

Lecture Notes, by James Cahill

Note: The image numbers in these lecture notes do not exactly coincide with the images onscreen but are meant to be reference points in the lectures' progression.

Lecture 11C: Ma Lin and Others: The Lyric Journey

Now we come to the third of the four great academy masters of the Southern Song: Ma Lin. But, since I don't have much of anything to say about him beyond what's in the lecture that follows, let me use this brief time to reveal what, I expect, many of you have been wanting to know: What is that music used in our lecture introductions and endings, set against a section of Xia Gui's *Pure and Remote View* handscroll? Beginning with shimmering strings, and then that haunting theme coming in with the violin. Well, the violinist is my favorite of all musicians, the great Joseph Szigeti—died in 1973, made many recordings, nearly all of which I have and have listened to, some of them over and over. The music is Prokofiev's first violin concerto, which Szigeti promoted—more than any other musician of his time, he was a champion of living composers, and was chosen by some of them—Bartok, Stravinsky, Bloch— to play first performances of their music, often with the composers themselves at the piano or conducting. Szigeti recorded the Prokofiev First Concerto in 1930 with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. It's available on disks, if you look hard. What's played at the end of each lecture is the last moments of the first movement. This is an exciting, moving performance, so get it and listen to it. Now, on to look at the paintings of Ma Lin.

11.35 Ma Lin 馬麟/ 马麟 (active early to mid-13th cent.; act. 1216–1264)

Son of Ma Yuan; his career overshadowed by four generations of famous ancestors in Academy, including his father. Last of line of Ma's in Academy: Song ends, Academy with it. (Skira 84-6: I may have romanticized him a bit.) Story of Ma Yuan signing Ma Lin's name to his own works, to enhance son's reputation. But story late, maybe apocryphal.

11.35.1: *Waiting for Guests by Lamplight* 秉燭夜遊圖/ 秉烛夜游图, fan painting, ink and colors on silk, 24.8 x 25.2 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. Reproduced in Skira 86; *Chinese Art Treasures*, Pl. 61; *Possessing the Past*, p. 89; *The Lyric Journey*, no. 1.29.

Li Lin-ts'an has suggested an alternate reading of the subject: "Sitting up Late to Gaze at Crabapple Blossoms," after lines from Su Dongpo's poem. Loosely: "Fearing that blossoms will

fall while he is sleeping, He has candles lit and sits up gazing at the flowering trees."

If Li is correct, and I think he is, then the painting is about the evanescence of beauty. Feeling, mood evoked, is a sense of the fragile and evanescent, like so much else in Southern Song. While finest Northern Song landscape conveys sense of the eternal, this evokes sense of transience of earthly pleasures.

11.35.2: *Fragrant Spring: Clearing After Rain* 芳春雨霽/ 方春雨霽, album leaf, ink and light colors on silk, 27.5 x 41.6 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. Skira 87; CAT 59; Loehr 104.

Maybe originally one of a series of seasonal pictures. I went a bit overboard in writing about it; responded to seeming break with Academy imagery in depicting a more natural tangle, dead tree; sense of exuberant, undisciplined growth. No idealization.

11.35.3: *Listening to the Wind in the Pines* 靜聽松風圖/ 靜听松风图 (1246), hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 226.6 x 110.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. Skira 64; CAT 60; *Possessing* Pl. 90.

One of few large-scale works surviving from Academy. Elegant scholar (*gaoshi* 高士) sits on bole of pine tree, looking sideways, as if towards servant. Person in painting now seems very conscious of being looked at, as if acting out his own feelings. On the edge of what we find too contrived, done for obvious effect. End of long process of change in relationship between man and nature, as portrayed in landscape painting. Man occupies the center.

While this is on: More ways to look at Southern Song painting:

Effects of Southern Song painting typically achieved through juxtapositions of opposites, contrasts, space vs. mass, full vs. void, man and nature in subject-object relationship. Anti-Zen, among other things. That this should co-exist with Zen painting is another of the bipolar situations typical of the period.

Later writers' view of Southern Song painting dismissive: leftover mountains, surviving steams: reduced area under Chinese control, political weakness—tied to character of paintings.

In any case, meaning of painting moves inward; painting doesn't attempt to express sense of comprehension of the world, degree of control that early painting does. Nature is tamed and made expressive, but kind and degree of involvement with it also changes.

Ma Lin's paintings: self-consciousness as element in Southern Song. Subject of painting is presented not for participation. Except for looking, admiring: subject seems to present himself, at this extreme point, for our admiration. Scholar-ideal expressed in this way is (according to Confucian idea) contrary to scholar-artists' own ideal: significant that such paintings not done by

scholars themselves, but by academicians and professionals who are presenting this ideal, not participating in it. A painting by one of the scholar-amateurs expresses scholar ideal in a totally different way.

11.35.4: *Sunset Landscape* 夕陽山水圖/ 夕陽山水圖 (1254), pair of album leaves, mounted as hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 51.5 x 27 cm. Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Tokyo. *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, no. 124; Siren, Vol. III, Pl. 294; Loehr 102; *Lyric Journey* 1.26–27.

Couplet:

*Hills enclosing autumn colors draw near,
Swallows traversing the evening light move slowly.*

Perfect simplicity and peace, or so we used say. Then it was pointed out that the hanging scroll was actually two separate album leaves mounted together.

11.35.5: *Scholar Reclining and Watching Clouds*, fan painting, ink on silk, 25.1 x 25.3 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, 1961.421.1.

11.35.6 (also shown in Lecture 10B, image 10.36.1): Ma Lin, *Branches of Blossoming Plum* (1216), signed and dated. Palace Museum, Beijing. Inscription by Yang Meizi (Empress Yang, 1162-1232, consort of Emperor Ningzong).

By 1254, China had been defeated militarily for 20 years; had been fighting Mongols Genghis Khan, later Ogodai, Kubilai. In 1234: fall of Jin in north. Southern Song surrounded on north and west (Szechwan), only very small area left to them; Mongols' push delayed by battle of succession by death of Ogodai. Kubilai Khan succeeded in 1260; concentrated on China. Song held out until 1277, when last Song claimant to throne killed in sea battle off the coast. Last pretender to the throne destroyed in 1279; this is usual date of end of Song. During this late period, peace was possible only in Buddhist monasteries; painting of late Song belongs largely to Chan monks, as preserved in Japan. Last lecture will be mostly about them. But a few more Academy things first.

11.35.7 (also shown in Lecture 10B, image 10.36.2): Ma Lin, painting of plum and bamboo reflected in water 暗香疏影, album leaf, 24.9 x 24.6 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

11.35.8: *Confucian Sages of Worthies* (1230), set of hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk, each 2.5 meters high. *Possessing*, pp. 257–259

Originally a set of thirteen, five survive, four shown here. Commissioned by Emperor Lizong.

11.35.8a: *Portrait of King Yao* 帝堯立像軸/ 帝尧立像轴, 248 x 111.1 cm.

11.35.8b: *Portrait of King Yu of the Xia Dynasty* 夏禹王立像軸/ 夏禹王立像轴, 247.8 x 110.7 cm.

11.35.8c: *Portrait of King Tang of the Shang Dynasty* 商湯王立像軸/ 商汤王立像轴, 249.2 x 111.4 cm.

11.35.8d: *Portrait of King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty* 周武王立像軸/ 周武王立像轴, 250 x 111.2 cm.

11.35.9: Ma Lin, *Landscape with Great Pine* 松蔭高士圖/ 松荫高士图, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 25.2 x 26 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, From the Collection of A.W. Bahr, 47.18.63. *Beyond Representation*, Pl. 65.

11.35.10: Album leaf, Palace Museum, Beijing.

11.35.11: Unidentified artist, 13th c., album leaf, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Crawford Collection.

11.35.12: Ma Lin, *Lake View with a Palace Lady Riding a Deer* 谿頭秋色圖/ 西头秋色图, signed, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 25.2 x 26.3 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 28.837a.

11.35.13: Formerly attributed to Ma Yuan, *Boating near Lakeshore with Reeds* 荻岸停舟圖/ 荻岸亭舟图, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 23.8 x 24.1 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 29.963.

An unlikely Ma Yuan, but possibly Ma Lin.

11.35.14a: Ma Lin, *Landscape with Flying Geese*, signed, album leaf, ink and slight color on silk, 25.5 x 26.5 cm. Cleveland Art Museum, 1952.285.

11.35.14b: *Scholar Reclining and Watching Clouds*, signed, fan painting, ink on silk, 25.1 x 25.3 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, 1961.421.1.

Reproduced in *Eight Dynasties*, Pl. 56, p. 57.

Signed “*chen Ma Lin* 臣馬麟/ 臣马麟” or “Your servant, Ma Lin,” meaning these were done on imperial commission.

11.36.1: Album leaf, Freer Gallery, acquired in 1911.

Foreground: fisherman sits in boat under low pines. Far shore: covered bridge spans inlet. These minimal pictures evoke “separation.”

11.37.1: Anonymous (old attribution to Huizong), *Landscapes of Four* (3 survive) Seasons, hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk. Reproduced in Siren, Vol. III, Pl. 241–3; *Lyric*

Journey 1.54–55.

Fine anonymous 13th c. paintings of the kind preserved only in Japan; Chinese literati of later times considered trivial, not worth preserving.

11.37.1a: *Autumn Landscape with Figure*, 126.9 x 54.5 cm. Konchiin, Kyoto.

Scholar *gaoshi* reclines against pine tree, two cranes wheel in the distance. Conventional.

11.37.1b: *Traveler in a Winter Landscape*, 121.9 x 54.5 cm. Konchiin, Kyoto.

Not conventional at all. Hooded scholar walks through ravine and pauses to look back. Superb handling of space. The scholar pauses to listen to the cries of the gibbons high on the branch above the waterfall.

11.37.1c: *Summer*, Kuonji, Kyoto.

Summer rainstorm; hooded figure about to cross a bridge, but pauses to turn and listen to the sound of the wind. Captures the sense of a rainstorm; trees and boulders as if seen through atmosphere.

Theme of travelers making their way through a landscape and being affected by the scenery and atmosphere must have been a whole genre; unfortunately, many now lost.

11.38 *The Lyric Journey*

Four stages of the lyric journey: 1) *Gaoshi* living in retirement/in the country, 2) ventures out into the natural world, 3) pauses/rests to experience natural phenomenon, 4) returns.

Series of leaves illustrating "Lyric Journey" theme. *Lyric Journey* 1.44–1.57; text pp. 57–73.

11.38.1: Attributed to Zhao Bosu 趙伯驩/ 赵伯驩 (1124–1182) (meaningless attribution, late Song work by Li Tang follower), *Reading in the Open Pavilion* 風檐展卷/ 风檐展卷, fan painting, ink and colors on silk, 24.9 x 2637 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. *Lyric Journey* 1.44.

The scholar (*gaoshi*) sits within the pavilion, awaiting guests. He surrounds himself with screen paintings, hanging scrolls, and books. To the right, two female servants lean closely upon each other: sign of homoerotic relations? To the left, two boy servants carry trays of food; they are turned toward each other in conversation, but this is a conventional composition, and not an indication of erotic attachment. Boy servants of old China were, however, often the objects of their masters' pederastic urges. No stigma attached to using young boy servants as catamites, often even considered a more refined relation than heterosexual relationships with courtesans.

11.38.2: Ma Yuan manner, fan painting. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Thatched house between two willows, the rural home of a *gaoshi*, who is entertaining a friend.

11.38.3: Li Tang follower, *Hermitage by a Pine-Covered Bluff*, fan painting, 21.3 x 22.8 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, C. C. Wang Collection, 1973.121.12a. *Lyric Journey* 1.45.

Bluff slopes diagonally, topped with pine trees. Path winds around base, disappearing into a thicket of trees, where a retired *gaoshi* presumably resides.

11.38.4a, b: Attributed to Xia Gui, *Setting Off on a Stroll* and *Gazing At a Waterfall*, two fan-shaped leaves in album, ink and light colors on silk, 24 x 24.9 cm. Osaka Municipal Museum. *Lyric Journey* 1.47.

Scholar stands at the base of a low bridge, contemplating the morning and about to set off on his journey.

In the next leaf, the scholar, accompanied by his servant, stands on a ledge and contemplates the waterfall on the other side of the ravine.

11.38.5: Album leaf, National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Autumn scene. Three old men converse in a ravine. Evocative, poetic, lovely.

11.38.6: Li Tang follower, Album leaf, Palace Museum, Beijing.

Two men with a servant arrive at a house. Dramatic pine tree thrusts out diagonally.

11.38.7: Anonymous, *Drunken Traveler Arriving at Inn*, fan painting, ink and colors on silk, 24 x 25.4 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. *Lyric Journey* 1.50.

Man riding on donkey returns to his inn, followed by his servant carrying picnic trays. Spring evening scene.

11.38.8: Attributed to Fan Kuan, album leaf, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure returns to group of thatched houses.

11.38.9 (also seen in Lecture 11A, image 11.1.3): Ma Yuan, *Bare Willows and Distant Mountains* 柳岸遠山圖 [detail], fan painting, ink and color on silk, 23.8 x 24.2 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 14.61.

11.38.10: Xia Gui, fan painting. Winter scene

11.38.11 (also seen in Lecture 11B, image 11.19.8): Xia Gui, *A Pure and Remote View Over Rivers and Mountains* 溪山清遠圖/溪山清遠圖 (ca. 1200) [detail], handscroll, ink on paper, 46.5 x 889 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Rustic figure on bridge makes his way toward the inn that closes the scroll.

Should note that many Academy-style paintings done outside the Academy. As soon as a

painting was made by an Academy painter, copies and imitations were available outside the Academy.

For example:

11.39.1 (see also Lecture 11A, image 11.1.2): Ma Yuan, *Banquet by Lamplight* 華燈侍宴圖/ 華燈侍宴圖 (ca. 1200), unsigned, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 111.9 x 53.5 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

And its imitations:

11.39.1a, b: Palace Museum, Beijing

11.40 *Lyric Journey Album Leaves*

11.40.1: Li Tang follower, *Recluse's House beneath a Cliff*, fan painting, ink and colors on silk, 23.9 x 25.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Thatched house at base of a cliff, surrounded by trees and stream. A path leads away from the house and into the farther distance, providing a route for the retired scholar to begin his journey.

11.40.2a: Fan painting of the third stage of the journey, Palace Museum, Beijing.

Reproduced as Pl. 88 in 100 Song Album Leaves book.

Group of scholars gathered in a bamboo grove, attended by boy servants.

11.40.2b: *Returning Late from a Spring Outing*, fan painting, Palace Museum, Beijing. 100 Song Album Leaves, Pl. 71.

Scholar on donkey accompanied by retinue makes his way toward the building seen dimly in upper right. Leafy trees around them and the dimming of those farther away catch the theme of "lateness" and impending dark.

11.41 *Spatial Composition*

11.41.1: *Playing Weiqi in the Lotus Pavilion*, fan painting, Palace Museum Beijing.

Master of the house sits in waterside pavilion playing *weiqi* with one of his concubines as another concubine watches. Female servant with large fan stands by outside railing watching another female servant gather lotus root at the water's edge. The seated woman to the right is the principal wife and responsible for running the household.

Composition: Spatial design that draws eye into and around buildings to explore further spaces. Not to be seen again until the 17th c., when artists partially influenced by foreign art. Seen

here, though, is an entirely indigenous development, a survival or revival of multispace compositions seen in Lecture 7A on Five Dynasties painting.

For example:

11.41.2: Fan painting with far distance in the upper right; eye also drawn into building's interior—into the kitchen and main room. On the opposite wall of the main room are two hanging scrolls of horizontal landscapes. Paintings within paintings.

11.41.3: *Summoning the Courtesan*, fan painting.

11.41.4 (also seen in Lecture 9C, image 9.32.3d): *Women and Children by a Lotus Pond* 荷亭嬰戲圖/ 荷亭嬰戏图, round fan-shaped album leaf, ink and color on silk, 23.9 x 25.8 cm., Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 28.842a.

Painting masters able to embed implicit narratives in their works.

11.41.5 (also seen in Lecture 9C, image 9.38.2a): *Lady Standing in Doorway*, fan-shaped album leaf, Palace Museum, Beijing.

11.41.6 (also seen in Lecture 9C, image 9.38.1): *Two Boats At Anchor By Moonlight*, fan-shaped album painting, mounted together with inscription, Cleveland Museum.

11.41.7 (also seen in Lecture 11A, image 11.10.1): Ma Yuan, *The Han Palace* 漢宮圖/ 汉宫图, album leaf, ink and colors on silk, 24.5 cm. diameter. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Why spatially complex paintings with implicit narratives on fan paintings? So the viewer can enjoy prolonged visual absorption, which stimulated imaginings and allowed them to fill out the narrative.