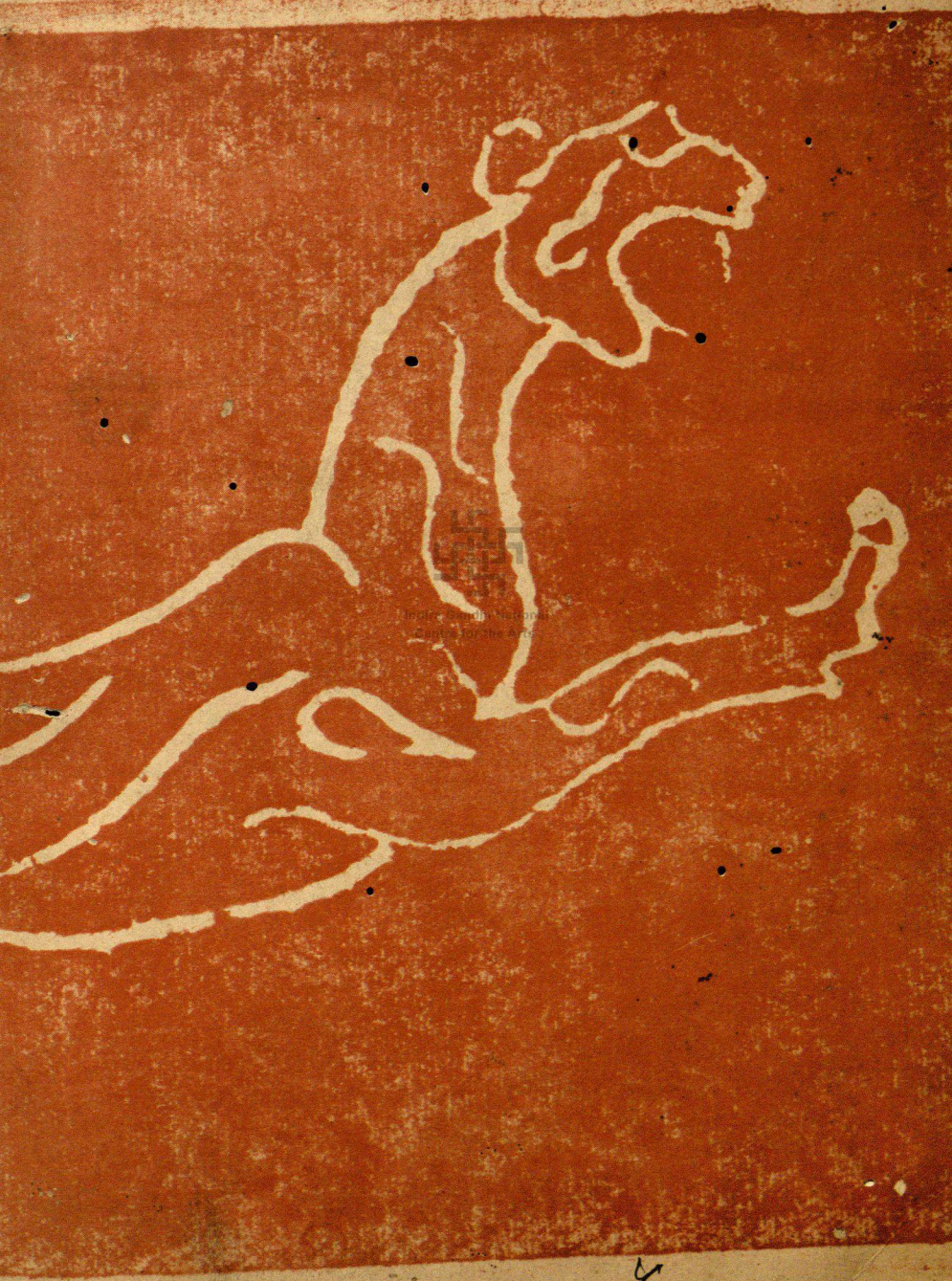
TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF CHINESE PAINTING

two thousand years of chinese painting



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INTRODUCTION

DESPITE the Western world's very great interest in it, Chinese painting may be said to be one of the least well known art forms in the world. The fragility of the material used is partly responsible for the rarity of old works, and misunderstanding accounts, to some extent, for our failure to recognize their true worth. The few fine examples to be seen in museums and collections are not enough to counterbalance the profusion of *chinoiseries* with which so many hurried travellers or undiscerning residents have been content. Even the best exhibitions, moreover, can display only a part of this enormous panorama, covering as it does a span of nearly two thousand years.

At the end of the last century, Japanese publishers made it possible for specialists to consult albums illustrated in colour. The same pictures were used in large numbers of Western studies, but there were too few of them and their quality sometimes left much to be desired. The reproductions mentioned in this catalogue are, so far as I am aware, the best that have been made; and the selection, though there are inevitable gaps, gives a reasonably good picture of the different periods in this great art.

For convenience of classification, these periods may be divided into three main groups: ancient painting, which may be associated with the great achievements of the Han dynasty, continuing until the seventh century A.D.; medieval painting, whose masterpieces were produced under the T'ang and Sung dynasties and which ran on into the fourteenth century; and modern painting, bearing the stamp of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. Contemporary painting, with all its traditional wash-tints or Western-style oils produced during the present century, forms a separate group with which we are not here concerned.

Whatever the dates of the works and the characteristics of each period, Chinese painting has its own very special material background and spiritual environment. On the material side, any Chinese painter has at his disposal the 'Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio' (wen fang sseu pao)—paper, brush, ink and ink-stone. Cotton or hempen cloth or, more often, silk may be used instead of paper. The material is rectangular in shape and mounted either

as a vertical hanging picture (kakemono) or as a horizontal scroll to be stretched out (makemono). In the latter case we find a continuous composition, developing as the work proceeds from right to left; the painting is intended to be viewed, not as a whole, but in sections, one leading on to another in a sort of cinematic composition. On the other hand, the kakemono, which is seen as a whole, gives us a complete picture and calls for a static composition; this, however, has also been influenced in some degree by the cinematic form, as many paintings must be 'read' vertically and from right to left. A bird's-eye view is thus combined with a panoramic view, where the figures have a different significance according to whether they appear on the left or the right. A house on the right and a traveller on the left may convey the pleasure of a host awaiting a guest; whereas if the composition were reversed, with the house on the left and the horseman on the right, it would better express the joy of the guest at last within sight of the end of his troubles. A poem, in fine calligraphy, may be added to explain the painter's intentions.

The brush, which was originally a calamus, is a bamboo twig, one end of which is fitted with a tuft of fine hairs; the thickest may be 5 cm in diameter and the finest 5 mm. When using it, the artist puts a little water into the ink-stone and rubs on it a stick made of a mixture of charcoal or lamp-black and gum. With measured, regular movements, he grinds his colours and sets his palette as required. The mixing of colours is not regarded with favour, but one coat may be laid over another to give greater variety of shades. There are strict rules regarding the handling of the brush. By classic usage, only the elbow and shoulder should move, the wrist being steady and the fingers merely imparting a slight rotary movement. The command of the brush thus suspended from the arm is obtained mainly by suppleness of muscle, which always gives better control than mere dexterity can do. According to the position of the brush and the pressure on the bristles, the stroke may be thin or thick, wavy, or sharp and precise. All scholars are thoroughly acquainted with the skills of brush work, which are needed for calligraphy and painting alike. This accounts for the fact that almost all Chinese painters are intellectuals and for the close association and interdependence of the two forms of art, which are often used together to interpret poetry.

As everywhere else, the ideals of the artists are bound up with their beliefs. The two basic religious outlooks of Confucianism and Taoism derive from the primitive Chinese conception of the world. This is founded upon a universal order uniting heaven, earth and man. Man is not the centre of the system, but a part of the whole. This philosophy of nature calls upon man to take his place in nature and enjoy it. Later Taoism and Buddhism were to lay stress on the equality of all creatures, charity, and love of everything which has a part in the universal soul. The quest for this cosmic harmony, this co-ordinating spirit, this rhythm of life dominates all Chinese painting.

Each era in Chinese painting—ancient, medieval and modern—has its own course of development, and successive stages which certain writers, to use

our customary terminology, regard as the budding, flowering and decline of an art. Others have even claimed to find in these divisions the counterparts of our primitives, classics and romantics. But in actual fact our classifications can hardly be applied to works which have come into being in an atmosphere so very different from our own. The development of an art itself is also affected by religious or political circumstances. Confucianism suggests the quest for a rational universal order under the guardianship of man; Taoism or Buddhism introduces the idea of a divine order, of which man is the subject servant or the calm and patient slave. The rivalry between nomadic and sedentary peoples is also often reflected in periodic preferences for full colour or light colour in art. Religious beliefs and political convictions, not overlooking direct foreign influences, from the Scythians to the Sassanids and from the Arabs to the Europeans, are all closely interlinked, and none of these factors can ever operate independently without reference to the others. In many cases all that can be said is that one of these interacting factors has a predominant influence.

We still know little about the beginnings of Chinese painting and can judge of them only from the writings dealing with them, such as those of Han Fei-cheu (third century B.C.) or Houai Nan-cheu (second century B.C.) or the *Historical Records of the Han Dynasty* (first and fifth centuries A.D.) From these sources we know that the emperors valued painters and entrusted them with the decoration of their palaces. These paintings took the form of edifying frescoes or laudatory portraits, but all have perished. We still have some means of judging them, however, as funerary tiles or incised stones have survived which are rightly considered to be reproductions of paintings. The subjects are often drawn from the life of the deceased, either his life on earth or the life it is hoped he will lead, depicting either the world he is leaving behind, still ringing with the sound of horses' hoofs and music or loud with farmyard noises, or the world to which he is going, the realms of the imagination filled with mythological characters and fantastic creatures. Tiles from Ho-nan, fragments of frescoes from the Manchu Kouang-tong give us some idea of the treatment and colouring characteristic of this period. The lines are pure and delicate and the colours very restrained, greens or browns, often set off with red. The same tradition can be seen in the painted pottery or Korean lacquers of the first century A.D.

The incised stones of the Ho-nan, Chan-tong or Sseu-ch'ouan give us even more useful information about the style of the period. The animals and figures are drawn from life; horses, ball-players, kings or sorcerers all appear in the most varied poses, majestic in procession or lost to their surroundings in the interest of a game of draughts. This may be realism but it is a stylized realism, using the arabesques of gesticulation to catch and hold the movement and life of a scene. In these early works we are given a bird's-eye picture and find the same panoramic views and the same division into tiers as in ancient Eastern art. The most distant parts of the scene come at the top and the backgrounds are on a larger scale than the foregrounds, which come slightly lower, giving

an effect which is the reverse of our receding perspective. Very successful rubbings can be made of these bas-reliefs, but this method calls for consummate art on the part of the expert concerned. The heaviness of the inking of the parts in relief may alter the balance of the composition, thus each rubbing has its own individual quality. These monochromes are highly interesting in themselves, as distinct from the bas-reliefs they reproduce.

Seeing these, we cannot help lamenting that no works by painters of the third and fourth centuries A.D. have survived; all we have are the names of a few masters—Ts'ao Pu-hing (222-277), Wei Hie and Siun Hiu (fourth century).

The scroll of Ku K'ai-chih (345-406?) is the only recognized survival of the art of the Three Kingdoms (third to fifth centuries). These *Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace* are a horizontal series of scenes illustrating a third-century poem by Chang Hua. The lines are delicate and reminiscent of those of the painted tiles, but the qualities of Han art seem here to have gained in refinement and, in the arrangement of the figures or the landscape, we can see clearer signs of a desire to use empty space as a counter-balance in the composition. In old writings, Ku K'ai-chih is credited with starting a reaction against the simple imitation of form. According to him, only the features representing the character of a subject should be included; he lays stress on the individual side of each thing. A picture should be a revelation of the soul through a harmonious composition of the subjects and, in the Taoist spirit, should show man clearly as the humble guest of nature.

At this period, we see the development of two distinct trends among artists. One school, led by Ku K'ai-chih, requires art to reveal the individuality of the subject; the other, led by Tsong Ping (375-443) and Wang Wei (415-443), is more concerned with the universality of characteristics and the unity of man and the Earth. In the sixth century, Hsieh Ho, reverting to the principles of the ancients, laid down the six canons which were to remain the basis of Chinese judgment and criticism. He lays emphasis on the need for capturing the rhythm of life (Ki yun) and for using only the essential lines, without flourishes, but with a proper regard to detail. He also recommends harmony of line and colour, and balance between the empty spaces and the occupied parts of the composition. Thus, on the eve of the T'ang dynasty, we see increasingly a quest for the spirit, the supremacy of nature over man, attention to resemblance of form and essence, and observance of an elementary form of perspective in which the most distant objects must be the smallest.

Five hundred years in the history of Chinese painting for which we have only a few fragments of a Korean tomb and one scroll! Fortunately, the sands of Central Asia have preserved for us Buddhist rock-temples whose walls are covered with paintings and there, even allowing for Western influences, we find a second body of evidence.

Between the second and the ninth centuries, sanctuaries were established in Serindia, carrying the story of the life of the Buddha from oasis to oasis, from

the borders of India to Japan—portraits of sages or monks and the splendours of paradise with its pavilions and terraces, processions, dancers and hosts of divinities thronging round a throne. These imaginative works of lofty inspiration showed the Chinese the possibilities of a religious art. Its spirituality blended harmoniously with respect for nature and love of the rhythm of life. Buddhist painters and Chinese artists shared a common faith in the universal.

Far from seeking to portray an individual soul as such, the Buddhist portraits were intended to show the beauty of a soul inspired; they thus offered scope for the dignity, nobility and grandeur of soul that the Chinese artists sought to give to their edifying and laudatory paintings.

Buddhism probably left its mark on portraiture by accentuating the effort after individual expression. In the works of Yen Li-pen we find, behind a well-balanced composition, a characterization of types which goes further than the facial expressions of Ku K'ai-chih. His work has the same delicacy as the portraits of monks and the same inspiration as that of the painters of the rock-temples of Qyzyl, Koutcha or Tun-huang.

In addition to this influence, some writers tend to attribute the development of Chinese landscape-painting to Buddhism and the West. Recent studies have shown that some of the features of this painting were already found in Han art and that the foreign influences merely developed the taste for landscape-painting, and its popularity, although this is not really a case of borrowing from the West.

As a result of the Buddhist influence, Siao Yi (506-554) had rejected the Confucian idea of the faithful imitation of nature. He was more interested in example than in truth, wishing to have before his eyes only such harmonies as might elevate or enlighten thought. The famous painter Wang Wei (699 to 759) took up the same idea. For this essentially literary-minded intellectual, intellectual concepts are always present and always predominate. He has no hesitation in correcting nature, for reason and man transcend it. In the ninth century, Chang Yen-yuan, in his famous work *Li tai ming houa ki*, takes a middle line between the meticulous imitation recommended by Hsieh Ho and the freedom of execution championed by Wang Wei.

Wang Wei sought to intellectualize painting, to bring out shades and half-tones, favouring a sober softness conducive to meditation. Owing to his interest in shades, he used colour less and concentrated on monochrome wash-tints. At the other end of the scale, Li Ssu-hsun (651-716) sought to preserve strength and purity of colour, and clear-cut vigour of line. These two styles were subsequently attributed to a southern school and a northern school, the first associated with the name of Wang Wei and the second with that of Li Ssu-hsun. This, however, should be regarded not as a geographical distinction but as a difference in outlook, which we might tentatively describe as idealistic and realistic respectively.

Thus, in the tenth century, on the eve of the Sung dynasty, the principle of the portrayal of what is essential takes precedence over the imitation of form,

and we see the beginning of a tradition in which the arts of execution and inspiration are honoured to the point of correcting nature, if need be. No liberties are barred, but the way is also already open to the academic style.

Sung painting, while establishing the earlier innovations, was to be mainly influenced by the Ch'an sect of Buddhism. This contemplative sect, founded in the sixth century and of Taoist inspiration, preached intuition and, at the period of which we are speaking, was at the height of its influence. The members of the Ch'an school, safe from hard-and-fast formulae, sunk themselves in contemplation of nature and sought to render the dominant feeling of a landscape in order to bring out the close union between man and nature. Nature again took the place of honour that Wang Wei had challenged.

Even in the time of the Five dynasties (tenth century) King Hao had substituted for the principle of imitation that of a directing thought reflecting the sublimation of a state of the soul. The importance that King Hao attributed to the essence of things made him the theorist of monochrome. About the same time, Li Ch'eng laid stress on the importance of successive planes and, above all, on the need for choosing dominants in the composition—a mountain governing the neighbouring ranges, a tree determining the arrangement of the others, a road towards which paths lead, etc., so that the necessary variety might not destroy the harmony of the whole.

Kuo Hi (eleventh century), in an essay on Chinese painting ('Lin ts'iuan Rao che'), written down by his son Jo-hiu, brings these discussions of aesthetics to a close. Once more he speaks of the spirituality of art, allows for imaginary scenes, and recommends eclecticism in technique. Every artist, in his view, should be fully master of the various types of technique and, after strict mental discipline, should be able to portray the spiritual essence of material things. Further developing Wang Wei's formulae, he personifies nature, comparing streams to the 'veins' of a mountain and the trees to its 'hair'; for him, the 'eye' of water gleams between the 'lashes' of the trees beneath the 'brows' of the terraces. Stones are the 'bones' of the earth and should remain hidden, while water, earth's 'blood', should flow. Finally, inspiration should be supplied by poems, for poetry is a disembodied picture, whereas painting is embodied poetry. It was he who first laid down the symbolism of colours, wind being represented by the yellow of clay and water by the colour of silk, blue in autumn and black in winter. Lastly, in his third chapter, he gave that list of themes from which all painters, down to our own day, have drawn the titles of their pictures. In his wisdom, he even recommends working in a heated room in winter and in a well-aired one in summer—a matter of some importance when we consider that, like the T'ang poet Tou Fou, he allowed five days for painting a river and ten for a rock, his method being to do a series of preparatory sketches in order the better to absorb that rhythm of life by which all Chinese artists are quite rightly haunted.

The representatives of the classic style at this point were Li Lung-mien (1040-1106), who preserved the tradition of even lines and exact drawing, and

the Emperor Hui-tsung (1082-1134). The latter, a great painter whose works are delicate in line and varied in colour, was also a great patron of the arts. He attracted many painters to his Academy of Painting and Calligraphy, instituting competitions and prizes; but in so doing, he helped to found an official style which was to dry up the well-springs of artistic inspiration.

A different type of art, distinct from genre-painting and portraiture, developed, concentrating on landscape-painting and the portrayal of a whole cosmogony. As early as the tenth century, Tong Yuan created wonderful landscapes in which everything is conducive to meditation, whereas those of Fan k'uan are imbued with a feeling for nature and intense emotion. Following this same line of development, the 'calligraphic' painter Mi Fei laid great stress on the balance of patches of colour with the skilful use of a delicate pointilliste technique. Ma Yuan (1190-1229) and his son Ma Lin concentrate on this balance to the point of breaking the continuity of forms, representing a mountain by its summit and shrouding it in mist or leaving it surrounded with empty space in an atmosphere of reverie. Hsia Kuei (1180-1250), following the same trend, was to simplify still further and make greater use of contrasts, with a greater tragic sense.

Isolated painters such as Liang K'ai or Mou-k'i were so far removed from the classical tradition that they were to have more true admirers in Japan than in China, and yet the portrait of Li T'ai-po is possibly the greatest masterpiece of Chinese painting.

In the thirteenth century, Chinese painting seems to have specialized in the wash-tint, a very distinctive form which rather overshadowed the development of the other types of painting, although these remained extremely active and provided a rich source of inspiration for later centuries.

Equal in importance with the Five dynasties, which paved the way for the success of the classical Sung landscape-painters, the Yuan dynasty founded a tradition of scholar painters (Wen Jen) which was to be followed by all adepts in modern art from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. The taste of the nomadic Mongol conquerors was to resuscitate the forceful and colourful style which had given way to the delicate shades of Sung art. Courtly subjects were fashionable and Chao Meng-fu and Jen Jen Fa delighted to paint that bearer of the power of the new masters, the horse.

Great numbers of artists fleeing from occupied territory took refuge in the south and sought escape in nature, being imbued with a feeling for their native soil more pronounced than that characterizing their predecessors. The observation of nature gave a new colouring to genre-painting; painters like Ch'ien Hsuan (1235-1290) saw in a flower or an insect a part of the whole. The landscape-painters portrayed the diversity of the provinces, the charm and beauty of their invaded land. In the fourteenth century, Wu-chen (1280-1354) gave dignity to his subjects by treating them not as decorative compositions but as landscape details, like his bamboos. Wang Meng and Huang Kung-wang went back to the tradition of the Sung and Five dynasties landscape-painters,

while Ni-tsan (1301-1374) and his luminous works, with their soft colours, was to provide a model for the greatest masters of the following centuries.

The great failing of Ming painting was that it sought to go back to the inspiration of the ancients. But in doing this and in establishing classification, standards and rules, it brought into being a pictorial idiom. Thenceforward the elements of that idiom could be combined in an infinite variety of ways, like musical themes. In contrast to the antiquated 'chamber music' of Yuan and Sung painting, the Ming artists were to produce variations on familiar themes with a wealth of orchestration. The overloading and complexity of the later compositions are probably to be regarded in this light. The great works thus lose their emotional content but come nearer to pure art.

Portraiture again grew in importance and many works (often funeral paintings) were produced, portraying monks, relatives, lords or princesses in their state robes. Some of these portraits show an engaging individuality but more of them reproduce a lifeless image of the dead.

The landscape-painters continued the work of the Sung and Yuan artists. Many scholars, forming groups of well-informed amateurs, took an interest in painting. The Wou school at Soochow brought glory to this 'learned man's' painting (Wen Jen Houa) which, before the academic style set in the eighteenth century, produced the fine works of Shen Chou (1427-1507), Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1559), Kieou-ying or T'ang Ying (1470-1525). Tung Ch'i Ch'ang, the spokesman of this group, was particularly instrumental in spreading the ideas of the Wen Jen Houa, perhaps to the detriment of another group, the Tcho school of Tchokiang, in which Bohemians and professional artists competed in an attempt to repeat the great Sung masterpieces.

Despite the efforts of isolated artists, Chinese painting suffered more and more from the rigidity of an academic tradition. The theorists spent their time praising the merits and methods of the older painters. Here, as everywhere else, the love of learning was to stifle the spontaneity of art, and the critics were already the masters of the creative artists. The treatise on painting known as the *Mustard Seed Garden* (*Kiai tseu yuan houa tchouan*), published from 1678 to 1829 and translated into French by R. Petrucci, is an example of these academic collections of formulae. It is, in fact, a richly illustrated encyclopaedia giving examples of all the different ways of painting an enormous variety of subjects—rivers, mountains, trees, bamboos, plum trees, etc.

The Ch'ing dynasty, which was of foreign origin, was to do something to break the sway of tradition to which the Ming painters had subscribed, and artists probably became more eclectic. But the inventory of orthodox Chinese works of the intellect, as understood by the Manchu Kien-long, helped by its sectarianism to sterilize the great well-springs of free art. The four Wangs, Wang Shih-min (1592-1680), Wang Chien (1598-1677), Wang Hui (1652-1717) and Wang Yuan-ch'i (1632-1677), continued the work of the 'learned men' and rediscovered the poetry of the great masters. But I am more attracted to those who, rebelling against the alien yoke, retired to monasteries to paint original

pictures linking up with the tradition of the Five dynasties, such as Shih-t'ao (1630-1707) and Chu Ta, eccentrics who did honour to creative art.

Many publications, in an excess of erudition, have discredited Ming and Ching painting by their exaggerated praise of the Sung and Yuan landscape-painters. The disfavour into which the later artists have thus fallen is certainly not deserved; but, while it is now time to do these masters justice, it would be quite as wrong, on the pretext that we can be surer of their authenticity, to follow commercial fashions which are not always in line with the realities of art.

Lastly, we can hardly omit to mention that, in a vast empire like that of China, the cultured elite of scholarship suffered such ostracism in its own country that it is now difficult for historians to form a fair judgment. It will take centuries to show us the true geniuses who were crushed by the Mongols or the great artists who were banished by the Manchus. May this exhibition give us cause to think about a heritage which well merits preservation, and which Unesco has taken into its keeping.

VADIME ELISSEEFF
Curator of the Musée Cernuschi, Paris.

CATALOGUE

Table of the Chinese Dynasties

Hsia	(?)1989 B.C.-(?)1523 B.C.	Sui	581-618
Shang	(?)1523-1028 B.C.	T'ang	618-907
Chou	1027-256 B.C.	Five dynasties	907-959
Ch'in	221-207 B.C.	Liao (South)	907-1125
Han	206 B.C.-A.D. 220	Sung (North)	960-1127
Three Kingdoms	220-265	Sung (South)	1127-1276
Chin	265-420	Yuan	1276-1368
Period of division between North and South	317-589	Ming	1368-1644
		Ch'ing	1644-1912
		Republic	1912

1. KU K'AI-CHIH (334-406)
Ch'in dynasty

The admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace (first section of the scroll: *The Lady Fong saves the Emperor Yuan*).

2. KU K'AI-CHIH (334-406)
Ch'in dynasty

The admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace (ninth section of the scroll: *The Instructress in the Palace*).

3. WU TAO TZU (680-760)
T'ang dynasty

The Snake and the Tortoise.

4. YEN LI PEN (died in 673)
T'ang dynasty

Philosophers collating classical texts (part I).

4 (a). YEN LI PEN (died in 673)
T'ang dynasty

Philosophers collating classical texts (part II).

5. YEN LI PEN (died in 673)
T'ang dynasty
Portrait of the Emperor.

6. HAN KAN (720-780)
T'ang dynasty
White horse.

7. UNKNOWN MASTER
Five dynasties
Stags in the forest.

8. MURAL FROM QYZYL
T'ang dynasty
Tales from the earlier life of the Buddha.

9. MURAL FROM KOUTCHA
T'ang dynasty
Sun God in his chariot (detail).

10. PAINTING FROM TUN-HUANG
T'ang dynasty
Avalokitsevara showing the way.

11. PAINTING FROM TUN-HUANG
T'ang dynasty
Flying genie.

12. LI LUNG MIEN (1040-1106)
Sung dynasty (North)
Horse with groom (detail from the scroll: *The Five Horses*).

13. FAN K'UAN (active about 990-1030)
Sung dynasty (North)
Snow landscape.

14. TUNG YUAN (active about 1000)
Sung dynasty (North)
Bright day in the valley (part I).

14 (a). TUNG YUAN (active about 1000)
Sung dynasty (North)
Bright day in the valley (part II).

14 (b). TUNG YUAN (active about 1000)
Sung dynasty (North)
Bright day in the valley (part III).

15. MA YUAN (active from 1190 to 1224)
Sung dynasty (South)
Boating by moonlight.

16. MA YUAN (active from 1190 to 1224)
Sung dynasty (South)
Landscape with willows.

17. HSA KUEI (active about 1180-1230)
Sung dynasty (South)
Boat returning in the rain.

18. Hsa Kuei (active about 1180-1230)
Sung dynasty (South)
Boats in the twilight (detail from a scroll) (part I).

18 (a). Hsa Kuei (active about 1180-1230)
Sung dynasty (South)
Landscape with a river bank (detail from a scroll) (part II).

19. Ma Lin
Sung dynasty (South)
Two birds.

20. Ma Lin
Sung dynasty (South)
Lakeshore in autumn.

21. Li Tang (active about 1100-1130)
Sung dynasty (South)
Returning from a feast.

22. Unknown Master
Sung dynasty
Bird on a branch.

23. Emperor Hui Tsung (1082-1134)
Sung dynasty (South)
The five-coloured parakeet.

24. Chao Mong-kien (active about 1265)
Sung dynasty (South)
Narcissi.

25. Liang K'ai (active about 1200)
Sung dynasty (South)
The poet Li T'ai-po.

26. Jen Jen Fa (active about 13th century)
Yuan dynasty
Horses feeding.

27. Unknown Master (active about 13th century)
Yuan dynasty
Lakeshore in winter.

28. Wu Chen (1280-1354)
Yuan dynasty
Bamboos.

29. Madame Kouan (active about 1300)
Yuan dynasty
Bamboos with calligraphy by Tung K'i-chang.

30. Chang Wu (active about 1400)
Yuan dynasty
Two women beside the sea (detail from the scroll: *The Nine Songs of Kiu Yuan*).

31. Fang Ch'ong-yi (active about 14th century)
Yuan dynasty
Misty landscape.

32. Ch'ien Hsuan (1235-(?)1290) — *Pear blossom.*
Yuan dynasty

33. Unknown Master — *Family portrait.*
Ming dynasty

34. Chou Tuan (active about 15th century) — *The cliff.*
Ming dynasty

35. Unknown Master — *Portrait of a monk*
Ming dynasty

36. Chen Hong Chou (1599-1652) — *Poetess.*
Ming dynasty

37. Houa Yen (1684-1764) — *Jackdaws.*
Ch'ing dynasty

38. She Tao (1630-1707) — *Lonely walk.*
Ch'ing dynasty

39. She Tao (1630-1707) — *Pavilion beneath the trees.*
Ch'ing dynasty

40. Wang Hui (1632-1717) — *Autumn landscape.*
Ch'ing dynasty

41. Rubbing — *Personage.*
Han dynasty

42. Rubbing — *Two horses.*

43. Rubbing — *Rain.*

44. Rubbing — *Dance and music.*

45. Rubbing — *Actors on a stage*
Han dynasty

46. Rubbing — *The dance.*
Han dynasty

47. Rubbing — *Portrait.*
Han dynasty

48. Rubbing — *Stag.*
Han dynasty

49. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Tiger.

50. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Eagle.

51. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Leopard.

52. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Birds.

53. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Ball player (detail).

54. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Juggler.

55. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Women and children.

56. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Domestic scene.

57. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Horseman between two towers.

58. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Horse.

59. RUBBING

Procession of chariots.

60. RUBBING
Han dynasty

Man standing.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. KU K'AI-CHIH. *The admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace* (first section of the scroll: *The Lady Fong saves the Emperor Yuan*). This scroll, at present in the British Museum, is one of the most important examples of early Chinese painting. The seals it bears and, other evidence, prove that it dates back to the Sung period and possibly even to the middle of the T'ang period. About 11 ft. 3 in. long, it represents a series of illustrations to a text by Chang Houa (*c.* 300), arranged in nine sections, recounting nine episodes to illustrate the various admonitions of the Instructress to the ladies of the court. The first section is reproduced here.

The original has suffered considerably from the ravages of time, but has been very ingeniously restored (there is much patching, especially along the lower edge). Painted on silk of a yellowish brown shade, it is marked by its assurance and elegance of line and restraint in colouring; a few touches of vermilion on the borders of certain garments and the dark black notes of the women's hair already show experience of colour harmonies.

This first section shows the extremely animated scene in which a lady of the court halts a dangerous bear in front of the Emperor.

2. KU K'AI-CHIH. *The admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace* (ninth section of the scroll: *The Instructress in the Palace*). This last section represents a lady of the court writing on a tablet which she is holding; in front of her, two others are engaged in conversation. This is the end of the painted portion of the scroll; the artist's signature can be seen at the extreme left.

3. WU TAO TZU. *The Snake and the Tortoise.* Coloured rubbing at present in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. None of the original works of Wu Tao Tzu has come down to us, and the only memorials of an art which was so highly prized by the old Chinese art critics are a few rubbings of carved reproductions of his works. The original of this is an incised stone which is still in existence at Ch'eng Tu, in the province of Szechwan. This group of the snake and the tortoise is the device of the 'black warrior', i.e. the symbol of the north. Four Chinese characters on the right-hand side must once have meant 'painted by Wu Tao Tzu'.

4-4(a). YEN LI PEN. *Philosophers collating classical texts.* A 45 in. scroll at present in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Since Sung times, this picture has always been attributed by Chinese critics to Yen Li Pen or his school. It bears an emblem devised by Fan Ch'eng Ta (1126-1193) meaning: 'This picture is painted in the manner

of Yen Li Pen.' Huang T'ing Kieng gives us a full description of it in his *Register of Painting*. Four other inscriptions of the Sung period deal with the same subject.

5. YEN LI PEN. *Portrait of the Emperor.* One of the most important paintings of Yen Li Pen which has come down to us. The section of the scroll reproduced here shows the 13 Emperors, chosen from among the many sovereigns who reigned over one part of China, from Chan Wen Ti of the Western Han dynasty (179-157 B.C.) to Yan Ti of the Sui dynasty (605-617). The detail here reproduced is the portrait of Ch'en Wen Ti, the most distinguished ruler of his dynasty. He is seated on a dais with two ladies-in-waiting standing behind him. The painter first makes his drawing and then seeks to render the modelling of the faces by the use of pale reds, and to give body to the costumes by the application of various delicate colours. He uses his main colours—black, white, red, green, yellow, brown and violet—in a great variety of tints.

6. HAN KAN. *White horse.* A small picture which once belonged to the brother of the last Ch'ing emperor and which is at present in Sir Percival David's collection in London. It shows one of the most famous horses of the Emperor Ming Huang, the white horse (Chao Ye Po). It is a very old painting which has been considerably retouched. There are many inscriptions bearing witness to its artistic merit, especially that of Li Hiu Chou (937-978) of the southern T'angs. The seals of Chang Yen Yuan, the great art critic of the middle of the ninth century, and those of Mi Fei, a famous painter and great expert on ancient art, can also be seen.

7. UNKNOWN MASTER. *Stags in the forest.* Detail from a large picture once kept in the Chinese National Museum at Pekin. This decorative composition reveals an interest in colour which was later to exercise a great influence on Indian and Persian painting.

8. MURAL FROM QYZYL. *Tales from the earlier life of the Buddha.* An invaluable piece of evidence about Chinese painting of the T'ang period. T'ang painting is extremely important because it represents the combination of Chinese traditions proper with the influences of India. At that period, the Emperor T'ai Tsung and the Emperor Hiuan-Tsung conquered part of Central Asia and imposed a Chinese protectorate over the oases on the caravan routes in the Tarim basin. In several of these Central Asian oases, there are remnants of Buddhist rock-temples; one of them is the rock-temple of Qyzyl, to the west of Koutcha, which has famous mural paintings. These are often described as frescoes and show a continuous local tradition from the fifth to the eighth century, proving that, in this remote corner of the Gobi desert, there was once a real Koutchan civilization of surprising richness and unexpected refinement. This fragment of mural painting, brought back by the archaeologist von Le Coq, is at present in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin.

9. MURAL FROM KOUTCHA. *Sun God in his chariot.* The kingdom of Koutcha was subjugated by the Emperor T'ai Tsung in 647-648 and, in 658, Koutcha became the seat of the Chinese government of the Tarim basin. This fragment of mural painting, also brought back by von Le Coq and at present in Berlin, is interesting evidence of the diversity of influences to be seen in Chinese border art at that time. There are signs of Indo-Persian influence (Sassano Gupta) besides the Indian influence proper.

10. PAINTING FROM TUN-HUANG. *Avalokitsevara showing the way.* Another group of extremely important ancient Chinese paintings was preserved in the rock-temples of Tun-huang. The Buddhist banner reproduced is from the Aurel Stein collection in the British Museum.

11. PAINTING FROM TUN-HUANG. *Flying genie.* Painting on cloth discovered in the rock-temples of Tun-huang and brought back by the French scholar Paul Pelliot. At present in the Musée Guimet, Paris. All these paintings on cloth are the work of anonymous painters. An extremely interesting feature of these works is that they show the combined influences of Indian art and the various arts of Central Asia.

12. LI LUNG MIEN. *Horse with groom.* Detail from a very important scroll known as the Wu Ma T'ou (scroll of the five horses). It portrays five magnificent horses, with their grooms, sent as tribute to the Emperor of China from the Khotan and other north-western centres. The inscriptions indicate that they were painted in 1086 and 1087, when the artist was nearly fifty years old. The technique is already very assured. This picture was once in the Manchu imperial collection.

13. FAN K'UAN. *Snow landscape.* A leaf from an album painted on silk, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, bearing the seal of the Emperor Ning Tsong of the Yuan dynasty. This small picture has a force and concentration which are most unusual in works of this size. The masterly drawing is combined with a very delicate appreciation of the misty winter atmosphere.

14. TUNG YUAN. *Bright day in the valley.* An important scroll, 5 ft. long, at present in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In the lower right-hand corner, it is just possible to decipher a signature which must have been the mark of Tung Yuan. There are several inscriptions with the painting, including those by Tong K'i Chang, a great connoisseur of the Ming period, and Tuan Fang, the great collector of the Manchu dynasty.

15. MA YUAN. *Boating by moonlight.* A big picture, which is at present in the British Museum and was for a long time an item of the famous Eumorfopoulos collection.

16. MA YUAN. *Landscape with willows.* A leaf from an album, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The picture bears three later seals and represents the half-light of an early spring morning, still absolutely silent although the morning breeze is already caressing the tops of the willows. All the poetry of Sung landscape painting is concentrated in this small, nearly monochrome picture.

17. HSIA KUEI. *Boat returning in the rain.* A fan-shaped album leaf now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It bears the seals of several different collectors.

18. HSIA KUEI. *Boats in the twilight* and *Landscape with a river bank.* Detail from a scroll in four sections, now in the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City. This scroll was displayed in London in 1935 during the great exhibition of Chinese art. It shows the typical features of the art of the great Sung landscape painter.

19. MA LIN. *Two birds.* Album leaf in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Ma Lin specialized in bird painting. Note the great freedom and evocative power with which the artists of this period painted small pictures.

20. MA LIN. *Lakeshore in autumn.* Album leaf in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In this small picture, which is distinguished by great feeling, the sense of space is conveyed with striking success.

21. LI TANG. *Returning from a feast.* Album leaf in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It bears a label reading 'Drunkard returning from the spring festival in the village', and two collectors' seals. It is somewhat stained with damp. This is an excellent small picture showing all the delicacy, firmness and expressive power of Sung art.

22. UNKNOWN MASTER. *Bird on a branch.* Album leaf from the collection of the Viceroy Tuan Fang, a great connoisseur of the Kwang Hsu period (1875-1909), acquired by the Eumorfopoulos collection and now in the British Museum. The tonality of this small picture, with its reds, muted blues in the bird's plumage, and jewel-like greens, is as discreet and delicate as the composition itself.

23. EMPEROR HUI TSUNG. *The five-coloured parakeet.* An important picture from the collection of Chinese paintings in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The whole painting is 4 ft. wide, the right-hand side being occupied by extremely elegant calligraphy. The colouring of the flowers and the parakeet is very delicate and subtle.

24. CHAO MONG-KIEN. *Narcissi.* This important picture depicts the wild narcissus called, by the Chinese, 'water nymphs' flower'. It is done in delicate ink with a fine brush on grey paper and shows a very penetrating knowledge of the character of the flowers. It is possibly one of the best pictures in the Freer Gallery in Washington.

25. LIANG K'AI. *The poet Li T'ai-po.* This masterpiece of purity is representative of the painting of the Ch'an period, Liang K'ai being one of the greatest artists of this school. The painter makes no effort at a set background but concentrates on conjuring up an inner atmosphere.

26. JEN JEN FA. *Horses feeding.* One of the best paintings in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. It was once in the Eumorfopoulos collection. Very few paintings by Jen Jen Fa have come down to us.

27. UNKNOWN MASTER. *Lakeshore in winter.* The original of this picture is 4 ½ ft. high by 3 ¼ ft. wide. Though anonymous, it shows the Yuan style. This picture, which was in the Oppenheim collection, is now in the British Museum, London.

28. WU CHEN. *Bamboos.* Picture in Chinese ink on paper. The sobriety of line and elegance of the composition make it one of the gems of the Chinese Government's collection. It was shown in London in 1953 at the exhibition of Chinese art.

29. MADAME KOUAN. *Bamboos with calligraphy by Tung K'i-chang.* Painting in Chinese ink on paper, with inscriptions by Tung K'i-chang. Madame Kouan was the wife of the great painter Chao Meng-fu and painted monochromes of orchids and bamboos exclusively. The compositions are generally very delicate, single stems with their sparse leaves, interpreted with a rare grace. Madame Kouan was also the author of an essay on painting bamboos.

30. CHANG WU. *Two women beside the sea.* Detail from a large scroll illustrating the poems of Kiu Yuan. The calligraphic note of this picture is very marked; this is the most characteristic feature of Yuan painting.

31. FANG CH'ONG-YI. *Misty landscape.* Work by a Taoist painter who specialized in misty mountain landscapes. This small picture, which once belonged to the Manchu imperial house, is a masterpiece. Here again can be seen the influence of calligraphy on Chinese painting of the Yuan period.

32. CH'IEN HSUAN. *Pear blossom.* Several very important works by this painter have been noted in various museums of Chinese art. This one, which is in Sir Percival David's collection in London, has never been reproduced before. The delicacy of colouring and sureness of line, as well as the exactitude of form, show, at its best, the talent of a great master who has often been imitated in China.

33. UNKNOWN MASTER. *Family portrait.* An example of a special type of Chinese painting. This is a real family portrait designed to preserve the memory of ancestors. The artists painting these portraits, who are always anonymous, have great assurance of technique and excel in rendering likenesses. This picture is a masterpiece of its type.

34. CHOU TUAN. *The cliff.* One of the best pictures in the important collection of Ming paintings in the National Museum, Stockholm. This is a big composition in which the artist sought to give a complete portrayal of the smiling country of the south.

35. UNKNOWN MASTER. *Portrait of a monk.* This small picture, now in the Musée Guimet, Paris, is a masterpiece of its kind. It was for a long time in the Rivière collection and was shown on several occasions in various exhibitions of Asian art in Europe. The picture must originally have been a full-length portrait of the monk. The portion which has been preserved and reproduced here is a real portrait of the spirit, of unusual penetration.

36. CHEN HONG CHOU. *Poetess.* This picture is from a great Chinese collection. There are only a few surviving works by this painter and they are very highly valued in China. No other painting by this master, of comparable importance, is to be found in European or American museums. The portrait of the poetess, with its graceful drawing and touches of discreet and lovely colour, perfectly reflects the genius and originality of this painter.

37. HOUA YEN. *Jackdaws.* An important picture from the Chang Chun collection, one of the largest contemporary private collections in China. This picture is a rare example of the free, non-academic art of the Ch'ing period, which has had a great influence on modern Chinese painting.

38. SHE TAO. *Lonely walk.* This small picture from a very well-known private Chinese collection is a masterpiece of its type. The artist has painted his own house. Although in monochrome, this picture has all the values which could not be rendered even by colour.

39. SHE TAO. *Pavilion beneath the trees.* This strongly constructed landscape is one of the best pictures in the important collection of Ming and Ch'ing paintings in the Musée Guimet, Paris.

40. WANG HUI. *Autumn landscape.* Now in the Musée Guimet, this picture by a great master of the Ch'ing period is a delight to the eye. In the composition and in the choice of its fine colours, the artist has combined great freedom with a real sense of space and an expression of idealism.

41. *Personage.* A stone of the Han period discovered at Tong-Ngan-Han Li, near Kiu Fou, Shantung.

42. *Two horses.* Carved ornament from the funerary stele of the mother of K'ai, Teng fong hien, Ho-Nan.

43. *Rain.* Carved stone from the stele of Kouo T'ai in the Wen Miao of Tsi Ning.

44. *Dance and music.* Carved stone from the stele of Kouo T'ai in the Wen Miao of Tsi Ning.

45. *Actors on a stage.* Stone of the Han period discovered at Teng-hien.

46. *The dance.* Stone of the Han period discovered at Tong-Ngan-Han Li near Kiu Fou, Shantung.

47. *Portrait.* Stone of the Han period discovered in a wall of the Kouan-ti temple in the village of Pai Yang Chou, Tseou hien.

48. *Stag.* Carved stone from the tomb of the Lady Li (Han period), Pong lai hien, Shantung.

49. *Tiger.* Carved stone of the Han period discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century at King T'souen, in the province of Li Yang.

50. *Eagle.* Carved stone of the Han period discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century at King T'souen, in the province of Li Yang.

51. *Leopard.* Carved stone of the Han period discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century at King T'souen, in the province of Li Yang.

52. *Birds.* Carved ornament from the stele of the mother of K'ai (Han period) Teng fong hien, Ho-Nan.

53. *Ball player.* Carved ornament from the stele of the mother of K'ai (Han period) Teng fong hien, Ho-Nan.

54. *Juggler.* Stone of the Han period discovered at Kouan Ti Miao, Souci Kia Tchouang, now in the library of Tsi Nan.

55. *Women and children.* Carved stone of the Han period discovered at Leang Tcheng Chan, Tsi-Nin, Shantung.

56. *Domestic scene.* Stone of the Han period discovered at Kao Miao, a village in Kia-Sian, Shantung.

57. *Horseman between two towers.* Funerary relief of the Han period discovered at Sin-Tsin in 1920, now in the Provincial Museum of Szechwan, Ch'eng Tu.

58. *Horse.* Relief of the Han period. Provincial Museum of Szechwan, Ch'eng Tu.

59. *Procession of chariots.* Provincial Museum of Szechwan, Ch'eng Tu.

60. *Man standing.* Carved stone of the Han period discovered at Kouan Miao, now in the Archaeological Museum of Lin Yi.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

1-2. KU K'AI-CHIH (334-406). Ku K'ai-chih was born at Wou Si, in the province of Kiang Sou. He was renowned not only as a great painter but as a man of outstanding intellect. In his view, the principal purpose of painting was to portray the soul of things. Although almost all the paintings of this period have perished, several pictures attributed to Ku K'ai-chih have survived until the present day, including the wonderful scroll entitled *The admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace*, in the British Museum.

3. WU TAO TZU (680-760). One of the greatest painters of the T'ang period. In ancient Chinese writings, he is spoken of as the fore-runner of the southern school. His versatile genius enabled him to engage successfully in every form of painting. The frescoes he painted in the famous temples attracted pilgrims and admirers from every corner of the Empire, but none of the works of this painter has come down to us. All we have are a few rubbings of carved stones depicting his paintings. *The Snake and the Tortoise* shows us a true master of line and composition.

4-5. YEN LI PEN (died in 673). Yen Li Pen was one of the most famous of the Yen family of painters. His father, Yen Pi, was already well known under the Sui, and Yen Li Pen and his brother, Yen Li To, were given lessons by their father from a very early age. Yen Li Pen was highly renowned at the time of the Emperor Tai Tsung (627-649) as a painter specializing in portraits of great historical or contemporary figures.

6. HAN KAN (720-780), painter of horses. Of humble birth, he soon attracted the notice of the great poet of the time, Wang Wei, who helped him to continue his studies of painting. He was summoned to court between 742 and 756 to be the official painter of the Palace horses. The Emperor, struck by his highly individual style, which was very different from the official style of the time, asked him who had been his teachers, and Han Kan replied: 'If I had to have teachers, they would be the horses in Your Majesty's stables.'

12. LI LUNG MIEN (1040-1106). Born in the province of Ngan Hui, Li Lung Mien is known as a painter who had a great mastery of line. His works, most of which are drawings, touched with colour, are extremely elegant.

13. FAN K'UAN (active about 990-1030) was one of the masters of the southern school of Chinese painting. The art of this school was distinguished from that of the northern school by its evocative and lyrical note. The landscapes of Fan K'uan are excellent. This painter's art is marked by intensity and intimacy of feeling, and yet is naturalistic.

14. TUNG YUAN (active about 1000). Tung Yuan was the leader of the southern school. He worked particularly in the provinces of Kiang Nan, south of the Blue River. His painted scrolls are of great merit; as they are unrolled, a new picture comes into view before the previous one has entirely disappeared; in this form, painting becomes an art extending through time while still remaining an art of space.

15-16. MA YUAN (active about 1190-1224). Ma Yuan was appointed an official painter of the academy under the Emperor Kuang Tsung (1190-1194) and received the golden girdle during the reign of Hing Tsung. Descended from a family of great painters, he was the great-grandson of Ma Fen. His brother, Ma Kui, was also a very good painter, as was his son Ma Lin who, while carrying on the artistic tradition, constantly gave it fresh life by introducing innovations. His contemporaries praised the massive strength of his rocks, the vigour of his trees, and the extraordinary effect of his early morning mists.

17-18. HSIA KUEI (active about 1180-1230). Hsia Kuei was a contemporary of Ma Yuan but his technique is more individual. The Chinese critics credit him with the invention of the 'tight brush' style, referring to his short, straight strokes spreading out at the ends. His style was introduced into Japan by the Japanese painter Sesshu (1420-1506). The best examples of Hsia Kuei's work are now in Japanese private collections.

19-20. MA LIN, the son of Ma Yuan, was also a leading member of the academy. His pictures, especially the small ones, are distinguished by a very acute feeling for nature.

21. LI TANG (active about 1100-1130). Li Tang specialized in village scenes. More realistic in manner than the other painters of his time, he caught 'snap-shot' scenes of daily life with great delicacy of expression.

23. The Emperor HUI TSUNG (1082-1134) was not only a great patron of the arts but a first-class painter himself. His works, which are distinguished by their well-balanced classicism, always bear the stamp of imperial nobility. He was also a great calligrapher who had an immense influence on the later period.

24. CHAO MONG-KIEN (active about 1265) was one of the great flower painters. He made a speciality of narcissi and was able to portray the very soul of these graceful and dignified flowers. He was related to the imperial family and at the beginning of his career divided his time between his official duties and poetry. Only towards the end of his life did he turn to painting.

25. LIANG K'AI (active about 1200). Liang K'ai is a representative of the Ch'an painters. In his time, that school of painting was standing out against the academic school; its art is therefore full of freedom and, in some cases, originality, as can be seen in the works of Liang K'ai. This painter showed great energy of line and amazing skill in the use of ink; he launched the fashion for monochrome, i.e. for wash-tints.

26. JEN JEN FA (active about the thirteenth century). Jen Jen Fa brings us to the painting of the Yuan period. He was a geometer by profession but is known to later generations mainly as the great painter of horses. The horse is an animal for which the Chinese have always had great respect, especially under the Yuan dynasty, which was directly descended from a race of nomads.

28. WU CHEN (1280-1354). Wu Chen introduced calligraphy into painting through his landscapes and bamboos—a trend which developed widely in later periods, especially in the seventeenth century. By that time, bamboo painting was a special branch of art which, for the painters, had become the highest form of art, almost a religion.

29. MADAME KOUAN (active about 1300). Madame Kouan, the woman painter, is also well known for her extremely elegant bamboos. She painted them in all their different guises: bamboos in the rain, quivering and sensitive; bamboos utterly motionless in the moonlight; bamboos alive with the pulsing vigour of spring. She is also regarded as one of the best calligraphers of the time, and the art of bamboo painting and that of calligraphy had common origin.

30. CHANG WU (active about 1400) was a painter of a different type who specialized in illustrations to ancient poems. He produced scrolls illustrating a variety of passages from literary works.

31. FANG CH'ONG-YI (active about the fourteenth century). Fang Ch'ong-Yi was a native of Kouei Si in Kiang Si. He lived as a Taoist monk in the temple of Chan King and all his works are landscapes with misty mountains, often reminiscent of the manner of Mi Fei, but less conventional. They are very highly thought of in Japan, and many of the masterpieces of Fang Ch'ong-Yi are in private Japanese collections.

32. CH'IEN HSUAN (1235-(?)1290) is one of the most remarkable painters of the group of artists known as 'The eight learned men of Wou Hing'. Living in the country in order to avoid the Mongol conquerors, he specialized in painting flowers and insects, but was also a renowned portrait painter.

34. CHOU TUAN (active about the fifteenth century), a well-known landscape painter of the Ming period, produced pictures that were always distinguished, as well as rich in detail. The great qualities of his art are the effort after the 'whole effect' and a sense of structure.

36. CHEN HONG CHOU (1599-1652) is one of the most original painters of the Ming period. Specializing in portrait painting, he gave new life to this type of art, which had become somewhat rigidly 'traditional'. His portraits and domestic scenes are all imbued with a naïve yet spiritual archaism. He had a great influence on later painting.

37. HOUA YEN (1684-1764). Houa Yen was one of the great painters of the Ch'ing period. It was then that several painters, realizing the decadence of a classic art which was becoming hidebound by the academic style, sought to give painting new life. Houa Yen, by his originality, produced compositions showing great mastery in the use of ink and colours. He has had a considerable influence on modern Chinese painting.

38-39. SHE TAO (1630-1707) was both a Taoist and a Ch'an monk. His landscapes, with their amazing energy, were highly valued in China and Japan. He too is one of the painters who have had most influence on modern Chinese painting.

40. WANG HUI (1632-1717). Wang Hui was one of the four great Wang painters of the Ch'ing period. The four Wangs were official painters, marked in greater or less degree by the academic stamp. Although their compositions are somewhat conventional, they have an excellent command of technique. In his old age, Wang Hui changed his style, painting with greater freedom and individuality, and it was then that he wrote: 'The path of painting is difficult to find, escaping us at the very moment when we believe our feet are set upon it.'

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