

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 6. Five Dynasties Landscape Painting: The Great Masters

A picture of my younger colleagues.

Before continuing to talk about the great masters of landscape painting in the Five Dynasties period, I want to show two very different paintings of the period:

Images 6.1.1 and 6.1.2: *Deer in an Autumn Forest* (秋林群鹿圖／秋林群鹿图), *Deer among Red-Leafed Maples* (丹楓呦鹿／丹枫呦鹿). Two hanging scrolls, in the Palace Museum, Taipei; they were originally panels of a screen, from the Liao dynasty? (Cahill, *Chinese Painting*, p. 68; T&V 7–24, CAT 5–6; Siren 142–143). The Liao, or Khitans (as mentioned at end of previous lecture in which I showed a landscape by a Liao artist), are called such from the old name for their regime, Khitai, whence came the European word Cathay. The Liao exchanged tribute, etc., with the Song. They sent screens of this kind to the Song emperor. These must be left and right of center.

Images 6.1.3 through 6.1.6: four details from these. In discussing these paintings in the essay I contributed to the 1986 Metropolitan Museum catalog *Possessing the Past* of an exhibition from the National Palace Museum in Taipei, I cite an 11th-century writer giving the advice that you can tell a good painting from a bad one by running your finger over it: if you can feel the pigment, it's not a good painting. So, a heavy build-up of pigment into a kind of relief was common in earlier periods but had gone out of fashion by Song times. The Liao were old-fashioned in this and other ways.

Such a relief build-up can still be seen in some Japanese screen paintings; also, there is a painting of a religious figure in the Boston MFA, acquired by Tseng Hsien-ch'i(?), like this.

Images 6.2.1 and 6.2.2: landscape wall paintings (ink monochrome) in the tomb of Wang Chuzhi 王處直墓／王处直墓 (died 923 C.E.) in Hebei Province in the north. They were published recently and add to reliable works of the period. Texturing and shading was freely applied to earth forms (etc.). Nothing that shakes our prior knowledge of landscape of this period.

Image 6.3.1: fragment of a landscape from Central Asia—still another from the late Tang or shortly after; it shows the same system of shading from fold to fold. The shading is even, not in separate, repeated brush strokes—that came after. Cylindrical tree trunks. All kinds of evidence, then, points to this as a basis of a new ink-monochrome mode of landscape arising in this period.

Image 6.3.2: slide of double picture from *Urinasu* 瓜茄, or *Ikuro zasshi* 伊九良雜誌, a private magazine published in the mid-1930s by Okumura Ikurō 奥村伊九良. This is in the fifth and last issue, in an article on “Mountains and Pictures of Mountains,” juxtaposing photos of real Chinese landscape with paintings of it. Here, the right part is taken from a landscape ascribed to Fan Kuan 范寬／范寬 in Japan—I don’t have a slide of the original (it is not important as a painting)—and the left side is from a photo taken in northeastern China, showing an eroded loess slope. This is very revealing—artists had a natural basis for this convention. This is something we all do—place photos beside paintings—dummkopfs point to them and say “Look, look, the artists are only painting what they see—what’s all this stuff about style?” That is the kind of observation made by outsiders and beginners; no one who gets seriously into the subject could say that. A huge difference in landscape style in different places and times, while real landscape doesn’t change so much—another simple but needed point.

6.4–5. Two More Diversions Before the Great Masters

Image 6.4.1: anonymous (after a 10th-century composition?), *Fishing in the Clear Stream*. It has much of the archaic in it, but it is used for its monumental composition. It is linear, unnaturally clear, without texturing, etc. It is a transitional work of some kind, datable to the 10th century or so—or is a close copy after. It was reproduced in the second chapter of my *Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).

Image 6.5.1: anonymous (after a 9th- or 10th-century composition?), *Immortals Dwellings on Pine-Hung Cliffs* (松巖仙館／松岩仙館). In the National Palace Museum, Taipei, as the previous painting. Discovered in 1959 when C. C. Wang, Li Lin-ts’an, and I were going through the Palace Museum collection in Taichung—it was never published; called “Anon. Sung.”

Like the Zhan Ziqian 展子虔 attribution *Outing in Spring* 游春圖／游春图, it is divided by a river: one shore has lots of detail, the other less. Here, the two shores are placed nearer and farther. But the foreground is much too close-up for a really early composition—easy entrance into painting is a later feature.

The drawing is in line like *Emperor Minghuang's Journey* (明皇幸蜀圖) and others.

Images 6.5.2 through 6.5.5: four details, one after the other.

Images 6.6.1 and 6.6.2: attributed to Jing Hao (late 9th–early 10th century), *Mt. Kuanglu* 匡廬圖／匡廬图, in slide from original and photo, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (3000, 85; Loehr 44; Siren 144).

Now, on to the five famous landscape masters of the Five Dynasties period. Along with Li Sixun 李思訓 and Zhaodao 李昭道 and Wang Wei 王維 in the Tang, recognized as forefathers of landscape painting by later historians and critics, the lists of them always go Jing/Guan 荆關, Dong/Ju 董巨, Li 李成 (Cheng). One could write a substantial book about them just from information and opinions that Chinese writers give us about them, about paintings attributed to them, etc. A lot of this is in Loehr's book, translations, and so on—it's worth reading for that. And with what would we illustrate it? Do we have one painting safely by any one of them? No. One painting safely *after* one of them? No. Not even anything so well recorded, with such strong provenance, and so plausibly attributable as the Zhao Gan scroll is. Lots of attributions to them: all serious collectors wanted to own examples of their work; people who had old paintings in their styles, or imaginably in their styles, were strongly tempted to attribute them to Jing and Guan, Dong and Ju, and Li Cheng, sometimes with added signatures. Modern forger Zhang Daqian 張大千 did all of them except Jing Hao: a "Guan Tong" is in the Boston MFA, a "Juran" in the British Museum, Li Cheng and Dong Yuan in—I'll stop there. But a number of old and fine landscapes survive that go under their names, and we'll look at some of them in the rest of this lecture. Loehr, Barnhart, and others take them much more seriously, as you'll find in reading. I would see them mostly as good examples of works done by artists in local schools founded by famous masters. What we call, in auction catalogs, etc., "School of Li Cheng," and the like. It's an honest appellation.

What I've been showing is a painting ascribed to Jing Hao, the oldest of the five. It's an impressive painting, over 6 feet tall, giving the effect of great space and height. But later I'll go on to say why it isn't by him, or even close to him.

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

Images 6.6.3 and 6.6.4: two details, one after another.

Note on Jing Hao:

Jing Hao 荆浩 was born ca. 855, died ca. 915, and was from Henan, in the north. He was a well-educated man who became a recluse in late Tang, according to a story. He was credited with an essay on landscape that is still extant. (For the essay, see Bush & Shih, pp. 145–148, 159–160, 164–165, 170–171. A translation by Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of the Brush*. Artibus Asiae Supplementum 31 [Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1974]).

I'll talk about this text, summarize it, without reading much from it.

The narrator in the text, a young student of painting, meets an old recluse in the mountains—maybe meant for Jing Hao himself—who gives him the “secrets” of painting landscape. The old man affirms the importance of capturing some pictorial truth, some deep understanding of nature, instead of just transcribing appearances. He distinguishes between *hua* 華, outward appearance, and *shi* 實/实, substance. He also gives four classes of painting: in descending rank, *shen* 神 (divine), *miao* 妙 (marvelous, or sublime), *qi* 奇 (distinctive, or strange), and *qiao* 巧 (skillful). He introduces terminology and concepts from geomancy, the study of underlying currents of energy in the earth (whatever): *qi* 氣/气, spirit, and *shi* 勢/势, energy. He discusses earlier painters, praising Wang Wei, contrasting him with Li Sixun (already those two have come to represent forward-looking and backward-looking, regressive vs. progressive, tendencies in landscape painting). He praises Wu Daozi 吳道子/吴道子 for the power of his brush, but says he lacks ink; another painter, Xiang Rong 項容/项容, is praised for ink but is said not to have bone in his brush. The author eulogizes the old pine tree, somewhat anthropomorphizing it.

He also lists six “essentials” of painting—like Xie He's 謝赫/谢赫 Six Laws, but directed at the *creation* of painting rather than as criticism. The Six Essentials are *Qi* 氣/气 (spirit) and *yun* 韻/韵 (resonance: “hidden things take shape; the painting is not vulgar”). These two are of course the same as in Xie He's First Law. Then: *si* 思 (thought: “select and depict the most essential points”) and *jing* 景 (scene, or seasonal aspects) These are specific to landscape, referring to the underlying meaning vs. the overt visual content. (C. C. Wang always used

“scenery” as what you shouldn’t look at in painting—you should pay attention to brushwork instead.) Jing Hao’s Six Essentials end with *bi* 筆/笔 (brush: “free and flexible, flying and moving”) and *mo* 墨 (ink: “shallow and deep, its colors natural”)—these pertain of course to execution, the creation of painting.

Overall, these point to where landscape is going at this time: a reduction of visual variety, toward a great unification that will somehow reflect the unity and order of the universe, as it was coming to be understood in Neo-Confucian philosophy. In style, this meant a reduction or elimination of color and move into ink monochrome; in brushwork, it meant creating a system of brush strokes that produces an orderly system of forms, organized into a composition that reflects the artist’s comprehension of an orderly natural world. It meant the creation of great systems of texturing earth and rock surfaces, brushwork systems for rendering forms such as trees and rocks and mountain peaks in ways that would unify the picture into a coherent vision of nature, of the physical world. The fundamental problem facing the landscapist was the translation, or transmutation, of observed scenery of nature into systems of brushwork and forms that embody, or express, an understanding of natural phenomena. Nature is presented, not as a collection of individual forms, but as an organic structure. What we will see in this and the following lecture will reveal how the great landscapists of China’s greatest period of landscape painting carried out this grand project, creating what we call monumental landscapes, in paintings that can be taken, if we want, as pictorial expressions of Neo-Confucian thought. I don’t want to overstress that—philosophy didn’t create painting style, any more than history does or any other outside factor does. Artists create styles. But Neo-Confucianism, I believe, is the worldview that underlies this huge collective project.

Back to looking at paintings.

Image 6.7.1: attributed to Jing Hao, *Landscape with Travelers*, in the Nelson Gallery, Kansas City (Loehr, 43). An archaistic work, much later.

Images 6.7.2 and 6.7.3: two details, one at a time. The white is meant to look like underdrawing, presumably, but there are no remains of overpainting over it, so it can’t really be that. A “signature” reading “Hongguzi 洪谷子” (a name used by Jing Hao) is written on it.

6.8. Guan Tong

Guan Tong was a rival of Jing Hao and was paired with him by later critics. He was also active in the first quarter of the 10th century.

Image 6.8.1: attributed to Guan Tong 關同／关同, *Travelers in the Mountains*, in the National Palace Museum (Loehr, 45; CAT 13). A fine early painting, more plausible than most of the others we're seeing as work of the 10th century, pre-Northern Song. An old attribution to Guan Tong.

The *Xuanhe huapu* writes of him: "Guan Tong's paintings are done in a fluent fashion with a small brush, and the more sketchy the brushwork, the stronger was the life breath; the simpler the scenery, the deeper seemed the thoughts. His pictures had a profound meaning; they were noble and pure, like Tao Yuanming's poetry and He Re's music. No ordinary painter could do such things."

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

Images 6.8.2 through 6.8.7: six details, shown beside whole at left. There's a difference between these bare trees and those in Jing Hao attributions. Thick-line drawing of figures and houses, almost cartoonlike when blown up like this. But in the context of the whole painting, meant to be viewed from farther away, the look is natural—they need to be drawn heavy. Above: an early form of texture strokes? Not clearly developed yet. Could be transitional—generally, this is plausible as a pre-Song painting.

Image 6.9.1: attributed to Guan Tong, *Autumn Mountains at Dusk*, in the National Palace Museum (3000, 86). An 11th-century painting by style, it was probably part of a series, maybe a screen or a series of panels set into a wall. (We saw examples represented in the painting of palace with ladies, in lecture 5.) These were common in the early period; often, single panels survive.

Images 6.9.2 and 6.9.3: two details, shown beside whole. An ascending path and a temple roof.

6.10. Dong Yuan

Dong Yuan 董源 was active under the Southern Tang and died in 962. He was a great and mysterious master. He held an official post, as assistant director of Imperial Parks in the Southern

Tang; he was credited with, among other things, establishing the Jiangnan (Yangzi Delta region) school of landscape.

Images 6.10.1 and 6.10.2: *Landscape of the Xiao-Xiang Region* 瀟湘圖／瀟湘圖, in the Palace Museum, Beijing (Siren 163–166). “Hemp-fiber” texture strokes (*pima cun* 披麻皴), as well as “alum rocks” (*fantou cun* 礬頭皴); these are terms invented by critics of later centuries to describe recurring features of his landscape style.

This is deeply unlike landscape we’ve seen up to now, such as *Emperor Minghuang’s Journey*: no narrative content; the figures are small and play a small part in composition. It has the plainest possible scenery—like the real hills of Jiangnan.

Dick (Richard) Barnhart published a study of this painting, in 1970, titled “Marriage of the Lord of the River.”

Images 6.10.3 through 6.10.6: four details, shown successively.

Images 6.11.1 and 6.11.2: (side by side) *Winter Landscape* (冬景山水圖), in the Kurokawa collection, Ashiya, Japan (3000, 89, Loehr 62). Inscription by Dong Qichang 董其昌.

This is an example of *pingyuan* 平遠 (flat-distance) landscape. (A mid-Song writer devised “three distances,” of which this is one.) It shows marshy ground, stretching to the horizon, which is above the upper margin of the painting. Hillocks rise from this, in repeated shapes:

Images 6.11.3 and 6.11.4: (side by side) the whole in softer image; detail. These images reveal the truth of what we are told by later critics: that Dong Yuan’s landscape paintings were meant to be seen from distance.

There is no attempt at variety here: the very opposite, monotony. One doesn’t enjoy details so much as take in the painting as a whole. It has rough style, no display of skill. “Arouses deep thoughts?” We can understand why they write this about him.

An early 11th-century writer sums up pretty much all we know about Dong Yuan: “The principal master of his time was Dong Yuan, an excellent painter skilled in painting the mists of autumn and far open views. He represents the real hills of the Jiangnan region and did not make any extraordinary cliffs. Most of Dong’s pictures are meant to be seen at a distance, because their brushwork was very rough. Seen in a close view the objects in his pictures do not seem right, but when one looks at them from a distance, the scenery and all the objects stand out clearly and beautifully, arousing deep feelings and carrying the thoughts far away.”

(Among a lot of paintings attributed to him that I'm not showing is a handscroll, *Summer Mountains*, in the Shanghai Museum [3000, 88].)

Image 6.12.1: one leaf in an album of reduced-size copies (*Xiaozhong xianda* 小中現大) made for the artist-collector Wang Shimin 王時敏 / 王时敏 in the mid-17th century, with facing inscriptions by Dong Qichang. Reproduced in my *Compelling Image* book. It preserves the composition, at least, of a painting that was considered at that time to be a genuine work of Dong Yuan.

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

6.14. Juran

Juran 巨然 (active ca. 960–980) was a pupil of Dong Yuan. He was a monk in a Nanjing temple; upon the fall of the Southern Tang, he went to Kaifeng, the early Song capital, with Li Houzhu 李後主, and settled there. So, he was active in the late Five Dynasties and the beginning of the Northern Song.

Image 6.14.1 beside 6.12.1: *Mountains and Woods*, in the National Palace Museum (3000, 90; Loehr 65). This work is close in composition to a 17th-century copy of the Dong Yuan painting I showed earlier. This is not a count against the painting attributed to Juran; it is a fine painting, but probably the work of a slightly later period in Juran style. The trees are treated in deep, misty groves; the mountain masses are convincingly monumental, etc. — all features of 11th-century

style. But I could be wrong. The lumps in the mountaintops are more convincing as geological forms—and shapes of mountains are the favorites of Northern Song painters, but they could have been earlier. Part of series, a screen? No figures or buildings, just a path leading into depth. We'll leave it open. It is a fine work, anyway.

Image 6.15.1: attributed to Juran, *Asking about the Dao in the Autumn Mountains* (秋山問道圖/秋山問道圖; CAT 15, Siren 168). This painting, by contrast, although famous and often reproduced, is much duller. One could argue that this is deliberate monotony, as with Dong Yuan, but it seems to me real dullness—hard to distinguish them.

Images 6.15.2 through 6.15.6: five details, shown one by one.

Image 6.16.1: *Buddhist Retreat by Stream and Mountain*, in the Cleveland Museum (3000, 91). From a screen or part of a series? (Again: we saw these in a previous lecture, in the painting of a palace with ladies.) Written in upper right: Ju 5, meaning fifth in the Juran series or screen. Six-panel compositions by him are recorded in the *Xuanhe huapu*. This is a fine painting, very much worth having—Sherman Lee and Wai-kam Ho treasured it, rightly. It is hard to find real early Chinese landscapes for sale. A long, fine essay on this by Wai-kam Ho is in the *Eight Dynasties* catalog (of a 1980 exhibition of paintings from Kansas City and Cleveland museums). He makes a good point that Juran, in his late years when he went north to Kaifeng, fell under the influence of Li Cheng; this picture, he argues, shows that influence. It is a strong argument.

Otherwise, one might well feel that this painting, as a would-be Juran, has too much of the look of the 11th century, like Guo Xi 郭熙 and such. Pockets of space and dramatic silhouetting of trees, which look like elements of 11th-century style. Also, the lumpiness is too extreme, too mannered. As a general rule, a sequence of paintings within a given stylistic lineage (all attributed to the same painter, often) can be established by assuming that any element of style or motif begins as a representational element, something that looks natural, makes sense as part of a picture, and that it gradually hardens, or degenerates, into an element of a *manner*, which the later artist learns when he learns “how to paint in the Dong Yuan style” (or whatever). Regional schools are established by these great masters, with lots of followers doing imitations. We know of these from early texts. And most of what we have are works by these followers, sometimes working centuries after the master; most of these come to be attributed to the master, because works by lesser followers, called *xiaomingjia* 小名家 in Chinese, weren't wanted by collectors. So,

as fine and impressive objects with little commercial value, they were transformed by added signatures and attributions into objects that did have commercial value, collectors being gullible and anxious to believe in them. This is a reality about Chinese painting that we have to live with.

6.17. Li Cheng

Li Cheng 李成 (919–967) was the fifth great landscape master of the time, another who founded a school or tradition of landscape that would endure for centuries.

His attributed paintings include the following:

Image 6.17.1: *Small Wintry Grove* (*Xiao hanlin tu* 小寒林圖 / 小寒林图), a short handscroll in the Liaoning Museum. (Larry Sickman almost bought this and other paintings; read the story in my “Responses and Reminiscences,” no. 69 on my website.) This is a good example of the kind of scene attributed to Li Cheng. This is a poor slide, and I’ll show another, but it’s not much better:

Image 6.17.2: here are tall trees, reaching out in both directions; old trees are below, stretching to the right; above this, hillocks of earth indicating distance. Still not very informative about Li Cheng style; I will show instead:

Image 6.18.1: another painting, by the same title, *Xiao hanlin tu*; this one is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. It is not properly attributed to Li Cheng, called simply “Anon. Song.” But it belongs among early paintings representing the Li Cheng style. Two men in the lower left are hurrying through the landscape.

Notes on Li Cheng:

Li Cheng was active in the mid-10th century. He came from a family of scholars, distant descendants of the Tang imperial family, living in the Northeast, in Shandong Province. (Wai-kam Ho was doing research on him throughout his life: he presented a paper at the 1970 Taipei symposium.) Li was precocious; he passed exams for official position and was active for a time in the capital, Kaifeng, around age forty, and spent several years there. But he didn’t continue in that career: he was too fond of drinking and contemptuous of officialdom. He ended up living away from cities, making a living as a painter, doing landscapes. But he was proud and independent: there was still some conflict between his scholar’s status and the painter’s occupation, which was associated with the artisan class. He painted scenery of the northern

plains, especially scenery of Shandong in the Northeast: desolate landscapes with bare trees, seeming to struggle for survival. This was a theme that fitted his temperament, his own situation in time. Near the end of his life, he was invited by a patron to Huaiyang, and he died there, of drink, in 967.

Image 6.18.2: detail of tree at left side of group. Some sense of patterning, but movements of brush are strong, and there is a continuous energy flowing out from trunk to twigs.

Image 6.18.3: detail of right side of tree group. This has more of that quality of natural tangle that seems to have distinguished his best works. Maybe this is as close as we will get to Li Cheng.

An 11th-century writer (Guo Ruoxu 郭若虚 / 郭若虚) writes of him: His atmosphere is mournful and thin; his misty forests are pure and desolate. His brush point is as fine as a needle; his ink infinitely slight (subtle).

A later Song writer (quoted by Loehr) writes: “It almost seemed as if [his landscapes] were not made with brush and ink.”

His paintings captured, it would seem, more of the transient—light and shadow—and exhibited a new mastery of ink monochrome for effects of space.

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

Image 6.19.1: *Trees on a Plain*, in a private collection, in Japan (the former Yamamoto collection, later the Inokuma collection, in Yokkaichi). A large hanging scroll, ink on silk. A fine work, which seems original, i.e., not a copy. But the rocks have the look of Guo Xi, a century later. A fine early painting anyway, an important part of our heritage of Li Cheng-style paintings.

Image 6.20.1: *Reading the Tablet* (讀碑窠石圖／读碑窠石图), in the Osaka Municipal Museum (Siren 143). It was supposed to be by Li Cheng with figures by another artist, Wang Xiao 王曉／王晓 — painting was sometimes done so. It is valuable as an old copy.

Loehr has a good discussion of Li Cheng, but then reproduces, to represent him, three paintings that shouldn't be there—including an album leaf by Wang Hui (17th century), whose hand can be recognized immediately. Ming-Qing painting was not sufficiently studied in the West in Loehr's time—a Chinese connoisseur, such as C. C. Wang, could recognize the difference immediately. But, no Chinese of Wang's generation were capable of the art-historical analysis and writing that Loehr could do. So, the great comprehensive history didn't get done.

Image 6.21.1: *Travelers in a Wintry Forest*, in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. A large picture with an inscription attributing it to Li Cheng by Zhang Daqian—used to be, anyway—which for me gives away its true origin. Not believable as a really early painting.

Images 6.21.2 and 6.21.3: details. Here are spongy earth masses, without brushwork at all—the same kind of drawing Zhang used in another work purportedly by an early master in the same museum. Enough said.

Image 6.22.1: a handscroll in the Liaoning Museum, very dark (I have slides only from reproductions); attributed to Li Cheng, in the former Manchu Imperial collection (detail in *3000*, fig. 93). An old, fine painting; Yang Renkai, a leading art historian and former director there, discovered it and has written about it. I don't know it from the original and only offer a tentative opinion. Impressive as it appears, it seems to me too diverse in its forms, almost cluttered, for early Song work; paintings like this belong rather to a later Song period; they were done by local artists and are somewhat eclectic, not "pure" versions of style anymore.

Images 6.22.2, 6.22.3, and 6.22.4: three details, one after the other.

Images 6.23.1 and 6.23.3: *Temple in the Mountains* (晴巒蕭寺／晴峦萧寺), in the Nelson Gallery, Kansas City (Cahill, *Chinese Painting*, p. 30; *3000*, 92; Siren 151). The whole plus detail. A fine work, but mid-11th century? (It was formerly owned by Michelangelo Piacentini, Tokyo. The attribution to Li Cheng needn't be any earlier than that.) I will bring this back and discuss it in

the next lecture, after showing works that I take to be more or less contemporary with this, to show where I think it belongs.

After looking at these landscapes, problematic as they may be in dating and attribution, we can understand problems that landscapists of the time were grappling with:

- Variety vs. unity: how to do away with a distracting diversity of detail, but keep the painting interesting, or somehow subordinate details to the whole.
- The effects of grandeur, massiveness, but not with single, simple form—this was too risky still. Nor could it be broken up into units, creating an additive composition.
- The effects of distance, depth.
- The treatment of surfaces: convexity vs. texture—defining texture tended to flatten. This is the main argument of my 1962 article “Some Rocks in Early Chinese Painting,” which was based on a lecture I went around giving after doing photographing for my *Skira* book in Taiwan—possible as never before.
- And, behind all these, the problem of how to give import, human meaning, to landscape painting, to make it something more than a mere picture. These were all old problems, now confronting artists with new urgency.

A bit on history, before we continue into landscape of the Song dynasty. China was unified again under the Song, from 960. In the north, the Liao continued in power, holding a large area; Chinese feared them, paid them tribute, in order to be left in peace. Apart from that, the Chinese empire was fairly strong in the first half of the dynasty: the Northern Song (960–1027). Strong emperors and an effective administration, but toward the end of the period, political factions were in bitter strife, weakening the monarchy. Also, another nomadic people appear, the Jurchen Tartars—in the early 12th century they captured the Chinese capital in the north, Kaifeng, and forced the Chinese south. After that, the dynasty was called the Southern Song.

Crucial to the strength of the administration in the Northern Song was the development of the civil service, a system by which men achieved office through exams, which were in principle open to anybody. The ideal type of scholar-official, a cultivated man who was eligible for office (even though he might be out for political reasons or living in retirement), was established at this time: this is important for the beginnings of *wenren hua* 文人畫／文人画 (scholar-amateur painting). Later, in the Northern Song, conflict was aroused by Prime Minister

Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086). There was government intervention in economy, control of trade, etc. The government gave loans to farmers, and such. These are ideas that sound like our liberal-democratic policies of recent history. But they ran up against an entrenched bureaucracy; Wang's reforms were nullified by a conservative backlash. The famous poet-statesman Su Dongpo belonged to that side. So, the great school of scholar-amateur painting, which came to dominate the painting world, arose within a kind of neo-con political situation. It's only a loose parallel, of course, and I shouldn't push it too far. But much truth to it.

Notes on Song Society:

The Song saw urbanization, an expansion of cities into the greatest on earth. This has to do with the growth of landscape painting—as the great 11th-century landscapist Guo Xi writes, landscapes were painted so that people kept in cities by their jobs, family responsibilities, and so on could roam in imagination through mountains, etc., much like the idea behind the essay by Cong Bing discussed earlier, for the Six Dynasties period. This is still what I call the “primary concept” of artistic expression in China.

The Song also saw the growth of what is called Neo-Confucianism. (A foreign term? Maybe it's taboo today. I'm talking in 1950s terms.) This was a broadening, deepening of Confucian tradition, including some elements from Daoism and Buddhism. In the cosmological system, nature was seen as operating according to a vast order, pattern, called *li* 理. The term can be translated as “natural order,” something like that. The basic stuff of the world was *qi* 氣/气, which coagulates into matter, dissolves, moves, according to *li*. All this makes up the process called *zaohua*: “creation,” but also “change.” This concept is important to thinking about landscape painting: in an ideal situation, the painter creates as nature does, without conscious purpose, so that his works have the look of creations of nature, not man-made ones. How this was accomplished by great masters of the Northern Song, we'll see.

The metaphysical dimensions to Neo-Confucianism, I don't want to do more than mention: the question of the “mind,” the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired, the relationship between the knower and thing known. Buddhism, especially Chan (or Zen) Buddhism, continues strong; its influence on art is chiefly in the Southern Song, so I'll talk about it then.

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

How all this affected painting in the Song we'll talk about in succeeding lectures.

Additional Reading

For more information about Northern Song history and culture, I used to recommend highly, still can, Peter Bol (Harvard), *This Culture of Ours* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994).

Especially good for plates (the text is in Japanese) is Richard Barnhart, *Tō Gen, Kyo Zen* (Dong Yuan and Juran). The second volume in a series edited by Hironobu Kohara for Chinese painting, *Bunjinga suihen* (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1985). It was published in large and smaller editions. Most major libraries have this—search it out.