

TRADITION AND INDIVIDUAL TALENT
IN THE THEORY OF CHINESE PAINTING
(The paradox of Hsieh Ho's First and Sixth Principles)

by
John R. Stocking

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
in the DEPARTMENT
of
FINE ARTS

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 17, 1968.

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Art

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date March 22, 1968

ABSTRACT

This study is directed at the problem of an apparent contradiction within the theory of Chinese painting, between insistence on the importance of individuality in painting on the one hand, by Chinese critics, and on the other their veneration of traditional ways and means, subjects, styles, and the criteria used in judging excellence. Since this dichotomy is clearly embodied in the single most important document within the theory of Chinese painting, Hsieh Ho's Six Principles (the First and Sixth in particular), I have structured the first three parts of the thesis around an evaluation of Hsieh Ho's reputation, and the literal meaning of the First and Sixth principles, respectively. The method is essentially that of literary criticism, tempered, hopefully, by a familiarity with many of the great masterpieces of Chinese painting.

In the last two sections I moved from an evaluation of the values and customs of the social class which supported the art of painting, back to the theory itself. Within the scholar-official class, as a social entity, a similar apparent contradiction exists between the importance placed on individual freedom and talent in living,

and the recognized authority of fixed tradition. Since this dichotomy is embodied within the apparently conflicting ways of Confucianism and Taoism, I have built my argument around these two socio-religious traditions. The method used is one of socio-philosophical analysis and interpretation.

From a consideration of Confucianism and Taoism a set of relatively a-historical constants emerges: for Confucianism a moral imperative and the practice of calligraphy; for Taoism a metaphysical imperative and the practice of meditation. In the great literary and artistic tradition of China, a fifth constant exists, shared by the Confucian and the Taoist mind alike.

My formulation of these constants and evaluation of their inter-relationships, and interdependence, is almost completely philosophical--the intuitive and deductive construction of a resolution which seems to adequately explain all of the important issues. My actual presupposition that the conflict (between the individual talent and tradition) is illusory comes, foremost, from my sense of complete unity in the painting, and, secondly, from the fact that the Chinese themselves were never particularly aware of any such threat to the production of masterpieces

of uncompromised spiritual significance. In the "Introduction" I suggest that the illusion of conflict or compromising conflict within the field-theory of Chinese painting is, very likely, based on a defensive Western cultural-egotism, and the superstition that the Orient has always negated the individual spirit while we in the new West alone know its true value. Once we emphathize with the Chinese scholar-painters, the illusion melts away.

The conclusion I reach is that the apparently opposing and conflicting elements are in fact complimentary and supportive, within the overall unity of the Chinese spirit. However, a certain irony must be admitted in that an a-historical, or universal level of being is a necessary postulate in order to consummate the resolution. That the Chinese themselves were convinced of the reality of such a metaphysical level, I have substantiated with quotations; and it is on this level that the result of Taoist meditation emerges as the supporting basis of the Confucian moral commitment to the essential goodness of man.

In a similar way the Confucian practice of calligraphy provides the essential technical equipment of the painter, and a ready-made audience of experts in brush work, while the final criteria for judging the excellence

of painting is closely related to the experience of the Taoist mystic. Moralizing on the Confucian side of the coin takes the form of transmission of ideal types and subjects in painting, while the Taoist commitment to spontaneous use of the brush, on the other side, leads toward the unconscious lodging of individual moral character--and, conceivably, all within the same painting. Individual talent finds its freedom to live in expression primarily through the function of negative capability, while tradition, the authority of the sages, in strictly governing the artist's positive invention ironically preserves the ideal conditions under which the painter's negative capability may be activated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. HSIEH HO	5
II. THE FIRST PRINCIPLE	15
III. THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE	26
IV. THE CONFUCIAN CONSTANTS OF CHINESE PAINTING ...	40
V. TAOISM, THE ALTERNATE CONVENTION	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79
APPENDIX I (Translations of the Six Principles of Hsieh Ho)	83
APPENDIX II (Negative Capability and Formal Values) ..	87

INTRODUCTION

In developing a discussion around two of the central themes of aesthetic theory about painting in China, the themes embodied in Hsieh Ho's First and Sixth Principles, it has been all too easy to speak in terms of "paradox" and "conflict" within a system of thought which probably did not strike the Chinese as very paradoxical or conflicting. Though generated through the experience of something which definitely exists, the paradox and tension of which I write is real only within our minds--our Western minds; and it is within the Western mind that I want most to reach a resolution of the apparent competition between the needs of tradition and the needs of individual talent in Chinese painting. The great tradition of Chinese painting forms a unity of being, a moral-aesthetic-historical continuum, a self-defining wholeness which must be fully realized before just appreciation can be freely granted to individual works. Through this discussion I hope that what first seemed superficially antithetical will come to reveal itself as profoundly complementary in the final analysis, and that the paradoxical will begin to emerge as self-evidently supporting. Perhaps strength and meaning

will emerge out of the Eastern mist where we thought we recognized inferiority and superstition. And the mysterious "mysticism" of the East may take on the curiously familiar colors of Dr. Einstein's universe.

° The seeming failure of the Chinese gentlemen painters to widely explore new materials, subject matter, and formal principles may seem paradoxical to the Westerner, in view of the emphasis which the Chinese placed on an intuitive approach to art, and the remarkable individualism which many of the great Chinese painters displayed in their personal ways of life. It is the paradox between Hsieh Ho's First Principle, which dictates an almost mystical release of completely spontaneous brushwork, and the Sixth Principle, which insists on the transmission of past experience through the adherence to formal conventions, leading to a relatively tight vocabulary of brush strokes and representational modes, and--in the extreme--to the practice of actually copying the works and styles of past masters.

In other words, if a painter values the intuitive and spontaneous approach, does the close adherence to tradition, and certainly the act of copying, imply some kind of moral or aesthetic compromise--an hypocrisy,

dishonesty, a deviousness? That is what many Westerners would like to think is true, and that is what one hears from not a few academics among us as they criticize the Chinese in defending Western art in its own terms, i.e. Western art displays more material and technical inventiveness, variety, a more original and dynamic evolution of meanings, etc. Now, I am sure what is actually involved in this sort of defensive attitude on the part of the West is a deep-seated fear of its own spiritual inadequacy (as expressed in the materialism and vainglory of much of its art), and a subsequent desire to devalue its natural mirror in the East--which shows us just what we are--on grounds which are essentially based on delusions of racial and cultural superiority. Needless to say, we do not fear the East because of some overall cultural superiority to the West, which it obviously lacks, but because acceptance of the East on its own terms reveals much to the Western mind about itself which it likes to avoid knowing, and which it would like to continue to avoid knowing until the end.

What I have attempted to do in this paper is to resolve the seeming paradox of tradition and the individual talent in Chinese painting. And, in addition, I

have also attempted to explain it in historical terms. The historical explanation is concerned mainly with such matters of fact as the practice of calligraphy, the traditional social-economic role of the Chinese painter, the Chinese attitude toward nature, history, and art. The resolution of the paradox depends upon an evaluation of the central control source responsible for the appearance of any phenomenon, meditation or action, within time--i.e. the human mind as a bio-cybernetic information-processing device. Difficulties have arisen, and will be experienced by the reader, in the area where the two factors--history and the abstract mind--come together, areas of philosophical speculation. Hopefully, the confusion which develops will not be on a communication-blocking level.

I. HSIEH HO

Within the East Asian field of reference it is fitting that the first known art theorist of major importance came to be accepted as the greatest authority.¹ Hsieh Ho did not write his famous treatise on painting, the Ku hua-p'in lu (The Old Classified Record of Painters), until 475 A.D.,² or quite late in the history of Chinese philosophy. (The traditional dates for Confucius are 551-479 B.C.).³ Yet, as the development of a critical literature on painting was about 1000 years behind the development of thought in the areas of politics, morals, and metaphysics, Hsieh Ho could still be first. The particular significance of his primacy must be emphasized, if we are to attempt to look at the problem from a Chinese point of view.

¹Edwin O. Reischauer and John K. Fairbank, East Asia The Great Tradition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 69

²Michael Sullivan, The Birth of Landscape Painting In China (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1962), p. 105.

³Reischauer, Great Tradition, p. 69.

Like Confucius, Hsieh Ho never claimed to be an originator of the ideas he codified,⁴ but rather, a transmitter of ideas already inextricably woven into the fabric of the great tradition, as he, himself, says in introducing the Old Record of the Classification of Painters.^{5,6} What he had to say had doubtless been said before on countless occasions when scholars met and discussed painting and, more important, the fine art of calligraphy. The roots of the famous Six Principles of Hsieh Ho were deep, grounded, as Acker suggests, not merely in the criticism of calligraphy, but most likely also in a system for judging horses which originated during the previous dynasty.⁷ It was not so much the originality or newness of what Hsieh Ho wrote that

⁴William Theodore DeBary, (ed.), Sources of Chinese Tradition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 15-20.

⁵Oswald Siren, The Chinese on the Art of Painting, (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 18.

⁶William Reynolds Beal Acker, Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), p. 5.

⁷Ibid., LIII and XXXIV.

accounts for his fame, but rather its universal acceptability within the great tradition, and the way in which he expressed it in writing. It is interesting to note that, although his style as a painter had much that was individualistic or novel, original and clever, he was always placed in inferior categories by later critics, who seemed to agree that the way in which he gained his effects was superficial.

We may be sure that Hsieh Ho was a painter, and learn a few things about his painting, mainly because of information found in the Hsu Hua P'in by Yao Tsui (circa. 550), the second oldest major theoretical-historical work on painting in Chinese which is known,⁸ and from which I will quote the section on Hsieh Ho, using Acker's translation.

In painting people's portraits he (Hsieh Ho) did not have to sit opposite them and keep looking. All he needed was one glance and he would go to work and wield his brush. His dots and sweeps are polished and refined, and his attention was fixed on (getting) a close likeness. (Even to) the expression of the eyes and the least hair, all was (done) without a single slip or omission. (Even) the festive robes and the cosmetics (of his

⁸ Siren, Art of Painting, p. 9.

women) changed according to the times, and he made straight eyebrows or curved forehead locks, according to the latest (fashion) in the world's affairs. Such refinement in the differentiation of styles generally speaking began with (Hsieh) Ho, but the consequence is that he has set all the (men from the) back alleys to chasing after unessentials so that they all resemble (the ugly women) who imitated the frown (of the famous beauty). For in what concerns spirit resonance and the essential soul, he was far from fathoming the meaning of vitality. The path of his brush was tenuous and weak which ill accords with a feeling of vigour and classic elegance. Will, ever since the Chung Hsing era (501) no one had equalled him in portraying people.⁹

And, according to Giles, it would appear that Huang Po-ssu (the Sung scholar and art critic) had access to a copy of a painting by Hsieh Ho, of which he wrote as follows in a brief note:

The picture of the Emperor Ming Ti of the Chin dynasty (A.D. 323-326) riding in his wheeled chair, was painted by Hsieh Ho of the Southern Ch'i dynasty. Although this is only a copy which has been handed down, the conception and likeness are those of ancient times; but to place a small table in the chair, and to display two carrying-poles alongside, is not at all in accordance with tradition . . . Further, at the time of the Eastern Chin dynasty, hats and boots had not come into general fashion, yet in this picture we see the eunuchs wearing

⁹ Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, p. 45.

them.¹⁰

Concerning Hsieh Ho as painter, little else of value remains to inform us. Concerning his character, there seem to be many legends, but nothing of clear-cut historical worth.

In evaluating the brief material which has been quoted, it would seem that, while Hsieh Ho recognized the Six Principles in order to record them, he was not able to abide by them in practice, nor to embody the First Principle in his painting at all. Thus he was condemned as a painter by later critics using the very criteria he had established. Apparently, to a man like Yao Tsui, who wrote only fifty years after Hsieh's death, the author of the Six Principles of Chinese Painting was no immortal or sage, like Confucius, but merely a good critic who could not paint very well. Since the painting seen by Huang Po-ssu was clearly a copy, little value may be attached to it, and one must conclude that no paintings by Hsieh Ho have survived, nor reasonable descriptions other than what Yao Tsui has to offer.

¹⁰ Herbert A. Giles, An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art, (Shanghai: Kelley and Walsh, Ltd., 1905), pp. 27-28.

As Sullivan suggests, Yao Tsui's criticism of Hsieh Ho's paintings, that they lacked life movement or spirit resonance--the most important of the "six elements," constitutes a "scathing verdict."¹¹ Sullivan, himself, speaks of Hsieh Ho's "mediocrity as a painter," and goes on to conclude that he was "doubtless a pedantic critic whose taste leaned toward meticulous realism . . ."¹² His portraits must have been more clever than profound, with an interest in detail and a limited kind of personal characterization overriding the expression of universal moral and metaphysical principles which the Chinese intellectual has always valued above technical facility or originality. And, as a critic, how could he have looked well at Ku K'ai-chih's paintings and still placed him (of whose well-established greatness we have considerable evidence) in the third rank of painters?¹³ Why does he place Wang Wei in the even lower fourth class? These, and other questions about Hsieh's ability as a painter and integrity as a critic, which tend to support Sullivan's verdict, must go unanswered.

¹¹ Sullivan, Birth of Landscape Painting, p. 106.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, p. 17.

Hsieh Ho's fame grew steadily because he was the first writer to officially, or formally record--to uphold and transmit--a set of principles which in and of themselves surround the secret of Chinese painting, the Tao, just as the political philosophy of the Duke of Chou (transmitted by Confucius) embodies the Chinese moral and political sense. Although he was certainly not a great sage like Confucius, Hsieh Ho's name was attached to the Six Principles of Chinese Painting because of his literary-historical contribution. He passed them on in a written style which the later Chinese took as classic prose. To quote the sinologist, Acker, "The style in which it (Ku Hua P'in Lu) is written is characteristic of the period, closely knit, elegant and polished, with nearly all the sentences arranged in carefully balanced pairs."¹⁴ This same description applies closely to the Wen-fu of Lu Chi (261-303 A.D.), a remarkable work in rhymeprose and the first comprehensive theory of literary criticism in China.¹⁵ But, unlike the Wen-fu of Lu Chi, it is hard to believe that the Six Principles

¹⁴ Ibid., XIV.

¹⁵ John L. Bishop (ed.), Studies in Chinese Literature (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965) pp. 3-41.

of Hsieh Ho contain any of their author's original thought. It would be better to think in terms of The Six Principles of Chinese Painting, which Hsieh Ho transmitted, rather than in terms of Hsieh Ho's Six Principles.

As anyone who has read The Chinese on the Art of Painting will agree, the "Six Principles . . ." survived and flourished with great tenacity in the minds of Chinese scholar painters, critics, and art historians.¹⁶ As a result, they have also drawn the attention of most writers in English, Japanese, and other foreign languages, when dealing with questions of the theory of painting in China. As Soper remarks, "...they satisfied the general requirements of classical lore by being at once ancient, terse, and superficially simple about a core of mystery..."¹⁷ In this paper, although questions of literal meaning and translation of texts are interesting and essential to the understanding of the basic problem, and will be dealt with, the interest here is not with Hsieh Ho's

¹⁶Siren, Art of Painting.

¹⁷Alexander C. Soper, "The First Two Laws of Hsieh Ho," The Far Eastern Quarterly: Review of Eastern Asia and the Adjacent Pacific Islands, Vol. 8 (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1948-49), p. 412.

rendition for its own sake, but rather in its function as a vehicle of historical and trans-historic, or universal, meaning.

In 1954, William R. B. Acker published an extensive technical study of Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting (Leiden, E. J. Brill), including Hsieh Ho's Ku Hua P'in Lu. In his argument concerning the Six Principles of Hsieh Ho, he attempts to prove that of the four Chinese characters which were previously thought to make up each principle, only the first two comprise the principle, while the last two provide a definition. Thus, in translating the Six Principles he presents only the first two characters of each line, although he provides a translation of the "definitions" elsewhere in his text. The result is a translation which I cannot help but feel, in its ideogramatic concentration, is much closer to the way in which the Chinese wrote and thought. A comparison of Acker's translation with earlier readings by men like Laurence Binyon, Friedrich Hirth, Shio Sakanishi, Arthur Waley, and to a certain extent, Osvald Siren (in which the principles and the definitions tend to be interpreted more as whole sentences or phrases), will illustrate what I mean.

(See Appendix I). Most leading contemporary scholars of Chinese painting, such as Alexander Soper, William Cohn, Sherman E. Lee, Michael Sullivan, and Laurence Sickman, base their translations at least in part on Acker's interpretation,¹⁸ although some go on to cast the meaning established by Acker into standard English sentences or phrases. In dealing with the literal meaning of the first and sixth principles in the next two sections of this paper, I have relied heavily on Acker's opinion.

¹⁸Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, The Art and Architecture of China (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1956), p. 65.

II. THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

Of the Six Principles of Chinese Painting, the first has received by far the most attention from writers in China and in the West.¹ Its philosophical ramifications and implications surround a philosophical-religious belief, or fact, which in itself unlocks the door to understanding the other five laws. For the Chinese it was a concept which expands to touch every area of action and meditation in life, and, like the Indian concept of Brahman or the medieval Christian concept of Light, came to the criticism of art from a philosophical system already complete with morals, metaphysics, logic, and politics. Obviously such a lineage makes the problem of adequate translation into the language of another culture extremely difficult, particularly when the culture and its language embody the values of a people at odds with the kind of life solution which the Chinese system inevitably suggests.

In translating the first binome, the first of Hsieh Ho's Six Principles (ch'i yun), Acker adheres to

¹Soper, "The First Two Laws," p. 412.

Siren's earlier rendering as "Spirit-Resonance."²

Although Alexander Soper eventually decides in favor of the "less specific" (but also less dynamic) "Spirit-Consonance," the argument he uses is almost identical to Acker's, and he also considers "Spirit-Resonance" as a fairly adequate definition as long as the English meaning of "Resonance" is clearly defined.³ The general argument of these two translators may be outlined roughly as follows.

Before Han times, the character "Ch'i," although already ancient and charged with the implication of religious-philosophical profundity, was used in a relatively indiscriminating way. It could refer to man's actual physical breath, or to a number of vital humours or quasi-scientific fluids generated by the internal organs then thought to control the personality, or, perhaps by implication, to definitely psychological concepts, i.e. man's abstract "spirit," his "passion-nature," his "presence" or spiritual style. And, in connection with what we might call the "natural world,"

²Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, XXIX.

³Soper, "The First Two Laws," p. 412.

it was also used to express a sense of some primal element or ether, the essential energy-transmitting element of the whole world continuum, something at once universal and yet capable of particularization under concrete circumstance in time and space. By Han times, however, the two general uses of the one character--in reference to nature and in reference to man as part of nature--had been fairly well fused into a single philosophical system, or cosmology, as the central metaphysical principle. Soper attempts to explain in English prose, as follows:

A primordial "chi" had existed at the beginning of time before the appearance of created forms. The first act of creation had been the separation of this ether into its grosser and subtler components, which became the nuclei of earth and heaven, respectively, and the agents in further cosmic interaction and subdivision. In the mature universe were all kinds and conditions of "ch'i", individual or collective, grouped about a common quality of relationship, parceled out into numerical categories. At the same time, as their common name suggested, all these units and groups, the "ch'i" of rock, the "ch'i" of the human spirit, the "ch'i" of meteorological phenomena and of the divisions of time, were in some way one. Here, half-formed and still full of gaps and contradictions, was the kind of tremendous metaphysical concept that in Indian thought was more systematically presented under the names of Atman and Brahman, or even Buddha. Its potential value for the more mystical side of Chinese painting theory

is self-evident.⁴

To get substantially closer to the central meaning of this idea in English, it is necessary to pass over all of the critics and literary-philosophical hacks who have waxed eloquent on the subject, and consult a true poet. In the passage I quote from "Lines above Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth speaks of a force distinctly related to the Chinese concept of "ch'i," and--what is most important--does so in a way which can recreate the feeling of the experience described, evoking as well as defining the event itself.

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.⁵

The defining binome, or explanatory equivalent of "ch'i yun" is "sheng tung" which translates unequivocally as "life-motion."⁶ The appropriateness of this

⁴Soper, "The First Two Laws," p. 419.

⁵Ernest Bernbaum, Anthology of Romanticism (New

binome will be apparent at once to anyone who has watched a master calligrapher or painter in action. Chinese painting is a performing art, not unlike the dance in its requirements, but with the difference that it is self-recording. The criteria for judging its excellence is implicit in the first principle: the record left in the ink on the paper must be the record of action which unselfishly participates, which freely becomes a knowing part of the primary processes of creation--processes which for the Chinese were the impelling forces of life, the source of life's-motion in "all thinking things" and "all objects of all thought."

"Yun," the second character of the binome which is the first law, poses few problems to the translator when compared with the ancient and enigmatic "Ch'i." To quote again from Soper's article:

'Yun,' in contrast, was for Hsieh Ho a relatively new character that had had little opportunity to grow in meaning. The K'ang-shi dictionary cites ancient authority to the effect that it was a new creation of the post-Han period, a response to the greater interest of

York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 193.

⁶Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, XXXII.

that age in problems of poetic form. Out of this need, then, of indicating a precise sound relationship comes its primary translation, "rhyme." In the "Wen hsin tiao lung," ch. 33, it is the subject of a valuable definition, contrasting it with the "ho," normally translated as "harmony:" "When differing sounds are in mutual accord, one speaks of "ho." When notes of the same key respond to one another, one speaks of "yun."⁷

He goes on to quote from the Book of Changes, perhaps the classic most important as a source of aesthetic philosophy to the poet and painter alike, where a "supplementary explanation" of a hexagram, traditionally ascribed to Confucius, speaks of sympathetic vibration of strings in relation to "ch'i."

Notes of the same key respond to one another; creatures of the same nature, "ch'i," seek one another. Thus water flows down toward wetness, while fire aspires toward dryness; clouds follow the dragon, and winds the tiger. The sage appears, and all things look to him. All that has its origin in Heaven is drawn upward; all that has its origin in Earth is drawn downward; for everything follows its kind.

Developed by the post-Han philosophers under the name of "yun," this metaphor to physical phenomena observable in musical instruments came to accompany the

⁷ Soper, "The First Two Laws," p. 419.

⁸ Ibid., p. 421.

primary concept of "ch'i." "Yun" was thus thought of as the condition in which "all thinking things, all objects of all thought" vibrate or resonate sympathetically, or are impelled or energized by the direct primal source, gaining self-evident presence by sharing in its authority. It is a responsiveness, an active or vital cooperation, a submergence within and realization through the essential currents of cosmic energy at work creating the world, rather than a rebelling or struggling against the natural order out of the ignorance of selfishness.

In English, Coleridge comes close to expressing the feeling and meaning of the Chinese concept, in these lines from "The Eolian Harp."

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each and God of all?⁹

Hsieh Ho used the character, "yun," freely, but he appears to have meant about the same thing by it in each case, as one can see from the examples Acker quotes:

⁹Bernbaum, Anthology of Romanticism, p. 140.

shen yun	--	soul resonance	
t'i yun	--	style tone	
ch'ing yun	--	emotional resonance	
yun ya	--	resonance and classic elegance	10

He goes on to explain:

In all these binomes "yun" (resonance) seems to point to a sort of vibrant quality in the works of the painters of whom he uses these terms--lingering resonances or overtones of the painter's own soul, nervous energy, feeling, etc. Some scholars have tried to bring out the "rhyme" sense of "yun" by suggesting that it might mean the conveyance of the artist's own emotion to others by means of the work of art, and they would, therefore, explain "ch'i yun" as sympathetic vibrations of the "spirit" between the painter and the critic brought about through the medium of the work of art. Or, in other words, the work of art should have the power of evoking in the critic the same feelings which inspired the painter when he created it. Those who take this view support it by pointing out that another character, "yun," (to convey, transport) is often used instead of "yun" (resonance, sympathetic vibrations, etc.) and that the use of this character proves that Chang Yen-yuan and the other early writers who substituted it, must have understood by Hsieh's "ch'i yun" some sort of transference of emotion from person to person by means of works of art.¹¹

¹⁰Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, XXXII.

¹¹Ibid.

In dealing with the Sixth Principle, and the problem of copying in particular, it will be important to remember that these early writers emphasized the possibility of contact transfer of "ch'i" or vital spirit, a spiritual communication, through completed works of art.

So much is clear. However, since the Chinese did not habitually distinguish between body and spirit, mind and matter, as we are accustomed to doing in the West, some confusion is bound to occur for us in attempting to get at what "ch'i" actually meant, and what the process of "yun" entailed: was "yun" the intellectual or mental realization of scientific (cosmological) fact, or was it a physical (emotional) reaction to some kind of universal idea? Were both "yun" and "ch'i" thought of in terms of consciousness, or idea, or were they both known purely as physical forces experienced by man? The answer, of course, is that some form of universal mind or consciousness is involved, but that this force is--or at least was for the Chinese--a reality which existed on a level similar to the level on which we place such scientific notions as quantum mechanics or magnetic wave theory--levels of an abstractly spiritual nature, to be sure, but also of concrete actuality. We may not understand the

universe of Dr. Einstein, but no doubt most of us believe fervently in its existence, and on occasion may even receive intimations concerning its nature. With much less recorded data to go on, the Chinese also seem to have had a deep faith in some primary undernetting, and took this constant and never-changing base as a categorical reference point in dealing with all philosophical-scientific problems--moral, aesthetic, and historical.

For the ancient Chinese the sage was the man who knows. And, not merely knows, but knows he knows and is not afraid to speak his mind or to act. His absolute knowledge leads to total commitment and spontaneous action based on an intuitive grasp of the moral-historical-aesthetic situation. As in the case of the legendary Duke of Chou, the sage model of Confucian political philosophy, action, based on absolute knowledge and cooperation with the pre-ordained order, becomes vibrant with the energy of "ch'i," and once charged with the will of the cosmos is irresistably effective. Yet, interestingly enough, the Chinese Superman is not amoral. For the Chinese world order was an extremely human vision, and rarely begins to approach the mechanistic neutrality of our

scientific cosmology. Enlightened action was, after all, nothing more than cooperation with the "will of Heaven."

Fortunately, the political feasibility of charismatic leadership is beyond the scope of this paper. The only point is that spirit resonance, or sympathy-empathy with cosmic energy patterns, was not thought of as a means to enter certain static religious-aesthetic realms of consciousness--realms of disinvolvement--as was so often the case in India. "Tuning-in" was first of all a way of unlocking an unusual kind of spontaneous action force; and Chinese painting is the ultimate form of action painting.

III. THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE

As one can see at once from scanning the various renderings of the Sixth Principle (listed in the Appendix), there is almost no disagreement concerning its general meaning. Some kind of transmission and conveying from the tradition of Chinese painting was intended; and, this should occur through a mechanism of formal reproduction such as the learning of models, styles, and the actual making of copies. Only the translation of Herbert Giles (as "Finish"), which must have been some kind of joke, conflicts with the general consensus. The real issue centers around the question of what kind of "transmission" is meant, and what kind of "models" or classic examples; and, more important, is pulling "the great cart of tradition" compatible with the search for life-breath at all? If the vital "ch'i" is available to all, at all times, to be accepted by anyone who can take it, why waste time memorizing the styles of dead masters?

Of the first two characters which, in Acker's opinion, form Hsieh Ho's Sixth Principle (Ch'uan and i), he writes as follows:

The combination ch'uan i which the Ku Hua P'in Lu has for the Sixth Element seems to occur nowhere else, and is not to be found in any Chinese or Japanese dictionary. The first character, ch'uan, means "to transmit," to "hand on," "continue," etc., and the second, i, means "to shift," "to change," "to influence," but also "to send," "to transmit," "to convey," etc., in which its meaning is very close to that of ch'uan. One might render the binome fairly literally with the words, "transmission and conveying." Hsieh Ho gives as equivalent the binome mu hsieh, mu, meaning "to take as a model," and hsieh, "to render faithfully," "to copy."¹

Without the defining or "equivalent" binome, a translator might conceivably take the first binome to mean some form of narrative transmission, as in story-telling, i.e. the literal handing on of ideas.² However, (Acker feels), the second binome makes it clear that "some sort of copying is intended, perhaps of a rather free nature, the idea being that one should be able to paint in a variety of styles, and copy famous masterpieces with facility, thus producing a beautiful thing, and at the same time helping to 'pull the great cart of tradition'."³

¹Acker, T'ang and Pre-Tang Texts, XXXIX.

²Ibid., XL.

³Ibid.

Ironically, this makes little difference; for it was not the older Imperial Library manuscript of the Ku Hua P'in Lu (which Acker uses), but Chang Yen-yuan's quotation of the Six Principles of Hsieh Ho (in Li Tai Ming Hua Chi)⁴ which most later Chinese were familiar with and tended to use. In treating the Sixth Principle, Chang changes what appears to have been Hsieh Ho's original wording ("ch'uan i mu hsieh") to "ch'uan mu i hsieh."⁵ The binome "ch'uan mu" ("taking as a model") was in Chang's time, and continued to be, a commonly-used term for copying in painting;⁶ although of course in Chinese ink painting there can be no "copying" in the sense we use the word in the West.

That is to say, the controlling information syndrome responsible for the hand movement of the copyist--the controlling information within his mind--must come close to duplicating the master's. Theoretically, for a perfect copy to be made a near-mystical communication must take place between the master and the copyist, through the

⁴Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, p. 61.

⁵Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, XLI.

⁶Ibid.

masterpiece--an emphatic trans-historic communication by means of which the copyist "becomes" the master, in the sense that his mind conforms to the thought patterns and levels of consciousness of the master at the time of painting the original. In the fourth section of the paper it will be possible to explore this notion further, for, though perhaps not altogether feasible tactically, the idea of trans-historic communication by way of art is quite a logical one within the Chinese aesthetic.

Acker puts it very well:

One reason why copying as distinct from tracing is not so much looked down upon in China as in the West is no doubt the circumstance that the average painting was not the carefully elaborated confection that the traditional European paintings were, all the lines of which could be made as slowly and painstakingly as one wished. The nature of the brush line is such that if the copy is to be any good at all the brush must be moved with some speed and considerable control. They should be made at about the same rate of speed which the painter of the original masterpiece employed, and with as nearly as possible the same vigour and dexterity.⁷

Hsieh Ho, himself, was apparently skeptical about the workability of direct copying as a way to enlightened style

⁷Acker, T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts, XL.

in painting, or, at least understood that copying must come from within as part of a spiritual relationship with the past, and not merely as a mechanical exercise. In his short section on the painter, "Liu Shao-tzu" (placed in the fifth class), he writes as follows:

He excelled in copying but did not study the thought of those (whose works he copied). In (the genre) sparrows and squirrels his brushwork is bold and free, and occasionally stands out from the crowd. His contemporaries in speaking of him called him "the copyist." But "to transmit without originating" is not what painting puts first.⁸

Throughout the history of Chinese painting debate over the place of copying in an artist's education continued unceasingly, as we will see in the next section. The general concensus appears to be that, given correct models to follow, some copying is a good thing, although too much is extraneous or even detrimental. Generally, the critics and painters seemed to feel that the best models are to be found in nature--expression born out of impression, not from expression. Yet, the Sixth Principle itself is never challenged in this connection. Its meaning involves much more than the practice of copying, or the

⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

following of models, for that matter. Its importance is grounded in a whole attitude toward learning, toward "transmission and conveying" of knowledge, which may best be understood within the context of the fine art of calligraphy, the great and encompassing technical constant most responsible for solidarity of style in Chinese painting through the centuries.

The formal aesthetic behind Hsieh Ho's "Ku Hua P'in Lu" was not developed in connection with painting, and, of course, not in connection with any of the "crafts" such as sculpture or ceramics which were to remain far below the brush arts in the minds of the intelligentsia.⁹ The first literature containing theories relevant to the so-called "plastic" or visual arts concerned itself solely with the fine art of calligraphy, and, since this literature served as a model for the "Ku Hua P'in Lu" and subsequent works of painting, it should be viewed as the primary source of aesthetic dealing with the fine arts in China. Although it is impossible to deal with any of these early works in the context of this paper, it will be

⁹Ibid., XII.

necessary to review the easily forgotten facts about how the Chinese painter learned his art. For to get close to the meaning of the Sixth Principle, and to fathom the nature of its tremendous authority, we must try to put ourselves in the place of the Chinese painter as he first begins to learn to manage brush and ink:

"Unlike the old masters of the West we were never fated for membership in a guild-class of craftsmen, initiated from early childhood in the expectation of devoting life to the specialized task of manufacturing luxury objects to sell. As our fathers, we began by aspiring toward careers in the government service--the profession of ruling men, controlling lands and waters, educating and evaluating minds through the vast examination system, tempering the will of the Emperor with the wisdom of the sages, or recording dynastic history in the service of future rulers. The other choice is retirement from public life, on an independent income or in poverty, to perfect the spirit in communication with nature and the past. How could we plan to be professional artists? That "profession" has never existed in our land, only the craftsman-peddler's way, far below the level of our

expectations--a way in which a gentleman might be driven to bend, but never the way of his choice.

Yet, to win either of the two honorable prizes of life--enlightenment or worldly power--it is necessary from the start to develop the sensibilities of an artist, particularly in the use of the language. Given a good ruler, the worthy scholar will inevitably be recognized if he has developed the accomplishments necessary to express his understanding. If unrecognized, the enlightened mind is its own reward and the accomplishments serve well to sustain it in exile, or in the seclusion of a mountain retreat. Given the will of heaven, enlightenment and secular power will come together in one lifetime, transmitted down the ages through the minds of the sages. Artistic sophistication is called upon to transmit and convey it to the future from the living past, and thus to make a name for all time. Many are called; if chosen, the mind and brush must be well tuned to accept the vital energy of the great tradition and speed it on its way.

The brush and ink, inkstone and silk, are not like common tools--not like Western quill and inkpot, the countless specialized brushes and paints, spatulas, scrapers,

palettes and palette knives, plasters and canvasses, panels and papers and parchments. They are rather like the sword. They are the key to secular power and a link with the knowledge of the past, not merely the means to a common living. Not everyone can aspire to use them: a difficult ritual is required. The way to mastery is long and for most it is very expensive: an independent income is a near prerequisite. Thus, for centuries brush and ink have served not merely as a means of communication, but as the single most important unifying bond and weapon of the social-intellectual class of scholar-official--a free-masonry of music, literature, painting, calligraphy, and power. Holding together the structure of the Empire, linking past and future, conveying knowledge between individuals and ages, the brush has proved mightier than the sword. Its apprenticeship has remained a privilege which is the basis of privilege. Yet, unlike the sword, the calligraphic brush simultaneously records a history of its own history-making action, and mysteriously deposits a portrait of the mind which controls its life movement.

As children we began learning to write with the brush by copying from stone rubbings of ancient texts, the

texts of the great past masters of the brush. If fortunate, we eventually study from original scrolls.

Against these models we learn to measure our progress and correct our habits, along with the instructor with his more experienced and committed vision, who provides bodily punishment to embody the mind's desire for excellence. The method is an indoctrinating ritual of memorizing and conforming to requirements set by an absolute historical standard. As in the dancer's or fencer's art, a vocabulary of traditional moves or strokes is established with which to execute the individual characters. Strangely, these movements must be made completely habitual; a fully automatic system of control information must be built within the mind to unquestionably guide the brush within rigid limitations--all in order to create a condition of freedom in the art of writing. If poor models are used, or if the instruction allows for the incorporation of inappropriate or ill-defined movements within the vocabulary, all is lost. For bad habits so deeply ingrained during the formative years are most difficult to unlearn, more difficult to replace without violating the organic unity of the mind-hand-brush system.

A double standard of excellence governs the composition of the individual characters--the measure of practical legibility, and the measure of taste. The last is a serious matter, since we will be judged as men according to the sense of discrimination and decorum, moral fibre and personal energy which any page of characters displays to the knowing eye. And, of course, if the great tradition of China is to live, the classic literature which surrounds the spark of its life must be copied and recopied with objective clarity for absolute legibility, in order to preserve the purity of its meaning. The survival of a classic civilization, within a classic tradition, demands the maintenance of a standard classic method of idea-transmission and storage, for reasons which are at once both practical and religious. In a near mystical union the double standard becomes a monolithic moral-aesthetic principle.

The idea from the first was, subsequently, not to influence the set nature of the individual characters but to conform with their independent existence as classic forms. We were to be influenced by them. A gentleman does not need to invent: he transmits. And the influence

of the classic characters, and our attitude toward them, has profoundly shaped our overall approach to form. The exact nature of the influence differs from man to man, and in the aspect of time and place is complicated to the point of indecipherable heterogeneity. But--in the abstract--it is clear that the ritual of learning to write and the principles and attitudes thus generated have strongly limited, or contained, our use of the brush in painting. This is not to say that the limits and containments have been of a simple, absolute, inflexible, or in any way fixed nature. It is more a matter of expectations which are too primary, generalized, and automatically accepted to be consciously controlled or manipulated at all; not so much a matter of deliberate critical decision-making, but of conditioned reflex action.

For example, the brush and ink--first known to us and originally perfected in connection with calligraphy--are unquestioningly accepted as the central character--giving material elements of painting in the Chinese manner. As we learned to write, we are inclined to learn to paint, by first submitting to the authority of classic models, and attempting to transmit and preserve their meaning.

Why do we take such pains in adopting the spirit of our invention to the restrictions of the different established modes or styles of painting? The different modes and styles are each appropriate and useful within given aesthetic-emotional situations, just as the different styles of writing--the "li," the "ts'as" etc.--are appropriate and useful within specific social-political situations. Why is the expressive quality of the swift, free calligraphic line inevitably the prime criteria used in judging the worth of a painting? It is because of the intrinsic nature of the line instrument used, and because of aesthetic expectations deeply ingrained by the evaluation and judgment of calligraphy during the formative childhood years."

Not all scholar officials went on to learn to paint in the Chinese manner, and few, indeed, attained high levels of excellence in such a difficult and time-consuming discipline. But all came equipped with a highly-developed critical system with which to evaluate brush work. This freemasonry of taste was doubtless one of the most formidable mechanisms through which the calligraphic limits to Chinese painting made themselves felt. It is not

reasonable to speak of "patronage" in respect to an art which is essentially amateur, but one may certainly speak of the painter's audience; and, in this regard the common lineage of a calligraphic education cannot be overemphasized. Although many forms of rebellion and rejection inevitably manifest themselves on an individual level, and as symptoms of individualism particularly during times of social insolidarity, the act of denial or repulsion is itself a form of recognition and a sign of a more fundamental influence.

IV. THE CONFUCIAN CONSTANTS OF CHINESE PAINTING

The creative act does not occur in isolation. In the course of the previous sections a number of constants have emerged--generalized ever-present forces which influenced the Chinese gentleman painters in their art; and, although these forces are all related within a single relativistic continuum, it is only possible to deal with them rationally one at a time. Throughout the history of Chinese painting, and in different places within the Empire, certain of the constants exercised greater influence than the rest, creating an historical pattern of style, a pattern in which the individual artists provide the detail. Because of the obvious unity which the art has maintained throughout its long history, it is clear that some kind of equilibrium must have existed between the constants with their endless fluctuation of individual importance. I would like to propose that the Confucian way of life or theme in Chinese intellectual life was the single most important factor in establishing and maintaining this equilibrium. But, before dealing with Confucianism and its alternate convention, it will be necessary to enumerate

and briefly review the constants.

The primary and central constant is the individual mind of the artist, the only possible source of individual talent if it may be said to exist at all. The artist's mind creates reality in interaction with the natural world and mankind, in thought and action, modifying sense information through reaction with the historical sense or memory. If the painter's mind is to conform with the Sixth Principle, the action it generates in painting will have been fully formed by the historical sense--a knowledge of the Great Tradition--and will therefore produce a style in harmony and agreement with the classic models of Chinese painting and calligraphy. If it is to be in harmony with the First Principle, the character of its interaction with the natural world (and society, a part of nature for the Chinese) will be one of vital cooperation--leading to a style which is charged with spirit-resonance and a brush which is impelled by the force of life's motion. Since individual talent clearly has little place within the jurisdiction of the Sixth Principle, and would rather tend to interfere with the ideal transmission or conveying of historical knowledge,

we will be inclined to look more closely for its rightful place within the approach to painting necessitated by the First Principle, although, of course, like the rules to any game, tradition itself must somehow be relied upon to create the condition of individual freedom.

The next (and in a metaphysical sense, the peripheral) constant is the totality outside of the mind of the individual artist, a totality which for the Chinese included both the humanized and the so-called "natural" world as available to the senses--a true "universe" in a surprisingly modern and scientific sense. Obviously, this is a primal source of qualitative reality, although as a thing it can exist for us only within the individual mind, a fact of which the Chinese were sharply aware. Liu Hsieh, the eminent 6th century literary critic, has put it very well:

And as one sees above the sparkling heavenly bodies, and below the manifold forms of earth, there is established a difference between high and low estate, giving rise to the two archetypal forms (Yin and Yang). Man and man alone forms with these the Great Trinity, and he does so because he, alone, is endowed with spirituality. He is the refined essence of the five elements--indeed, the mind of the universe.

It is the Third and Fourth Laws of Chinese painting (as recorded by Hsieh Ho) which have most bearing on the attitude of mind which the painter should take toward the world in representing it on his paper or silk. They are (3) "Reflecting the Object," and (4) "Appropriateness to Type," by Acker's translation. Sherman Lee gives us (3) "Fidelity to the object in portraying forms," and (4) "Conformity to kind in applying colors." The implication here is clear, that it should be the objects, themselves, which determine the nature of the representation in the painting, and not the individual talent or independent imagination of the artist, himself. Through the mind of the artist, painting should not merely erect a mirror "reflecting the object" but as reasonably objective and undistorted a mirror as circumstance permits. Put in metaphysical terms, this is simply the discipline of allowing the world to live within the mind as its own idea, to determine its own embodiment in idea form and action the process which Coleridge has named "negative capability,"

¹Vince Y. C. Shih (trans.), The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

and one which definitely connects the universal constant of Chinese painting with its First Law. Of individual talent--as opposed to negative capability or depersonalized talent--we may again rightly ask, what place does it have?

The practice of calligraphy together with its materials forms another of the constants already considered, an element which was established early and which has survived with incredible tenacity. Little further explanation of the relationship between calligraphy and the central constant (of the individual artist's mind) is necessary: within the aspect of time we have seen how the calligraphic education, or indoctrination, conditions the motor reflexes of the child during his formative years, not only establishing the implements he will use, but also molding the very motor reflexes with which he will use them. Outside of the aspect of time, i.e. within the context of the creative act as an abstract idea, the importance of the practice of calligraphy becomes manifest for the painter. He may draw at will upon a large vocabulary of spontaneous strokes or moves, as does a dancer--combining, connecting, joining, and composing elements in automatic response to representational-symbolic reflections

without having to burden conscious consideration with these technical matters. And (again because of calligraphy) the brush he has in his hand is in itself such a simple, hyper-responsive and adaptable line instrument that a real condition of freedom is created. Clearly, it is in connection with the results of this freedom that we may look for evidence of individual talent within the mainstream of Chinese painting.

Lastly, there is the simple fact of other human beings with minds of their own--the constant of Chinese society and the Great Tradition. For, while undergoing continual change, society and tradition in China also maintained enough of a continuing essential form to be considered a constant during the great centuries of painting, at least for certain levels of the population. Around the time of Confucius an unusual social class began to emerge.² First securing a permanent place for itself in the economic and political life of the country, it went on to completely dominate the intellectual life

²H. G. Creel, Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-Tung (London: University Paperbacks, 1954), pp. 25-59.

of China, serving as the primary logistic support for calligraphy and painting down to the present time.

Exactly how did the scholar-official class come into existence? Traveling from state to state in search of scholarly or administrative employment from the feudal rulers, it is clear that the founding members of the class could not have come from among the peasants. For, like Confucius himself, they were highly literate and well-acquainted with matters of court protocol. But, unlike the nobles, they found it necessary to support themselves on their own moving from court to court, and taking with them little more than the accomplishments and knowledge they could display when facing the militaristic aristocrats who employed them. By acting as educators, accountants, official administrators, or professional diplomats and consultants, they were able to exist on a level well above the only other alternative--the ever-present threat of serfdom or slavery as a peasant.

Some became professional soldiers, no doubt. In the Christian West most of the others would have been priests. But in feudal China, where religion remained predominantly an individual or family involvement, and

where monasticism was not a significant factor, the handy role of spiritual caretaker was not available. Without killing for the ruler, the only way to remain and survive within society--above the level of a serf--was to find some other valuable secular service with which to provide the ruling class. Any activity involving hand labor in the manufacture of objects for use in material exchange was out of the question, for to the Chinese the only action worthy of a gentleman within society was the exercise of power. But the exercise of power even in the administrative sense is a dangerous occupation, indeed, especially for those who have no material or hereditary-religious support within the establishment. I think, if we put ourselves in the place of those wandering scholar officials of Chou times, as the disinherited bastard or youngest sons of rulers--well-educated, but left without an independent income--the rationale behind the Confucian ethic will become self-evident, as will the social-moral emphasis of the Confucian aesthetic regarding the practice both of painting and calligraphy.

They became the scholar-official class originally because they inherited no material grounds for the exercise

of power--the one action, the only suitable action of a gentleman. It was necessary to somehow borrow or appropriate some of the worldly power of the ruling class. The only way open--outside of professional soldiering--was through the performance of administrative duties, and in a disinterested and thus extremely efficient manner which made them more useful than the ruler's own kin. But such service was clearly not enough in itself--the serf and the common soldier provide invaluable material services, and are rewarded accordingly. The problem was to develop some ideological bulwark or justification for the secular power they exercised--an independent and categorical moral imperative, or religious-social super-ego with which to protect their independent status from both those above and below. Around the man, and the man's name--Confucius--such an ideological weapon was forged, with consummate skill from ways of thought already deeply rooted in the Chinese way of life. Thus were the brush and ink first raised against the sword.

Raised against the sword, but not in the manner of the sword, the brush became the instrument of moral judgment--the judgment of history, of the "rectification of names." In a land where ancestors live on for centuries as if real

in the minds of the living, it is possible to punish and even to kill--and therefore to control--with the brush, as if a judgment in a history book were the judgment of Heaven. The will of Heaven, of course, was the ultimate source of the "Way" as Confucius and Mencius defined it--like the rulers these early officials grounded their authority in the Ultimate, but not through the hereditary argument of divine right. Their privilege could not be based on heredity, in any case--they had all been cut off from that; rather, it was to be "academic" or "scholarly" as befitting men of the pen. Instead of receiving the mandate of power as an ancestral gift, they would claim knowledge of the will of Heaven through voluntary study of history and through meditation. Since few others could read the ancient texts, or made claim to interpret them; and since the scholar-officials copied, edited, annotated, and created all of the books which were made new; and since the knowledge gained through meditation must pass through the brush to be communicated; and because they were also to control the education of the sons of the rulers, it was only a matter of time until "The Way" of Confucius became the accepted way of gentlemen throughout China.

Clearly, corruption and inefficiency of government brought about by family favoritism and quarreling, and through the amateurish power-seeking of hereditary despots--the object of Confucian moralizing--formed and continued to form one of the two great supporting factors of the scholar-official class. Throughout Chinese history the breakdown of government control through clan and family entanglements, leading to flood, famine, and foreign invasion, demanded a countering force--an objective, moral, efficient, and patriotic element--in order for the nation to survive or grow at all. With the firm entrenchment of the examination system--the second great coup of the scholar-official in assuring his class long-term survival--the ground was well laid for a relatively objective, though arbitrary, means of supplying the manpower needs of the central bureaucracy, and providing a countering force against the standard practices of favoritism and nepotism in making appointments. Thus, for example, a highly lucrative official post could be given as a bribe by the ruler to another noble or a family member, regardless of the low capability or interest of the appointee, and without endangering the effectiveness of the office itself; for a highly capable and industrious assistant

could always be supplied to actually administer the post, from the tried and true ranks of the scholar-official class.

The second great supporting factor of the scholar-official class was the classical education system, the great historical-literary tradition and--most important--the matter of literacy itself. In a land where the class which controls education has a vested interest in limiting the general level of literacy throughout the population, it is not surprising to find a language which, difficult from the start, became more and more so as characters and meanings accumulated over the years. When one considers the number of accomplishments which were also expected of a gentleman and a scholar, in order to be accepted as a member in good standing--artistic accomplishments over and above mere literacy, such as poetry, music and painting--the importance of the time (and its cost) to learn them becomes evident. Needless to say, the examination system supported this sort of discrimination most effectively, as well as giving the scholar some sort of tangible evidence of time well spent.

Thus separated from the masses by his expensive education and the manners and accomplishments of a gentleman,

and from the decadent ruling classes by his relatively puritanical and not overly ambitious mind, his industry and dedication, the scholar-official held the other two classes together while separating them, like a marvelous elastic social cement. One can imagine the kind of pressures which must have resulted for the poor official, particularly during times of political-economic duress, crushed between the other two segments of society--each powerful in its own way--or else pulled apart by the dual commitment which invariably entangles a bureaucrat. The monopoly which his class held was ingenious in its effectiveness as an overall structure, but to hold it in the concrete circumstances of history from day to day required the scholar-official's absolute commitment, and a degree of conformity in behalf of class solidarity which often amounted to a genuine act of sacrifice leading to martyrdom. To call Confucianism a religion is not as misleading as we have been led to believe; and, in this sense, much of Chinese painting is not as secular as it appears to be at first glance.

Although the most transcendental or esoteric ideas and emotions of the class--matters which we normally think

of as religious--found expression within the context of Confucianism's alternative convention, the Taoist Way, it is surely a mistake to draw a sharp line between that way and the Confucian Way; for the same men, the same minds, were nearly always involved with both, depending, among other things, on the political-economic climate. Of course the Confucian religiosity must be described by the word, "piety," but piety is not necessarily unknowing or mechanical in its motivation. The Confucian constants of painting, calligraphy and the moral imperative of the scholar-official class, may be seen as thoroughly dependent on, and complementary to, the Taoist constants of the individual mind within the Universal object of its meditation. And the piety with which the Confucian artistic ritual was regarded, was, I am sure, ultimately derived or rooted in the religious experience of Taoist meditation, at least for many of the greatest masters.

But what, actually, is the philosophic content of the Confucian moral imperative? The premise is simply that man--or, rather, the abstract idea of man outside of the aspects of time and space (man's essential Platonic form)--is good. Evil results because of the confusion, short-

sightedness, and wrongly interpreted self-interest which develops under concrete circumstances, and not from any positive source. Evil is not the absence of good, for the essential man is always good, but rather the failure of individual man in time and space to recognize and conform with his own essential nature. From this premise two dependent tenents follow: you must know man, and thus realize his and your own goodness; and you must "know your game" (to use the modern slang), i.e. you must know what your real role in life is, and thus avoid the errors of inappropriate goals and aspirations, of inflated, deflated, or in any way inappropriate self-image. In other words, know man (and thus, yourself) outside of time and space; and, in order to correctly manifest this knowledge in action, understand the life of man (and thus, your own) within time and space, i.e. within history. As a method, the study of history is recommended above all others. The alternate Taoist convention, of course, emphasizes the act of meditation leading to self-knowledge, and from self-knowledge to universal wisdom. The direction of travel is different, but the destination is really the same.

The assertion which is commonly made or implied by

writers (H. G. Creel, for one) that Confucianism is simply morals without a metaphysical side,³ is simply not the case. As with any complete philosophy or world view, which Confucianism certainly became by the time of Mencius, metaphysics and morals are inextricably linked and inter-dependently supported. Any absolute (such as an abstract idea of goodness of man), to be applied within the concrete circumstances of time and place (within history) implies metaphysical change. The false assumption that Confucianism is a strictly political philosophy--opposed to Taoism which is supposedly amoral and metaphysical--lies at the roots of the failure to fully appreciate the Confucian current at the mainstream of Chinese painting.

The way in which the ideal forms of human behaviour are to be promulgated--forms such as the "li" or "tao" which exist as native inheritance within the collective consciousness--is a case in point, and one of great importance for painting. Because within the Confucian way these essential forms are known as basic, or more natural and fundamental than deviation from them, it follows that

³Creel, Chinese Thought, pp. 45, 52.

they are self-evident to all who experience them through the good example of another individual who "knows." And to "know" is to conform, when the appropriateness of a mode of action is self-evident--although it is always possible to forget. Now, as we all know, self-evident knowledge differs metaphysically from linguistic or historical fact--just as the direct realization of a situation differs from theorizing or lecturing concerning it. The Confucian element in Chinese painting is certainly moralizing; but, at its best, it is always a moral communication at the level of self-evident example. In this sense it exists on very much the same metaphysical level as the art rooted in the Taoist practice of meditation, which, of course, is moralizing in its own way.

The sort of moral effect which paintings were supposed to have, in early times, is well demonstrated by the famous passage from Chang Yen-yuan in which he discusses their beneficial effect on the onlooker:

Loyal and filial men were all represented on the Yun t'ai (Cloud terrace). Brave and meritorious men were entered in the Lin k'o (Chi-lin pavilion). The contemplation of good men became a reason to avoid evil, and to look at the evil men was enough to make people turn to the sages of the past. The painted records

of the old manners and miens became models for exercising virtue. The representations of the successes and failures transmitted the events of the past.

The written records tell about the acts of men, but they cannot convey their appearances. The poems and ballads sing about their virtues, but they cannot represent their images. By the art of painting the two (sides) may be combined.⁴

Chang then goes on to quote from the earlier critic, Ts'ao Chih (192-232), whose words reflect a similar attitude:

When one sees pictures of the three kings and the five emperors, one cannot but look at them with respect and veneration, and when one sees pictures of the San Chi (the bad last rulers of the Hsia, Shan and Chou), one cannot but feel sad. When one sees pictures of rebels and unfilial sons, one cannot but grind the teeth. When one sees pictures representing men of high principles and wonderful sages, one cannot but forget one's meals. When one sees pictures of faithful subjects who died at the call of duty, one cannot but feel exalted. When one sees pictures of exiled citizens and expelled sons one cannot help sighing. When one sees pictures of vicious men and jealous women, one cannot but look askance. When one sees pictures of obedient empresses and good secondary wives, one cannot but feel the deepest admiration. By this we may realize that paintings serve as moral examples or mirrors of conduct.⁵

⁴Siren, The Chinese, p. 225.

⁵Ibid., p. 226.

This "elevated subject matter" moralism, as Cahill aptly dubs it,⁶ remained (with important modifications) throughout the history of Chinese painting: and, as Cahill fails to point out, it is one of a number of reasonable explanations of the limited subject range of the art. With the exception of a few highly individualistic artists, such as Wu Wei and Li Sung, most of the painters with whom we are concerned relied heavily upon lofty or elevated subject matter, such as landscape, bamboo and flowers, in order to express particularly dignified and life-enhancing mental states--either Taoist or Confucian, both moralizing and metaphysical in holding up an example of self-evident force. One cannot help but question Cahill's assertion that the Confucian scholar-painter and critic, of Han times was somehow torn between art for art's sake (an aesthetic approach) and the moralizing one just mentioned.⁷ More likely, the Good and the Beautiful were considered--at

⁶James F. Cahill, "Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting," Confucianism and Chinese Civilization, Arthur F. Wright (ed.), (New York: Atheneum, 1964), p. 84.

⁷Ibid., p. 80.

least ideally--as inseparably fused; and the "innovations of style" which Cahill recites as examples of "aesthetic" interest, most likely fell under the category of what we would consider mere "technique," of interest as a way to reproduce the good and the beautiful, but of no real "aesthetic" importance on their own."

And, just as the Confucian ideal of elevated subject matter would influence the so-called Taoist approach to subject matter in nature, another Confucian critical concept--the unconscious or spontaneous lodging of moral character--would deeply influence the interpretation of meaning. The notion of the lodging of moral character of the artist, through his style in the formal elements of a painting, is a logical extension of the Confucian preoccupation with example. For the Confucian, the good man--the man who "knows"--inevitably attracts other good men, and weak and erring men around him turn to virtue: automatically and spontaneously the charismatic force of his example brings the light of goodness to everything he touches, if his knowledgeable character is strong enough in its resolve. Just being near him is enough! Thus, one may expect a painting by a good man, and especially a sage,

to embody on some formal level--say, in the quality of the brush stroke--the exact moral nature of the artist himself, his essential humanity. Now here, clearly, is a point where individual talent--although it is not a narrowly artistic talent--may be seen to enter the mainstream of Chinese painting. By lodging his individual moral character, as a concrete and actual personality within history, the painter may live as an individual within his painting, although subject, materials, brush technique and formal conventions remain completely conformist--even though representation is determined solely by the nature of the object depicted (as its own idea). While the "what" of the painting remains conventional, the "way in which" can emerge as distinctly personal and individualizing.

Again, one must note that a metaphysical shift is involved, for, while the Confucian virtues were known to derive ultimately from absolute principles or forms within man's nature (beyond time and space), no one expected them to be embodied homogeneously or monolithically within a given historical situation. Rather, they were thought to manifest themselves through "changes," and in a specific

and concrete manner for each unique personality, through specific personal action such as painting, and by means of a process which though universal in totality remains individualized in detail.

Clearly, an important element within the system of social solidarity of the scholar-official class, both painting and calligraphy served as tests of the man. The aspiring scholar who was asked to compose a poem or paint a picture at a gathering was very definitely put up for judgment, since either act comprised a total moral-aesthetic commitment, and the resulting work of art (or artlessness) would stand bare as a yardstick of both the level of taste and the moral fibre of the mind which brought it forth. If it stood strongly, appropriately, rightly and loftily--and for the moral-aesthetic values which the class continued to value--it would stand the test of history. That is, it would live on as a yardstick against which other men could be measured in their time; and yet, more than that, it would also function as an example or source of positive influence for the good--an icon to guide the mind, not toward transcendence, but toward a well-balanced and morally enlightened stance within time. Far from being

a purely utilitarian mechanism by which the class protected its hierarchy of scholarship and taste (although that was involved), the masterpiece of moral-lodging served a truly religious function.

As Cahill points out, Chang Yen-yuan's comments on the landscape painter, Yang Yen (late eighth century), comprise the first example of seeing the artist's moral character in his works, which has come down to us within the literature on painting. He quotes Chang as follows:

He was polished and elegant in his bearing, vigorous and energetic in his spirit and feeling. He was good at landscapes; his works were lofty and unusual, refined and strong. . . . When I look at the late Mr. Yang's landscape pictures, I see in imagination what he was as a man--his imposing stature and unconventionality.⁶

Kuo Jo-hsu (late eleventh century) develops Chang's idea further, with special reference to the scholar-official class, in his Mt'u-hua Chien-wen Chih:

I have . . . observed that the majority of the rare paintings of the past are the work of high officials, talented worthies, superior scholars, or recluses living in cliffs and caves; of persons, that is, who "followed the

⁶Cahill, "Confucian Elements," p. 84

dictates of loving kindness and sought delight in the arts." . . . Their elevated and refined feelings were all lodged in their paintings. Since their personal quality was lofty, the "spirit consonance" (of their paintings) could not be but lofty.⁷

In this light, the practice of making copies comes into sharper and more meaningful focus. The notion that spiritual goodness, wellbeing, enlightenment, could somehow be contacted or communicated spontaneously--on the level of self-evident example--reinforced the habit of making copies established by the calligraphic education, there can be little doubt. Our very real Western materialism inclines us to think of any effort at duplication as a way to obtain, to own, the object which will result, and by implication to sell, display, or in some way profit economically or egotistically from its material presence. That forgers existed in China, we may be sure; but it is not with men of this level that we are concerned, but rather with the masters of the art. Why did they copy, if not to own the object for the object's sake? As I have suggested, a process of spiritual communication (or, rather "transmission") was involved. If the "great cart of tradition" is heavy not with dead learning but with the living wisdom of universal truth, it is well worth the effort of pulling.

To retrace the brush strokes of the master--presumably an enlightened sage--is essentially the same as to retrace his footsteps. To copy in this sense is a devotional act, an act of pilgrimage or prayer. Indeed, what is the difference between chanting the words of some spiritual leader of the past and rhythmically and lovingly retracing his paintings?

The idea of transmission of ideal historical types as social icons, and the related notion of communication of abstract spiritual qualities through the practice of copying both make sense in exactly the same way that the transmission of religious symbols and religious essence through rituals has made sense to so many serious theologians. It is all based on the same kind of logic. An ideal type (such as a "good first emperor") was perpetuated by painters who copied his portrait, as well as by scholars who passed on his biography in writing, and, indeed, the scholar and the painter were often one in the same. However, does communication of the second level of moralizing power make sense within the context of direct copying i.e. the transmission of the artist's moral character lodged in his paintings? No, it does not. And I am sure that most of

the Chinese critics and painters would have emphasized the use of free or individual treatment in making copies directed toward this end. Again, we must remind ourselves that the great painters of China were not held in high esteem, were not copied, so much because of the individual quality of the spiritual representation; rather, they were valued as individuals because of the universal nature of the moral essence, or goodness, which they managed to lodge in their brushwork. It is something primordial and formless, to be picked up by contact and passed on like a spark of electricity. So that, although the accuracy of laborious copying was no doubt critical to the success of transmission on the first level (ideal historical types), free copying was usually chosen as the most reasonable way in which to increase contact with the spirit of a master of the past, without destroying the all-important spontaneous approach. In fact, the act of making a free copy obviously contributed to a spontaneous use of the brush by freeing the mind from the task of deliberate composition. The Confucian elements required direct copying, the Taoist a free contact motivated and inspired reproduction. This was a very real conflict, one

of means rather than ends, and one which the Chinese, themselves, were never able to resolve. For learning to paint, to paint as one's self, direct copying was seldom recommended by the respected critics, although a certain amount of free copying was nearly always suggested as one means for improving style. Hsieh Ho was the first of a long line of critics who were well aware of its limits, preferring nature to art as a source of impressions with which to charge the painter's mind. The essential union was that of nature and calligraphy.

V. TAOISM, THE ALTERNATE CONVENTION

The Taoist constants--the individual and the world--may be seen as complementary and supporting in relation to the Confucian constants, all of which involve the relationship of the individual and society. The definitive experience of the Taoist way, of course, was the act, or, rather, the inaction, of meditation. And all in the Taoist way of life is seen to lead or somehow grow out of the knowledge gained through metaphysical enlightenment. As we have observed, the dominating experience of the Confucian way of life was the political act, an involvement to which all other aspects of Confucian existence were seen to contribute in preparation. Clearly, a broad similarity exists, along with a point of agreement, between Taoism and Confucianism in this respect; for, as Taoist meditation involves a devotional giving back of the self, consciously, to the world, the Confucian political act involves a ritual giving back of the self to the society or civilization. And, in a strange way, a certain very real enhancement of individuality through selflessness may be postulated--paradoxical only within the aspect of

time. Given the possibility that the order of society might conform to the will of Heaven (or universal order), the possibility was always open to the Chinese that a complete agreement or resolution might be reached in which no conflict could exist between the enlightened mystic's mind, the will of Heaven, and the necessity of moral action within society. The implication of such a resolution should be clear, to all who have contemplated the coming of Heaven to earth.

Unfortunately, it is only possible to have such knowledge on the level of direct experience i.e. as self-evident situation consciousness. For the realization of the real self does not involve any idea of the self, but, rather, the direct consciousness of being. Likewise, to know the world as its own idea in our minds it is necessary to consciously become the world process, something from which we are separated only by the idea of separation. If either life-breath or the lodging of individual moral character is to be realized in any action, it must be realized on the level of self-evident situation response.

When does one act most like oneself? Ironically, it is when one "forgets himself." Within an habitual

environment, surrounded by familiar faces, and engaged in an automatic or near-automatic activity, self-consciousness may dissolve and movements become spontaneous. Thus, the way in which a man ties his shoe may be more indicative of his inner nature than the speech he prepares in accordance with what he selfconsciously thinks he is (or should be) in the eyes of others. It was a kind of spontaneous action in painting--painting which "accomplishes itself" effortlessly--that the Chinese felt to be the way to the quality of spirit-resonance in brush work, and which they subsequently cultivated. The problem is to distinguish between spontaneous action which is habitual, and that which involves not only complex conditioned-reflex action, but involves decision-making situations as well. Wielding the Chinese brush and tying a shoe are quantitatively leagues apart, in the amount of conditioned-reflex information required; and, more important, tying the shoe is an act without representational (external) reference or symbolic meaning.

In athletics, the dance, and the musical performing arts we often witness the function of highly-involved conditioned-reflex complexes, as the master of the discipline,

be it tennis or ballet, progresses through a sequence of actions which astound us as unimaginably difficult, and with the mindless grace of spontaneous action. It is the old familiar matter of "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" On the level of spontaneous or intuitive action, the dancer, of course, becomes the dance in an inseparable union. It is a matter of "negative capability" in reference to the medium itself, or media-language (controlling information system) unity, something which is obviously necessary for peak performance in any action art.

Clearly, it would be rather hard to reach the heights of poetic composition in French, if one could not directly "think in French," and were therefore forced to compose in English and translate consciously into French before externalizing the verbal media orally or with the pen. This is the most obvious example I can construct of a lack of "media-language" unity, leading inevitably to a stilted or mechanical effect. The proper media of French literature is the French language, and every art has its own media-language or controlling information system. The point which is hard to fully digest and

remember is that it will not be a verbal or literal language (such as English or French) unless the art involved is literature.

The language-media system of Chinese painting is not Classical Chinese, nor the vernacular, nor are these the language-media of calligraphy as a fine art, except in a rather distant sense. The real language of calligraphy and painting is the language of the brush (or, rather, the idea of the potential brush) in mental time and space, just as the real language of fencing is the language of the foil within the relativistic time-space syndrome of the fencer's controlling mind. If one is to reach any degree of freedom in the use of either foil or brush, one must be able to think automatically--spontaneously and intuitively--in the language of the brush or foil, and "fence or paint one's mind" in the same sense that the charismatic orator "speaks his mind."

The kind of metaphysical change which is involved in "becoming the media" should be clear when the situation is viewed in another way, or from a slightly different direction. Normal mind commitment is necessarily made to the individual ego (the self's idea of itself), so that

the mind's concern in discriminating is always with the survival and life of the ego-mind establishment within society, the universe, and the internal world of the mind. As a result, the processing of mental information is normally dominated or strongly influenced by a set of subjective interest investments of the ego--polarized between what is supportive and what is detrimental to the ego's security. Now, if the artist is to mobilize his total controlling mental powers to their fullest potential, within a given creative situation, and in solving problems which may or may not have anything to do with his ego's subjective survival commitment to itself--which may in fact threaten it--the disadvantages of normal mind posture become obvious.

The masterpiece is generally considered to have a unity of its own, a being of its own. In its independent power to act, to survive within the minds of men throughout history, it may also be said to have a kind of life. If it is to have universal meaning (not merely subjective meaning as an extension of the person who made it), it must have a life of its own. It must have been set free. In order to free the work of art, the artist must achieve

undivided ego commitment to the work of art itself as it grows, to its life, which he nurtures and lives as if it were his own. He gives himself to the work of art, and in becoming it makes it. Otherwise, the energy-sapping needs of the subjective ego will violate the unity of the work of art and compromise its life-integrity. Paradoxically and ironically, it is only by giving up one's individuality to the work of art that one may lodge or imprint the deeper individuality of the "real self" within the structure of its formal being. For the "real self" (being the platonic or ideal form of the human intellect or spirit) is universal in its authority for man no matter whenever, wherever, or whoever it may be. It can appear concretely individualized--as in the essential moral character of a given man--only because of the formalizing effects of time-space within the mind.

This much could be true for both the fine arts of calligraphy and painting, although painting differs even from calligraphy in that it has a representational reference within the measurable material world. Calligraphy, although it exists in models and sometimes refers abstractly to objects, is essentially idea--like the idealized examples

of kings and consorts held up and transmitted by the moralizing Confucian painter as self-evident within his given society. But the hills and mountains, streams and forests--or whatever is "out there" to make trees and water within all of our minds--existed before the coming of man. Calligraphy is the mirror of man, and thus, the most essentially Confucian of the scholar-official's plastic arts; but, holding up the mirror to reflect both man and the universe, painting is Taoist as well--yet, Taoist without ceasing to be Confucian. In becoming his subject the Chinese sage-painter of landscape, such as Li Ch'eng, was able to lodge his individual moral character in the reflection of the natural world at the same time that he activated the conditioned reflex movements of the calligraphic mind.

The kind of unity which may be realized somewhere between the needs of spirit-resonance and those of the lodging of moral character should not be so difficult for the Westerner to accept. As we have already seen in considering the First Principle, spirit-resonance may be thought of as resulting from action painting which cooperates or somehow works through the laws, principles,

and processes of universal flux i.e. without the deadening will to resist the inevitable. The so-called "real self" or essential character of man--of individual men, when individualized in the aspect of time and space--must also be regarded as one with and dynamically energized through the will of Heaven. When it (the real man) expresses itself in art, spirit-resonance results automatically within the record of the formal values of the painting (as an historical statement of the action); and this will take place spontaneously and effortlessly in the absence of the deadening defensive anti-force of the selfish subjective ego. When spirit-resonance is lodged in the formal values of the painting, moral character must simultaneously join it; for the two are the same. According to the primary tenet of the Confucian way, the "real self" or essential character of man is good.

The role of meditation may thus be seen as contributing to the art of painting in a way which is not at all contradictory to the Confucian value system; for, certainly, meditation is one of the most direct and effective avenues to realization of the "real self" and its basic relationship to the cosmic processes of the world i.e. to

religious experience. And, although it is hard to accept landscape painting as a form of direct political action, the production of a masterpiece of moral character lodging (and spirit resonance) must be recognized (if we are to see matters in a Confucian light) as potentially contributing to a state of mind or spiritual condition prerequisite for the selfless objective social-political contribution. The manufacture of examples of moral stature and strength is always a social contribution of the highest order.

One may now reasonably consider the relationship of these matters (essentially religious) to the practice of "Transmission by Copying, that is to say, the copying of models" (Sullivan), or, in Soper's translation, the "transmission (of the experience of the past) in making copies" i.e. to the Confucian authority of Hsieh Ho's Sixth Principle with its eclectic-pedantic implications. Now as soon as we put ourselves into the Confucian frame of mind, the relationship should become self-evident; for it must be remembered that the Confucian did not share our historical skepticism and talent for disbelief. The ideal forms or models of calligraphy, to give one example, were believed to have originated as a result of direct trans-

mission from Heaven. And in its long historical development the written language was not refined and perfected by common pedants, but by the sages of history, poetry, and art. It should not be necessary to add at this time that the sages (in China) were inevitably tuned in to the will of Heaven, and therefore functioned routinely as "the real man." Models or examples--whole paintings, or a particular method of representing natural objects or space, or even a type of brush stroke derived from individual styles of masters--were very likely viewed in a religio-moral perspective, so that to conform was to obey the will of Heaven as well as the customs of the scholar-official class.

Through meditation in a rustic or wilderness setting the Confucian scholar-official, acting through the alternate convention of Taoist mysticism, was able to sharpen his soul for tasks ahead. Particularly in times when his services were not wanted, or could not be given in good conscience this was the accepted way; although the hope of a chance to serve at some time in life seldom died. And, yet, art itself could always serve as a way in which a man might give himself back to society. Through the

lodging of spirit-resonance and moral character the scholar-painter was, ironically, also able to give himself back to himself, and to the Totality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acker, William Reynolds Beal. Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting. Leyden, E. J. Brill, 1954.
- Bernbaum, Ernest. Anthology of Romanticism. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948.
- Binyon, Laurence. Painting in the Far East. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., rev. ed., 1959.
- Binyon, Laurence. The Flight of the Dragon: An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Art in China and Japan, Based on Oriental Sources. London: Wisdom of the East Series, 1927.
- Bishop, John L., ed. Studies in Chinese Literature. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- Bushell, Stephen W. Chinese Art. London: The Board of Education, 1924.
- Cahill, James. Chinese Painting. Genève: Albert Skira, 1960.
- Cahill, James F. "Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting." Confucianism and Chinese Civilization. Edited by Arthur F. Wright. New York: Atheneum, 1964.
- Chan, Wing-tsit, ed. and trans. A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Cohn, William. Chinese Painting. 2nd rev. ed. London: Phaidon Press, 1950.

- Contag, Victoria. "The Unique Characteristics of Chinese Landscape Pictures." Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America, VI. New York: 1952.
- Creel, H. G. Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-Tung. London: University Paperbacks, 1954.
- Croce, Benedetto. Aesthetic. Translated by Douglas Ainslie. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudany (The Noonday Press), 1922.
- DeBary, William Theodore, ed. Sources of Chinese Tradition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Selected Essays: 1917-1932. London: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1932.
- Eliot, T. S. The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909 to 1950. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1952.
- Fenollosa, Ernest F. Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963. (First published, 1912).
- Ferguson, John C. Chinese Painting. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927.
- Fitzgerald, C. P. China: A Short Cultural History. 3rd. edition. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961.
- Giles, Herbert A. An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art. Shanghai: Kelley and Walsh, Ltd., 1905.
- Grousset, Rene. The Rise and Splendour of the Chinese Empire. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1964.
- Hirth, Friedrich. Scraps from a Collector's Notebook. Leyden, 1905.

Kuo, Wei-ch'u. Sung Yuan Ming Ch'ing Shu Hua Chia Mien Piao. Peking: Chung-kuo ku tieni shu ch'u pnn she, 1958.

Ming, Lai. A History of Chinese Literature. New York: Capricorn Books, 1964.

Lancman, Eli. Chinese Portraiture. Rutland, Vermont: The Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1966.

Lee, Sherman E. A History of Far Eastern Art. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1964.

Reischauer, Edwin O. and Fairbank, John K. East Asia The Great Tradition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958.

Sakanishi, Shio. The Spirit of the Brush. London: Wisdom of the East Series, 1939.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. The World as Will and Idea. Translated by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961.

Shih, Vince Y. C., trans. The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.

Sickman, Laurence, and Soper, Alexander. The Art and Architecture of China. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1956.

Siren, Osvald. A History of Early Chinese Painting. London: The Medici Society, 1933.

Siren, Osvald. The Chinese on the Art of Painting. New York: Schocken Books, 1963.

Siren, Osvald. Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956.

Soper, Alexander C. "The First Two Laws of Hsieh Ho." The Far Eastern Quarterly: Review of Eastern Asia and the Adjacent Pacific Islands. Vol. 8, 1948-49. Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press.

Sullivan, Michael. The Birth of Landscape Painting in China. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1962.

Sullivan, Michael. An Introduction to Chinese Art. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961.

Sze, Mai-mai. The Tao of Painting: A Study in the Ritual Disposition of Chinese Painting. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1956.

Van Briessen, Fritz. The Way of the Brush. Rutland, Vermont: The Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1962.

Waley, Arthur. An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1923.

Willetts, William. Foundations of Chinese Art: From Neolithic Pottery to Modern Architecture. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.

Willetts, William. Chinese Art. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1958.

Wilson, John A. The Culture of Ancient Egypt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

APPENDIX I

Translations of "The Six Principles of Hsieh Ho.

- 1) Spirit-Resonance.
- 2) Bone Method.
- 3) Reflecting the Object.
- 4) Appropriateness to Type.
- 5) Division and Planning
- 6) Transmission and Conveying.

William Acker. Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting, p. XLI.

- 1) Rhythmic Vitality, or Spiritual Rhythm expressed in the movement of life.
- 2) The art of rendering the bones or anatomical structure by means of the brush.
- 3) The drawing of forms which answer the natural forms.
- 4) Appropriate distribution of the colors.
- 5) Composition and subordination, or grouping according to hierarchy of things.
- 6) The transmission of classic models.

Laurence Binyon. The Flight of the Dragon, p. 12.

- 1) Rhythm and vitality.
- 2) Significant brushwork.
- 3) Realistic form.
- 4) Right colour.
- 5) Good composition.
- 6) Study of good models.

William Cohn. Chinese Painting, p. 35.

- 1) Rhythmic vitality.
- 2) Anatomical structure.

- 3) Conformity with nature.
- 4) Suitability of colouring.
- 5) Artistic composition.
- 6) Finish.

Herbert A. Giles. Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art, p. 29.

- 1) Spiritual Element, Life's Motion.
- 2) Skeleton-drawing with the brush.
- 3) Correctness of outlines.
- 4) Colouring to correspond to nature of object.
- 5) The correct division of space.
- 6) Copying models.

Friedrich Hirth. Scraps from a Collector's Notebook, p. 58.

- 1) Animation through spirit consonance, sympathetic responsiveness of the vital spirit.
- 2) Structural method in the use of the brush.
- 3) Fidelity to the object in portraying forms.
- 4) Conformity to kind in applying colors.
- 5) Proper planning in the placing of elements.
- 6) Transmission of the experience of the past in making copies.

Sherman E. Lee, A History of Far Eastern Art, p. 253.

- 1) A picture should be inspired and possess life itself.
- 2) The framework should be calligraphically established.
- 3) In drawing the forms of things one should conform to their natural proportions.
- 4) Color should be applied in accordance with the nature of the subject.
- 5) In planning the composition one should observe consistency and propriety in the realization of things.
- 6) The drawing should be guided by former masters.

Benjamin March, "Linear Perspective in Chinese Painting," Eastern Art, 1931, p. 131. (Quoted by Fritz Van

Briessen, The Way of the Brush, p. 110).

- 1) That through a vitalizing spirit, a painting should possess the movement of life.
- 2) That by means of the brush, the structural basis should be established.
- 3) That the representation should so conform with the objects as to give their likeness.
- 4) That the coloring should be applied according to their characteristics.
- 5) That, through organization, place and position should be determined.
- 6) That by copying, the ancient models should be perpetuated.

Shio Sakanishi, The Spirit of the Brush, p. 50.

- 1) Spiritual Tone and Life-movement.
- 2) Manner of brushwork in drawing lines.
- 3) Form in its relation to objects.
- 4) Choice of color appropriate to the objects.
- 5) Composition and grouping.
- 6) The copying of classic masterpieces.

Taki Seiichi, Kokka: No. 244. (Quoted by Fritz Van Briessen, The Way of the Brush, p. 110).

- 1) Resonance of the spirit; movement of life.
- 2) Bone manner (i.e., structural) use of the brush.
- 3) Conform with the objects (to obtain) their likeness.
- 4) According to the species, apply the colours.
- 5) Plan and design; place and position (composition).
- 6) To transmit models by drawing.

Oswald Siren, Early Chinese Painting, Vol. 1, p. 32.

- 1) The first is "animation through spirit consonance."
- 2) The second is "structural method in use of the brush."
- 3) The third is "fidelity to the object in portraying forms."

- 4) The fourth is "conformity to kind in applying colors."
- 5) The fifth is "proper planning in placing (of elements)."
- 6) The sixth is "transmission (of the experience of the past) in making copies."

Alexander Soper, "The First Two Laws of Hsieh Ho."
The Far Eastern Quarterly, Vol. 8, 1948-49, p. 412.

- 1) First, Spirit Resonance, which means vitality.
- 2) Second, Bone Method, which is (a way of) using the brush.
- 3) Third, Correspondence to the Object, which means the depicting of forms.
- 4) Fourth, Suitability to Type, which has to do with the laying on of colours.
- 5) Fifth, Division and Planning, i.e., placing and arrangement.
- 6) Sixth, Transmission by Copying, that is to say, the copying of models.

Michael Sullivan, The Birth of Landscape Painting in China, 1962.

- 1) Spirit Harmony--life's motion.
- 2) Bone-means--use brush.
- 3) According to the object, depict its shape.
- 4) According to the species, apply color.
- 5) Planning and disposing degrees and places.
- 6) By handing on and copying, to transmit designs.

Arthur Waley, An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting, p. 72.

APPENDIX II

Negative Capability and Formal Values

The critical question which remains is this: exactly what is the physical difference, in terms of formal values, between a painting which has life-breath or moral-lodging and one which does not? And if it does exist on this level, i.e., if it is perceivable through the senses at all, is the physical evidence in a painting of moral lodging of the artist's essential being identical to the evidence of life-breath or spirit-resonance?

From what has already been said, the case for moral-lodging should be clear. The Confucian moral imperative insists upon the psychological-intellectual neutrality of the scholar-official; a gentleman does not invent, he transmits. Ideally, he becomes the neutral vehicle, as universal or a-priori mind, in order to pass on the wisdom of the sages uncontaminated and uncolored by individual personality. To do so he must, obviously, leave himself out--out of thought and out of action, in literary transmission or in painting. In other words, he must not let his own personal conditioning--his individual positive history--interfere with the classical pattern of universal

wisdom.

But, as anyone who is sharply aware of the presence of negative space will be quick to admit, an omission can be as important as an inclusion. Obviously--perhaps too obviously for the academic mind to readily accept--by leaving himself out of a painting, out of its positive space, the Chinese painter ironically (and in an astonishingly straight-forward way) was able to deposit or embody himself in terms of anthropomorphic negative space (or spaces) within the painting. As soon as one can make the perceptual reversal, from consciousness of positive space to the consciousness of negative space, the negative space in the painting will become visually active in a formal way, and the anthropomorphic voids which I just mentioned will magically snap into focus. The painter takes off his clothes and sits cross-legged: no less is required of the serious viewer. In order to appreciate--indeed, in order to perceive--the evidence of moral-lodging in Chinese painting, which is an art of negative capability, the viewer must activate his own negative capability--a matter of meditation, of self-denial, a suppression of the criticizing, literalizing, judging facilities of the positive mind. For those who are un-tuned to the reality

of negative space, who deny negative capability, this door will remain tightly closed--unless, of course, some purely technical means is employed to force the gap--some technological trick or device, supplied by science. I am thinking here of the free-running stroboscopic inspection light, which has been used for many years now in modifying the perceptual capacities of workers on inspection lines in factories.

Be that as it may, what do these negative-space self-portraits really look like to one who can see them? Obviously, the individual characteristics differ greatly according to the individual nature of the artist's mind, although the way in which they appear is remarkably constant. Even so, it is extremely difficult to put their nature into exact words. They appear in a manner similar to that of moral patterns, either singly, or as a morie of figurative representations, dynamically interpenetrating positive form--be it the representation of rock, tree, forest, mountain, water, mist, or bamboo. Unlike the pattern of positive brush work, they are very generalized; but, at the same time--in evocative power--they are very concrete, and homogeneously related to the individual character of the painter in question. For example,

those of Li Ch'eng seem very erect and virile, vital and energetic in a pure super-human way, and their evocative effect is one of pure life-enhancement. Those in Kung Hsien are paranoid--although nobly so--seeming crushed, trapped, confined, and suffocating under the pressure of his positive brush--but, nevertheless, holding their space. Such anthropomorphic forms in Chinese painting are never static or fixed, but tend to breathe or pulsate (as experienced in the viewer's mind) within the limits set upon them by the positive elements of the composition. Although they result as the negative embodiment of what the painter has disciplined himself to omit, the way in which they appear is clearly the result of automatic and unconscious formative powers within the a-priori mind. As a moral-aesthetic criterion for judgment, I would suggest that anthropomorphic negative space which seems to expand in an effortless, affirmative way--as in Li Ch'eng--is superior to that which, as in the case of Kung Hsien, labours to exist or appears to shrink defensively. I am sure the Chinese would agree. What, then, is spirit-resonance? This is a term which the Chinese always seem to apply to the positive qualities of painting, the brush work in particular. In general, it may be described as a

process quality in which every detail in the whole action seems to be caught up or supported by the same overall force field. It is, quite frankly, as if every detail in the complex action of executing a painting had been rendered at exactly the same moment, the work of ten thousand brushes controlled simultaneously by one mind. There is no beginning and no end: every stroke and every image is right (where every stroke is at home, taking its place to support the others, the stroke neither diffident nor ostentatious, the common stroke exact without vulgarity, the formal stroke precise but not pedantic, the complete consort dancing together) every passage and image is an end and a beginning, every painting an epitaph.¹ Clearly, for this to be, ordinary time-space control must give way to some constant a-historical control force. But what is it?

Again, the only reasonable answer lies with the a-priori mind, the primordial under-netting of historical time-space reality. The creator of time and space, and of form, itself formless, it must give form such as a mirror gives form by reflecting; but, as we know, there are

¹T. S. Elliot, The Complete Poems and Plays, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1952), p. 144.

many kinds of mirrors. Here, we must think in terms of a cybernetic mirror. And, although we can have no idea of its reality--it is the very substance of the idea we would have--we may not discount its presence which we may experience but cannot know. The Chinese at this point, might, I think, be inclined to argue that this presence is part and parcel of a much grander mind system--indeed, the mind of Heaven.

In any case, the most reasonable explanation for the formal quality of spirit-resonance in paintings, is that they present some kind of resemblance between their own mode of being and the way in which the primordial cybernetic mirror has its being--i.e., a painting with spirit-resonance represents and symbolizes the primordial mind process, if only in a limited way. Consciousness itself, being the product of cybernetic action, must surely have a peculiar and typical rhythm--a process-tone characteristic of our species. And in its ability to support impression objectively within a transparent cybernetic medium--to nourishingly bathe impression with the transparent fluid of consciousness, or the pure vacuum of consciousness--the universal mind must be said to have some intrinsic being of its own which might conceivably be represented or symbolized in a painting, or allegorized,

on the deepest iconological level.

Here, again, the criteria of judgment which emerges is essentially iconological. The way in which the ink exists in relation to the paper must somehow adequately symbolize the way in which impression exists in relation to the universal mind potential which supports it, in the mind of the painter and of all men, for otherwise there can be no spirit resonance when we are in turn impressed by the painting. The representational surface must seem to ride upon a fluid potential of light--or pure spiritual energy--which supports it from beneath, once the painting is recreated in the viewer's mind. As in the case of all of the greatest landscape paintings, anthropomorphic negative-space forms must appear to emerge from a deeper and more intense formless potential to support the fabric of the world. In bamboo painting, the a-priori negative image of a man is often lodged in the pattern of light between the leaves and branches, ironically set apart from the surrounding ether out of which the plant has crystalized. The space has been left empty, there is room, it has been transmitted so that the viewer too may live within the painting as his own idea--as long as it is also the universal concept of man. Like the painter who takes off his

clothes and sits cross-legged, the viewer must take off his personality and move into the painting.