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Friends and Colleagues:

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

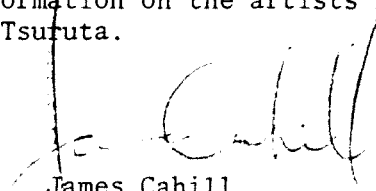
Go Shōseki, Sai Hakuseki (Wu Ch'ang-shih and Ch'i Pai-shih),  
Tokyo, Chuokoron-sha, 1977. Vol. X in the series: Bunjinga Suihen,  
Chugokū.

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 <sup>volume</sup>~~bulk~~ 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

Huang Pin-hung. This rigorous selection has meant the elimination of whole important schools, such as the Ling-nan-p'ai masters of Canton, of the new directions taken by artists in the People's Republic of China, and of the achievements of living painters. All these would carry us beyond the scope possible in a book of this kind.

Another limitation has been that the finest works of the masters of the late period are mostly still kept on the Chinese mainland, and so are not easily accessible for study or photographing. Collections in Japan, Hong Kong, and the U.S. have grown in recent years to the point where a fairly comprehensive representation based on them has become possible, but there are still serious gaps.

With these special conditions and limitations stated, we can go on to say that we have tried herein to present the most interesting and original artists and paintings from this recent period, while trying to emphasize that side of it which continues, in a vital and creative way, the great tradition of Chinese painting, and particularly the current to which this series is devoted, wen-jen hua.

The late period in Chinese painting can be said to begin in the second decade of the eighteenth century with the deaths, all close together, of Wang Hui, Wang Yuan-ch'i, and Tao-chi. The passing of these great masters, and with them of the strong and creative periods of the Orthodox and Individualist Schools, marks an epoch in the history of Chinese painting. The direction that painting was to take afterwards was pointed already by the late works of Tao-chi: it was on the whole to be far less intensively involved than before with either powerful constructions of form or powerful expressive effects; it was to be milder in expression, often with an air of melancholy or nostalgia; it was sometimes to be playfully experimental, and often

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

natural world and man's relationship to it had been landscape painting. The last such confident and authoritative statements had been in the paintings and writings of Tao-chi. For him to claim, in his Hua-yü-lu, that his creation of landscape paintings supplemented the process of creation in nature was amply justified by the profoundly metaphysical content of those paintings. For any later artist, a similar claim would have been an empty boast. Under such conditions, it is easily understandable that landscape painting would sink gradually into a stagnant condition. Throughout the eighteenth century, innovations in landscape style, those that deviate significantly from the Orthodox tradition, are sporadic and can scarcely be said to constitute a development in themselves. The same is even more true of the nineteenth century. During the first half, the followers of the Orthodox tradition continued to dominate, without adding much, except in quantity, to what had been done before. In the latter half of the century, fresh achievements in landscape painting are usually the occasional creations of artists such as Chao Chih-ch'ien and Jen Po-nien whose specializations are in other subjects.

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. <sup>56-57</sup>  $\wedge$ ), 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 fairliness,  
A mountain rain is about to fall, wind fills the upper storey."

Ca hill leaf: "Old trees - no one passes by.  
Deep in the mountain - somewhere a temple bell."

tendency, but by his late years, as represented in the two works we reproduce, he had settled into a fairly narrow range of compositions and brush manners, and a style that can be called individual only in the sense that it allows his paintings to be recognized immediately through their sameness in materials and mode of construction. They are nevertheless attractive, accomplished productions. His landscape of 1811 in the manner of Huang Kung-wang (Pl. 53) makes skilful use of a long-established system of organizing a composition with repeated modules, carefully proportioned and built into a stable structure. Also based on old formulae, but no less effective, is his rounded, volumetric rendering of masses. In the "Autumn Landscape with Red-leafed Trees, in a Yuan manner" of 1827 (Pl. 52), the painting surface is simplified, treated in broader and flatter units, and the richer textures of the 1814 work are replaced with fairly heavy washes of color. The addition of heavier color to the Orthodox landscape manner, with red-browns and greens predominating for strangely somber effects, was one of the nineteenth century's few contributions to expanding the expressive range of this mode.

An even more interesting colorist, and a more interesting artist altogether, was Ch'ien Tu (1763-1844), another native of Hangchow. He was less committed than the others to the Orthodox tradition, although that too was an important element in his stylistic background. Chinese writers state that he followed Wen Cheng-ming and other Wu School artists of the Ming period in his landscapes, and one can indeed detect in most of them late echoes of the fastidious taste, the fine and cautious brushwork that avoids all effects of forcefulness or spontaneity, that characterize much of Wen Cheng-ming's output. In pursuing these qualities, Ch'ien Tu follows the time-sanctioned approach for the scholar-amateur artist. Like Wen Cheng-ming

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 YU-shan Villa" (Pl. <sup>49</sup>), 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 Yuan 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 Yun Shou-p'ing and landscapes of Wang Yuan-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



guests stroll out of a villa to enjoy the cool air. We should note in passing that this style, in its dense patterning with tiny repeated strokes, its distinctive color harmonies, its mild poetic flavor, seems to have been known to the Japanese Nanga master Tanomura Chikuden, whose paintings resemble it too closely for coincidence.

Another of the late Orthodox masters was T'ang I-fen, born in Ch'ang-chou in Kiangsu Province, and active as a painter for nearly fifty years. He lived in Nanking, where he held a post as a military official, and committed suicide, along with his entire family, when the city fell to the Taiping rebels in 1853. The poignancy of his end may have affected Chinese judgments of his art, as is the case of the last artist of this group, Tai Hsi. T'ang I-feng was known in his day as a figure painter and landscapist; he is represented today principally by landscapes. Some of them are in the soft, grassy manner of Yun Shou-p'ing, others in a sparse dry-brush manner that seems to derive from Anhui School works of the early Ch'ing. We reproduce two leaves from a late album, dated 1849, that rises well above the routine level of most of his oeuvre in originality. (Pl. 54-5) Dry brushlines, rubbed onto the slightly rough paper surface as if by a charcoal stick; outline flat, geometric forms that divide interestingly the picture space. The landscapes are pale, dreamlike, engaging the imagination more than the senses; the drifting mists and the facelessness of the figures (as in Ch'ien Tu's picture) make them remote from earthy human problems. This air of disengagement from reality in landscape painting of the period seems to represent a retreat into an aesthetic realm totally divorced from the real experiences of the artists--there is no way to find in works of T'ang I-fen or Tai Hsi any expression of the actual concerns of their age.

Tai Hsi (1801-1860), the youngest of this group, is the most orthodox of them all. His success in his time--he was probably the most famous and

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. ~~549~~<sup>58-59</sup>) 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

young and lovely). Pictures of beautiful women, the Chinese equivalents of the Ukiyoe paintings and prints of Japan, had been popular for centuries. They had been among the specialties of T'ang Yin and Ch'iu Ying in the Ming, and numerous Soochow followers had continued to satisfy the demand for them. They were a favorite subject among the popular Soochow prints produced in the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods. Court artists and other conservative masters of the K'ang-hsi reign, such as Leng Mei, had heightened the illusion of physical presence (the very desideratum in pictures of this kind) by using techniques of shading and perspective from Occidental painting (techniques to be seen already, in fact, in the earlier Soochow prints). The immediate predecessors for the artists to whom we are about to turn were middle and later eighteenth century masters such as K'ang T'ao and Lo P'ing. The early nineteenth century beauties, compared to theirs, are even more willowy in form, scarcely seeming to possess physical bodies. A truly fleshy kind of voluptuousness would have seemed gross to the Chinese, and the attraction is in the supple postures and the faces. Facial expressions are more or less uniformly sweet and winsome, and, as had been the case from the earliest representations of court ladies and other beauties in the Six Dynasties and T'ang, they are quite unindividualized, conforming always to the ideal of feminine beauty current at the time. They are portrayed walking or sitting in gardens, drifting languidly in boats, playing flutes, or, most commonly, longing for absent lovers. The artists are careful always to suggest that they lead shallow, protected lives, totally dependent on their husbands or patrons. Seldom is any disturbing hint of intelligence allowed to show in their faces. The women are shown often in the roles of respectable wives or concubines rather than as courtesans, but it is probable that many, perhaps most, really represent women of the pleasure districts in the cities, like the subjects of Ukiyoe. Again as in Ukiyoe, these paintings

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

(Pl. <sup>62-63</sup> ) and Ku Lo (Pl. 70) are more introspective and moody, their slight smiles and narrowed eyes seeming to express some pensive melancholy. Their clothes are loose, and the bodies thus concealed have little volume, with no indication of the breasts or anything else that would now be counted voluptuous. It was rather the suggestions of suppleness and compliance conveyed in their figures and postures that Chinese gentlemen of the time evidently found captivating, and along with the bittersweet beauty of their faces, it can still work its effect a century and a half later, if a personal reaction can be taken for a general one.

Among the other subjects painted by figure specialists of this period were portraits--Fei Tan-hsu was especially accomplished at these; pictures of scholars; religious figures, Buddhist or Taoist (see Pl. <sup>Pl. 15 and</sup> 72, representing <sup>^</sup> 摩訶聖尊者, a rare example of Ch'ien Tu's figure painting); and pictures of children. A good example of this last category is an album painted by Kai Ch'i representing "The Hundred Children" (Pl. <sup>60-61</sup> ). It is based on a work by Hua Yen, which is now in a private collection

in New York. Pictures of children at play had been painted by Chinese artists for centuries--a number of Sung examples are extant--and have a wide appeal. They seldom, however, reveal much insight into the real nature of children. The children are portrayed usually as miniature adults, often mimicking their elders' activities--this allows the painter to adapt standard compositions to this special purpose, as does Kai Ch'i in a leaf parodying the theme of "Scholars in a Garden Examining Antiquities" (Pl. 61). Other scenes in the album show more sympathetic understanding of children's experiences: the kite-flying scene, for instance (Pl. 60), conveys perceptively the feeling of the earth tilting under one's feet as one follows a kite wheeling in the sky.

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-ting 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.

### The Rise of Shanghai as an Artistic Center

Except for this isolated Cantonese master, the movements we have considered so far can best be seen as an aftermath of eighteenth century painting. The first really new developments begin shortly before the middle of the nineteenth, and they begin in Shanghai. Since our attention will be focused for most of the rest of this book on that city, which rapidly outstrips all others (including earlier centers of painting such as Soochow and Yangchow) and holds that position through the early decades of the twentieth century, we had best pause briefly to consider its phenomenal growth in this period.

Before the opening of Shanghai in 1843 as one of five treaty ports for foreign trade, it had been a fairly prosperous market city, enjoying a unique geographical position, with access inland to the rich Chiang-nan region and outward to the sea. Its contacts with European powers had begun with the visits of Jesuit missionaries in the late sixteenth century and continued with the coming of East India Company and other traders. Its volume of imports and exports doubled in the decade after the Opium War, and the city soon became the most modernized and westernized in China. It had electricity by the 1860's, and shortly afterwards street cars, a railway, and tall buildings at which people from the provinces could gaze up in wonderment. Its material prosperity was in sharp contrast to the increasingly desperate situation of the rest of China. The Taiping Rebellion of the 1850's, brought on by Manchu misrule together with natural disasters and famine, devastated vast areas of the Chiang-nan provinces. Shanghai, under foreign protection, was never captured or ravaged by the Taipings, and became a place of refuge for hundreds of thousands, including many officials and wealthy men who lived in the foreign settlements. The positive benefits

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,



a flower specialist, did so only occasionally. The two Jens, together with Jen Hsiung's younger brother Hsün who seems to have contributed less of real originality, established a school of figure painting that was immensely successful, with countless followers and imitators continuing their styles well into the twentieth century.

Jen Hsiung (1820-1857) may well have been responsible for more significant stylistic innovations than any other painter of the past 150 years. He, more than anyone else, deserves to be seen as the originator of modern Chinese painting. His achievements are especially astonishing when we consider that he died when only 37 years old. He learned painting from a local portraitist in his home town, Hsiao-shan in Chekiang, later spent some time in Ningpo, and lived during his late years, from 1852, in Soochow and Shanghai, where he became famous and sought-after. The first to recognize his talents was Yao Hsieh, another Chekiang scholar-artist, with whom he lived for some years as a "painter-guest." During the last four years of his life he collaborated with a fellow townsman, a bamboo and wood carver named Ts'ai Chao, on woodblock-printed illustrations for four books on illustrious or legendary figures from the past. The form and technique of these books, as well as the figure style, were based on the seventeenth century woodblock-printed books illustrated by Ch'en Hung-shou, Jen Hsiung's most important model for his figure style. He died while working on the last of them, the Kao-shih chuan (Fig. ~~34~~). In refinement of cutting and printing and in page design, they join Ch'en Hung-shou's among the masterworks of the Chinese printed picture book.

The same sure sense of design and incisive line drawing can be admired in Jen Hsiung's paintings, of which fairly few survive today. We have only to compare his "Lady with a Fan" of 1856 (Pl. 69<sup>\*</sup>) with any of the earlier paintings of similar subjects to become aware of a different kind and level of artistic sensibility. It is revealed in the sharp rectilinear division

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\*Color all wrong!

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. 7), painted in the same year, to realize 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 unmistakably the influence of Occidental painting although he inscribes it as a copy after T'ang Yin (Fig. 8), 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).

Chao Chih-ch'ien (1829-1884), in his few figure paintings, declares himself in favor of the astringent, with sharp, tense brushlines delineating figures of slightly grotesque appearance, as in his "Chung-k'uei" of 1870 (Pl. 73). We will consider this first-rank master later at greater length, in relation to his favorite subject, flower painting.

Jen Hsiung's younger brother Jen Hsün (1835-1893) had no such touch of genius as his older brother, but could handle the same styles skilfully, and by virtue of his much longer life became one of the respected and influential artists of Shanghai. Much of his prolific output seems facile, lacking in creative force, but occasionally he can surprise us with sensitive, original pictures. His fine-line drawing often exhibits a particular mannerism, repeating curled strokes with "nail-head" endings, that becomes obsessive and unpleasant in the works of later followers. In the best of his small paintings, such as the undated album of figures (Pl. 74, 75), the fine-line drawing is balanced by other passages executed in soft, broad washes. The effects of ink suffusion depend on a lightly sized paper with more absorbent surface than had generally been used before.

If Jen Hsiung is the most innovative of nineteenth century artists, it is Jen I, or Jen Po-nien (1840-1896), who is the most brilliant technician, and the master who brings most glory to the Shanghai School. He was born in Shan-yin in Chekiang Province, and came to Shanghai as a young man to make his fortune as a painter. The story of his encounter with Jen Hsiung, in which he is caught forging the older master's name to his own paintings but forgiven and taken on as a pupil, is related at length elsewhere in this volume (p. ). Whether or not this amusing anecdote has any basis in fact, it is true that Jen I began as an imitator of the two older Jens, and was probably the pupil of Jen Hsün--whom, however, he soon cast into the shade by his own greatly superior talents. Of similarly uncertain reliability are

the reasons given for his copious production of paintings--that he had a nagging wife who forced him to paint constantly to make money, or that he had to support an opium habit. The truth may simply be that he took great joy in painting, as his pictures suggest he did, and also in making money, as a good commercial artist should. He was able to work swiftly, fluidly, spontaneously, but with close control over his compositions and the structure of his forms, however sketchily they may seem to be rendered.

We noted earlier that the Shanghai masters, breaking with the "high" tradition of painting, accepted and even cultivated a quality of "vulgarity" (su-ch'i) in their subjects and styles. Jen Po-nien is the prime exemplar of this phenomenon, and many of his figure paintings, such as the "Han-shan and Shih-te Playing with a Small Bird" of 1883 (Pl. —), display this quality openly. The two plump young men, wearing what appear to be untidily draped sheets and leaning heavily on a pine tree, belong to the "sweet" mode of figure painting we have associated with Huang Shen, but can also be seen as reflecting a new down-to-earth realism. Similarly unidealized are the herd-boy in Jen's "Boy and Buffalo in a Storm" of 1890 (Pl. 78) and the fisherman in his "Peach Blossom Spring" picture of the same year (Pl. 79). The figures stand in the same ungraceful, active postures, with bodies turned and heads thrust forward. Both figures occupy volume and appear capable of movement; in their sheer physical presence, they seem denizens of a new world in which traditional Chinese restraint no longer operates. Their settings are suitably spacious, with masses of earth and rock rendered in loose but form-defining brushstrokes, and darkened areas creating hollows of space. The landscape seems in itself emotion-charged, echoing the moodiness of the figures. The bamboo and flowering trees are good examples of Jen Po-nien's gift for adapting conventional painting techniques to fresh, more naturalistic effects.

An album leaf in a Chinese collection (Fig. ~~8~~) 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 "NU 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 NU 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 NU Kua's body ended by concealing it in a long, ruffled 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

almost gross in its realism. Wu, a follower of Jen in his early period, must have been around fifty when it was painted. A few precedents for unidealized portraiture can be found in the late eighteenth century, notably in Lo P'ing's 1760 portrait of Chin Nung, but none that portrays so candidly as this does the physical bulk of its subject. After centuries of more or less dematerialized figures, this comes as a shock, signaling the breakdown of a tradition as much as the opening of a new age.

Many other capable masters of figure painting were active in Shanghai in the late nineteenth century, notably Ch'ien Hui-an (1833-1911) and Ni T'ien (1855-1919), the latter a close follower of Jen Po-nien. But since we are limiting our view to a few major masters, they must be passed over.

#### Landscape Painting of the Later Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.

Original achievements in landscape painting in the later nineteenth century are even rarer than in the early nineteenth; most landscapists of the period demonstrate only that the Orthodox tradition, already moribund before their time, could sink to further depths of monotony without quite disappearing. Jen Yü (1853-1901), who was the son of Jen Hsiung, was a painter of pleasing and capable landscapes, although not remotely so creative an artist as either his father or his younger contemporary Jen Po-nien. He was reportedly lazy by nature, painting only when he needed the money; for this reason, and because of the shortness of his life, his works are relatively rare. An excellent example of his landscape is in the Yoshino Collection, Osaka (Pl. 82). The painter's inscription tells us that it is based on his memory of a landscape by Wang Hui in the manner of Chao Meng-fu. Expectedly, then, the landscape follows the

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

Orthodox master of the early Ch'ing, being strongly composed and rendered in impeccable brushwork. There is no question that Lu Hui can imitate this style masterfully; the question is rather whether, in 1917, it was worthwhile imitating it at all.

For genuine departures from established models we must look, not to the landscapists proper, but to artists whose specialties were in other genres and who painted landscapes only occasionally. Their achievements are diverse and isolated, not making up any unified movement or setting a consistent direction for other artists to follow. Nevertheless, certain new approaches to landscape composition may be observed in certain of their works. Jen Hsiung and Jen Hsiin both painted landscape album leaves, fresh and informal in composition. Some of them (Fig. ~~10001~~) treat the picture surfaces by dividing them into distinct areas and filling these with contrasting patterns and colors. An earlier form of this compositional device can be seen in Ch'ien Tu's landscape of 1813 (Pl. 49). Chao Chih-ch'ien's only known landscape painting, the "Piled Books Cliff" (Fig. ~~8~~), is another example, but here it is broader, dry brushstrokes that are repeated fairly evenly over a broad area, depicting clusters of rocks. Some geological peculiarity of the place depicted doubtless lies behind this technique, for which precedents can be found in early Ch'ing painting of the Anhui School, but it is also formally effective in unifying and activating the surface. The painting strikingly anticipates twentieth century landscape, such as that of Fu Pao-shih (cf. Pl. [12]), and stands out as one of the truly original creations of its time.

Another is Jen Po-nien's large "Landscape with Figures" (Pl. 88), one of the very few landscapes that survive from his hand, and a painting that makes us wish he had turned to this subject more often. It is undated, bearing only the artist's seal, but one leaf in an 1885 album of sketches,



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. 84), 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

increasingly by professional poet-painter-calligraphers such as the Yangchow masters Cheng Hsieh and Li Shan. <sup>(as they had been already by Ming artists of the same type such as Tang Yin and Hsü Wei.)</sup> The final reconciliation of the literati and professional-popular traditions happens in Shanghai in the later nineteenth century, when one can no longer talk of these as two clearly separable kinds or currents of painting. Chao Chih-ch'ien was an educated man, poet, and calligrapher; Jen Po-nien was none of these. Yet, although their styles diverge in some respects, the points at which they come together are more significant, and while Jen can paint "vulgar" pictures, he can do others of the highest refinement. Jen is the teacher of Wu Ch'ang-shih, generally regarded as the outstanding example of the literatus-painter in recent times.

A new development of the later eighteenth century was the emergence of a movement known as the chin-shih chia or "Masters of Bronze and Stone [Epigraphy]," in which the style and special taste of archaic stone and bronze inscriptions were adapted into seal carving, calligraphy, and even painting, as in the works of Chin Nung. This development, along with the styles of Li Shan and other Yangchow masters, represents the most important heritage to 19th century flower painting. It is understandable in this light that several of its leading masters, such as Wu Hsi-tsai, Chao Chih-ch'ien, and Wu Ch'ang-shih, were also leading calligraphers in the chin-shih chia lineage.

The oldest of this group, Wu Hsi-tsai (1799-1870), followed Teng Shih-ju as a calligrapher in the seal (chuan) and clerical (li) scripts, and also in seal carving. He is said to have imitated Yun Shou-p'ing in his flower painting, but his pictures (Pl. <sup>98, 99</sup>) are quite different from Yun's. We can see in them characteristics that were to be fully developed in the works of Chao Chih-ch'ien and Wu Ch'ang-shih, both of whom were influenced by him. One is the practice of laying on strokes of color contiguously to make broad, continuous color areas within which the individual brushstrokes are still

visible. Another is the depiction of vines in long, ropy, twisting brush-strokes--it is these that have close affinities with seal-script calligraphy of this school.

Jen Hsiung, a capable although not a notable calligrapher himself, painted some flower-and-bird pictures in a manner that similarly anticipates Chao Chih-ch'ien, as can be seen in both his "Pheasants on a Rock" of 1850 (Pl. 86) and his 1852 album (Fig. 4). They suggest that Jen may have been an important innovator in this as in other branches of painting. The album leaf, although he mentions no model in his inscriptions, is based on the style of the Yangchow master Li Shan (active 1730-1755), developing further Li's mode of composition based on an interweaving of branches, twigs, and leaves. The "Pheasants On a Rock," on the other hand, presents a great deal that is totally new. Most of the picture space is occupied by the rock and leafy bushes, so that the principal subject, the pair of pheasants, is pushed to the top. (This distinctive kind of composition was to be taken up by many later artists, notably Ch'i Pai-shih.) The ink and colors are strangely turbid, quite unlike the clear, transparent colors ordinarily used in earlier flower painting. Some kind of filler, probably lead white, has been mixed with the pigments, and apparently also with the ink at some points. The effect is to make the pigments opaque, and also to prevent them from running together as freely as they otherwise would, so that they can be laid on in contiguous strokes. They can also be overlaid--lines of pure white, for instance, have been put on over the ink and color areas to render grasses and leaf veins. The coloring is rich but subtle, with close, blended hues juxtaposed, especially in the blue-green portion of the spectrum. The resemblance to Western gouache is close, and surely not coincidental. Opaque pigments had been used in Western-influenced flower painting by Yün Shou-p'ing and others in the K'ang-Hsi era, and later, in the early Ch'ien-

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

from returning by the presence of the Taiping rebels in the region. Later he went to Peking and attempted the government examinations three times, failing each time. He held minor official posts, and must have been active at some time as an artist in Shanghai (although his biographies do not say so) since he is classified as a master of the Shanghai School. He was more renowned in his day as a calligrapher and seal carver than as a painter. Not many of his works are to be found today outside China, but some excellent examples are in Japan, where he has been appreciated and collected principally by calligraphers and seal carvers, beginning with Kawai Senrō. Outstanding are two sets of flower paintings, each consisting of four hanging scrolls, dated 1861 and 1870, in the Tokyo National Museum, part of the gift of the late Takashima Kikujirō. The 1861 set (Pl. <sup>90, 91, Fig. 16, 17</sup>) is painted for the most part in the mo-ku or "boneless" manner, without ink outlines, and uses the new technique seen in Jen Hsiung's painting of 1850: color applied in close-packed strokes for continuous passages of polychrome, pigments rendered opaque with some admixture of white filler. The compositions are not built around large dominant forms or unifying movements so much as on a balancing of filled and empty areas, and on exquisite harmonies of color. A complex overlapping of flowers, leaves, stalks, and rocks permits a kind of informality and naturalism previously impossible in Chinese painting, when these elements had to be kept physically apart on the surface. Shapes can now be partly hidden behind other shapes and seen in bits through the openings. The edges of the pictures also cut as if arbitrarily into the forms, giving the viewer the impression of being drawn into the picture space.

The 1870 set (Pl. <sup>96, 97, Fig. 18, 19</sup>) depicts "Fruits of the Four Seasons," represents Chao's late style in painting, since he seems to have done very little in the last decade of his life. They are quite different in style from the 1861 pictures: heavier, more static, less imaginative in design.

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. <sup>2,3</sup>~~115~~). 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, Yun 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. <sup>92-95</sup>~~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. <sup>95</sup>) 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.)

shapes of flower and leaves but giving to the images a subtle chin-shih-chia flavor.

The hardness and mannerism into which most outline painting had slipped can be illustrated with a work by Jen Hsün, his "Pheasant and Parrot in an Autumn Tree" (Pl. 87). In defense of the painter, however, it should be stated that this curious style represents a deliberate move into artificiality, the aim evidently being to produce a picture devoid of any sense of spontaneity, looking like a lacquer design or an embroidery or a woodblock print. (In fact, at least one woodblock print based on a Jen Hsün painting of this type, with the colors added by hand, is known--it must have been a way of making inexpensive reproductions of paintings. Once more, early Ukiyoe paintings and prints offer a close parallel.) The linework follows its own odd course in jerky arc-shaped movements, seeming little concerned with naturalistic description. Jen's works of this kind make handsome decorations but do not hold one's attention for long. At other times he paints in a looser, more pleasing manner, as in his "Banana Palms, Blossoming Plum, and Chicken by Moonlight" (Pl. —).

Chao Chih-ch'ien's only real rival in flower painting in the later nineteenth century was, as we might expect, Jen Po-nien. His works, while they lack the special calligraphic strength and antiquarian-scholar's taste of Chao's, offer far more variety in subject, composition, and brushwork, along with dazzling displays of technical virtuosity that neither Chao nor anyone else of the time could rival. In this genre as in his figure paintings, Jen combines a fresh, naturalistic approach with an extraordinary facility for turning old styles and techniques to his new uses. The paintings of this genre that we have chosen to represent him here all date, by chance, to a brief period, 1879-82, so we will not try to deal with his stylistic development, beyond regretting that a good example from his last years,



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

two Middle Chou bronzes for an entertaining juxtaposition of ancient tomb finds with flowers just picked from the garden, and of intellectual and antiquarian interests with the simpler enjoyment of evanescent loveliness. Wu Ch'ang-shih and Tomioka Tessai did similar works later. Jen Po-nien was also highly proficient in the outline-and-color manner, as a small painting of "Flowers, Bamboo, and Mantis" reveals (Fig. ~~15~~<sup>16</sup>). Plants-and-insects themes, which had not been seen much in Chinese painting since the Sung dynasty, were popular among the Shanghai artists--there were even specialists in them. They were also a favorite subject, as we will see, of Ch'i Pai-shih, especially in his early period.

Among Jen Po-nien's painter friends in Shanghai was Hsü-ku (1824-1896), whose specialties were flowers, fruit, and goldfish. The circumstances of his life are somewhat obscure. Born in Hsin-an in Anhui Province, he originally had the family name Chu. He was involved somehow in the Taiping Rebellion; one account says that he was an officer in the Taiping army, but some recent Chinese sources claim instead that he was a military official under the Manchus who, unwilling to obey an order to go with his troops to attack the Taipings, became a Buddhist monk and went to live in Shanghai, where he covertly aided the Taiping cause. In any case, he lived as a painter in Yangchow and Shanghai during his late years. He is best known today for pictures of goldfish, the goggle-eyed kind bred by the Chinese into decorative deformities (Pl. —). At times Hsü-ku flourishes the lightly loaded brush over the paper surface for loose, impressionistic renderings of blossoming branches or willow leaves in the wind (Pl. 105); at other times he works in a crisp, disciplined manner, as in the still life of lichee fruit and a teapot from the same album (Pl. 106). He seems to have been admired and imitated by Ch'i Pai-shih, who pursues similar effects in some of his paintings, although not with so light a touch.

(cf. also Pl. 104, Branches of Lychee, by Hsü-Ku.)

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 <sup>(his only rival being Ch'i Pai-shih).</sup> 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; <sup>subtle modulations</sup> ~~stances~~ of brushwork and purity of design--these sound like the values of fairly advanced connoisseurship,

and might suggest an art that delights a small circle of admirers while leaving the greater public cold. But this is not at all the case--or rather, the appeal is on both levels. The paintings of Wu Ch'ang-shih might be said to be like, in this respect, the kabuki drama (to make a somewhat far-fetched analogy): they offer both a popular, easily enjoyed aspect and a more difficult, connoisseur's aspect, with some gap between the two. No one has any difficulty in enjoying a kabuki performance or a Wu Ch'ang-shih painting immediately--both are colorful, dynamic, technically impressive--but such enjoyment takes one only part-way. Beyond that point, it is not so easy; to proceed beyond that level of appreciation to a deeper and fuller one is a process that does not happen quickly. However, the time and effort needed are well rewarded, in both cases. The paintings of Tomioka Tessai are like Wu Ch'ang-shih's in having this kind of split-level appeal. Ch'i Pai-shih's, by contrast, engage the popular and the cultivated tastes together, or all at once--their attractions are manifested immediately, they communicate what they have to offer in one burst of expressiveness, so to speak, and one's appreciation of them is not much enriched or deepened afterwards.

Chao Chih-ch'ien, Wu Ch'ang-shih, and Ch'i Pai-shih: these three are the dominant figures in three successive generations of flower specialists in recent times, making up a single lineage. It is perhaps pointless to attempt to rank them in order of artistic importance, but we can try to state their particular strengths. To begin with, it is Chao Chih-ch'ien who can reach the highest level of quality in individual works, which are likely to assure him a place in the history of Chinese painting, ultimately, above that of Wu and Ch'i. Even the most dedicated admirers of the two later masters would probably agree on the difficulty of singling out any masterpieces from their output, paintings that can stand up to the finest flower paintings of earlier periods as can Chao Chih-ch'ien's 1859 Peking album or

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 <sup>alone</sup> 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

substantial and satisfying; although some may appear sketchy, there is very little of the arbitrary or truly improvised in them. These are the works of a man who could write, modestly but with some truth: "I have no special strengths in painting, but I do know the li (principle) of painting." (我畫非所長而頗知畫理).

His biography is recounted elsewhere in this volume; what concerns us here is only his development as a painter. He once said that he began painting only when he was fifty. In fact, it would appear that he painted from around the age of 34, but it is true that his serious application to the art dates from the time, at about fifty, when he began to associate with Jen Po-nien and other artists in Shanghai. He learned a great deal from Jen, whether or not in a formal master-pupil relationship (Jen is said to have told him he had "nothing to teach him" after watching him paint), and his flower paintings of the 1890's and the early years after the turn of the century have the same wet lushness and subtly blended coloring as Jen's. At the same time, he was also deeply affected by the style of Chao Chih-ch'ien, probably the most important single influence on his work. That influence seems strongest in the period 1900-1910. Wu's stylistic development presents interesting parallels with Chao's, as does his life. Both begin by applying ink and colors fairly richly in pliant and fluent brushwork, often allowing the strokes to run together, and end with styles that feature harder, drier brushwork in which the strokes tend to be more distinct.

Wu Ch'ang-shih's earliest extant pictures, from the late 1880's and early 1890's, seem to be limited chiefly to branches of blossoming plum, in which the influence of Chin Nung and Chu Ta can be observed. In this early period Wu sometimes imitated the styles of earlier Ch'ing artists, especially the Yangchow masters, as a way of amplifying his relatively narrow stylistic

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. <sup>4</sup> 30 ), the originator of so many of the techniques and stylistic ideas used by later flower painters.

(Pl. 8, 9),

A pair of small flower pictures from 1907<sup>^</sup> 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

(Fig. 13, detail of Pl. 14),  
 Plum and Rock, with Two Sparrows" from 1919 / the formula is varied  
 by the addition of two birds, rarely seen in his works--Wu apparently did  
 not enjoy painting them, and did so only on request, setting the prices of  
 such paintings higher, perhaps to discourage other bird-lovers.

By his last years, from 1920 until his death in 1927, his period of  
 exploration and innovation was largely over, and he relies on designs and  
 techniques that he had worked out over the previous years. Nevertheless,  
 his works retain freshness and vitality. A painting of "Chrysanthemums and  
 Rock" of 1922 (Pl. —), uses the same basic composition as the "Orchids and  
 Rock" of 1913 (Pl. 6), but with a greater profusion of forms and less space.  
 His "Green Peaches and Rock" of 1924 (Pl. 1) seems a throwback to his early  
 style in its wet brush manner and more rounded, substantial forms. The  
 color by this time, however, is generally paler, limited to dilute washes  
 that complement the deep tones of the ink. His paintings of red blossoming  
 plum are exceptions, still using brilliant color. He did many of them,  
 compositions powerfully composed within the frame, as an example from 1926  
 reveals (Pl. 3). The affinities of such a composition with a scroll of  
 large seal-script calligraphy or an impression from a well-designed seal  
 are enhanced by the simple red-and-black coloring.

A triptych representing "Pine, Bamboo, and Blossoming Plum" dating  
 from the autumn of 1926 (Pl. —) shows no decline at all in his sureness of  
 hand, although he was (by Chinese count) eighty three. Most amazing of all,  
 in an album of twelve leaves painted a year later in the autumn of 1927, only  
 two months before his death, he departed from the well-worn paths of his  
 standard repertory to do flowers in an outline manner, birds after Chu Ta,  
 and landscape unlike any he had painted before (Figs. 5, 6, 7). Such a  
 sudden striking out into new stylistic territory after decades of working  
 within a carefully circumscribed realm is an extraordinary phenomenon to  
 observe.

cf. Pl. 18,  
 dtd. 1916

cf. Pl. 12,  
 dtd. 1924.



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. 一) 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 (Pl. 8)). 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 idiosyncrasy 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. <sup>19, 20</sup> ), 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 Wuhsing 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

of his paintings are in collections there. He had begun painting by secretly copying works of Jen Po-nien in a mounter's shop; he was discovered doing this by Jen himself, who encouraged his studies. An example of such a copy is his "Water Buffalo and Herd-boys" of 1892 (Pl. <sup>107, 108</sup> || ), based on a Jen Po-nien composition still preserved in China. Later Wang studied with Wu Ch'ang-shih and began to imitate him closely--so closely, it is said, that he sometimes "ghost-painted" for him, doing pictures for Wu to sign when the older master was too burdened with requests and commissions to fulfill them all himself.

A twelve-leaf album painted in 1914 (Pl. <sup>107, 108</sup> ) displays the stylistic repertory of his middle period, at least in figure and landscape subjects. (His flower-and-bird paintings, essentially dilute versions of Wu Ch'ang-shih's, we are omitting.) Five leaves depicting beggars and homeless people <sup>(pl. 107)</sup> testify to his humanitarian concerns, and are painted in a style relatively free of old conventions--more responsive, that is, to his observations of his subjects and feelings about them. Several landscapes-with-figures seem similarly unhackneyed, and a few leaves are strikingly original in theme and design, especially <sup>(pl. 108)</sup> a picture of three diminutive musicians seated beside a bronze lamp and incense burner (or normal-sized musicians beside huge bronzes, as the case may be--the subject is obscure). Like Ch'i Pai-shih in the same period, Wang takes advantage of the breakdown of old traditions to exercise his imagination on new pictorial material for which there were no established precedents. Jen Po-nien had done the same, but from a base of solid technical training that Wang lacks; and since part of that technical training was toward achieving desired expressive effects, Wang's pictures tend to be more entertaining than moving.

In his late years Wang produced a great many paintings, some of them done lightly and so rather trivial in nature, others showing the expenditure of more time and care. His many paintings of Ch'an Buddhist subjects, such

as Han-shan and Shih-te or Bodhidharma (Pl. --), are engagingly free of spirituality, and he enjoys doing Taoist immortals such as Hsia-ma (Pl. 110), subjects that had been given earthy, "vulgar" treatments in painting since the time of Yen Hui in the late thirteenth century. A "Boy in a Windy Grove" of 1927 (Pl. 109) is an unusually sensitive and poetic work for its period; for the most part, in these late works, he is unconcerned with nuances of any kind. These are bold compositions in lively brushwork, handsome pieces of decoration on a wall, but, as a Sung theorist might say, "not for the refined contemplation of the elevated connoisseur." Wang's reputation dropped sharply after his death, but interest in him has revived in recent years, and his paintings are again being collected and published.

### Ch'i Pai-shih

There is no question that Ch'i Pai-shih is the most renowned of twentieth century Chinese artists, among both Chinese and foreigners. He is more or less universally regarded as the great master of modern Chinese painting. More has been written about him than about any other Chinese artist of recent times, and virtually all of it consists of expressions of unmixed adulation.

It seems time, therefore, to stand off a bit and consider Ch'i Pai-shih somewhat more dispassionately, to take a critical view of his paintings, and to begin to ask: was he really a great master? And if so, what kind of great master? What are the qualities in his works that make them great art, either individually or collectively? To do this, we must first separate out those reasons for his widespread acclaim that are extraneous to proper artistic judgment, so that by eliminating these from our consideration we can concentrate on the relevant, properly artistic factors. The extraneous reasons are several. In the People's Republic, and by like-minded people outside

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 張次漢, 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

of subjects and styles that they tell us little about the beginnings of his development. Two fan-shaped pictures from his early forties, a landscape of Hua-shan dated 1903 painted on a trip made in that year (Fig. 8) and one of crickets and flowers dated 1906 (Fig. 9), represent the traditional kung-pi (fine-brush) manner he learned and practiced in this early period. (Early, that is, in the context of his development--he was already forty. We should recall that Jen Hsiung died at 37, Jen I at 56. Ch'i Pai-shih's artistic maturity is generally considered to have been reached when he was around 60.) By his own account, he gave up the kung-pi manner for the looser, more calligraphic hsieh-i manner at the age of forty, but elements of the kung-pi persist in his later works, particularly in the depiction of insects. It is also apparent from published works that he was experimenting with freer manners of brushwork well before 1900. The period 1900-1920 finds him simultaneously imitating a number of earlier masters--Chin Nung, Tao-chi, Chu Ta, even Pien Shou-min--and taking the first steps toward developing a personal style. During this period he traveled a great deal, and did a number of albums of travel sketches.

Let us here acknowledge the inadequacy of tracing "sources" and "causes" for stylistic change, and say that many factors would have to be brought in to account for the formation of the mature Ch'i Pai-shih manner, and even these would not begin to suffice. The ahistorical character of this essay is nowhere more flagrant than here (the Chinese revolution and the founding of the Republic of China have just taken place without our noticing). A few suggestions: A painter doing travel sketches tends almost necessarily to draw pictures that are simple in conception and immediate in effect, and this may affect his other work. One choosing Chu Ta and Tao-chi as his models can move either in the direction of compositional complexity (imitating their large, elaborate landscapes) or simplification (following Chu Ta's bird-and-

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" (我門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,



on his observation of some close-at-hand occurrence. The other leaf <sup>(Pl. 27)</sup> represents two mynah birds (?) on a branch of flowering plum. The branch, once more, has clear affinities with Wu Ch'ang-shih (cf. his painting of 1892, Pl. (0) ) but the birds are latter-day descendants of Chu Ta's. Most importantly, the whole is handled with enough freshness of conception and brilliance of design to take on a large degree of independence from such sources. Ch'i's strong, assertive brushwork is already in evidence, as is the bright, open feeling that pervades his paintings. His birds do not seem to brood as Chu Ta's do, nor do his paintings ever carry anything like the sense of dark melancholy that Tsuruta finds in the works of Chao Chih-ch'ien. Theories that try to make art dependent on history founder on artists such as Ch'i Pai-shih, who live and work through great historical paroxysms without expressing any noticeable response to them in their works.

Ch'i's early mastery of fine-style insect painting continued throughout his career, making up one of his most engaging specialties; he was still doing meticulous portrayals of insects in some works of his nineties, when his style had otherwise become quite loose. In his late years, however, he reportedly left the painting of these to assistants most of the time, doing them himself only for very special friends or patrons. An album dated 1924 is a particularly fine example of his work in this genre (Fig. 10). He titled it "Pictures Amplifying the Odes of Pin" (Kuang Pin-feng t'u), referring to one of the odes in the Shih ching which mentions crickets and other insects. Not only are Ch'i's depictions of the small creatures as accurate as an entomologist's studies might be (and considerably more lifelike), but the plants and leaves are rendered just as painstakingly, with a fine network of veins traced on each leaf. In most of his later pictures of this kind, such as the undated "Mantis and Grapes" (~~Colorplate~~ <sup>Pl. 29</sup>), the insect is painted in the fine style and the plants in the hsieh-i brushwork; the disparity in brush-

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 <sup>plum?</sup> cherry (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

very last works (he added two years to his age, for reasons explained in his biographical account), is a good although rather extreme example.

For an artist so concerned with the arrangement of stable forms within the picture space, it is natural that still-life subjects would be attractive, and Ch'i Pai-shih painted many of them. Such subjects had been common in the nineteenth century (cf. Jen Hsiung's, Fig. // ) and even before; Chao Chih-ch'ien and Wu Ch'ang-shih provided models for, in particular, pictures of vegetables and fruits in baskets, which often had symbolic connotations of a good harvest or a comfortable, affluent life. A painting of a teapot and cups, cakes, and lotus roots (Pl. 47) brings together things associated with autumn, as the title tells us, and finds interesting visual affinities among subjects very different in substance. A powerfully composed picture of fruit in baskets and a wine pot (Pl. 36) is dedicated, as we are again informed by the title in large seal-script characters, to the pleasure of drinking wine. The tensile strength of Ch'i Pai-shih's brushwork, well displayed in the pictures of flowering branches considered above, is ideally suited to describing the structure of the baskets, and particularly their bent handles. The amorphous overlapping brushstrokes on the wine pot are equally suited to describing its rough ceramic surface, and similarly bring out its three-dimensional form. The two baskets are separated in space by contrast in the ink tone in which they are drawn, the further one being lighter; this device is uncommon in Ch'i's works, most of which are confined to the picture surface. Altogether, this is one of Ch'i's most successful pictures, and makes one regret that his almost mass-production rate of output prevented him from spending as much care and planning on more than a few others.

A special subject area that Ch'i Pai-shih made his own is the portrayal of prawns, crabs, frogs, and baby chicks. All these he did in ink monochrome, typically portraying a number of them seen from different angles, spaced on

the picture surface for decorative effect. Sometimes they are used for small parables and whimsical allusions which are explained, or hinted at, in the inscriptions. All these subjects had been painted before by Chinese artists, but seldom so perceptively or delightfully; the prawns, in particular, had waited centuries to be pictorially celebrated by an artist capable of capturing their translucent daintiness. Ch'i began painting these subjects early in his career and continued them to the end, in such numbers that they became a stock-in-trade both for him and for his many forgers. Perhaps a serious art-historical study of him will some day discern some development within his works of this type; for now they appear simply repetitious after their initial creation, making it a matter of small importance, in the end, whether the imitation was done by Ch'i himself or someone else, so long as it was done well.

Pl. 45

Pl. 46

Figures make up a minor but popular subject group in Ch'i's oeuvre. Here too he developed a small repertory of types early in his career and continued to paint them without significant change for the rest of it. Most common are stocky old men and little boys, sometimes studious, sometimes mischievous. The pictures are often illustrative in nature, with keys to their meanings supplied by the inscriptions. Good and typical examples can be seen in an album of 24 leaves painted in 1930, from which we reproduce four (Pl. 23-26). Ch'i also occasionally painted auspicious figures such as the God of Old Age and Taoist Immortals, but without making any notable innovations in these long-lived themes.

We have left for last Ch'i Pai-shih's landscapes, the subject in which he can be said to be most free of both derivativeness and repetitiousness. He seems to undertake each picture as a fresh creative venture. A few early examples reflect his study of the paintings of Tao-chi, but even

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<sup>A</sup>). <sup>Detail Frontispiece B</sup> 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~~<sup>sometimes</sup> 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 Pin-hung

Huang Chih, or Huang Pin-hung (1864-1955), was an almost exact contemporary of Ch'i Pai-shih. He was born in She-hsien in Anhui Province, the son of a merchant who was a cultured man and gave his son a good education. Huang studied painting from childhood under several minor masters. He himself was a teacher of painting for most of his life, holding posts at a number of art academies; he was also art editor for the Commercial Press in Shanghai, and is known to students of Chinese art as the compiler of Mei-shu ts'ung-shu. He wrote books on painting, especially a series of studies of artists of the Anhui School, late Ming and early Ch'ing masters to whom he felt a special affinity because of his birthplace. He also studied and imitated many other earlier artists, however, and traveled throughout China making sketches of scenic places.

All this would seem to suggest a versatile, eclectic painter working in a diversity of styles, but in fact Huang's stylistic range is quite narrow. Excepting a few undistinguished flower pictures, his oeuvre is made up entirely of landscapes. As in the case of Ch'i Pai-shih, his early works (those done up to the age of sixty) do not seem to reveal any consistent direction; some are derived from the Orthodox landscape manner, while others explore rather bizarre styles and scenes. Around the age of sixty he settled into a manner of painting that he used for the rest of his life, one based chiefly on the styles of K'un-ts'an, Ch'eng Sui, and other Anhui masters. In his writings Huang argued that they had been the leading opponents to the Orthodox School in the early Ch'ing period; reviving their tradition must have seemed a sensible course around 1920, when Orthodox School landscapes were still being painted and admired (cf. Lu Hui's work of 1917, Pl. 83) but when more creative artists were looking for alternatives.

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



Orthodox masters Huang had pointed out that their mountains were "all white," without shadows, and so were only "mountains on paper." In this picture of 1926 he demonstrates the right way, as he saw it, to model the landscape masses with light and shade. But his own closeness to the Orthodox tradition is clear when we compare it with Lu Hui's work of 1917 (Pl. 83). A work of 1929 (Pl. 118) is a sketchier rendering of essentially the same composition, somewhat simplified. Light and shadow, space, convincing mist, subtlety of tonal gradations, all have been sacrificed to energetic brushwork and an air of spontaneity. Without nearly so firm a basis in traditional technique as Ch'i Pai-shih had, Huang when he loosens control is always in danger of lapsing into incoherence, as he can be said to have done here.

Many of his most pleasing and successful works are those in small sizes, where compositional problems are less taxing. Two such small works may be used to represent his late-period evocations of the Anhui tradition. One, with strange twisting peaks (Pl. 116), represents a scene of Huang-shan (Yellow Mountains) and recalls portrayals of that scenery by earlier artists who worked in that region. Another, a river scene with men in a boat (Pl. 120), displays his drybrush manner at its finest, in a composition reminiscent of some works of Ch'eng Sui in the way it is dominated by a single large, textured shape, the bluff, and takes its character from the formal tension between this shape and the picture frame. Two fan paintings, undated but also from Huang's late period (Pls. 114, 115) are done with the engaging ease and informality of the late works, and reveal how he could create some sense of space and air by concentrating brushwork in some areas and leaving others open. The inscriptions are art-historical in nature, offering learned comments on Northern Sung and Yüan

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.

Fu Pao-shih

Since we spoke of Jen Hsiung as the first modern Chinese painter, it may seem strange to speak now of Huang Pin-hung and Fu Pao-shih, a century later, as the last traditional ones. But of course traditional art did not come to an end at the moment when modern art began, nor do our dividing lines and turning points have any absolute validity anyway--we should not think of them as though they were historical events. As with Chinese culture as a whole, so with art: the old traditions could not survive in their original form once they were confronted, in Occidental styles, with alternatives more challenging and more radically unsettling than any before. But traditions could be replaced, and gradually were, by varieties of traditionalism, conscious and calculated uses of the past. This was nothing entirely new--Chinese artists had for centuries been making use of old styles, in an art-historically conscious and sophisticated way unparalleled in Western art until much later. Still, all these archaistic borrowings and revivals had happened in the context of a basic, unquestioned commitment to the Chinese painting tradition as a whole. Now even that basic commitment was not beyond question, and as time passed, became harder and harder to sustain. Artistically, even to be Chinese was a matter of choice, and sometimes a difficult choice.

As some new options opened up, other older ones were closed off. Jen Hsiung could continue a living tradition, as in his pictures of beautiful women; he could revive an old one, and thus re-assert traditionalism, as in his figure paintings after Ch'en Hung-shou; he could adopt elements of Western style; or he could leave all these behind to invent new styles and motifs. A century later, the same options were still open, excepting the first: continuing a living Chinese tradition was all but impossible, since none was in a healthy enough state. Huang Pin-hung and Fu Pao-shih occupy the end of this transitional period, a time that one might call the late twilight of traditional Chinese

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

abroad as the solution to China's dilemma.

Fu Pao-shih was born in 1904 in Kiangsi Province. Little information is available on his early life and training. In 1935 he entered the Imperial Academy of Art in Tokyo. A rare example of his early painting dated to that year (Pl. 123) and inscribed as having been done "in Edo," i.e. Tokyo, shows him as already a technically accomplished, eclectic painter.

Japanese artists from the late 19th century onward had attempted to synthesize their own tradition and selected features of the Western one into a new style, an artistic manifestation of the great urge toward modernization that obsessed the country in the Meiji era and after. This movement was attractive to many Chinese painters, who saw in the Japanese experience a model for their own efforts to adapt Chinese culture to 20th century conditions and demands. Kao Chien-fu and other artists of the Ling-nan (Canton) School had studied in Japan <sup>during the period from 1898 to 1916,</sup> ~~around 1912-16,~~ imitating the styles of Japanese artists of that period; a particularly important influence on them was the work of Takeuchi Seihō. They returned to China to paint in a mode of romantic realism; and although the school they founded did not become the mainstream of the "new Chinese painting" 新國畫, as they had hoped, artists of this lineage have been active down to the present, when new works in this manner can still be seen in Canton.

Fu Pai-shih's painting of 1935 reveals some affinity with the Ling-nan School style, for instance in the effect of slight haze over the hillside rendered with delicate applications of dilute ink and color wash. The sensitivity of his brushwork is already apparent, and the composition can be seen as an early example of his device of setting finely drawn bare trees against a softer, mistier background.

In a painting dated to the following year, 1936, representing people

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,

melancholy faces and frail bodies covered with flowing robes. An excellent example of this figure type is "The Artist in His Studio" (Pl. 121), painted around 1949. According to the inscription, it is an imaginary portrait of the late Ming master Shao Mi. He sits at his table holding a brush, with paper spread before him, inwardly contemplating the painting he is about to do, while a man and boy regard him curiously through the window.

Fu Pao-shih's favorite theme, in his late years, was landscape with figures. Sometimes the figures are relatively large and prominent, and gaze at waterfalls or into misty distances in a way that recalls Southern Sung painting, or (more pertinently) the works of Tao-chi. At other times the figures are extremely small and can even be overlooked until one studies the picture closely. But in both cases, the placing of the figures and their postures convey emphatically to the viewer their responses to their surroundings, and are crucial to the expression of the work; they are never conventional figures serving only com-

(p. 112)

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 middle-ground 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-



ist grounds. The painting offers something to both tastes, without, we should add, quite satisfying either: one wishes for more exercise of formal control. Fu is another painter whose all-over level of quality suffers somewhat from over-production, and who depends too often on easy effects. It should be said in his favor, however, that his pictures are inspired by a poetic imagination that Huang Pin-hung, for instance, seems to have lacked, so that they are consistently more interesting pictorially.

A work of 1963, a "Landscape with Two Figures" (Pl. 122), is one of the many paintings on which he imitates Tao-chi. whose works Fu Pao-shih studied especially--he is the author of Shih-t'ao Shang-jen nien-p'u 石濤上人年譜 (1948). The influence is present in the rendering of the rocky mass with linear surface pattern and large tien, in the foggy distance in which a waterfall and stream are dimly visible, and in the dark, mysterious grove of trees in the foreground, painted with deep black ink and blue color. Sources for all these can be found in Tao-chi's works, such as the "Eight Views of Huang-shan" album in the Sumitono Collection. Two figures in the lower right hurry into the wood, as if to take refuge from an approaching storm; one of them looks back apprehensively. Such moody, emotion-charged landscapes as this are rare in recent Chinese painting, and give Fu Pao-shih a special place in it.

After 1949 Fu made some efforts to adjust the style and themes of his paintings to the new artistic ideals of the People's Republic, painting industrial scenes, adding steamboats to his river landscapes, replacing the "noble scholars" 高士, with their elitist overtones, by peasants and workers in some of his pictures. But their basic character was not much modified. Such partial accommodations to the demands of socialist realism are no longer acceptable since the Cultural Revolution, and one may question whether anything that can properly be termed wen-jen hua is being painted in China today, except by a few

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.

TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS FOR BUNJINGA SUIHEN X. (Original numbering; not followed in printed book in which nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, were deleted).

1. Kai Ch'i, illustration to Hung-lou meng (Japanese reprint of 1914).
2. Kai Ch'i, illustration to Hung-lou meng 紅樓夢圖詠.
3. Jen Hsiung, illustration for Kao-shih chuan (original edition).
4. Jen Hsiung, illustration for Kao-shih chuan 高士傳.
5. Jen Hsiung, portrait of Ting Lan-hsü (cf. 浙江古代畫家作品選集, P1. 97).
6. Jen Hsiung, leaf from album dated 1852. Reproduction album.  
任謂長人物花鳥冊
7. Jen Hsiung, leaf from album dated 1852. Reproduction album.  
No pub., no date.
8. Jen Po-nien, Men Seated by the River (from reproduction pub. in Shanghai).
9. Jen Po-nien, Portrait of Wu Ch'ang-shih. From 浙江古代畫家作品選集, P1. 101).
10. Jen Hsiung, Landscape with Men Beneath Leafy Trees. Album leaf.  
From 中國近百年繪畫展覽選集, P1. 6
11. Jen Hsün, Landscape with Building. Album leaf. From (same)  
, P1. 15.
12. Chao Chih-ch'ien, Landscape 積書巖圖. From (講談社)  
中國美術, III, 87.
13. Jen Po-nien, Landscape with Figures, from album of sketches, 1885.

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.