

LS.Lect.notes.5: Five Dynasties Figure and Other Painting

Long, slow decline of T'ang followed by another period of disunion and disorder: Five Dynasties period, 906-960. But great period of ptg., to which I will devote two lectures (this, plus one on great landscape masters of the period, works ascribed to them.) Almost constant warfare in north, where 5 Dynasties succeeded one another. Southern T'ang, in south, relatively peaceful; carried on T'ang traditions in some respects. Shu state, in present-day Szechwan in SW, had a few prominent ptrs.

Last ruler of So. T'ang: Li Yû or Li Hou-chu, had number of major painters in his academy. Secular fig. ptg, bird-and-flower ptg, landscape. He was poet himself, calligrapher, connoisseur. After fall of his dyn. to Sung (975) he was allowed to roam about for remaining years as a poet. One of his court artists during his heyday was Chou Wen-chü, follower of Chou Fang in T'ang. Quite a few ptgs attrib. him, but none with much evidence. Handscroll in Liaoning Mus. seen last time sometimes associated with him.

I should mention that a book on Li Hou-chu, and ptg of his time, was published in 2007 by Ch'en Pao-chen, whom I've mentioned before—she teaches at Taiwan Nat'l U. in Taipei, fine scholar. She discusses lots of the ptgs I do. Book all in Chinese; I haven't read her arguments in detail. But can recommend the book just from knowing her.

~~- 5.1.1, 5.1.2. Painted marble reliefs from tomb of Wang Chuzhi, died A.D. 923. Female attendants and musicians. In Hebei Province in north.~~

~~- 5.1.3. Cf. to Princess Yung-t'ai tomb ptg.~~

follower of Chou Fang

REMOVE
(IGNORE FIRST 3
IMAGES)

- 5.2.1 Attrib. Chou Wen-chü (Zhou Wenju) (active ca. 961-975), "Double Screen" picture. Freer Gallery version: Lawton, Chinese Figure Ptg., no. 3, p. 34 ff. I discovered while I was curator there, meant to publish, didn't—Tom Lawton pub. for first time.

- 5.2.2. copy of this composition in Palace Mus. in Beijing—later, neater, loses early features of style seen in Freer ptg. Freer version prob. isn't original, quite, but early, close copy I think.

- 5.2.3. Figures in *zhanbi*, "tremulous brushstrokes," manner (another example: Siren 102). Said to depict Li Yu, or Li Houzhu (reigned 961-976) and his brothers playing *weiqi*. (Explain, title: screen w/in screen w/in ptg.)

- 5.2.4. Ptg on screen, in Freer version. LS doesn't necessitate later date than early Sung: simple LS of hills, repeated folds. Strangely hunched figure at left w. red robe: misunderstood copy of foreshortened figure?

- 5.3.1. Attrib. Ku Hung-chung (Gu Hongzhong), "Han Xizai's Night Banquet." T&V 7-23, 3000 Fig. 103, pp. 112-13, complete, Siren 120-23.

Scroll was owned in 1940s-50s by Chang Ta-ch'ien, pub. In his collection volumes; was for sale (Sherman Lee, Sickman, failed to buy.) Bought back by Chinese, now in Palace Mus., Beijing.

Discussion in 3000: I think wrong; it takes it to be original of time of Emp. Hui-tsung, criticizing Southern T'ang court. More likely, 12th-13th cent.

copy after work really done in 10th cent., whether or not story true: (Tell story.) Han Hsi-tsai was high minister under last emperor of So. T'ang, Li Yû; as this state neared collapse, conquest by Sung imminent, Han began holding wild parties in his residence, with lots of women entertainers and sex. Emperor heard of this, arranged for court artist Ku Hung-chung to be hidden in Han's house to observe secretly, paint the goings-on for the emperor to see, also Han Hsi-tsai, to realize his dissipation was known.

Various versions of story This is first sec'n of the scroll, from reprod. (Detail slides were made by my colleague and old friend in Ann Arbor, Dick Edwards--

Placement of furniture, set diagonally, and (espec.) screens as dividers defines space; almost like walls. Small spaces (beds) open into larger spaces. Fig. set w/in this, move easily, interrelate in complex ways. Lots of significant looking going on—sexual proposals. (Hard to know how much of this pertains to period of copy, but speaks of highly developed rendering of complex interior spaces w figures in 10th cent., So.T'ang.

-5.3.2 - 5.3.17. Sixteen more slides and sections, to end. More originally?

- 5.4.1. Attrib. Shih K'o (active ca. 950-975). Two Patriarchs (of Ch'an/Zen Buddhism). ("Two Patriarchs Harmonizing Their Minds.") Skira 49, Siren 118, etc. (Actually anonymous 13th cent. works, will return later.) Shih-k'o was artist of some eccentric habits, known for figure paintings so strange that they shocked people.

- 5.4.2. Detail. Whatever Shih-k'o's eccentricity was, this isn't it. More or less meaningless attribution.

- 5.4.3. Other of pair. Will bring back in last lecture, talk of what they probably really represent.

- 5.4.4. Detail of that.

- 5.4.5, beside it. Picture of demon, done in sketchy ink style, found in Central Asian site, shown last time, maybe late T'ang in date. Probably gives better idea of what "untrammeled" ptg of time may have looked like.

Critic of time writes: "In ptg, hardest to achieve is *i-ko* class. Ptg of *i-ko* may be clumsy in ruling off of right angles and arcs, it may despise the fine grinding of colors; but even though the brushwork be simple and abbreviated, the forms are complete, and things are ptd. w. spontaneity." Already in T'ang, there were ptrs who would work while drunk, splashing the ink and colors freely, turning their splashes marvelously into recognizable ptgs. For these, we can read texts:

These figured heavily in long article by my teacher Shûjirô Shimada which I trans., pub. in *Oriental Art* in three parts, 1961-64. (Story). This was a dev. in critical theory that I'm mostly leaving out: besides traditional scheme of classification, "divine, wonderful, competent" classes into which ptrs put, another added: *i-ko* or *i-p'in*, "untrammeled" class. Ink-splashes of T'ang and later, others who ptd in unusual ways, could not be fitted into established ranking system. I had to make the point back then that although we were tempted to match them up with our own "abstract expressionist" artists flourishing then, not really comparable: what Chinese splashes did was produce semi-chance configuration, then turn that into recognizable picture with brushwork after they had sobered up. Method of avoiding conventional, man-made-looking compositions, used also in Renaissance Italy—Leonardo da Vinci—and at other times & places. They didn't, that is, present ink-splashes as finished ptgs.

For the *i-p'in* (*yipin*) or "untrammeled" style, see S. Shimada, "Concerning the *i-p'in* Style of Painting," trans. by J. Cahill, in *Oriental Art* 7 (1961) pp. 66-74, 8 (1962) pp. 130-137; and 10 (1962) pp. 19-26.

Also active in Shu in 5 Dyn. period: Ch'an monk-ptr named Kuan Hsiuu (832-912.) Important series of pictures of Buddhist holy men, Arhats, in Jap. Imperial Household collection attrib. to him, prob. after him. But I'm not treating those.

5.5.0. Anon., 12th cent. copy after 9th-10th cent. work? "Ladies in the Palace." Met. Mus. of Art, N.Y.

- 5.5.1, whole of this ptg. Preserves old and important composition.