CLP 65
(1977)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO

SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

Department of Art and History of Art

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

March 31, 1977

Friends and Colleagues:

Attached is a copy of the English version of the text that has now appeared, in Japanese translation, in:

> Go Shōseki, Sai Hakuseki (Wu Ch'ang-shih and Ch'i Pai-shih), Tokyo, Chuokoron-sha, 1977. Vol. X in the series: Bunjinga Suihen, Chugokū.

The text was somewhat abbreviated in translating, so that this English version does not correspond exactly to the Japanese. Several of the plates I had meant to include, and most of the text illustrations, were also deleted from the book for lack of space. (I am not saying this to criticize the publishers; I am generally pleased with the way the book turned out.) This English text will be useful to those who do not read Japanese, or who read English more easily; it is also a closer reflection, of course, of what I want to say about these artists and developments. (Again, I do not say this to criticize the translation, which, largely the work of Hironobu Kohara, was expertly done.)

References to plates and text illustrations in the published book have been added, so that the text can be read in conjunction with the book. I hope that in spite of the price (¥53,000), enough copies of the book will be available in the U.S. and other countries that everyone who wants to use it will have access to one.

This essay was written to accompany a book that is primarily a collection of plates, and should not be thought of as an attempt at a serious study of the subject. The final volume of my series on later Chinese painting, which will include the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century (along with most of the eighteenth), will treat the same material at greater length, although the plates will be fewer.

My brief treatment of the rise of Shanghai as an art center is based largely on a draft chapter for a doctoral dissertation written by my student Stella Lee. Some biographical information on the artists has been taken from the writings of Takeyoshi Tsuruta.

James Cahill
Professor of the History of Art

JC:wm

BUNJINGA SUIHEN TEXT

Introduction

The neglect of the nineteenth century in histories of Chinese painting has been responsible for a major gap in our understanding of the development of this artistic tradition. A few writers, notably Takeyoshi Tsuruta, have done valuable pioneer work on the period, including biographical research on the artists. But the problems of art-historical continuity have still to be solved--how nineteenth century painting continues eighteenth century trends, and what is new in it; how it leads into the revolutionary changes of the twentieth century. Part of the problem is the sheer quantity of painting that survives, and the great proportion of it that seems derivative, trivial, or simply dull. Until the interesting artists and original, high-quality paintings have been winnowed out from this larger mass of art-historically insignificant work, the task of understanding and assessing the painting of the period will seem discouraging, and in fact can scarcely be undertaken. The present book cannot claim to be more than a small and tentative step in that direction.

On twentieth century painting, much more study has been done and published. Here too, however, the ~~bulk~~ volume of surviving material facing researchers is more intimidating than inspiring, tending to send them back to those earlier periods for which the normal decrement of centuries has reduced their task to more manageable size. In this book, we have avoided this problem by limiting our view of twentieth century painting to five masters: Wu Ch'ang-shih, Wang I-t'ing, Ch'i Pai-shih, Fu Pao-shih, and

decorative in nature. To say this is not to undervalue the achievements of the major artists of this late period, which are frequently delightful and impressive. But they usually delight and impress through refinements of aesthetic effect and exquisiteness of taste, or through novelty of invention, rather than through any displays of power in organizing forms that can compare with the feats of the earlier masters.

Why this should be so is one of those large, unmanageable questions to which one can only propose partial answers. One such partial answer is that the concentration of important early paintings in the Manchu Imperial collection, especially during the reign of Ch'ien-lung (1736-96), made them inaccessible to artists, who were thus cut off from what had until then been a great pool of continuing inspiration and a corpus of work that set the standards by which the later productions could be judged. One can also cite historical, sociological and intellectual changes in accounting for a loss of faith in the function of painting as a serious means of interpreting the world and man's place in it. The preceding volume in this series has done this for the eighteenth century. For the nineteenth, we can speak of many factors: a general decline in the effectiveness of imperial rule, the weakening of the nation through internal revolt and external encroachment from the Western powers, and, perhaps most decisively and irreversibly, the questioning of long-established cultural values, the set of assumptions, loosely termed Confucianism, that underlay and stabilized traditional Chinese civilization. That the beliefs of Confucianism continued to be asserted does not mean that they carried the same authority as before; set in contrast and competition with new foreign ideas, they were forced into a position of defensive conservatism, and lost their viability.

The main artistic vehicle for making confident statements about the

Early Nineteenth Century Landscape Painting: the Orthodox Tradition Continued

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the commanding figures in landscape painting were not any living artists, but rather three who had died a hundred years earlier: Wang Hui, Wang Yüan-ch'i, and Yün Shou-p'ing. Their styles had been so popular and prestigious in their time as to become virtually inescapable for artists after them; both painters and patrons seemed persuaded that the Orthodox manner they represented was the only "right" way to paint landscape. Since no significant development in this Orthodox style was accomplished by their followers and descendants of the next few generations, such as the so-called "Four Small Wangs," the style was passed on unchanged to the masters of the nineteenth century.

Hsi Kang (1746-ca. 1816), a painter of the Hangchow region, handles it with great delicacy in pictures that appeal through softness of touch in brushwork, and through some degree of poetic sensitivity in their pictorial conceptions as well. The model for both qualities is clearly the works of Yün Shou-p'ing. In Hsi's album of 1801 (Pl. 56-57), each leaf illustrates a couplet from a T'ang poem.* Although the style adheres too closely to Orthodox canons to allow any effect of poetic immediacy or invention--the trees, mists, grassy hillsides, all seem too much the materials of art rather than of nature--such pictures demonstrate that the Orthodox manner still had some limited flexibility and was not totally stultifying.

The landscapes of Wang Hsüeh-hao (1754-1832), by contrast, are based on those of Wang Yüan-ch'i, and so follow a somewhat different, more formalist direction. The artist's birthplace, K'un-shan in Kiangsu Province, was close to Wang Yüan-ch'i's, T'ai-ts'ang, and he studied painting with the earlier master's grand-nephew; he was thus firmly situated in the Orthodox lineage. Some of Wang Hsüeh-hao's early works exhibit some freedom, even an eclectic

*Carter leaf: "Mists from the stream begin to rise, the pavilion sinks into darkness,
A mountain rain is about to fall, wind fills the upper storey."

Cahill leaf: "Old trees — no one passes by.
Deep in the mountain — somewhere a temple bell."

he was a man of private means who was under no compunction to please any taste but his own very reserved one. His Ming models were already near the point of over-refinement, and much of Ch'ien's own work could, not unfairly, be characterized as effete. The literati painting tradition was nearing the point of exhaustion, along with the Confucian amateur ideal more generally.

"Strolling by Moonlight at the Yü-shan Villa" (Pl. 49), dated 1813, is one of a smaller number of paintings in which Ch'ien Tu reveals himself as a more up-to-date painter carrying on the movement begun in Yangchow in the eighteenth century. He fills most of the picture space with dense patterns of repeated brushstrokes or tiny leafage--in this, and in the tortuously twisting rocks, he recalls the Yüan master Wang Meng. But the way the patterns merge into a unified surface is new--we will see an equivalent handling of color areas in flower paintings by Chao Chih-ch'ien and others--and the coloring is not to be paralleled before the late eighteenth century. Color in literati painting had throughout the Ming and early Ch'ing been kept mostly simple and pale, often with only two basic colors, warm and cool, added to the ink drawing. By the K'ang-hsi era (1662-1723), some painters had begun using a more varied palette and mixing pigments for subtle, in-between hues unknown to earlier painting. Examples are in the flower paintings of Yün Shou-p'ing and landscapes of Wang Yüan-ch'i; in the former case, at least, we can suspect the influence of Occidental painting. Experiments with colors continue in the works of Yangchow masters such as Li Shan and Lo P'ing, whose album dated 1774, now in the Freer Gallery of Art, contains leaves that anticipate nineteenth century developments in their use of color, combining sallow green, red-brown or russet, and plum tones with touches of brighter red. It is just this combination that we see in Ch'ien Tu's painting (detail, Plate 50). The coloring, although not at all naturalistic, is expressively right for the mood the artist means to convey. The scene is set on a moonlit evening in autumn, when the host and two

highly respected literati master of the nineteenth century--seems largely based on his extraordinary ability to turn history back two hundred years, through painting, to the early Ch'ing and the great period of the Four Wangs. So must many contemporary Chinese scholar-officials, observing with dismay the economic and political decline of their country, have wished to turn back time--we can best understand the historical significance of a work like Tai Hsi's album of landscapes of 1841 (Pl. 58-59) when we recognize that just when he was painting it, the Opium War was putting an end to China's complacent conviction of being the center of the civilized world. Tai Hsi's landscapes can be seen as symptomatic of an urge to retreat into the past, which characterizes Chinese culture at this time. They follow established formulae for stable, easily readable compositions. The brushwork is loose enough to give a pleasant effect of damp, grassy earthiness, the ink values skilfully controlled. Tai Hsi, like T'ang I-fen, met a noble and tragic death: after a distinguished official career, he accepted an imperial command to defend his native city of Hangchow against the Taiping rebels, and drowned himself when the city fell in 1860.

Early Nineteenth Century Figure Painting: Beautiful Women and Charming Children

No less escapist in subject and conservative in style than the Orthodox landscapes, although certainly more attractive, were the paintings of beautiful women that enjoyed a great popularity in this same period. Although they and the landscapes might seem diametrically opposed in the nature of their appeal, the one praising sensual pleasures and the other seeming to repudiate them, they were directed at the same kind of patron, the man of the gentry class or the scholar-official, and were doubtless intended by the artist to flatter subtly his aesthetic taste (the landscapes are always in a "refined" style) and his virility (the women are always

are the tamer versions of a more overtly erotic art of which examples in the same styles are occasionally to be seen; there was apparently a large output of such pictures, in both paintings and prints, from the Ming period on.

The artists who specialized in pictures of beautiful women came from the same centers as the Orthodox landscapists--Chiang Hsün (1764-1835) and Kai Ch'i (1774-1828) were from Sung-chiang, Ku Lo (ca. 1762-1835) from Hangchow, Fei Tan-hsü (1802-1850) from Wu-ch'eng not far to the north--but were more professional in their orientations; although they could be educated men, as Chiang and Kai were, they generally did not pursue official careers. Kai Ch'i and Fei Tan-hsü, the two most popular specialists in this genre, were active as commercial artists in Shanghai, which was already prosperous enough to attract some painters early in the century, although its great rise as an artistic center was still to come. Kai Ch'i did a series of illustrations for the Hung-lou Meng (Dream of the Red Chamber), which had been published only a few decades earlier, in 1791, and which doubtless had helped to implant in the public imagination a taste for the kind of romantic imagery these paintings offer (Fig. 22).

It is difficult to distinguish individual styles in these paintings, and stylistic distinctiveness was surely not a major aim of the artists. Kai Ch'i's "Lady Inscribing and Autumn Leaf" (Pl. 71) is a work of the highest refinement in a very traditional outline-and-color manner. Fei Tan-hsü's two ladies, in his painting dated 1847 (Pl. 64), seem to be engaged in some domestic pursuit, perhaps sewing, instead of an aesthetic or amatory one, and they appear to be more matter-of-fact people with their oval faces and vacuous expressions. The facial types portrayed, we should note, are not consistent within the oeuvre of particular artists, and may well reflect changing fashions or different preferences in feminine beauty more than distinctions of personal style. The women in the paintings by Chiang Hsün

A Cantonese Individualist: Su Jen-shan

In recent years another 19th century master, scarcely noticed since his lifetime, has come into prominence through the research and publication of the Cantonese scholar Jen Yu-wen 簡又文, as well as Li Chu-tsing and Pierre Ryckmans. This is Su Jen-shan (1814-1849). His tragic life can be briefly recounted. Although a brilliant child, he failed repeatedly in the official examinations, became a teacher and professional painter, developed such introverted and odd ways of behavior that he came to be regarded as crazy, was put into prison at the age of thirty-four on the instigation of his father, and died there two years later. Although Canton had produced interesting painters before him, there was no strong local tradition for him to follow, nor, probably, did he have access to any sizeable collection of old paintings; he must have learned largely from woodblock-printed books such as the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting and illustrated books such as those by Ch'en Hung-shou, with whose style he was certainly familiar. He paints groups of figures, such as the "Thirteen Sages of Medicine" (Fig. 20), in a firm, relatively unmodulated brushline that suggests a derivation from woodblock pictures, without washes or dry-brush texturing or any other intermediate tones to relieve the stark black-and-white design. His landscapes (Fig. 21) have the same linear character and similarly use repeated patterns to fill large areas. On some, calligraphy becomes still another pattern, filling its assigned space densely besides conveying in words, as the paintings do in forms, some insight into the strange and tortured mind of the artist. The paintings are striking and original, rare virtues in this period, and establish Su Jen-shan as a fascinating and important painter, although one of limited breadth.

that Shanghai enjoyed were thus based on the very factors, the Taiping Rebellion and the encroachments of foreign nations, that were tragically negative for China as a whole.

By the last decades of the century, the period of activity of Jen Po-nien, a rich plebeian culture had grown up, in many aspects similar to that of Edo in seventeenth and eighteenth century Japan, with opera troupes performing, brothel districts renowned as the finest in the country, and the most creative painters of China concentrated there, enjoying the patronage of rich merchants and, to a lesser extent, the local gentry. The imposition of the commercial values and the taste of the merchant class on art and literature was seen by the more traditionally minded as a degeneration of Confucian ideals, but they were powerless to halt it. The artists of Shanghai, instead of being apologetic about the "vulgar" character of their works, chose to exploit the fresh possibilities that opened up when they rejected, or at least relaxed, the constraints of traditional "good taste." They made striking innovations in the use of color, used unashamedly decorative effects, and experimented brilliantly with ways of combining Western realism with what they chose to retain of respectably "literary" or antiquarian styles.

Later Nineteenth Century Figure Painting

In the new painting that arose in Shanghai, landscape was relatively unimportant, although landscapists continued to work there. Flower-and-bird subjects were popular, and figure painting most popular of all. Once more the parallel with Ukiyoe is striking. The three most creative masters active in Shanghai in the period 1845-95, and the three truly first-rank artists of the nineteenth century as a whole, were Jen Hsiung (Jen Wei-ch'ang), Chao Chih-ch'ien, and Jen I (Jen Po-nien). All painted figures, although Chao,

of the painting surface, the subtly scaled grey tones with a few touches of color--red-orange, an acid green--and most of all the presentation of the woman, provocative but with no suggestion of coyness or subservience, a self-sufficient person with (her face seems to tell us) a cool intelligence. All this sets him apart from the purveyors of refined and aestheticized eroticism. And we have only to turn from this to his mundanely realistic portrait of Ting Lan-hsü (Fig. 5), painted in the same year, to realize the the breadth of his art. That breadth is demonstrated already in an album of 1852, known now only through an old reproduction book, in which the painter presents us, in succession, with a figure painting after Ch'en Hung-shou, two flower paintings that span neatly the gap between Li Shan and Chao Chih-ch'ien (Fig. 6), a beauty on a veranda by moonlight in the manner of Fei Tan-hsü, a still-life that reveals unmistakeably the influence of Occidental painting although he inscribes it as a copy after T'ang Yin (Fig. 11), and three landscapes.

The leaves in his undated album of "Landscapes with Figures" (Pl. 65-68) span a range of styles that is narrower but still interestingly varied. The compositions are again unhackneyed, the colors bright. In the subjects portrayed, pensive beauties alternate with scholars. For the latter, Jen Hsiung draws on two stylistic models for contrasting expressive effects: the sharply-outlined, angular style of Ch'en Hung-shou, with its characteristically astringent flavor (Pl. 67), and the softer manner of Huang Shen, sweeter in flavor, well suited to slightly sentimental portrayals of lovable, white-bearded old gentlemen (Pl. 65). Much of late Ch'ing figure painting, if we exclude the styleless and expressively neutral, can be seen as turning toward one or the other of these two modes, or vacillating between them: the bitter vs. the sweet, or the antiquarian-literary (Ch'en's) vs. the plebeian (Huang's).

An album leaf in a Chinese collection (Fig. [illegible]) is an excellent example of Jen's new capacity to invest mundane realism with a certain poetic beauty. His paunchy Shanghai citizens relax by a river on a hot summer day, fanning themselves, scratching their backs, and watching two water buffalo wallow in the mud. Such sympathetic portrayal of everyday life, and the wide appeal of his paintings to people on all levels of aesthetic sophistication, have made him a favored artist today in the People's Republic of China, where many publications on him have appeared.

That he could handle with equal skill the other mode, the more sharp-angled, fine-line manner derived from Ch'en Hung-shou, is demonstrated in a number of works, among them the "Nü Kua Smelting Stones" of 1888 (Pl. 80). The picture exists in two versions, one on the Chinese mainland, the other in the Nelson Gallery, Kansas City, which is the one here reproduced. This mode, in contrast to the realistic tendencies of the other, tended to attenuate or otherwise distort forms, and treated textures unnaturalistically, so that a cloth robe could look like carved stone, or stone like weathered wood. It is ideally suited to such a subject as Jen treats here. The story of how Nü Kua, legendary sister and consort of the mythical ruler Fu-hsi, smelted stones to repair one of the pillars that support the firmament had gained some popular currency in Jen Po-nien's time through having been retold at the beginning of Hung-lou-meng. Jen suggests delicately the serpent's tail in which Nü Kua's body ended by concealing it in a long, rumpled extension of her robe.

We should mention in passing that Jen Po-nien was an excellent portraitist, the best of his period. Good examples of his portraits, however, seem to exist only in mainland Chinese collections. His portrait of Wu Ch'ang-shih (Fig. 24) stands out among them as a remarkably successful use of delicate drawing to render an image that is rather indelicate, in fact

Orthodox mode, but with a distinctive softness of touch and subtlety of ink values. Hu Chang or Hu T'ieh-mei (1848-1899), an artist who began his career in Anhui Province, became a commercial painter in Shanghai, and spent some of his late years in Japan, can sometimes break the Orthodox molds to create powerful, moving works such as his "Listening to the Bell of a Temple in Mist" (Pl. 85). Although he inscribes it as being in the manner of Wang Chien, the focus on the figure in the lower right and the intense activation of the surface by the bare trees remove it from the bland world of the Orthodox style. The persistence of this tradition, now sustained more by the approval of conservative connoisseurs than by any creative energy in the artists, is well represented by Lu Hui (1851-1920). A native of the Soochow region who lived for some time in Shanghai, he refined his style through the study of old paintings, and became one of the most successful artists of his day, appealing no doubt to those who found the works of Jen Po-nien and his followers too low-class for their taste. His landscape of 1917 (Pl. 83) could almost have been painted by Wang Chien or some other

similar in composition (Fig. 13), gives a clue both to the date and to the original source of the composition, since he inscribes it: "I once owned a Ting Yün-p'eng painting of this subject, and enjoy making copies of it." The sketch and the large painting differ enough in design to indicate that Jen depended only loosely on the late Ming master's picture. A group of trees centrally placed in each provides a supporting and stabilizing trunk around which the rest moves in a spiralling motion. In the large picture, the eye is carried along this course, around and upward, beginning with a sudden pull into middle distance to where, at center right, a man and his servant are seen ascending the path. (This abrupt pull into depth at one side is reminiscent of passages in Italian Mannerist paintings.) Long, loose ts'un brushstrokes in dilute ink cover the rocks and earth slopes, rendering rounded volumes but also setting up restless movements that interact with the areas of tree foliage for a dense, active surface. The coloring in light, cool hues, with a few spots of brighter green and orange, enhances the freshness and visual beauty of the painting.

A few other landscape-with-figures compositions by Jen Po-nien, extraordinarily refined in conception and drawing, add to the stature of this brilliant master and help to offset the impression given by his more numerous popular, "vulgar" figure pictures, which he produced in too great numbers to keep the quality consistent. Two leaves from an undated album (Pl. 76, 77) represent the highest level of his output. They are sensitive portrayals of man-in-nature themes, done in brushwork of a special finesse. In one, a man lies reading with his head pillowed on two cases of books, his back turned to the viewer, framed by an overhanging cliff and vines. This way of presentation, cutting off contact and making the figure into a symbol of solitude, is without real precedent in Chinese painting. The brushwork is deliberately blurred at some points through the use of watery strokes that soak into the

paper. The other leaf depicts two men talking in a thatched house built over a stream, with huge boulders on its banks and bamboo growing behind.

Jen Po-nien used this latter composition also for a hanging scroll painting (Pl. 81), which, in contrast to his larger "Landscape with Figures" (Pl. 88), is spacious and atmospheric, rendering the damp, slightly misty air of the stream valley. Here the taller shape allows the artist to set the house and figures further back for an impression of deeper seclusion. The drawing of the boulders is unusually effective. When we speak of a general decline in the qualitative level of Chinese painting in the nineteenth century, we must recognize also that a few masters could still, in some of their works, rival or equal the achievements of the past, as paintings such as these demonstrate.

Flower-and-Bird Painting of the Nineteenth Century

In flower-and-bird painting of earlier centuries, from the Sung through the Ming, two diverging tendencies had correlated approximately to two types of artists, separated by socio-economic criteria: professional masters had ordinarily worked in detailed manners with rich color, often on silk, while the scholar-amateurs usually preferred to paint these subjects in ink monochrome with broader, freer brushwork, and usually on paper. There are of course exceptions, but this distinction, which of course corresponds roughly to the Northern School-Southern School distinction in landscape, was on the whole a valid one. By the early Ch'ing it was breaking down, and a scholarly painter and Southern School landscapist, Yün Shou-p'ing, could become the leading flower painter of his age by depicting them in rich colors and realistic styles, sometimes even in a Western-influenced style with opaque colors used for illusionistic shading. In the eighteenth century, the calligraphic styles previously associated with the amateurs were used

lung, by Li Shan, who adapted them into a less constrained, more calligraphic manner of brushwork. These precedents, along with new influence from European paintings (as well as Westernized paintings done in the gouache medium by Chinese artists for European buyers) that Jen and others were able to see in Shanghai, underlie the technical features of Jen Hsiung's work. They do not, however, account for its expressive qualities--a heavy, somber tone produced by darkening and neutralizing the colors with ink, and by the dense, multilayered tangle of grass and bushes that fills most of the space.

A similar expression and mood can be found in many of the works of the greatest flower master of the period, Chao Chih-ch'ien (1829-1884), and since that expressive quality had been excellently characterized by Takeyoshi Tsuruta, we can do no better than to quote him here, to introduce this master:

". . . the flower painting of Wu Hsi-tsai reveals a fresh sensibility, but this is still far from the agitated emotion of Chao Chih-ch'ien's works. It appears that painting inspired by depressed or melancholy feelings in the breast, or by anguish, begins with Chao Chih-ch'ien. It was not with him, as with most other scholar-artists, a simple matter of expressing feelings aroused by the circumstances of the moment. The same can be said of most artists of the Shanghai School--the causes of their grief differ, but they share a sense of dark hopelessness about the conditions of their time. This they have in common with the Yangchow masters, and is another reason why the Shanghai School can be seen as a late phase of the Yangchow School. When we consider that artists of both schools favored flower subjects, we realize that there is something in the portrayal of flowers that could touch the passionate artist. If suffering is one condition of modern painting, we can say that modern Chinese painting begins with Chao Chih-ch'ien."

Chao's particular anguish began when in 1862 his wife died while he was away from his home, Shao-hsing in Chekiang Province, and was prevented

They are also nearly twice as large, which may account in part for their character, if we consider that they were probably intended as imposing decorations for the home of some patron. Other dated works, however, confirm the evidence of these two sets: Chao's development seems to be from a manner of working in wet, broad strokes of ink and color, with little sense of impulsion or direction in the individual stroke--the manner seen in the 1861 works--to one that is heavier, more linear, with the brushstrokes tending to be more distinct. He is at his most sensitive in the works of his early period, which offer visual delights and nuances unmatched later. Perhaps his finest surviving work is an album dated 1859, now in the Palace Museum, Peking (Fig. 2,3 [illegible]). Black-and-white reproduction cannot convey more than a poor shadow of the beauty of these leaves, which are among the masterworks of Chinese flower painting. They are also of special interest because the artist's inscriptions refer to the earlier masters on whose styles they are based--for the two we reproduce, Yün Shou-p'ing and Li Shan.

Nearly equal in quality is an album of twelve leaves dated 1865 in a Japanese private collection, representing flowers and vegetables (Pl. 92-95). In style as in period, it stands midway between the two Tokyo National Museum sets, with the clearer colors and sensitive touch of the 1861 pictures but a more sinewy calligraphic brushwork that foreshadows the style of the 1870 set. The artist's inscription on the last leaf (Pl. 95) advises that the painter must practice outline drawing as a discipline before taking up the "boneless" manner, and ridicules the "cheap view" that holds outline painting to be "vulgar artisanry." But few other artists of the time could handle the outline manner with the unhackneyed grace of Chao Chih-ch'ien's drawing, which manages to reconcile the values of realism with those of disciplined calligraphy, delineating the real

(Cf. also Pl. 89, undated, by Chao Chih-ch'ien.)

1890 and after, when he attained his greatest ease and sureness, could not be included.

The "Wisteria, Narcissus, and Bamboo" of 1879 (Pl.100) shows him at the point closest to Chao Chih-ch'ien, whom he may have known and who was surely an influence on his style. Even the subject, combining three kinds of plants, is like one of Chao's. There are differences, however, which ensure that it could never be mistaken for Chao's painting. Jen's compositions are usually more open than Chao's, leaving space around his subjects where Chao tends to crowd the frame. Jen's brushwork shows a more supple adaptation to the things it portrays. The rendering of depth, from the black bamboo back to the palest leaves and flowers of the wisteria, is masterly. His "Trilling Bird of Bamboo" of the following year, 1880 (Pl.102) is a more dynamic composition executed with the same consummate control. It is done in imitation of Hua Yen or Hsin-lo Shan-jen (1682-1765), whose works in this genre may be seen in the preceding volume of this series. Singing birds were a favorite subject of Hua Yen, who was able somehow to capture the exhilaration of their songs in his paintings. Jen Po-nien does so also, in portrayals that are more naturalistic than Hua's, in spite of his fondness for giving geometric shapes, usually four-sided, to the birds' bodies. The exhilaration is caught as well in the depiction of the bamboo, the chrysanthemums, even the rock, all of which seem to exist in sunlight and air.

Besides these, Jen Po-nien portrayed an amazing repertory of plants, birds, and animals in compositions that virtually never seem to repeat each other. In an 1882 painting, he depicts "Juniper Trees" (Pl.101), perhaps as a present to felicitate the birthday of some aged man. Here again we can see the influence of Chao Chih-ch'ien's style. In a work of 1882 (Pl.103) he playfully added peonies and other flowers to rubbings of

Wu Ch'ang-shih

With Wu Chün-ch'ing or Wu Ch'ang-shih we turn to a painter much more widely known than any we have considered so far. Even Jen Po-nien, so famous and successful in his lifetime, has fewer admirers today. When we consider Jen's far greater stylistic virtuosity and the nature of his subjects, figures and birds-and-flowers, which are inherently more attractive to the average art-lover than Wu's flowering branches or orchids-and-rocks, we are faced with a phenomenon that demands discussion at the outset. How to account for Wu Ch'ang-shih's immense, overshadowing popularity?

First of all, his stature as calligrapher and seal-carver has spread his fame among the very large audiences for those arts and practitioners of them, greatly augmenting the number of admirers of his paintings. Particularly is this true in Japan, where he may well be the most widely known of all Chinese artists (his only rival being Ch'i Pai-shih). Secondly, his style has been so much imitated by so many later painters, down to the present day (when close followers are still active in Shanghai and elsewhere), that he can be hailed as founder of a school that has created a large segment of twentieth century Chinese painting. Third is the sheer quantity of Wu Ch'ang-shih's surviving work and its wide dissemination; his paintings can be seen in many countries outside China, with Japan again foremost among them. (In Europe and America, he is still considered a somewhat special taste, in contrast to Ch'i Pai-shih, whose works are enjoyed everywhere.)

But these are all external factors, and do not account for the broad popularity of the paintings themselves. If we consider the aspects of them that are praised by connoisseurs--the successful integration of painting, calligraphy, and poetry; the adoption of elements of style from calligraphy and seal-carving into painting; subtle modulations of brushwork and purity of design--these sound like the values of fairly advanced connoisseurship,

the 1861 Tokyo National Museum set. Chao's paintings are certainly the most refined in execution; the period of Wu's career when his painting exhibits the greatest sensitivity and responsiveness to natural form is also the period when he is closest to Chao Chih-ch'ien, and Ch'i Pai-shih never quite reaches that level at all. On the other hand, it is Ch'i who exhibits the most variety in subjects and a touch of wit that makes Chao and Wu look rather humorless in comparison; he probably has the greatest general appeal. What points of pre-eminence, then, does this leave for Wu Ch'ang-shih?

Wu's achievement in painting cannot properly be assessed without taking into account his calligraphy and seal-carving, and ideally his poetry as well; that we are here dealing with his paintings alone is because of limitations in space (and the author's competence). Even by themselves, however, they make up a large and consistently excellent body of work. Wu Ch'ang-shih created a strong, distinctive, personal mode of painting, taking from the past what served his purpose, and explored the capacities of this style with extraordinary thoroughness. Although, as noted above, it would be difficult to designate masterpieces among his works, there are few failures to be seen either. His strengths are a sureness of hand and taste (due in part to his aesthetic cultivation as a chin-shih-chia calligrapher) and a compositional inventiveness within clear, self-imposed limits. When he writes of himself that he "originally didn't know how to paint" (素不知畫) he probably means that he was not the kind of naturally gifted artist who draws everything around him from childhood; he apparently had to learn by mastering element after element, as one learns calligraphy. In this he is the opposite of Jen Po-nien. But once he had mastered them, Wu used these pictorial components to make up compositions that seem all the more

repertory; he seldom did so later. A plum-branch painting from 1892 (Pl. 10) is executed in brushstrokes clearly imitating Chu Ta both in their slow, deliberate movements and in the way the ink soaks into the paper at some points and is dragged dryly over the surface at others. Most importantly for Wu's future style, the painting already exists more as a structure of formally interlocked brushstrokes than as a self-sufficient natural image. Precedents for this mode of composition can be seen in the works of Li Shan (Fig. 4), the originator of so many of the techniques and stylistic ideas used by later flower painters.

A pair of small flower pictures from 1907 (Pl. 8,9), originally leaves in an album, represent the phase described above when Wu was following Jen Po-nien and Chao Chih-ch'ien most closely. From them he has learned how to work in broad, puddly patches of ink and color, adding ink lines to still-wet areas so that they blur slightly, and employing an unevenly loaded brush held slanting for shaded strokes--a technique used by Hsü Wei in the late Ming, by Li Shan and other Yangchow masters, and (more schematically) by Shijo School artists in Japan.

The period 1905-1915 is pivotal in Wu Ch'ang-shih's career; it is at this time that he develops his distinctive compositions and brushwork, and produces his most disciplined pictures (also, one could easily argue, his finest). His themes are now set: they are usually flowers and rocks. The flowering stalks or bushes are not rooted in the ground--there is seldom any indication of a ground plane at all--but are treated as "cut branches," placed before or above the rock in an ambiguous spatial relationship to it. The rock serves to stabilize and give weight to the composition, as a foil to the lighter and more fragile plant subjects, but does not provide much real sense of a natural setting. A good example is an "Orchids and Rock" picture of 1913 (Pl. 6). A fastidious, even purist taste is

manifested in the simple composition and consummately controlled ink values and brushwork--in the rock and further clump of orchids, the broad, deliberate strokes become very pale without turning spongy or otherwise weak at any point. From such achievements, visually esoteric though they may seem, arises much of the pleasure that a Wu Ch'ang-shih painting can give us.

We have noted in the works of Jen Hsiung (Fig. —) and Chao Chih-ch'ien (Pl. 89) a mode of composing a picture out of interwoven or tangled brush-lines that represent flowers, stalks, and vines. This is also a mode favored by Wu Ch'ang-shih, who uses it often in this period when the subject lends itself to such treatment, as in a painting of "Wisteria" from 1915 (Frontispiece A). The complex overlapping of forms creates a shallow depth and draws the eye into the picture much as it is drawn into a painting by Jackson Pollock or some other of the "action painters" of the 1950's. But the medium, liquid and transparent instead of being viscous and opaque like theirs, allows far more nuance of tone and touch. (Nuance, to be sure, was the last thing the "action painters" wanted.) Masses of leaves and blossoms provide more stable areas between which the vines twist.

A composition of "Loquats and Rock" from the same year (Fig. 1) indicates the new direction his painting was to take from around that time. The picture space is more filled, and the forms, instead of being mainly contained within it, push in from the sides and are partly cut off by them. The composition is strongly vertical, with a suggestion of attenuation. The brushwork is bolder, heavier. Generally, the style reveals more of idiosyncracy than before. Around 1918-19, a new tendency appears, especially in the paintings of bamboo and blossoming plum that Wu did in considerable numbers around this time. Stiff vertical strokes crossed by others horizontal or slightly slanted form a trellis-like framework that holds firmly to the picture plane, as in the "Bamboo" of 1918 (Pl. 22). In a "Blossoming

We do not mean to imply that his achievement would have been more impressive if he had pursued a greater diversity in subject and style. On the contrary, his few landscapes, mostly dating from the period 1913-16, are competent and interesting but do not add much to what other artists had done (Pl. 19, 20), nor do his still rarer figure paintings suggest that he would have enriched that genre greatly if he had devoted more of his energies to it. We can count ourselves fortunate that Wu Ch'ang-shih recognized early his real strengths and drew on them constantly throughout his long career. It was this self-knowledge, this thorough mastery of a strictly defined system of forms, that kept his oeuvre on such a consistently high plane of quality.

Wang I-t'ing

Wang Ch'en, best known by his tzu I-t'ing (1867-1938), might be used to illustrate the point just made, that diversity in subjects is not necessarily a source of strength for an artist. His paintings are much more varied than Wu's thematically, but much less varied in their formal properties--types of brushwork, kinds of relationships between forms--and it is the latter criteria which in the end determine value, and relegate Wang to the second rank. He is nevertheless an interesting and often entertaining artist, who merits some consideration in any history of recent painting.

He was an amateur painter in a more real sense than the others, being extremely successful in his extra-artistic career--he was a prosperous business man, a supporter of Buddhism, and a philanthropist. Born in Wu-hsing in Chekiang Province, he came to Shanghai as a youth, began by working in a bank, and eventually became a prominent figure in the city's commercial circles. Through business contacts he had many friends in Japan, and hundreds

it, Ch'i is admired as a man of low class origins who attained fame through his own efforts, and who expresses in his art some vital spirit of the common people. (It is also not irrelevant to his fame that he is a fellow native of Hunan Province with Mao Tse-tung.) By many Chinese he is hailed as a preserver of Chinese tradition at a time when many other artists, such as Hsü Pei-hung and Lin Feng-mien, were turning to Western styles. During his late years, at least, Ch'i looked, acted, and talked as a major painter is expected to, and (as is the case with Chang Ta-ch'ien today) his personal magnetism and venerable appearance raised him somehow above objective criticism. Finally, the subjects of many of his paintings have such charm that one feels compelled to like them. But other artists are not extravagantly praised for painting pictures with the kind of humor or whimsy that would be as well suited to a cartoonist or a children's book illustrator; on the contrary, this is ordinarily cause for some suspicion. Why is Ch'i Pai-shih lauded for doing what could not easily be tolerated in others? He is clearly not a great master because of these factors (unless we are to abandon our normal criteria of artistic value for this single case); is he then a great master in spite of them? It is probably too soon to attempt any definitive answer to this question, but we will, as we discuss his paintings, disclose some personal views on the matter.

Ch'i Pai-shih's biography can be related in considerable detail, since he himself has left us a long chronological account, dictated to his student Chang Tz'u-ch'i 張次溪, and many other records are available. The son of a poor family, he spent his early years in farm labor, then was apprenticed to a carpenter, his uncle, when he was fifteen. He had already begun to draw pictures at the age of eight. No success as a carpenter, he worked for a time as a carver of flowers in wood, then began the formal study of painting when he was twenty-seven. His early works show such a diversity

flower pictures and Tao-chi's small, album-leaf landscapes); Ch'i Pai-shih chose the latter course. In the decade after the revolution, the stylistic nuances and esoteric references of classical Chinese art and literature came to seem inadequate and unsuited to the new age, and a powerful reaction against them took place. In literature it was manifested in Hu Shih's literary revolution of 1916-17, with a turn to the use of vernacular language for the portrayal of everyday, down-to-earth themes, and in poetry, in the simple and direct expression of emotions, with borrowings sometimes from folk songs and popular literature. Parallels with Ch'i Pai-shih's development are obvious. In painting of this same period, we have noted already the shift from sensitively executed, compositionally complex pictures to bolder and simpler ones in the cases of Wu Ch'ang-shih and Wang I-t'ing. To all these could be added factors in Ch'i Pai-shih's life, his patronage, the attitude toward his art that years of poverty had implanted in him. He was not inclined to spend a great deal of time on a single painting, in pursuit of some pure and idealistic artistic goal, especially when his quickly executed pictures in the hsieh-i manner were more popular anyway. His perfectly sensible practice, the heritage of his peasant and artisan upbringing, was rather to work hard, produce lots of pictures, give them a wide appeal by treating lively themes and using strong brushwork and bright colors, repeat compositions that proved popular, and thus make a good living for himself and his family. This practical course also, somewhat to his surprise if we are to credit his own account, made him famous. And so the figure of Ch'i Pai-shih came to dominate the Chinese painting scene. In 1920 he was pleased and flattered to be compared to Wu Ch'ang-shih, whom he had begun much earlier to imitate; by the mid-1920's he had achieved an international reputation, and by the time of Wu Ch'ang-shih's death in 1937, he had easily eclipsed the older master in fame and popularity.

Some connoisseurs of the time continued to prefer Wu, and there are still those (such as the present writer) who cling stubbornly to traditional (some would say reactionary) criteria of value and find expressive depths and visual satisfactions in Wu's more disciplined and reserved paintings that Chi's do not offer. But the twentieth century, or at least the three quarters of it that have gone by, has made its choice clearly in favor of Ch'i, and perhaps history will confirm that choice.

Ch'i Pai-shih's relationship to Wu Ch'ang-shih deserves some attention and should some day be studied systematically through dated works of both artists. Ch'i writes that he was persuaded to change his style in 1920 by the painter Ch'en Shih-tseng, who advised that "fine-style paintings of flowering plum take a lot of effort and aren't much to look at." (工筆畫梅費力不好看). Ch'i then created, he claims, the manner of painting them with blossoms in red and leaves in ink 紅花墨葉. But this manner had been used earlier by Wu Ch'ang-shih. Again in 1920, in response to someone speaking of "Wu in the South [Shanghai] and Ch'i in the North [Peking]," Ch'i remarks ingenuously that "there was indeed some slight resemblance between our stylistic directions" (我們的筆路倒是有些相同的. In fact, one important segment of Chi's oeuvre, his pictures of flowering branches, chrysanthemums, wisteria, and other flower subjects, as well as grapes and gourd vines etc., consists of fairly straightforward imitations of Wu's works. The originality of Ch'i Pai-shih lies elsewhere.# As a start to understanding it, we may look at two leaves from an undated but fairly early album--a colophon speaks of it as a work of his "robust years" 壯年 , and it was probably painted in the period 1915-20. One leaf (Pl.28) depicts a cat looking at a crab through a fence, with chrysanthemums above. The chrysanthemums are based closely on Wu Ch'ang-shih's, but the theme is otherwise totally new, and must have been based, like many others,

manners is not disturbing, but serves to focus the viewer's attention on the principal subject.

Ch'i Pai-shih's paintings of branches of blossoming fruit trees, wisteria, etc. from the 1920's are, as noted above, based fairly closely on Wu Ch'ang-shih's, but as the years passed Ch'i began to show a distinct taste and compositional method in this genre also. A set of four paintings dated 1929, done for a girl pupil, of which we reproduce the pictures of blossoming cherry and crab-apple (hai-t'ang), display these independent directions. The painting of crab-apple (Pl.) is composed of two branches with leaves and flowers; they are related only by juxtaposition on the surface, with no unifying movement between them. In the picture of blossoming cherry? plum? (Pl.35), the branches and twigs form a pattern reminiscent of the cracked-ice pattern on some blue-and-white porcelains, or the crackle on kuan ware pots, dividing the surface into interesting polygonal shapes. An excellent painting of "Blossoming Cherry" in the Hashimoto Sueyoshi Collection (Pl. 38), probably dating from around the same time as the set of four, follows the same compositional principle. What the compositions of the three paintings have in common, and what contrasts with Wu Ch'ang-shih's typical compositions, is their static quality; the forms are firmly set in place, instead of being charged with the kind of force or momentum (shih 勢) that seems to carry over from one to another for dynamic unity. The loss in all-over energizing of the composition is compensated by gains in the kind of strength that comes from stability; we are not characterizing them as static with any implication of lifelessness or other weakness. As we will see, Ch'i's landscape paintings tend to be similarly organized of large, stable units. In his last years, Ch'i sometimes loosened the movements of his brush for less restrained calligraphic effects. The "Blossoming Plum Branches" (Pl. 48) signed at the age of 97, which must have been one of his

these are more than simple imitations. Often he paints river landscapes with far-separated shores and houses among trees, bucolic scenes that follow no established type in Chinese landscape painting (Fig. 12, Detail Frontispiece B). In the 1920's he works out a distinctive new manner in compositions that represent houses among cypress trees, typically, with loaf-shaped mountains beyond on a high horizon. The coloring, predominantly in red-brown and blue, is also distinctive. This manner, in which the houses are often repeated for a geometric pattern, was taken up and developed further by his pupil Li K'o-jan. We reproduce two interesting variants on this compositional type, both undated. One (Pl. 40) places the trees in the foreground and just behind these two vertically rising cliffs that arch over to meet at the top, forming a strange cave-like opening through which a river and house are seen in the distance. This odd motif had appeared in 17th century paintings by Wu Pin, Kung Hsien, Fan Ch'i and others; some picture of that kind must have stimulated Ch'i's imagination. The other represents "The Shrine on Mt. Tai" (Pl. 39), and according to the previous owner, the Czech scholar Lubor Hajek, dates from around 1930. Again the trees occupy the foreground, and the mysterious round-topped mountains loom in the background. The composition, using the temple wall to surround and divide space, is reminiscent of some of the faux-naif pictures of the Yangchow master Chin Nung. Ch'i's inscription reads: "After I had painted this picture, a foreigner saw it and said, 'In three hundred years this style of painting hasn't been met with.' Then he heaved a great sigh and went away."

Before we heave a great sigh and leave Ch'i Pai-shih, we should return once more to the question posed at the beginning: was he a great painter? The final answer must be left to history, but perhaps the time has come to

suggest, tentatively, that he was not: that he was a master with a superb sense of design, a lively imagination, and a more than adequate technique, all of which assets he turned, however, more often than not, to uses that were facile, ~~often~~ sometimes even trivial. That is to say, he was an artist with the capacity for greatness who somehow, through circumstances of his time and his own life, failed to attain it. Where other painters--Tomioka Tessai, to take a contemporary example--rise to unprecedented heights in their late years, never losing the creative, experimental approach that drives artists to their supreme achievements, Ch'i chose to coast along comfortably once he had established an attractive and popular style and repertory, repeating his successes for decades without adding to them appreciably except in quantity. He aimed, moreover, at strong and immediate effects rather than at expressive or formal complexities or nuances, and his pictures consequently tend to lack depth in both literal and figurative senses. But when confronted by his paintings with all their undeniable attractions, one may nevertheless feel inclined to set aside these art-historical concerns and simply enjoy them.

Huang criticizes the Orthodox masters on the grounds that their highly conventionalized pictures lack naturalism--their mountains, he says, look like "mountains on paper."

Such criticism may be difficult to understand when we look at Huang's own paintings, which scarcely seem naturalistic in any ordinary sense. But in a special sense they are. K'un-ts'an and Cheng Sui had built up their landscapes out of dense, tangled applications of dry brushstrokes, allowed their forms to run together instead of setting them clearly apart, and avoided planned-looking compositions; by these means they had given their paintings the appearance of nature in all its rich disorder. In this Huang follows them, especially in his late works, when the brushwork becomes ever looser and shaggier, the compositions ever less articulated and spatially readable. In spite of this looseness, Huang's late landscapes are his most interesting and original works. He is another artist, like Ch'i Pai-shih, who was too prolific to give serious thought and care to more than a few works--his total output is estimated at around 10,000 paintings. Moreover, the dangers of over-production are greater for a landscapist, whose creative task involves (or should involve) a disciplined ordering of forms in space. Huang's quick improvisations do not allow much organizing of forms, which may be a major reason why he developed a style in which a degree of disorganization is taken as an artistic goal. He was, moreover, in accord with a broad trend in late Chinese landscape in the direction of reducing the picture to pure surface.

Two pictures from the 1920's represent opposed tendencies within his middle-period style. A landscape of 1926 (Pl. 117) is an excellent example of the conservative tendency; it is a substantial, spacious, clearly readable, using traditional techniques for giving depth to tree groups or surrounding mountain peaks with mist. In the above-mentioned criticism of the

painting. Fortunately, Huang's didacticism was largely confined to his writings and seldom intrudes on the paintings.

The same compositional methods, with some areas densely packed with brushstrokes and others empty, as if to suggest a coalescence and dispersal of matter, may be seen in the large-scale works of his late years, such as the landscape painted on a trip to (? Ling-hua-t'ien?) (Pl. 119). The informal composition and the brushwork give it an improvisatory character, suggesting a travel-sketch made on the spot. (Traditional Chinese landscapes, by contrast, were always studio paintings, even though they might be based on sketches made from real scenery.) One might criticize such a picture, and much of the rest of Huang's work, as containing too much that seems arbitrary or capricious; the artist would answer that that was his intent. Nevertheless, we should recognize that the evolution of this style and the public acceptance of it depended on a special set of factors in Huang's art-historical situation: a reaction against arranged compositions and traditional brush manners, a popular preference for spontaneity, a revival or interest in the early Ch'ing individualists, a certain fascination with Impressionism and later developments in European art which affected even those Chinese masters who most asserted their allegiance to Chinese traditions. The style was not, in other words, inherently strong or historically viable, and has had no noticeable effect on later painting.

painting, when artists who worked in traditional styles did so by choice, and had to choose moreover between a variety of old and new styles known to them through reproductions and exhibitions, with no compelling reason for choosing one over another, unless it were, as with Huang, one's birthplace. We have entered, that is to say, the Chinese gallery of Malraux' Imaginary Museum, where virtually the whole range of past art lies open before artists. Ch'i Pai-shih seems relatively unconcerned with the larger world of art, and is on the whole a less style-conscious artist than the other two, both of whom were teachers in academies and authors of art-theoretical writings. Where Huang Pin-hung had chosen the Anhui School artists as his chief models, Fu Pao-shih chose the greatest of the Individualist masters, Tao-chi, for his landscapes, and Ch'en Hung-shou and others for his figures. Moreover, he was exposed to influence from Japanese painting through having studied at the Imperial Academy in Tokyo. The complexity of Fu's art-historical position can be recognized if we try, for instance, to account for Western influence in his work, such as the illusionistic shading in the faces of his figures: it might come from earlier Ch'ing figure painters such as Huang Shen (echoes of whose style still survive in his work), or from 19th century painting, or from conservative Western-influenced painting in Japan (where painters inclined to perpetuate native traditions faced similar problems), or from Fu's own exposure to European painting. In fact, it must come from all of these. We can no longer, even to the degree that we could before, write of sources for stylistic change, but can only analyze the artist's situation and characterize it as one of extensive awareness of the art of many times and places. If space and the scope of this book permitted, we could go on to describe, as a setting for Fu Pao-shih's activity, the extraordinary ferment in Chinese painting of the 1920's and 30's, with schools and associations forming and dissolving, the relative merits of Chinese and Western traditions being debated, and artists returned from study trips to France or Japan promoting what they had learned

in a boat (Pl. 124), Fu Pao-shih uses a very different style, with heavy ink drawing (resembling that of Wang I-t'ing around this time) and a composition reduced to only a few elements. It would be simplistic to take these two pictures to represent opposed directions in his early style which were reconciled in his maturity; much more of Fu's early work must be studied before we can begin to understand his development. Nevertheless, some such fusion of the tendencies seen in these two pictures must underly the works of his late period. A "River Landscape in Rain" dated 1948 (Pl. 113), for instance, is almost as simple in plan as the 1936 picture, but preserves the softer, wetter brushwork and poetic mood of the 1935 one. For this method and mood Jen Po-nien was a predecessor, and his works, which were again enjoying some popularity around this time, must have been known to Fu Pao-shih and affected his style (cf. Pls. 79, 81). Another important influence must have been the Japanese painter Kosugi Hōan, who entered the Imperial Art Academy in Tokyo as a teacher in 1935, just when Fu Pao-shih was there; Fu's works resemble his in many features. Related to Hōan's style, in particular, is the way Fu exploits the special capacities of ink, brush and absorbent paper; here he uses scratchy, semi-random brushstrokes for the distant hills, and lets the suffusion of ink blur some passages for rainy effects.

Fu's studies of older masters affected his paintings in a number of ways, but all his borrowings are skillfully absorbed into a generally consistent style--he is not, that is, an artist who "imitates old manners." Some of his figure paintings, especially pictures of beautiful women, follow T'ang dynasty models, while his images of old scholars are based on those of Ch'en Hung-shou (and his 19th century followers such as Jen Hsiung), which themselves echoed Six Dynasties figures in their elongated,

positional functions. In a painting dating from the 1950's, four tiny figures, three gentlemen and a smaller servant carrying a ch'in, make their way up a steep mountain slope. The man who leads points forward with his staff while turning back to the others; he is the one who, present in every hiking party, exhorts the others onward with cheery reassurances that their goal is only a short distance away, and that the steepest part is behind them anyway. Seen at the upper left, just visible over the crest, are the roofs of a temple. Travelers climbing steep mountain paths toward Buddhist temples had appeared in Northern Sung landscapes as a metaphor for seeking spiritual enlightenment; Fu may mean to evoke that old motif, although he does not do so quite seriously. The composition, based on a single huge shape that fills much of the picture space and exerts pressure outward on the frame, we have noted already, in relation to a painting by Huang Pin-hung, as being 17th century in origin; it is used to powerful effect here. The combination of deep blue-grey washes and scumbled brushwork, produced by using the brush with the hairs spread, gives a rich, varied surface and the kind of informal, suggestive naturalism that we noted in the works of Huang Pin-hung, in which the artist depends on the readiness of the viewer's eye to "read in" representational meanings when presented with amorphous visual material. This is far from the evocative grandeur and descriptive detail of Sung painting, but it is as close as any 20th century artist has come to it.

Another impressive landscape from the same period, in an even looser brush manner, is the large "Winter Landscape" (Fig. 25). Here even less is clearly defined, more is left ambiguous. Two men and their servant are seen on the sloping top of a bluff at the base of the picture, with vaguely indicated forms around them suggesting pine trees and huge boulders. Beyond a murky middleground rise steep, snow-covered peaks. With enough positive participation, the viewer can almost turn this into a monumental landscape in the Northern Sung manner, or he can admire the lively dry-wet brushwork on abstract-expression-

traditional artists who seem very much outside the main current. The death of Fu Pao-shih in 1965 is thus an appropriate point at which to close this last volume in a series devoted to literati painting in China.

14. Chao Chih-ch'ien. Flowers, after Yün Shou-p'ing. Leaf from an album. Palace Museum, Peking.

15. Chao Chih-ch'ien, Flowers, after Li Shan. Leaf from an album. Palace Museum, Peking.

16. Jen Po-nien, Flowers, Bamboo, and Mantis. Ching Yüan Chai Collection.

17. Li Shan, Chrysanthemums, from album dated 1738. Collection of George J. Schlenker, Piedmont, California.

18. Wu Ch'ang-shih, Flower, from album dated 1927. Peking, 1959, Pl. 70.

19. Wu Ch'ang-shih, Bird, from album dated 1927. Peking, 1959, Pl. 71.

20. Wu Ch'ang-shih, Landscape, from album dated 1927. Peking, 1959, Pl. 78.