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Texts

LS.Lect.Notes3.

3. Six Dynasties Painting and Pictorial Designs

Intro. (me on camera? Or map?):

Must begin with note on nomenclature. I'm using an old-fashioned name for this period, which is the almost four centuries between two great unified dynasties, the Han and the Tang. In the *3000 Years* book it is called "The Three Kingdoms, Two Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties." This is more accurate but ponderous. Thorp and Vinograd call it "Age of the Dharma: The Period of Division," emphasizing the rise of Buddhism in this period, and the lack of any single ruling power in north and south. I will use the old, somewhat discredited term for convenience. As I emphasized at the beginning, you will have to get historical background elsewhere; I'm not going to lecture at length on the complexities of Six Dynasties power struggles, the rise and fall of states.

Nor will I give you more than the simplest remarks on Buddhism, which are that it enters China from India, by sea and later thru Central Asia, already in the Han period and becomes a great force in Chinese civilization in the centuries that follow. I was never strong in Buddhist art, and I won't show much of it in these lectures. I will completely leave out, for instance, the wall paintings in the Buddhist caves at Dunhuang, the site in the far northwest of China. These make up a lifetime pursuit for many scholars; and although I've been there and was as much overwhelmed by the wall paintings there as anyone else, they don't fit into my present account of early painting, especially landscape painting, in China. Also from Dunhuang are many portable paintings, on silk mostly, taken away by foreigners and now kept in museums in New Delhi and London, the British Museum—also Paris (drawings). I will show ptgs associated with the Chan or Zen sect of Buddhism in last lecture, and talk about Chan, but that's all.

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About the political-historical situation in Six Dynasties China, I'll say only for now that there was more or less constant warfare going on in the north, and occupation of big regions by borderland peoples from the north and northeast, both of which forced many Chinese families to emigrate to the south, and settle in the Yangzi delta region, especially in and around the city of Nanking/Nanjing, which became a major intellectual and artistic center in this period.

✓ We go
 So, on to look at paintings and pictorial designs from the Six Dynasties period found at other sites. Also some brief remarks on calligraphy in this period, and a few Six Dynasties texts on painting, the real beginnings of the great and rich Chinese literature on our subject.

Two notable developments in this period: first, appearance of important individual artists, and of one, Gu Kaizhi, to whom important early ptgs are attributed; and second, great dev. of ptg. theory, including LS ptg theory.

2.1.1, 2.5.6. Two slides from previous lecture, to remind you, and to correct two mistakes. I said the ptg on the left from the tomb of the Marquess of Tai near Changsha was listed in the inventory in the tomb as a *feiyi*, but then translated that as “spirit robe.” It really means, of course, “flying garment.” I also stumbled in trying to think of the word for what they did to her corpse: I said “dissected” when I meant that they “did an autopsy” on her. And in the tomb tile from Sichuan seen on the right, I spoke of ducks on the water and flying off. I meant, of course, geese. Probably lots of other mistakes, but those two struck me right after I recorded the lecture. These two pictures can serve to represent high points of Han ptg and pictorial art, and remind us of the beginnings of LS representation then. We’ll see it much advanced in the post-Han period in the lecture that follows now.

3.1. Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove, Nanjing Tomb

3.1.1, 3.1.2 (one above other? or beside) Bricks making up a tomb wall, with design. Rubbing. Immortal playing with dragon, pursuing jade *bi*-disk. (Explained rubbings last time.)

Must have been multiple-copy production to justify stamped or molded bricks; designs are repeated, more or less, in different tombs. Here is Thorp writing about it (p. 180 of T&V):

“ The technique employed required stamping the narrow edges of bricks into a master mold so that when they were assembled in proper order the larger composition took shape. The making of the master molds presumes drawing a full-scale cartoon that was transferred to the molds. The cartoon, in turn, must derive from an original design, whether conventional or from one of the famous painters of the period.”

3.1.3. Tomb-wall representing four of Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove. Large rubbings exhibited in Nanjing Museum, slides from those. Seven prominent figures in cultural life of Nanjing, who withdrew to commune, drink wine, and escape from human society in a bamboo grove—well known from writings of the time, and known to have been depicted in paintings by Gu Kaizhi, artist I'll speak of later. Tomb wall designs, stamped bricks, in tomb near Nanjing, late 4th century.

3.1.4. Other wall. Eighth figure, named Rong Qiji, added to fill out the space. 3000 Fig. 57, pp. 48-49; T&V 5-26, p. 17

3.1.5. One of figures, holding wine-cup. Conventional props attributing certain characteristics to them. Man-under-tree was conventional sign for man in nature, man escaping from human society.

3.1.6. Two figures. Don't respond to each other; must have been based on series of individual imaginary portraits? But characterizations effective, individualize the figures, convey attributes associated with them.

3.1.7. Ruanji was known for ability to whistle—kind of piercing sound that would reverberate through forest. Daoist's deep concern w. phenomena of sound: sympathetic resonance with nature, people and things vibrating in mysterious harmony.

This is the time to talk a bit abt Daoism—important to rise of landscape and writings on LS ptg in this period.

READING: Keep images on, read from prepared text about Daoism.

Daoism: had arisen in the 5th-4th cent. B.C. as alternative to human-centered systems of Confuc. & Legalism. Denied value of everything Confuc. preached, concerned itself w problem of understanding natural order, bringing one's self into accord w it. This was an individual quest, which could only be impeded by adherence to social conventions. This early form of Daoism was deflected or distorted in later centuries, Han & after, into a quest for magical powers or eternal life. In 6 Dyn period, another form called Neo-Daoism arose, taking several directions One was abstruse speculation, intellectualized commentaries on early Daoist texts. Another was practice of *qingtan*, lit. "pure conversation," kind of mystical dialogue full of metaphysical hyperbole, grandiose images, meant to induce a transcendental state of mind in participants., Most to the point