ptg the idea” vs. “ptg outward appearance,” etc.—all evoke positive responses. Traditional, academic, all off-putting words. BUT: as I hope you will agree after looking at what follows, ptgs that follow strong traditions w/in academy can be poetic, deeply moving, compelling—if you end up still feeling you’d rather see another scroll of misty hills by Mi Yu-jen, I will have failed. And you probably belong in that other lecture room down the hall. So, here we go.

Su Han-ch'en (active ca. 1120-1165).

- 9.25.1- *Children at Play in Garden* (attrib.) CAT 41.

- 9.26.1- Another, *Winter Play*, Possessing Pl. 81.

He was one of Acad. ptrs who moved to South w court, active in mid-12th cent. When Acad. moved to Hangchou, whole mood changed. Something gentler, more lyrical, romantic (dangerous word, but commonly used of So. Sung Acad. ptg., with enough truth that I’m using it.) His ptgs have immediate appeal that have made them popular everywhere.

Here, in one of two large hanging scrolls attrib. convincingly to him, a pair of children, little boy and older girl, playing in garden. One of qualities everyone feels in So. Sung Acad. ptg is security—as if scenes of Elysium, where nothing unpleasant ever occurred, no harsh winds blew, nature made for enjoyment of man. Ideal realms; garden scenes common. Some of this comes from taste and example of Huitsung; some from simple desire for peace & real security, which people living in So. Sung must have felt: they were in precarious situation, couldn’t survive long; didn’t.

Branch of flowering tree: have seen, or will see, quite similar flowering branches in ptgs by other Acad. artists. Does this indicate a lower level of artistic value? Etc. *Idea of individualism a latecomer to artistic traditions-*

9.27.1- Hundreds of album leaves survive of playing children, So Sung or that style; often playing games. Great thesis topic: identify the games.

~~First: fan ptg~~

- 9.27. . Detail from leaf in Boston MFA (colorplt. 799 in Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons*): lady w baby & servant in house, children playing outside, acting out drama? Detail only...

- Attrib. Mao Sung (court ptr under Hui-tsung).

- 9.28.1. *Monkey*. Siren 246.

Court ptr under Hui-tsung. One of finest animal ptgs surviving: famous ptg of monkey, attrib. to him. From being kept in Ch'an temple, where it had been preserved ^{for} centuries, has entered Tokyo Nat'l Museum. Album leaf; like so many So.Sung Academy-style ptgs, study of creature (often a plant), isolated, considered entirely for itself. Presented as quiet, patient animal, as if w. human qual. of meditation. Monkeys and gibbons were favorite subjects in China and Japan. (Story of Jap. Emperor in 1950s? being shown thru Tokyo Nat'l Mus., seeing this. . .)

Mao I (mid-12th cent. Son of Mao Sung--another family lineage w/in Acad.

- 9.29.1- *Cat and Kittens in Garden; Bitch and Puppies in Garden*. Skira 77 (cats.)

Perfect animal counterparts to Su Han-ch'en's children in garden--or countless ptgs of palace ladies in gardens from this period. Old attribution.

- Hollyhocks, detail. Combines extremely fine line with sensitively-applied color washes. Technical perfection of Hui=tsung Acad ptg carried on here. For sheer loveliness, refinement, accuracy of depiction, So. Sung flower ptgs hard to match anywhere in world. (Much more in following lecture)

- 9.30.1-2. Alb leaf in Freer Gallery, fan ptg, *Swallows in Willow Tree*.

Signed. Seems genuine to me, although in dif. manner--ink only, some use of slightly freer brushstrokes, espec. in rendering birds. Wonderful. Typical So.Sung composition (describe: as if diag. divided, most of matter of picture in lower segment, something active? occupying other segment. We saw beginnings of this in LS in works assoc. w. Li T'ang. Abbreviated styles of Liang K'ai and Ch'an masters grow out of such ptg--Another manifestation of consummate tech.--sure spontaneity of highly disciplined ptr., can relax hand w/o losing sure representational skills.

Li Ti (died after 1197).

Said in some books to have served in Hui-tsung Academy, but that was mistake, as I pointed out long ago ... Dtd ptgs in 1190s--impossible. Highly honored in So.Sung Academy- appointed Asst.Director, awarded

~~741~~
Golden Belt. Followed Li T'ang in special genre: LS w. water buffalo and herdboys. Pair of these in Yamato Bunkakan:

- 9.31.1- *Winter Landscapes with Figures & Buffalo*, Yamato Bunkakan.

Siren 253-4. Boy returning on back of buffalo on wintry day, pheasant on pole; farmer w. rabbit & buffalo, wintry trees. Alb leaves: popular form in this period, for obvious reasons. Comp: asymmetrical, dominated by diagonal, fig. more centrally located than in most, but still w/in So.Sung acad mode. Materials of picture reduced to those that contribute immediately to feeling, or mood, or idea, it conveys. Season, time of day, represented—as typically in So. Sung LS w figures. Like brief poems in this regard. (Don't mistake this comment to be ~~extension~~ of "Poems are soundless ptgs" etc.--one of those cliché formulations I dislike.) Not truly random selection of segment of world, or (as in No. Sung LS) diversity of elements composed into microcosm, w some implication of universality. Rather, simple setting that harmonizes w feeling of ^{human} subject. Human beings far more prominent than in LS we've seen earlier. (So another old cliché, about how humans play smaller role in Ch ptg than in European, sometimes true, sometimes false--also useless.)

Mood-pictures. So Sung ptrs less concerned w grandeur of nature, evoking awe, than w ~~poetic~~ evocative visions--something of more conscious intent. History of any art could be written in terms of increasing consciousness of artists of their means, what they are attempting, more deliberate pursuit of certain ends. Surely emphasis by late No. Sung critics & theorists on power of ptg to evoke emotion, mood, subtle responses, affected what ptrs did in practice. They do it w/o writing or (presum.) talking abt it—by nature of their positions. Shouldn't be undervalued because of that.

(Boys & Buffalo in Rainstorm, copy, CAT 40. Not showing.)

- 9.32.1- *Kitten*, signed, dtd. 1174. CAT 39.

BG darkened, warm fur stands out agst it. White on breast, paws, face.

- Another, sibling: Possessing, Pl. 77, 78. Pair. (But in dif. albums—I recognized them as pair, brought together.) Like monkey etc., others we've seen: feat of rendering fur in such detail, while keeping treatment of body, giving volume--this w/o any shading. Unassuming, unshowy technical feat, like so much So.Sung Academy masters do—like boys on Huangshan I showed at beginning, and the song they "made up". Ptgs that are much admired by cat lovers—have both appearance and inner life (so to speak) of kittens ever been better captured, anywhere?

endorsement
(content of picture)

(w/in Academy)

organic

- 9.33.1- Pink and White Hibiscus, pair of leaves, signed, dtd. 1197. Tokyo Nat'l Museum. Siren 245; cover of my old Crown book. Among loveliest of Ch flower ptgs--or anywhere, for that matter. Such things endlessly done later, but not w. this lightness of touch, absence of set forms, sense of direct observation. Portraits of flowers: not flower forms used for decoration. Subtle shadings of color: nothing bright; like Sung ceramics in this: taste for soft, subdued. Richness, yet understated. Grandeur of conception seen in earlier ptg gives way to refinement; aestheticism of Hui-tsung era, idealization, but somehow w/o coldness of things assoc. w. Hui-tsung. Flowers & birds not regarded w. quite such analytical clarity.

Details: seem to draw one's gaze, one's very consciousness, into depths of flower, among petals, to inhale fragrance, feel warmth.

- 9.34.1- In Beijing Palace Mus., big book of 100 Sung alb leaves, two others, signed, by him: Chicks, Dog (hound): latter dtd, again, to 1197. (etc.) Dog has double in Boston MFA—maybe this is that (unlabeled slide)

Li Sung Began life in Hangchou as carpenter, but was adopted by ptr in Acad., active there ca. 1190-1230. Famous for architectural ptg, but also did other kinds, as we'll see. Versatile, like all these ptrs.

- 9.35.1- *The Knick-knack Peddler*, dtd. 1210. Skira 53, CAT 50, Possessing Pl. 84.

Detail of signature, w. added 3 char.

- Handscroll of same subject, dtd 1211, Palace Museum, Beijing.

- 9.36.1. *The Red Cliff* (Nelson Gal., K.C.) Siren 313, 8 Dynasties 37.

- 9.37.1- *The Skeleton as Puppet-Master*. Fan-shaped album leaf. Palace Museum, Beijing. ((Show later pictures of boys + puppets. My beliefs abt ptgs that depict boys reaching for puppets: usually scholar-officials or military men, forecasting future? Is this a dark parody of those?

Premonition of fall of Hangzhou to Mongols, already imminent? Just a guess, but . . . Skeleton in China, as in memento mori pictures of medieval Europe, stands for death---

- 9.37a.1- *Dragon boat; Palace*. Two alb. leaves w. his signature, NPM, Taipei. Not by him: cut from Yuan-period handscroll, color & signature added? (Show why.)

- 9.37b.1- *The Hangchou Bore*. Fan-shaped album leaf, signed, insc. by Yang Mei-tzu: "Leave word not to lock the double doors;/The nightly tide is waiting to be viewed under the moon." CAT 51. Others, same subject.

- 9.38.1- *The West Lake at Hangzhou*, handscroll. Attributed. Possessing Fig. 67. (Put beside: photos of West Lake from hill above, etc.) If by him,

further example of his versatility. In any case, appears to be work of highly-trained profess. artist relaxing his hand, blurring forms somewhat to render them as seen through atmosphere in distance. Remarkable feat--I used this in first chapter of *Compelling Image* as example of visual approach, as opposed to intellectual, book-reader's approach to ptg.

Liu Sung-nien. Later in So. Sung, late 12th – early 13th cent., contemporary w. Ma Yuan and Hsia Kuei. Best known as figure ptr, rather conservative. Lots of ptgs attrib. to him, some reliably. Three signed ptgs of arhats in NPM, Taiwan; won't show.

- 9.35a.1- Large horizontal album leaf, attrib. to him, maybe by him: celestial maiden offering flowers to bodhisattva, some monks. Probably originally was picture of Vimalakirti's debate w. Manjusri, missing Vimalakirti now. (We saw version of this comp. attrib. to Li Kung-lin.) Note small "lion" (pussy-cat) under bodhisattva's chair.

- 9.35b.1- Inserting here, although not attrib. to Liu Sung-nien, could be by him: *Greeting the Emperor at Wang-hsien Village* (or, as Li Lin-ts'an believed, Han Kao-tsu taking his old father to his native village.) Shanghai Museum. Color frontispiece in my *Three Alternative Histories*.

- 9.39.1- Anon. 12th cent.? (Old attrib. to Ma Ho-chih). *Two Boats At Anchor By Moonlight*. Fan-shaped album leaf. Eight Dynasties 38; color detail, Lyric J colorplt. 1 (after p. 194.) Insc. above reads (but doesn't belong w. ptg): "Infinite space, a bright moon night, / Pale light, the early autumn sky." *Famous & distinguished Chinese scholar giving paper on words & images*
Any literate Chinese viewer will be reminded of Po Chû-i's poem *The Lute* *symposium*
Song, p'i-p'l hsing, in which ... Lots of other cases, in ptgs I'm showing, of responses that Ch viewers will have that I, as outsider, miss.

- 9.39.2- Fan-shaped album leaves: *Lady Standing in Doorway*; *Boating Past a Pavilion*. Palace Museum, Beijing. Lyric J. 1.40, 1.41.

- 9.40.1- Attrib. to Feng Ta-yu, So. Sung academy: *Lotuses and Waterfowl*. Possessing the Past 75, 75a, p. 169. Fan painting. Done to accompany (on reverse side of fan) calligraphy by Emperor Kao-tsung, a quatrain by Wang Wei:

"From the palace adjoining the T'ai-yeh pond, I gazed at azure waves,
Thoughts of autumn multiplied in the thin, pure summer air.
All night long an autumn breeze stirred in the duckweed,
Scattered everywhere, pearls of dew filled the lotuses."

Add!
T991

Case in which both ptg and poetic text, in this case a quatrain, that inspired it, preserved together. Were ^Vobverse + reverse of fan.

2 sides,

- 9.41.1- Various Sung album leaves by Academy masters.

- One in Boston MFA (14.63) formerly attrib. to Ma Yuan: *Confucius's Encounter with Hermit Jung Ch'i-chi*. 90-year-old musician/hermit; Confuc. Recognizes his "contented state expressed in music," asks abt source. Jung replies: Three worldly joys: to be human, to be a man, to enjoy longevity. He has all three.

(Or is this just an "Inviting the Hermit" picture, like Ming academy works?)

- Others, and details from others, mostly Boston MFA.

Readings:

- Cahill, "The Imperial Painting Academy," *Possessing* pp. 159-199.

- Cahill, The Lyric Journey, ch 1: "In Southern Sung Hangchow."

- Loehr Ch. 7, "Painters of Southern Sung."

- Wen C. Fong and James C. Y. Watt, eds. Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996. (*Possessing*). Read, compare/contrast with my treatment of same materials: Wen Fong, "Monumental Landscape Painting," pp. 121-137.

~~1, 2~~ ~~pm~~ ~~her~~ Add Change
- Sects 5, after Shihoh's, I mention Ken Ham: in cut A124.
- Section 2, after newly-added AB92: add
and Angle 1; Add here is an actual view down into a Chinese courtyard
house, to show that the the-designer has it right: the wall goes
horizontally across. with its side id try, the wall seen diagonally from above,
freshbroken, Visually True, in Seabuck's sense. And just the kind of
~~now~~