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PHILOSOPHY OF PAINTING BY SHIH-T'AO
A TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION OF HIS
HUA-P'U (TREATISE ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF
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PHILOSOPHY OF PAINTING BY SHIH-T'AO
A TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION OF HIS HUA-PIU
(Treatise on the Philosophy of Painting)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to translate and explicate Shih-t'ao's philosophy of art as expressed in the Hua-p'u (Treatise on the Philosophy of Painting). Perhaps through such an investigation, one can better evaluate Shih-t'ao's contribution to the theory of art and broaden one's view of the field of aesthetics.

A major conclusion which is arrived at through this study is that Shih-t'ao's Hua-p'u is primarily inspired by, and can best be understood in terms of, Taoist philosophy. For example, in the Tao Te Ching, we find such expressions as "the image of the imageless" and "the form of the formless." Only through Shih-t'ao's Hua-p'u do we clearly see the value of these statements. This nondifferentiation became a chief contribution of Chinese aesthetics, as we have learned from leading contemporary philosophers in the East.

In modern philosophy, one usually proceeds by distinguishing oppositions between mind and body, self and other, subject and object, etc. But Eastern philosophy seeks what is prior to these oppositions. This primordial nondifferentiation was originally in the Taoist Classics, but Shih-t'ao has actually applied it to his theory of art. Ordinarily, one expends great energy to determine which method or technique is most suitable in a given situation. However, in Chinese philosophy, one tries to obtain the method
of no-method, that which is natural and free from method in the conventional sense. Shih-t'ao's application of no-method in his art demonstrates the value of this principle.

Besides the above considerations, there is a further reason for translating Shih-t'ao's writing, for his accomplishment is not limited to empty theory; his brush work has actually attained the high aesthetic ideals expounded in the Hua-p'u. Because the world now knows and enjoys Shih-t'ao's brush work, it is important to make available the theory of art which underlies it. Thus, a grasp of the Hua-p'u is a prerequisite for full understanding and appreciation of Shih-t'ao's work and further leads to a realization of what is essential in the art of the East.
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INTRODUCTION

Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945), the leading twentieth century philosopher of Japan, has used the notion of "the form of the formless" to differentiate between the Eastern and Western cultures.

In contradistinction to Western culture which considers form as existence and formation as good, the urge to see the form of the formless, and hear the sound of the soundless lies at the foundation of Eastern culture.¹

Formlessness is identified with the infinite, the inexhaustible. Thus it is often described in the negative terminology of "emptiness" or "nothingness." What is formless is the source of all forms but itself is empty of forms. It is nothing in the sense of being no particular thing but the thingless origin of all things. Positively it may be expressed as the One, the unitary reality. It is the formlessness of Oriental paintings, especially, in the case of serene landscapes, which renders them so enchanting for even an uninformed viewer.

Shin'ichi Hisamatsu, a noted follower of Nishida, has established himself as a leading exponent of Zen aesthetics in contemporary Japan. Like his teacher, he demonstrates a high regard for the formless basis of Asian art:

It is not that the many expresses itself in the many, or form in form; rather, the One expresses itself in the many, and the Formless in form. Accordingly, even the many that is expressed is not meant to express the
many, nor is the form expressed intended to express form. On the contrary, the many is intended to express the One, and form, Formlessness.²

Hisamatsu has described formlessness in a straightforward and unqualified manner, "Accordingly, the Zen term [formlessness] means, briefly, that there is no form of any kind, either physical or mental."³ What is formless is altogether beyond differentiations or distinctions; borrowing a phrase from Hans-Georg Gadamer, this formlessness may be spoken of as "aesthetic nondifferentiation" (aesthetische Nichtunterscheidung)⁴ in the context of painting. In his recently translated Zen and the Fine Arts, Hisamatsu carefully discusses seven characteristics of Zen aesthetics; certain of these features are particularly important to a grasp of formlessness. To appreciate how formlessness is achieved and manifested in Oriental art, it will be of value to examine those characteristics which are particularly related to the aesthetic principles of Shih-t'ao, as expounded in his Treatise on the Philosophy of Painting.

Austere Sublimity or Lofty Dryness ( 枯高 Kokō)

By "austere sublimity" Hisamatsu refers to being matured and, hence, devoid of the sensuous. All that is fleshy and extraneous has been eroded away; only the essence or bare bones remain. This "pith," as Hisamatsu calls it, that endures has a strength and seasoned quality which distinguishes the
Eastern conception of beauty. There is a powerful quality that transcends ordinary beauty in the stark, weathered pine tree that a more elaborate, lushly-depicted forest could not capture. Total liberation from the sensuous is, of course, only possible with the Formless.

Subtle Profundity or Deep Reserve (深奥 Yugen)

Deep Reserve is another characteristic which Hisamatsu associates with Oriental aesthetics. It can be described in terms of implication rather than total exposure, suggestion rather than strained delineation. In his words, "Such works enable us to imagine the depth of content within them and to feel infinite reverberations, something that is not possible with detail painted minutely and distinctly." This sort of painting seeks to evoke a sense of the Formless which lies beyond all particular forms. Next Hisamatsu notes that Subtle Profundity contains a type of darkness, a darkness which stills and calms the mind. For example, turning to the darkness of the tea room, he explains that the purpose is to create a calm atmosphere--a milieu which is conducive to ultimate tranquility.

Simplicity (簡素 Kanso)

The characteristic of simplicity denotes a sparse, uncluttered quality. "The ultimate Simplicity is 'not a single thing' . . . the negation of clutter may be spoken of as being 'boundless'--there
is nothing limiting, as in a cloudless sky.\textsuperscript{6} Nothing can exceed the Formless in simplicity; thus the greatest simplicity is expressed by the unity of the Formless rather than that of form.

Transcendence is simplicity; thus the greatest simplicity is expressed by the unity of the Formless rather than that of form.

Tranquility (静寂 Sei Jaku)

The characteristic of tranquility is concerned with quiet, calm, and being inwardly disposed. Hisamatsu cites Mu-ch'i's "Six Persimmons" as a painting which infuses the mind with tranquility. He then comments upon serenity as follows: "This sort of calm or composure seems also to be excellently expressed in the phrase 'rest amid motion.'\textsuperscript{7} From the premise that to have form necessarily entails disquiet, Hisamatsu concludes that only the Formless completely avoids disquiet.

Freedom from Attachment (脱俗 Datsu Zoku)

Freedom from Attachment is explained as escape from bondage to habit, tradition, formulae, rules, etc. If successful, one's thought and action are both utterly non-dependent. According to Hisamatsu, the shattering of conventional regulations is commonly termed the "Rule of No Rule." Finally, as in the case of the other characteristics, he links unrestricted freedom with the Formless Self:

The Formless Self is not bound to any form. As the living Fundamental Subject free from all form, it is free of adherence or attachment. While being concerned with what has form, it remains formless. Only this formlessness in form is true Freedom from Attachment.\textsuperscript{8}
Having surveyed Hisamatsu's chief characteristics of Zen aesthetics, the contribution of Shih-t'ao's aesthetic principles embodied in the seventeenth century Hua-p'u may be all the more appreciated. As Hisamatsu says: "the many is intended to express the One, and form, Formlessness." What is many is form, and what is One is formless. Thus, the oneness of strokes of Shih-t'ao is the art of formlessness. Let us now examine the basic principles that are contained in the Hua-p'u.

1. Oneness of Brush Strokes (一画 i-hua)

Taoist philosophy adopted the unity of multiplicity as its most basic principle. Thus chapter thirty-nine of the Tao Te Ching states:

- Obtaining the One, Heaven was made clear.
- Obtaining the One, Earth was made stable.
- Obtaining the One, the Gods were made spiritual.
- Obtaining the One, the valleys were made full.
- Obtaining the One, all things lived and grew.

Amidst all plurality there is a fundamental unity, for the entire manifold of diversities emanates from and returns to the absolute oneness of Tao. From Zen literature, we have: "One in All and All in One." Shih-t'ao's oneness of brush strokes is a direct application of this unity of multiplicity to Chinese painting.

In chapter one, i-hua is used as follows: "To travel far and ascend heights, one's step begins with a single inch near at hand. Hence, oneness of strokes embraces all strokes before
their differentiation. Myriad brush strokes and ink wash all
derive and diminish here." This may remind one of the unifying
Tao from which all things issue and to which they return. Thus,
the i-hua involves something more than the initial, single stroke; it
entails a fundamental unity to which all subsequent strokes must
contribute. "Stroke" carries a dynamic connotation which is
more consonant with Shih-t'ao's message than "line" or "mark."

There are at least three basic interpretations of the oneness
of brush strokes. First, the one-stroke can be understood as
an expression by which Shih-t'ao indicates the standard or meas-
ure of excellence in painting. Thus on the level of art technique
and execution, the one-stroke signifies the free origin of painting.
To be an accomplished painter is to follow the one-stroke, to
never deviate from it (just as to live successfully is to conform to
the Tao). But conformity to the one-stroke is not to be confused
with bondage, for such action is regarded as the purest freedom
in which the artist can participate. Only painting which accords
with the one-stroke is judged capable of liberating the artist. His
work, then, proceeds like "water flowing naturally downward and
flames burning upward." Freedom of artistic expression is,
therefore, equated with the natural as opposed to constraint by
adherence to artificial conventions of men. When one's painting is
so untrammeled, his execution is immediate, unhesitating and
powerful. Hence, the i-hua can be interpreted as an uninterrupted
outpouring of spirit. By contrast, painting which fails to issue from the one-stroke yields aborted effects that do not at all qualify as genuine, creative paintings. Finally, theory alone is not a sufficient condition for art, since the putting down of a first stroke is the beginning of all possibilities, all potentialities for creativity.

Another interpretation is concerned with the metaphysical dimension of the notion of the i-hua. As has already been mentioned, it points to universality and oneness rather than particularity and plurality. In this context, oneness of brush strokes pertains to the ontological experience of identification, i.e., the unity of reality, for to follow the one-stroke is to be closest to the unity of Tao (see chapter forty-two of the Tao Tê Ching). As Shih-t'ao states in chapter eighteen: "From oneness deal with ten thousand things, from the ten thousand things, deal with oneness."

The sense in which the one-stroke conveys a metaphysical idea of unity is closely related to a third, cosmological use of the i-hua. "This oneness of strokes is the origin of all beings, the root of myriad forms." Forms (hsiang), in this context, are images or representations. Here, the i-hua suggests the original stroke or creation. By speaking as though a lone brush stroke produced all phenomena, Shih-t'ao calls attention to the affinity between artistic and natural creation. As Siren points out, painting is understood as a microcosmic creation parallel to the
The macrocosmic creation of the entire universe, and; the I-Ching is perhaps responsible for Shih-t'ao's emphasis on processes of creation. To summarize, while the concept of the one-stroke, involving multiple and subtle nuances, can hardly be formulated in succinct terms or made perfectly clear, a careful attending to its various occurrences in the text will contribute cumulatively to an enriched appreciation of the notion.

Although Hisamatsu has not mentioned Shih-t'ao's philosophy of painting, his remarks in *Zen and the Fine Arts* are exactly what Shih-t'ao wanted to say. As Hisamatsu comments:

The most striking feature of the new Zen style of painting is that the whole is first painted in one stroke—in one breath, as it were—without regard for the details; it is out of the whole that the parts then emerge. In other words, instead of the many building up to form the One, the One first forms and the many appears in it. Instead of the many or the form aspiring toward the One or the Formless, it is the One or the Formless that expresses itself as the creative subject in the many or the form. This is in complete agreement with Zen's way of Immediate Awakening.12

This oneness of brush strokes may be directly related to the form of the formless. If the brush strokes contain oneness, then formlessness is present. Individual brush strokes are responsible for various forms, but the unity of brush strokes evokes a sense of the formless. Although the formless is necessarily invisible, unified brush strokes can at least suggest it.
II. Concealment in Nondifferentiation (蒙養 mēng yang)

On a colophon written by Shih-t'ao we find:

To engage oneself in painting, one must be aware of the principle of mēng yang. That which is mēng is the state of nondifferentiation in the remote past. That which is yang is the state of concealment of supreme simplicity prior to dispersion. Prior to dispersion is the concealment of nondifferentiation. In painting, before the ink wash is put on the paper, one must contemplate upon the state of nondifferentiation; after one holds the brush, one must concentrate on concealment. Contemplating nondifferentiation and concentrating on concealment, one will be awakened from nondifferentiation and find his complete potentiality; he will also fulfill various transformations and be liberated from methods.13

Yang, that which is potentially present but concealed, is raised or nourished in mēng, nondifferentiation. Thus mēng corresponds to the uncarved block and yang to the future emergents. In chapter five, we find: "Ink wash cannot be spiritual unless one has achieved the state of nondifferentiation and concealment." A previous English translation of this line states: "Without nourishment and culture, the ink lacks soul." It is clear that the translator failed to understand Shih-t'ao's principle of mēng yang. This nondifferentiation-concealing potentiality produces quiescence; the ink wash somehow both conceals and reveals. It conceals by its misty vagueness; it reveals through the spiritual feeling evoked by this subtle formlessness. In Taoist terminology, the blurred or amorphous atmosphere dimly projects the "form of the formless."
III. Harmonious Atmosphere ( 綱緯 yin yün)

In chapter seven, Shih-t'ao introduces the principle of yin yün, or harmonious atmosphere. This expression is traceable to the I-Ching, which states: "When Heaven and Earth unify into harmonious atmosphere, ten thousand things will be transformed and purified." This fusion of yin yün has been applied by Shih-t'ao to the union of brush strokes and ink washes. As he puts it in chapter seven:

When the brush strokes and ink wash are unified, this is called yin yün, that is, harmonious atmosphere. . . . Apply it to painting a mountain, the mountain is spiritualized. Apply it to painting a stream, the stream moves. Apply it to human figures, and they are free from mundane defilements. . . . Transform oneness into this harmonious atmosphere, and this is indeed the highest achievement of art in the world.

The subtle merging of brush and ink can create a spiritual atmosphere which produces transcendental feeling. Lin Yutang's translation reads: "Where the brush and ink blend, cloudy forms are produced." This rendering as "cloudy forms" fails to convey the spiritual quality of yin yün. Siren has translated yin yün quite literally as "The Generative forces of heaven and earth, by means of which all things are constantly reproduced." While not entirely satisfactory, Lin Yutang's "cloudy forms" is at least suggestive. Yin yün does carry the idea of vagueness or mistiness, but this is not the ordinary mistiness of say, for example, a fog. This mistiness is the profoundly spiritual atmosphere generated by
mêng yang. As has been mentioned, the principle of yin yün involves the unification of heaven and earth, a fusion which purifies all things. Such harmonious atmosphere may be compared with what Laurence Binyon terms "wholeness of spirit."

In *Spiritual Man in Asian Art*, he states:

> What he (the painter) put into his work comes out from it and flows over into our minds; and we recognize something which cannot be called intellectual only, sensuous only, or emotional only; it is the wholeness of spirit, which goes out, free and unafraid, into wholeness of universe.\(^{15}\)

Wholeness is often associated with the Tao which is said to be absolute wholeness or oneness. In chapter thirteen, Shih-t'ao says: "The mountain is the sea, the sea is the mountain."

Statements such as this will necessarily be unintelligible unless one comprehends the principle of yin yün.

IV. Sublimity as Aesthetic Achievement (遠塵 yuán ch'en)

The sublimity that is so evident in the calm landscapes of the Sung masters is a characteristic which distinguishes Chinese paintings of great aesthetic quality. This sublimity is a pervasive principle in the work of Shih-t'ao, especially in chapter fifteen, "Sublimity and the Commonplace." As he says:

> When man is confused by things, he attaches himself to the commonplace. When man is ruled by things, his mind will become a servant. When the mind becomes a slave of limitation and rigidity, it destroys itself. . . . As for me, let things obstruct themselves. Let the commonplace associate with the commonplace. Then my
mind will be set free. When the mind is set free, the art of painting emerges.

If the artist's mind is severed from attachment to things, his being is marked by purity and transparency. Such ontological purity and transparency is the common goal of Taoist philosophy and Chinese aesthetics. It matters not whether purity and transparency are transmitted through poetry or painting. Shih-t'ao concluded chapter fourteen by identifying the sublimity of painting with that of poetry. Moved by the tranquility of Su Tung-p'o's poems, Shih-t'ao once translated this sublimity into the medium of painting.

One day, when a storm was blowing outside, I thought of Su Tung-p'o's poems describing twelve scenes and became so inspired that I took up my brush and started painting each of the scenes in the poems. At the top of each picture I copied the original poem. When I chant them the spirit that gives them life emerges spontaneously from my painting.\(^{16}\)

The respective expressions of sublimity produced by Su Tung-p'o and Shih-t'ao testify to their spiritual attainment, i.e., freedom from bondage to commonplace things. Similarly Hisamatsu has discussed the sublimity of being matured and devoid of the sensuous. That which is matured and void of the sensuous naturally attains spiritual sublimity.

V. Emptiness versus Solidity (虚實 hsü shih)

Ordinarily the principle of hsü (empty) and shih (solid) is related to the balance between vacant space and filled areas, such
as in the explanation given by Hsun Tsu-yung in his Ferry Boat of Painting.

In the composition of a picture there must be spiritual breath coming and leaving without hindrance. Generally speaking, when the left side is vacant, the right side should be solid; when the right side is vacant, then the left side should be solid.\(^{17}\)

The balance between hsü and shih is further explained in a more subtle manner. When K'ung Yen-shih applied this principle, he said:

\[
\ldots \text{to draw trees or rocks the solid stroke is used; to draw clouds and mists the vacant stroke is used. Through that which is vacant the solid is moved and that which is solid becomes vacant. Thus the entire picture will be full of the life rhythm.}^{18}\]

When the brush strokes are full of life rhythm it is because "the proper measure between hsü and shih," as Shih-t'ao maintained, is applied. As to how the artist achieves this proper measure, from chapter nine we have Shih-t'ao's statement:

The potentialities of mountains and rivers reside in the painting; the evasive concealment of the painting lies in the ink; the vitality of the ink depends upon catching the absolute moment, the action of grasping the moment requires continuity of execution. Among those who know how to control movement, their brush work is inwardly real (shih) and outwardly transparent (hsü).

This indeed explains the highest attainment of emptiness and solidity.

VI. Living Spirit (生活 shēng huo)

In the fifth century, the well-known first canon "Chi'i yün
shêng tung" or spiritual rhythm and life motion was developed by Hsieh Ho. Shêng huo is not being employed in the ordinary sense of a state of life as opposed to death. Shih-t'ao applied shêng huo to describe the spiritual reality of things in their most animated aspect. When an artist captures the shêng huo of an object, he has seized its liveliness or vitality. It seems that Shih-t'ao followed the first principle of Hsieh Ho. However, in chapter five, Shih-t'ao makes clear that the principles of mêng yang and shêng huo are mutually necessary complements. While shêng huo is more concerned with the dynamic and active dimension of experience, mêng yang is more involved with the passive, dark, and formative side of life. Both mêng yang and shêng huo are fundamental principles of Chinese aesthetics. As Shih-t'ao states in chapter eighteen:

Thus, when we discuss the function of painting, we see the truth of the awakening from nondifferentiation and lively spirit. From oneness, deal with the ten thousand things; from the ten thousand things, deal with oneness. It is not the function of particular aspects of mountain or water, or the function of mere brush strokes or ink wash, or the function of antiquity or the present, or the function of the wise man. Within this function there is reality. In short, it is the oneness of strokes. It is the limitless, it is the Tao of heaven and earth.

When the Tao of heaven and earth is fulfilled, the aesthetic of nondifferentiation is attained, the highest achievement of one-stroke painting.
VII. Liberation from Method (功法 liao fa)

Chinese aesthetics recognizes genuine beauty as the beauty of the true Self which is awake and in action. With the awakening of this real Self, the beauty of formlessness is directly manifested, for the real Self is free from all obstacles, including those of method and lack of method. According to Shih-t'ao, oneness of brush strokes liberates the artist from any limitations. Only after such liberation can the Tao of painting be attained. Thus, in chapter two of the previous edition of the Hua-p'u, which is entitled the Hua-yü Lu, we have:

This oneness of stroke is free from the limitation without limitation (method) but also free from the limitation with method.

Later, in chapter three, Shih-t'ao adds:

The perfect man has no method. Not that he has no method whatsoever, but no-method is the method which is the perfect method.

Here Shih-t'ao's principle of no-method (wu-fa) in Taoist philosophy means non-action (wu-wei). The inspired artist is neither bound by conventional methods nor altogether without method.

Similarly, wu-wei means neither artificial striving nor complete inactivity. As in the middle way dialectic of Madhyamika, both no-method and non-action are marked by the rejection of limiting extremes. Shih-t'ao's attitude toward method is in accord with the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting in which we find:

"The end of all method is to seem to have no method."19
To better understand the basic aesthetic concepts discussed above, one must be aware of the fundamental source of Tao which is often described as the One. The One in Taoist philosophy is seen as the unity of multiplicity or the unity of opposites. In the realm of the unity of multiplicity, each particularity retains the potentialities of universality. In the realm of the unity of opposites, man transforms himself and identifies with the reality of other beings. Such unity and identity in the field of art may be achieved through what Shih-t'ao calls mēng yang, or concealment in nondifferentiation. When mēng yang remains in quiescence it is the state of the uncarved block which may be described as darkness or dryness or simplicity. But when it is in action it is described as life spirit, harmonious atmosphere, tranquility, or sublimity. All these aesthetic qualities are derived from the One and return to the One. Their achievement is through the method of no-method, or wu-wei. In Creativity and Taoism we have:

What then is Tao painting? We may . . . define it as the spontaneous reflection from one's inner reality, unbound by arbitrary rules from without, and undistorted by confusion and limitations within. In this spontaneous reflection, one's potentialities are set free and great creativity is achieved without artificial effort.

With this understanding of Taoist aesthetics in mind, we may better grasp what Shih-t'ao expounds in his treatise.
FOOTNOTES (Introduction)


14 Appendix II.


16 Chang, Creativity and Taoism, pp. 200-201.

17 Ibid., p. 212.

18 Ibid., p. 212.


20 Chang, Creativity and Taoism, p. 203.
Biographical remarks on Shih-t'ao are necessarily limited by the meager information which is presently available. Historians can supply little more than approximate dates (1630--C.A. 1717/1720) and the names of a few associates and locations which he visited. Shih-t'ao's actual birth date is a most controversial matter. The choice of 1630 is based in part upon a poem which Shih-t'ao wrote in 1699 (the year of chi-mao) when he was seventy years old. In one line of this poem, we find: "As an old man who has peacefully passed seventy years..."¹

There is a contradiction, however, for in another poem, said to be written in 1700 (the year of keng-yin), his age is mentioned as sixty.² From this it would be deduced that Shih-t'ao was born around 1640, but one of Ch'ien Ch'ien-i's fourteen poems of 1651 states that he was quite happy to have a monk (Shih-t'ao) visit him from Kiangsi. This reference to Shih-t'ao as a monk would be inapplicable to a young child of about ten. Thus Chiang l-han says Shih-t'ao was twenty-two at the time of this visit.³ And so the controversy continues, as those like Hsü Fu-kuan⁴ and Fu Pau-shih⁵ defend the date of 1630 and Wen Fong⁶ argues for the year 1641. In view of the unsettled state of this issue, the traditional date of 1630 has been accepted. As might be suspected, many of the most outstanding paintings attributed to
Shih-t'ao ("Eight Views of Huang-shan," "Paintings After Su Tung-p'o's Poetry," "An Album of Twelve Leaves for the Taoist Yü," and "The Waterfall at Lu-shan") have not been precisely dated. Shih-t'ao, a pen name which means "Stone Wave," is perhaps the best known epithet of the artist-philosopher. An eleventh generation descendant of the original Prince Ch'ing-chiang, Chu Shou-ch'ien, Shih-t'ao was born in Kueilin, in Kwangsi Province. He was also called Tao-chi (the way of salvation) and his imperial name "Chu Jo-ch'i" indicates his descent from the Chu family of the Ming Dynasty. Other names by which he is known include: Hsia-tsun-chê (the Honorable Blind One, Shih-t'ao having regarded himself as blind to worldly things), Yüan-chi (the beginning of salvation), K'u-kua (Bitter Melon, another literary name), and Ta-ti-tzü (the Pure One, identifying his turn to Taoism from the political embroilment with which Buddhism had become involved). Altogether, Shih-t'ao employed over two dozen pen names.

In 1644, the Manchus overtook the Ming Dynasty and the Ch'ing Dynasty rose to power. Thus, during his earliest years, Shih-t'ao was exposed to the trauma which accompanies political turmoil. It may very well be that the collapse of his own Ming Dynasty contributed to Shih-t'ao's revolutionary spirit as an artist and thinker.
As a youth of nine or ten, Shih-t'ao resided in Kiangsi. Here the famous mountain "Lu-shan" served as an inspiration for a monumental landscape painted by him in his later years. By the age of fourteen, Shih-t'ao had begun painting orchids; shortly thereafter, he became a monk, an action that can be interpreted as a rejection of the newly instated Ch'ing Dynasty. His monastic experience, which he judged to be overly restrictive, proved to be short-lived. The balance of his life was marked by an alternation between travelling through the stirring scenery of China and transposing his impressions into paintings and calligraphy. In the 1660's, Shih-t'ao probably received instruction from the Ch' an Buddhist Shan-kuo Pên-yüeh. By 1670, Shih-t'ao's travels had taken him to the region lying south of the Yangtse River in Anhwei. A half dozen years later found him enjoying the extraordinary beauty of the Huang Shan region in Hsüan-ch'êng.

To label Shih-t'ao as a recluse or hermit is simply mistaken, for he removed himself from only the coarse and vulgar, having a number of friends among scholars, monks, and artists—Mei Ch'ing and Pa-ta Shan-jên were undoubtedly the most prominent. Indeed, by 1684, Shih-t'ao had even met the Emperor K'ang-hsi at Nanking. In 1689, a second meeting with the emperor is believed to have taken place in Yangchou.

In order to appreciate the significance of Shih-t'ao's interviews with Emperor K'ang-hsi, one must consider the preceding events.
T'ien-tung Yüan-wu was a great Ch' an master of the Lin-chi school in the later part of the Ming Dynasty. Among his spiritual descendants were Han-yüeh Fa-tsang, who rebelled against the court of the Ch'ing Emperor K'ang-hsi, and Mu-ch'ên Tao-ming. The latter remained in the court at the will of the emperor and eventually served as the teacher of Shan-kuo Pên-yüeh. He, in turn, became the immediate Ch' an master of Shih-t'ao. Shih-t'ao, unlike his grandfather in dharma, Mu-ch'ên Tao-ming, or his own Ch' an teacher, Shan-kuo Pên-yüeh, never visited Emperor K'ang-hsi in Peking, nor did he ever accept a national position with the court. In the case of the 1684 meeting between Emperor K'ang-hsi and Shih-t'ao, the former had travelled to Nanking in order to visit the tomb of the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, Chu Yüan-chang. This gesture was perhaps taken by Shih-t'ao as a sign of deference toward the Ming era.

In 1693, Shih-t'ao discarded his Buddhist robe and assumed the role of a Taoist priest. His Taoist name "Ta-ti-tzǔ" means "the Pure One," signifying purification of all the accumulated filth of worldliness. The filth which he rejected was the political corruption which had become associated with Buddhism. This helps explain Shih-t'ao's famous letter to Pa-ta Shan-jên in which Shih-t'ao requested a painting of his home, Ta-ti ts'ao-t'ang (the Grass Hut of Great Purity). Shih-t'ao's request, therefore, was intended as an announcement of his purification.
From 1697 until his death, Shih-t'ao made Yangchou his home. The *Hua-yü Lu*, his major aesthetic statement, is generally held to have been written in about 1700, the revised version of this text, the *Hua-p'ü*, appearing in 1710.
FOOTNOTES (Biographical Sketch)

1 Cheng Cho-lu (鄭祖壘) 五代研究


3 Chiang, K'yu-kua Ho-shang Hua-yü Lu Yen Chiu, p. 416.

4 Hsü Fu-kuan (徐復觀) 五代之研究
   (Shih-t'ao Chih I Yen Chiu) (Tai-chung, Taiwan: Central Book Company, 1968), p. 117.

5 Fu Pao-shih (傅抱石) 五代上人年譜

Shih-t'ao's Hua-p'u (Treatise on the Philosophy of Painting) is a very recently discovered and most valuable text. Written by his own hand, it was skillfully engraved at Ta-ti t'ang (the Hall of Grand Purification, Shih-t'ao's home). This work is actually another version of the much more widely circulated K'u-kua Ho-shang Hua-yü Lu (Dialogue or Discourse on Painting of the Monk Bitter Melon).

When the two texts are compared, a number of significant variations can be seen. In some cases, the Hua-p'u, the slightly shorter of the two editions, is characterized by the omission of redundant passages, as, for example, when an unnecessary repetition of a list of landscape elements has been deleted from chapter one, "mountains, streams, human figures, birds, animals, grass and trees, ponds, pavilions, and towers." At times, characters, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, which occur in the Hua-yü Lu, do not appear in the Hua-p'u. Where such omissions are of particular importance, they will be discussed. All in all, the Hua-p'u represents a more compact presentation of Shih-t'ao's aesthetic views. But this is not to say that the Hua-p'u is simply a condensed version of the Hua-yü Lu. On the contrary, the Hua-p'u contains important philosophical material not found in the Hua-yü Lu. For example, chapters
one and three include explicit references to Confucius, and chapter eighteen links oneness of brush strokes with the Tao of heaven and earth.

While opinion is still divided with respect to which of the two engraved copies is the later edition, the evidence weighs heavily in favor of the Hua-p'u as being the final form of the text. To begin with, only the Hua-p'u carries the stamp of two seals by Shih-t'ao, "A Ch'ang" (the elder one) and "Ch'ing-hsiang lao jên" (the old man from Ch'ing-hsiang). These seals may be interpreted as meaning either that Shih-t'ao had given his full approval to this particular version or that he was presenting it as a gift.

Given that Liu Hsiao-shan is said to have been in possession of an edition of the Hua-yü Lu prior to 1712 and that the Hua-p'u was published in 1710,¹ the dates of the two texts would appear to be quite close. It must, however, be remembered that the actual writing of the Hua-yü Lu is considered to have been around 1700, Lin Yutang assigning it as early a date as 1660. The Hua-p'u, by contrast, is scarcely mentioned—except for its publication date of 1710. If the two texts are read alongside each other, the Hua-yü Lu seems less structured, more rambling and exuberant, the Hua-p'u having a tight, refined, or edited quality. Thus it is likely that the Hua-p'u, lacking much that is extraneous in the Hua-yü Lu and adding philosophical references of its own, represents Shih-t'ao's revised statement.
Since all previous English translations of Shih-t'ao have been based upon the Hua-yü Lu, the present translation of the Hua-p'u is intended to make available what appears to be the most historically authoritative and what is certainly the most philosophically illuminating of Shih-t'ao's writings.
FOOTNOTES (A Note on the Chinese Scripts)

1Wu T'ung, "Tao-chi, a Chronology," The Painting of Tao-chi, pp. 60-61.
A DISCUSSION OF PREVIOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

A brief review of previous English translations of the Hua-yü Lu will help to explain the motivation behind the present translation of the Hua-p'u. As early as 1936, Osvald Siren's The Chinese on the Art of Painting had introduced translations from Shih-t'ao to English speaking students of Chinese painting. Part of this material was revised two decades later in Siren's Chinese Painters Leading Masters and Principles. While having the merits of a pioneering achievement, Siren's translations have two serious disadvantages. First, they are incomplete: "The seven chapters of which we offer translations contain all the essential elements of Shih-t'ao's aesthetic ideology." Thus more than one-half of Shih-t'ao's eighteen chapters have been omitted, material which Lin Yutang regards as "quite significant." Siren's partial translation, then, simply does not allow the reader to judge for himself just what chapters are essential in the treatise of Shih-t'ao. Second, with regard to the chapters which Siren has translated, Chou Ju-hsi has called them "far from accurate." This may very well be due to Siren's highly literal rendering of the text.

Four chapters from Victoria Contag's German translation of the Hua-yü Lu have been translated into English by Michael Bullock. Here, there is not only the problem of incompleteness but that of a translation at two removes from the original Chinese.
Lin Yutang's recent translation (1967) of the *Hua-yü Lu* has the distinct virtue of being complete.⁷ In contrast to Siren, whom I have labeled as "highly literal," and thus sometimes conforming to the letter rather than the message of Shih-t'ao, Lin Yutang presents a "highly literary" or creative, free rendering of the text. Although Siren and Lin Yutang both acknowledge a Taoist influence upon Shih-t'ao, neither fully grasps the actual application of Taoism by Shih-t'ao. Thus, as has already been noted, a principle like mèng yang (concealment in nondifferentiation) is treated superficially as "early training" or "nourishment and culture."

All translators would undoubtedly agree upon the problematic character of the treatise. Lin Yutang has described Shih-t'ao's style as "very difficult to render into English."⁸ Siren characterizes the text as being "written in a rather abstruse form interspersed with strange terms, mostly of Taoist origin, and abstract philosophical deductions, a serious drawback pointed out by the first editor in the following remarks 'Ta-ti-tzū has penetrated deep into the mysterious origin (of painting) and expressed original ideas of his own mind in a style which is old-fashioned and vigorous, but very difficult to interpret.'"⁹ Given the difficulties of the text, it is unfortunate that none of the translators has supplied the necessary chapter by chapter analysis. Instead, they present mainly introductory remarks, largely of a
biographical nature. Equally unfortunate is the fact that all prior attention has been directed to the Hua-yü Lu rather than the Hua-p'u. Since I believe a commentary is invaluable in making sense of Shih-t’ao's exposition, the present translation of the Hua-p'u will be supplemented by comments throughout each chapter. In a majority of cases, these remarks will also be applicable to the Hua-yü Lu. The purpose of this dissertation is, therefore, twofold: First, it is intended to provide a faithful and philosophically oriented translation; second, it seeks to explicate condensed, elliptical, and cloudy passages so as to allow for a fuller realization and evaluation of Shih-t'ao's aims and accomplishments.
FOOTNOTES (Previous English Translations)

1 Siren, The Chinese on the Art of Painting, pp. 182-192.


3 Siren, The Chinese on the Art of Painting, p. 182.


8 Ibid., p. 140.

9 Siren, Chinese Painting, Leading Masters and Principles, p. 171.
CHAPTER 1
ONENESS OF BRUSH STROKES

In remote, ancient days there were no principles. The primordial p'o (or state of uncarved block) had not been dispersed.

As soon as the primordial p'o was dispersed, principles emerged.

It is instructive to compare varying renditions of these first few lines.¹ To analyze the two characters (tai and p'o) which Lin Yutang has rendered as "primeval chaos," tai means "very," "extreme" or "great"; p'o, an important Taoist concept, refers to that which is simple, plain, sincere, the substance of all things. P'o is the primordial unity from which all multiplicity derives. It is the original nature or condition of reality. Etymologically, it describes the wood of a tree before being processed by man. P'o, then, is absolute nondifferentiation, the one which gives rise to all diversities. To translate p'o as "chaos" may mislead by suggesting the idea of plurality or heterogeneity, for chaos is commonly taken to mean confusion or disorder. However, in fairness to Lin Yutang, a second sense of chaos should be acknowledged, for it can also signify an undifferentiated state which preceded the emergence of the ordered universe. Siren's translation as "the great state of natural simplicity" avoids this problem of ambiguity. Nevertheless, there is something to be said for retaining the romanized "p'o" rather than substituting the English near-equivalent "simplicity." By retaining this transliteration, Shih-t'ao's link with Taoism becomes immediately evident.

How did these principles emerge? They were founded upon the oneness of strokes. This oneness of strokes is the origin of all beings, the root of myriad forms.

Literally this line reads: "This oneness of brush strokes is the origin of all beings, the root of ten thousand forms."
Expressions such as "ten thousand forms" are not to be taken literally, but as suggesting a myriad number of entities.

It is revealed through spiritual reality, and is innate in man.

"Spiritual reality" or "spiritual power" seems preferable to "gods" which is used to translate "shên" by both Siren and Lin Yutang. Shih-t'ao is, after all, basically naturalistic rather than theistic. Heaven and earth, for example, mean the entire universe or nature in Shih-t'ao as well as Chuang Tzu and the Tao Tê Ching. In fact, the naturalistic and humanistic strains of Chinese thought are often interpreted as atheism.

However, man in the world does not realize this. I was the first to discover the principle of oneness of strokes. The principle of oneness of strokes is such that from no-method method originates; from one method, all methods harmonize.

In "no-method" (wu fa), the negative "wu" is coupled with a character (fa) which embraces a variety of meanings: statute, law, rule, regulation, plan, method, technique, model, way, approach. While agreeing with Siren's and Lin Yutang's choice of "method," I regard Edwards' use of "style" as acceptable even if not necessarily preferable. The point is that Shih-t'ao rejected method or style in the restrictive sense, i.e., blindly adopting the artistic preferences, approaches, or proclivities of one's contemporaries or predecessors. (The topic is again taken up in chapter three.) This entire sentence closely parallels the final two lines from chapter forty of the Tao Tê Ching, "Heaven, earth, and ten thousand things proceed from being and being proceeds from non-being." The negative terminology of Shih-t'ao and the Tao Tê Ching was deemed necessary to characterize that fundamental unity which is the essentially inexpressible root of all else.
The art of painting is a manifestation of truth. With regard to the delicate arrangement of mountains, streams, and human figures, or the natural characteristics of birds, animals, grass, and trees, or the proportions of ponds, pavilions, towers, and terraces, if one's mind cannot deeply penetrate into their reality and subtly express their appearance, one has not yet understood the fundamental meaning of the oneness of strokes.

"Li," translated here as "reality," has been variously rendered as the reason, principle, or inner law of things. Broadly speaking, li is identified as that which is real and fundamental in individual things, their universal principles or innermost nature as opposed to their superficial or accidental aspects. For Shih-t'ao, capturing the eternal principles (li) of things takes precedence over displaying their sensuous appeal. The concept of "quintessence" in medieval Western philosophy is somewhat analogous to the Chinese term "li." Quintessence is defined as "the essence of a thing in its purest and most concentrated form," i.e., that which is most representative or typical of an individual. There is a problem involved in that "essence" may be taken to mean substance as though it were referring to a subtle, but nevertheless, material residue. If essence is interpreted physically, it is inapplicable, since the li of a thing is not reducible to a materialistic account. In fact, the concept of li, which rose to prominence among the Neo-Confucianists of the Sung period, was the very antithesis of pure materialism. The Neo-Confucianist Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200), for example, insisted that the materialism of chi (ether) must be grounded upon a formal principle. This formal principle was, of course, li. Given that the notion of li was assigned a position of utmost importance by such thinkers, it is obvious why later commentators have detected a Neo-Confucianist influence upon Shih-t'ao. That Shih-t'ao is genuinely concerned with penetrating into the reality (li) or innermost nature of things needs reiteration, for, in contrasting the Ch'an painters with Shih-t'ao, Siren has described the latter's writings as "more playfully intellectual, more detached from the realities of life, and
full of far-fetched cosmological speculations." To the contrary, Shih-t'ao could hardly be more preoccupied with capturing the subtle realities of life; and, his cosmological remarks are certainly no more whimsical or far-fetched than those of the I-Ching or Tao Tê Ching.

(As for instance) to both travel far and ascend heights, one's step begins with a single inch near at hand.

This line has a counterpart in chapter sixty-three of the Tao Tê Ching: "The world's great affairs have proceeded from what is small."

Hence, oneness of strokes embraces all strokes before their differentiation. Myriad brush strokes and ink wash all derive and diminish here. Merely rely upon the grasp of men. A single stroke which identifies with universality can clearly reveal the idea of man and fully penetrate all things.

This line may also be translated as: "Man can, by the one-stroke, embrace everything in miniature; his thoughts will be clear and his brush penetrating." Under this interpretation, Shih-t'ao would be claiming that one-stroke painting has the ability to reflect the entire universe on a microcosmic scale.

Thus the wrist seizes reality.

In the original text, pu hsü means not empty. Not empty means to seize reality. Shih-t'ao's earlier text, the Hua-yü Lu, contains different characters at this point and may be read: "If the wrist is not empty (flexible), then the painting is wrong." Here hollowness or emptiness of the wrist has been understood as meaning "fully responsive" by Lin Yutang and "unhampered" by Siren. Lin Yutang adds that "The palm and fingers are held
fairly rigid and all movement should start from the wrist." Thus the empty wrist is free as opposed to stiff or fixed. It is interesting to note that when the proper grasp of the brush has been assumed, the palm may be described as empty or hollow. It is also possible that Shih-t'ao is making reference to emptiness of intentionality, for in chapter four, he writes: "Painting is transmitted by the ink, ink is transmitted by the brush, brush is transmitted by the wrist and the wrist is transmitted by the mind..." Such a mind is marked by insights rather than strained intentionality.

When the wrist seizes reality, it moves the brush with a revolving movement, enriches the strokes by rolling the brush hairs, and leaves them unbounded by any limitations.

"Leaves them unbounded by any limitations" may also be understood as "leaves some empty space." Emptiness does not carry a negative or pejorative connotation. Pictorially, it may be understood to indicate the necessary ingredient of space in a painting, as, for example, when Shih-t'ao uses a diagonal void to separate his canvas. Metaphysically, emptiness or the "form of the formless" refers to the primary reality which lies behind all shapes. Chapter fourteen of the Tao Te Ching describes Tao as the invisible, inaudible "form of the formless."

When the brush moves outward, it is like cutting something; when the brush moves inward, it is like lifting something.

This sentence can also be interpreted as "Externally it is as if one is cutting, (the technique is virtually swordsmanship with a brush) but internally there is a revelation."
To make either a square or a circle, to make a straight line or a bent line, either upward or downward, left or right,

Similarly, chapter thirty-four of the Tao Tê Ching states that the Tao can move in any direction, "it can go left or right."

all of these movements are similar to water flowing naturally downward and flames burning upward. They are natural and are free from the slightest artificiality. All of these actions possess a lively spirit and their methods are always integrated. All things become real and their manner is vividly and fully expressed.

"Tai," which has been translated as "manner" corresponds to the total appearance, atmosphere, or bearing of things.

This is because when the primordial uncarved block was dispersed, the principle of oneness of strokes emerged, and ten thousand things were manifested. Confucius said: "My doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity."

This quote follows James Legge's translation of the Analects. Only in the final edition of the text, the Hua-p'u, is the name "Confucius" included. While Confucius was concerned with a unifying principle of morality, Shih-t'ao is interested in a unifying principle by which ultimate reality can be expressed. Confucius' outlook can, then, be characterized as ethical, Shih-t'ao's as aesthetic and metaphysical.
This proves that oneness is not merely idle talk.

Again, this important line is found only in the latest edition of the text.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 1)

1 Siren (1936)  "The most ancient had no method; their state of natural simplicity had not been shattered. When this state of natural simplicity was broken up, a method was established."

2 Siren (1956)  "In great antiquity there were no methods; the great state of natural simplicity had not been broken up. Once this state of natural simplicity had disintegrated, methods (rules) were established."

3 Lin Yutang (1967)  "In the primeval past there was no method. The primeval chaos was not differentiated. When the primeval chaos was differentiated, method (law) was born."

4 Present Translation  "In remote, ancient days there were no principles. The primordial p'o (or state of uncarved block) had not been dispersed. As soon as the primordial p'o was dispersed, principles emerged."


6 Siren, The Chinese on the Art of Painting, p. 183.

CHAPTER 2
LIBERATION FROM METHODS

This title "Liao Fa" has also been translated as "Perfected Method," for "liao" carries the following ideas: to complete, to finish, to make perfect. The perfected method would then be understood as the method of no-method, that is, a natural method without constraints. The present translation of "Liberation from Methods" is closer to Lin Yutang's "From Method Freed" than to Siren's "Perfected Method" simply because the lines which follow give greater contextual support for this choice. Thus, while Siren's "Perfected Method" does make linguistic sense, "Liberation from Methods" is more consistent with the main philosophical theme of this chapter, escape from bondage to methods.

Compasses and carpenters' squares are the perfect patterns of circles and squares. Heaven and earth are the motions of circles and squares.

In antiquity, heaven was spoken of as round (yüan) and earth as square (fang). It is important to realize that the compound of heaven and earth designates the totality of nature, the entire universe or cosmos, as opposed to a fundamental dichotomy between two realms, the celestial and the earthly. This sort of outlook is responsible for labeling the Taoism of Lao Tzu as naturalistic. For even the later and more mystical Chuang Tzu, heaven, or the way of heaven, applies to what is natural, the Tao of nature, as distinguished from the artificial way of man. In the writings of Chuang Tzu, the heavenly and the human are contrasted as follows: "Horses and oxen have four feet--this is what I mean by the heavenly. Putting a halter on a horse's head, piercing the ox's nose--this is what I mean by the human."
The world (society) realizes that there are compasses and squares, but does not understand the meaning of the revolution of heaven and earth.

In this line, Shih-t'ao selects the characters "ch'ien" and "k'un" to represent heaven and earth. These are both traceable to the I-Ching; ch'ien corresponds to heaven, the male, the creative, the yang or active aspect of life. It is the first of the hexagrams. K'un, another of the hexagrams, refers to earth, the female, the receptive, the yin or passive aspect. When Shih-t'ao asserts that people are aware of compasses and carpenters' squares but unfamiliar with the revolutions of heaven and earth, he appears to be distinguishing between the artificial and the natural. While compasses and T-squares are man-made, the movements of heaven and earth constitute the sum of nature. This motion of the universe is, therefore, describable as suchness.

Thus men are bound by method.

"Method," in this context, is associated with constraining techniques or practices which fetter the ordinary artist. Therefore, this is obviously not the method of no-method which is perfectly natural. Throughout the essay, only scrutiny of the text can determine in which sense Shih-t'ao is using method (fa). The following sentence mentions the origin of man's subjugation by method.

The enslavement of men by method is from the very time that they initiate their study of art. Although men seize the methods of former and later heaven, still they fail to grasp the real meaning of method.

Mathews' Dictionary discusses former and later heaven as follows: "the former heaven, a technical Taoist
term for the previous invisible existence of all things, it is contrasted with . . . later heaven which is used for the present state of existence. Shih-t’ao’s point is that past or present methods are inadequate substitutes for the true method of no-method.

Therefore, even though there is method, men cannot be free from it; to the contrary, method obstructs them.

Only the freedom possessed by the method of no-method is compatible with the creativity of the one-stroke. Traditional methods inevitably function as impediments.

If the oneness of brush strokes is understood, then there is no veil before one’s eyes and painting can flow freely from his mind.

Such painting is a true expression of the artist's state of mind. Hsin, which has been translated as mind, is actually a far richer term which encompasses heart, mind, will, moral nature, the affections, and intention. This problematic character has been translated by Lin Yutang as "will"; Siren, in his 1936 translation, rendered it as "heart"; in 1956, he favored "mind." The heart and mind have been intimately connected, if not identified, in Chinese thought. Confucius’ sagehood was, for example, ascribed to an extraordinary number of cavities in his heart. The heart was, then, often regarded as the locus of thinking. In Mencius we find the following remark: "The organs of hearing and sight are unable to think and can be misled by external things. When one thing acts upon another, all it does is to attract it. The organ of the heart can think." That sort of thinking which is most significant for Mencius is the immediate, intuitive thinking illustrated in his famous "well" anecdote. Thus it is not surprising that "ssu," "t," and other characters associated with thinking have the heart radical (hsin) as part of their structure.

Turning to Taoism, in chapters such as twelve and twenty of the Tao Te Ching, hsin, which is actually a pictograph of a heart, is best translated as mind.
To employ "will" in the present context may imply excess intentionality, but genuine painting can only proceed from a non-striving disposition. Giles has even defined Tao as the "inability to exercise the functions of will." To use "heart" is to risk conveying undue sentimentality or emotionalism. Although mind is the most adequate rendering of hsin in the present case, it is not to be taken as the logical, analytic mind, but as the intuitive mind. Its penetrating power is sensitive to the moral and aesthetic and is not limited to rational, discursive thought.

When painting issues directly from the mind, obstructions naturally recede. To have the true method is to be free from obstructions; to have obstructions is to lack the genuine method. The method is produced in the act of painting and obstructions diminish.

Shih-t'ao, like the Ch'an masters, refuses conformity to a preconceived or fixed method. Instead, he advocates only that method which is born in the immediacy of artistic activity. Without enslaving forethought, the method arises spontaneously.

When method and obstructions do not mix, the meaning of the action of nature is obtained, the Tao of painting is clear, and the one-stroke is thoroughly understood.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 2)


CHAPTER 3
TRANSFORMATION AND FREEDOM

Even though Lin Yutang's translation of "Pien Hua" as "development" clearly signals the necessity of advancing beyond one's artistic predecessors, it has the effect of understating the basic point of chapter three. In this chapter, transformation is associated with the freedom which is essential to innovate or create, to depart from the canons of tradition. Only when one transforms and transcends the work of past masters can his individuality emerge. "Transformation and Freedom" is, therefore, more informative than Siren's literally accurate "Transformations."

Works by the ancients are the means to knowledge.

Lin Yutang favors "insight" in place of "knowledge" as a translation of "shih." Perhaps "inspiration" would be even more satisfactory than the literal "knowledge." Shih-t'ao's central concern is that the ancients should serve as helpful points of departure for present artists, not as "masters" in the worst sense--that of oppressive or domineering controls. Shih-t'ao never repudiated the value of drawing upon the geniuses of the past; in fact, traces of Ni Tsan, Mi Fu, and others are plainly manifest in his works. Indeed, he actually speaks of becoming united with such past masters. "In my loneliness I went to study of an artist friend, and there I found on the table some genuine works by Ni, Huang, Shih, and Tung; and as I met with them (studied them) day after day, I became united with them, and after a few days more I was with them even while eating and sleeping. . . ."¹ However, he did insist that a reversion to Sung, Yüan, or other models must be accompanied by a reconstruction or reconstitution of them. The error is to mimic the superficial features, the likenesses, or appearances of the masters, rather than to grasp their spirit and express it according to one's own style. In short, one must both assimilate and transmute.
Those who transform know these sources of inspiration; yet, they are not trapped by them.

Shih-t'ao's admonition is quite clear; the would-be artist should be familiar with past achievements; yet, he must not fall into slavish imitation or overdependence which stifles creative advances. Throughout the chapters, Shih-t'ao's repetitions on this basic theme underscore the importance which he attached to self-expression and undoubtedly contributed to his classification as a "Ch'ing Dynasty Individualist." Since "individualism" and "self-expression" are vague concepts, elaboration is in order. Although expression and communication are closely related (each seeks to bring coherency to the artists impressions and feelings) and often coincide, they are, nevertheless, distinguishable. Shih-t'ao's individualism is never sheer expressionism at the expense of communication. Thus he avoids the pitfalls of excess subjectivity; ambiguity at best and unintelligibility at worst. His paintings strike a balance between the expressive and the communicative. But this is not the equilibrium of a conservative. While artists such as the four Wangs neglected their own subjectivity in order to emulate the objective features of leading painters, Shih-t'ao rebelled and affirmed the value of self-expression. He sought a harmony between the inner and the outer, the Tao of self and the Tao of nature. His goal was accomplished through the combination of a bold, forceful style and careful attention to the distinguishing marks of natural phenomena.

The following line, which occurred in the Hua-yü Lu, has been omitted in the present text: "I have never seen an artist who, possessing ancient principles, could go beyond them." Shih-t'ao's omission of this extreme statement indicates that the Hua-p'lu is a less emotionally-charged or more reflective essay.

I have often regretted the bondage of artists by ancient principles. These men cannot be free, since their "knowledge" restrains them.
Obviously, by "knowledge" (shih) is meant a distorted or inadequate type of understanding, not genuine knowledge or wisdom. Like Shih-t'ao, Taoism repudiates sophistical knowledge which perverts or interferes with individual development. Thus the same character "shih" has a pejorative use when coupled with the adverb ch'ien (meaning "before") in chapter thirty-eight of the Tao Te Ching. "Foreknowledge is the flowering of Tao but the start of ignorance." Several commentators, Carus, Blackney, and Waley, have interpreted this line as a critique of the Confucian tao or way. In any case, a number of chapters from the Tao Te Ching attack so-called knowledge or purported wisdom. In these cases, oversophistication, cleverness, and cunning are being criticized. Of course, knowledge has a positive content in several other chapters. In chapter two of Chuang Tzu, "The Identity of Opposites," a number of epistemological difficulties are raised. These include the relativity of knowledge and the futility of argument. Chuang Tzu condemns provincialism, partial knowledge or what he terms "small knowledge" as contrasted with "great knowledge" or all-embracing understanding. Thus for Chuang Tzu, the criterion of real knowledge is its extensive or all-embracing nature; it cannot be conditioned or limited in any way. Similarly, Shih-t'ao, in the following line, speaks of broad knowledge or extensive knowledge. Relating the perspective of Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu to Shih-t'ao, Chuang Tzu asserts that knowledge of the Great One is perfection. Lao Tzu equates knowledge of the eternal Tao, synonymous with the Great One, with enlightenment; and Shih-t'ao recognizes knowledge of the one-stroke as a prerequisite for artistic perfection, the one-stroke being the unifying Tao of painting.

If knowledge is restricted to similarities, it is not broad knowledge. Thus the perfect man has no method. Not that he has no method whatsoever but...

No-method is the method which is the perfect method.
"No-method" (wu-fa) illustrates a direct application of non-action (wu-wei), as discussed in the Tao Te Ching, to Chinese painting. Just as chapter sixty-three of the Tao Te Ching, which urges one to "act without action," is an appeal for no unnatural action, Shih-t'ao's method of no-method advocates the performance of only what is natural. Wu-wei or spontaneous action avoids either extreme: excessive, artificial striving or total stagnation. Similarly, wu-fa refers to an approach in painting which is not bounded by conventional formulations, a style that is a free, natural outpouring of an unruffled mind. One of Shih-t'ao's main contributions is, therefore, the discovery and application of what is aesthetically relevant in key philosophical concepts of the Chinese tradition.

Therefore, to have method, one must have transformations.

Transformations require the freedom to modify or the opposite of method in a fixed sense.

Transformations, then, yield the method of no-method. Painting is the great way of the transformation of the world.

A grasp of painting can be the key to comprehending the complex processes, changes and forces which are constantly operating throughout the universe. This idea is developed in the following lines.

The very essence of the conditions of mountains and rivers, the creation of nature (both ancient and modern), the movement of yin yang forces, all these are revealed through brush and ink; upon sketching heaven, earth, and the ten thousand things, their forms joyfully swim in my mind.

The artist's penetration into things produces interpene-tration between self and non-self.
Contemporary painters do not understand this. They always say, "A certain painter's (or school's) wrinkles and dots can establish a base.

Ts'un (wrinkles) has been translated as "texture lines" or "texture strokes" by Lin Yutang. Both are appropriate, for ts'un describes the type of brush strokes which exhibit surface features as opposed to mere outlines. Mountains, for example, would be nothing more than shapes or masses altogether lacking in character, were it not for the particular ts'un which give each mountain its unique qualities. In the mountains of Wang Meng, for example, sinuous ts'un produce a striking effect known as dragon veins (lung mo). Chapter nine of the Hua-p'u enumerates various types of ts'un.

If one does not resemble certain painters, his landscapes cannot endure. Certain painters, who are pure and tranquil, can establish actions (show the way). If one does not resemble such painters his art is only sufficient to give pleasure to men (shallow entertainment)." But then I will be the slave of these artists and not apply them to my own advantage. Even if one closely resembles such painters, then he only eats their leftovers (spoiled soup or broth). Regarding myself, what value does this have for me? The reason I am myself is that there is a real self present.

"Self" does not refer to the ego-form self or the empirical self but to the true Self, one's Buddha-nature as it may be put. Chapter thirty-three of the Tao Te Ching begins: "One who knows other men is wise; one who knows his own self is enlightened." When considered in relation to painting, self-realization, the supreme goal of Taoists and Buddhists alike, requires that the artist allow his own unique state of mind to issue forth in his
work. It is no wonder, then, that Shih-t'ao condemns strict adherence to the ancients. Again, Shih-t'ao demonstrates his regard for the inner as well as the outer. Not only must the li (reality) of objective nature be captured, but the li of the artist, his own true Self, must be expressed. Only then will harmony replace divisiveness between the two. All opposition between the subjective and the objective is a product of the empirical ego. With the emergence of the true self, unity or continuity with nature becomes evident. It is not difficult to appreciate why Lin Yutang has characterized chapter three as "a most important statement of individualism in art." Shih-t'ao's words introduced a fresh breath of air into the stifling atmosphere produced by mere copying of the masters. Chinese painting had culminated in a Platonic nightmare, imitation at three removes from reality.

Confucius said: "I am not one born with innate knowledge. I love the past and earnestly pursue it." To love the past and earnestly pursue it, one should carry out transformations.

One can best demonstrate his regard for the past by his own creative advances.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 3)

1 Siren, Chinese Painting, Leading Masters and Principles, p. 163.

2 See chapters two, three, ten, eighteen and sixty-five.

3 See chapters sixteen, forty-seven and fifty-five.

4 Chuang Tzu, Chuang Tzu: Taoist Philosopher and Chinese Mystic, p. 246.

5 See chapter sixteen of the Tao Te Ching.
The "inborn nature" (shou) or "natural gift" of this chapter is an innate ability which Shih-t'ao appears to contrast with knowledge (shih). The real contrast, however, is between acquired knowledge and intuitive knowledge. Shou can be understood as intuition or the intuitive knowledge (shêng chih) which one receives from nature. This primordial intuition or inborn knowledge is naturally more fundamental than knowledge which is later accumulated.

An interest in the inborn nature of man can be traced to Mencius' argument for the inherent goodness of man (II, a, 6) "When I say that all [men] have the mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: Now, when men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they all have a feeling of alarm and distress, not to gain friendship with the child's parents, nor to seek the praise of their neighbors and friends, nor because they dislike the reputation [of lack of humanity] if they did not rescue the child. From such a case, we see that a man without the feeling of commiseration is not a man; a man without the feeling of shame and dislike is not a man; a man without the feeling of deference and compliance is not a man; and a man without the feeling of right and wrong is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity; the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of deference and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the feeling of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Men have these Four Beginnings just as they have their four limbs. Having these Four Beginnings, but saying that they cannot develop them is to destroy themselves." These "Four Beginnings" are regarded as innate qualities by which man is marked off from birds and beasts. While Mencius' discussion of man's inborn nature is obviously moral in orientation, Shih-t'ao is concerned with the aesthetic potential inherent in man. That man has an inborn nature which must be nourished is agreed upon by Shih-t'ao and Mencius.
Distinguishing between intuition and knowledge, first there is intuition, then knowledge; or, first there is knowledge, then intuition. Throughout history, even very learned scholars—who relied upon their knowledge and developed their intuition, and, being aware of their intuition then developed their knowledge—were only capable of a single thing.

Unless one develops his intuition to the fullest possible extent, what he achieves is minor. To be "only capable of a single thing" is to be limited to particularities. By contrast, Shih-t'ao's one-stroke is the way of universality which is characterized by the integration of all multiplicity.

This is small intuition and small knowledge. These men did not yet comprehend the power of the one-stroke, expand it, and enlarge it.

Such men failed to realize in practice the potential of the one-stroke as embracer of all things.

That which is the one-stroke contains myriad things within it.

This line as translated by Lin Yutang reads: "For the one-stroke is contained in all things." Siren renders it as: "The all-inclusive creative painting contains innumerable things." Of course, what is at issue is whether the verb han (to contain) is meant to be taken actively or passively. At first sight, the active and passive interpretations would seem to be at odds with each other. But, given the context of Taoism, either is acceptable and the two are in fact complementary rather than contradictory. The oneness of Shih-t'ao's brush stroke must be understood as the fundamental unity of Tao, the unity of mutual interpenetration. On the one hand, Tao is the transcendent source of all things, the inexhaustible
container in which all potentialities inhere; on the other, the Tao is immanent in the ten thousand things. Indeed, the well-known chapter twenty-two of Chuang Tzu acknowledges the presence of Tao in such lowly things as ants and dung.

Painting is transmitted by the ink, ink is transmitted by the brush, brush is transmitted by the wrist, and the wrist is transmitted by the mind,

This is the mind of primordial intuition, a state of peacefulness and purity in which one is neither disturbed by internal contents nor impeded by external obstacles. Painting which proceeds from such an origin is a revelation of one's natural gift. Once the proper frame of mind has been achieved, the control of wrist, brush, and ink (the execution of the painting) is effortless. Similarly, Confucianism advises that one first cultivate his own self, then establish proper relations within his family, the state and finally the world.

just as heaven creates life and earth completes it. This is creative intuition. However, it requires that people consider valuable the obtaining of this primordial intuition and do not underestimate or deprecate themselves.

Hence the title of this chapter "The Value of Inborn Nature." One is not to belittle and undermine his own natural talent or gift. On the contrary, the would-be painter must acknowledge and steadfastly develop his inborn nature. This, in turn, requires independence from the bonds of past masters.

If one has reached this type of painting but cannot be free from it, he has bound himself. Regarding primordial intuition, the artist
must honor and preserve it, strengthen and apply it. Outwardly, there is no gap (everything in the universe has been penetrated).

Inwardly, there is no cessation. Thus the I-Ching states:

"The action of nature is constant, so the chün-tzū himself should be strong and unceasing."

"Chūn" was commonly used in classical literature to mean "ruler" (see, for example, chapter twenty-six of the Tao Tê Ching). A chün-tzū, then, is the son of a ruler, a potential ruler, or one worthy of ruling. It is a positive valuational term rather than a neutral description. Most often, it has been translated as "gentleman," "superior man," or "sage," as contrasted with the common or vulgar man of the masses. Confucius' Analects speak of the chün-tzū as a cultivated person who has attained moral perfection. His advancement in virtue (tê) allows him to choose right (yi) over profit (li). Therefore, he is the Chinese counterpart of Plato's philosopher king, the man who is most deserving of political authority. For Shih-t'ao the chün-tzū is one who strives forward, breaking new paths in his practice of painting.

This means that he values his primordial intuition.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 4)

CHAPTER 5
UNITY OF BRUSH STROKES AND INK WASH

Rowley quotes T'ang Tai on this topic of the roles played by brush and ink: "Brush is activist and therefore captures the yang; ink is quiescent and therefore captures the yin. When the ancients painted they created the yang through the movement (tung) of the brush; they created the yin through the quiet (ching) of the ink. They created the yang by capturing the ch'i (spirit) with the brush; they created the yin by producing ts'ai (value) with the ink. They used brush and ink to realize yin and yang."1

Among the ancients, some have both brush strokes and ink wash. There are also some who have brush strokes without ink wash. Furthermore, there are some who have ink wash but no brush strokes.

From the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting, we have: "The ancients used the expression yu pi yu mo (have brush, have ink). Many people do not grasp the significance of the meaning of the two terms pi (brush) and mo (ink). How can there be painting without brush and without ink? To know how to outline peaks of a mountain range but not know the strokes for modeling (ts'un) is described as wu pi (not having brush). To know the strokes but not know how to handle ink tones or indicate the nuances distinguishing near from far, clouds from reflections, light from shadow, is wu mo (not having ink)."2

Perhaps specific artists should be cited to illustrate each of the possible extremes. The T'ang master Wu Tao-tzŭ (c. 700 A.D.) was renowned for his energetic, wiry lines, what could be called "brush without ink" or "emphasis upon brush." By contrast, Mi Fei (A.D. 1051-1107), a celebrated painter of Northern Sung, was disposed toward ink rather than brush. In a misty landscape attributed to him, brush strokes or texture lines are at a minimum and ink wash or shading gives a
vaporous quality to the scene. Mi Fei's softness of ink wash produces an effect of masterful serenity and repose. As might be anticipated, Shih-t'ao advocates drawing upon the best of both approaches in the execution of paintings. Brush or the linear aspect of painting is detailed in chapter nine of the Hua-p'u which catalogues various texture lines. Ink wash is associated with "concealment in nondifferentiation" (mēng yang), which is first taken up in the present chapter.

This is not because the boundaries of mountains and streams are limited (imperfect), but due to variations in the talent of men.

In this line, Shih-t'ao speaks of the uneven diffusion of talent among men. "Talent" is actually "shou," one's natural gift. Although all men have an inborn gift to be developed; their potentialities are not uniform. Thus each artist should promote the maturation of his own particular talent, even if he cannot be another Ni Tsan. Similarly, Mencius urges each man to nourish the four incipient moral tendencies which are the universal defining characteristics of man. Still it is not as though every man were capable of obtaining the same moral perfection as a Confucius or Mencius.

The splashing of the ink onto the brush is to be done with spirit.

Wang Hsia (c. 800 A.D.), an innovator who sometimes used only his fingers to paint, is credited with being the first painter to employ p'o mo, splash ink technique. Whether originating with him or with Wang Wei, this style was taken over and modified by Mi Fei who, in turn, left his impress upon Shih-t'ao.

The revolving of the brush moves the ink with spirit.

In the preceding two lines, ling and shên have both been translated as "spirit." Lin Yutang's use of "soul" in the first case and Siren's "a god" in the second are, of course, possible renderings. Ling can mean: spirit,
spiritual, divine, or supernatural. Shên is an equally vague term which embraces: spirit, god, spiritual, divine, supernatural, and the soul. The present translation of ling and shen as "spirit" seeks to avoid any misdirecting associations with the religious or supernatural.

Ink wash cannot be spiritual unless one has achieved the state of concealment in nondifferentiation.

As has been mentioned, mêng is a state of nondifferentiation; yang describes what is contained but concealed therein.

If the brush stroke is not endowed with vitality, then the brush is without spirit. If the brush contains the spirit of concealment in nondifferentiation yet cannot release the spirit of life, then this is ink wash without brush strokes. If one's brush can contain the spirit of life, but cannot transform this into concealment in nondifferentiation, then this is having brush strokes without ink wash.

Shih-t'ao's point is that neither mêng yang, which basically depends upon ink washes, nor life-revealing strokes, which heavily rely upon the brush, are sufficient conditions for painting. As the title of this chapter indicates, there must be a union of these two complementary elements.

To paint the reality of mountains, streams and the manifold things, depict the back and the front, the different aspects (vertical and horizontal), that which is clustered or scattered, near or
distant, inside or outside, vacant or solid, broken or connected, gradations and roughness, richness and elegance, and misty vagueness. These are the essential elements of lively potentiality.

Painters are here being encouraged to express the richness of natural phenomena through careful attention to complexities. A comparison of these lines with Richard Edwards' description of an album by Shih-t'ao confirms the fact that the painter did, indeed, live up to his own ideal. "Perhaps such motifs in the foreground as rivergrass, a tree clawing downward, a tree with blunt-edge twigs jaggedly reaching upward may indicate connections. But they are not exact. This, however, can hardly be considered surprising, for as one moves from leaf to leaf in the album itself one scene simply does not correspond to another. Some views bring us close; some take us far; some are heavy and dark, others gentle and light; some make use of the winding tangled rhythms of lines, others soften these to gentle washes. Free techniques of splashing and dotting are countered by statements of careful control. Needless to say, no landscape is the same--."3

Thus, because men grasp the power of evasive concealment and vitality, mountains, streams and the myriad things offer their spirit to man. If it were not the case, how could one enable brush strokes and ink washes, within the ink, to create embryonic and structured forms, openness and closedness,

K'ai (to open) and ho (to close) have been interpreted by George Rowley as "The Unity of Coherence."

Before analyzing the principle of k'ai-ho, it will be helpful to quote at some length from Rowley's discussion:

"The most illuminating analysis of this creative process may be found in Shen Tsung-ch'ien, a writer of the eighteenth century. On the basis of the eternal flux of nature he described creation as k'ai-ho,--an 'open-join' or 'chaos-union' process. 'From the revolution of the
world to our own breathing there is nothing that is not k'ai-ho. If one can understand this, then we can discuss how to bring the painting to a conclusion. If you analyze a large k'ai-ho, within it there is more k'ai-ho. Even down to one tree and one rock, there is nothing that does not have both expanding and winding up. Where things grow and expand that is k'ai, where things are gathered up, that is ho. When you expand (k'ai) you should think of gathering up (ho) and then there will be structure; when you gather up (ho) you should think of expanding (k'ai) and then you will have inexpressible effortlessness and an air of inexhaustible spirit. In using brush and in laying out the composition, there is not one moment when you can depart from k'ai-ho. In painting, when you expand (k'ai) you must think of the gathering up (ho), or else the composition will fly apart through the explosive tendency of creativity, and the structural unity of the whole will be lost; when you pull the parts together (ho) you should think of the vital force which gave them birth (k'ai), or else the result will be a dead mechanical adjustment and the whole will have missed the life breath of the spirit. One may regard k'ai-ho as the yin-yang of pictorial composition. Broadly speaking, they are the integrating powers or forces contained in all things. When applied to painting, each supplements the other. As the Taoist "Law of Reversion" implies, if the expanding aspect of creativity (k'ai) is not checked by the gathering aspect (ho), the result is not creative painting at all, but a meaningless outpouring of energy; if the gathering or organizing phase of painting is not infused with k'ai, the work is frozen and lifeless. Painting which is impulsive and unrestrained might therefore be described by Shih-t'ao as "all k'ai and no ho"; painting, in which excessive regard for structure extinguishes vitality, might be termed "all ho and no k'ai."

substance and function, forms and power, bowing and standing, squatting and leaping, that which hides in waters or soars into the clouds, teetering cliffs, vastness, irregular peaks, monumental and awesome heights, odd peaks and dangerous precipices.
Shih-t'ao's description of these overwhelming features calls to mind the dramatic landscapes of the Northern Sung painter, Fan K'uan. His powerful forms dwarf the human figures that are depicted, thus instilling in the viewer a sense of humility and a lofty deference for nature.

Without all this, how can one enable brush and ink to fully reveal the spirituality of things?
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 5)


CHAPTER 6

MOTIONS OF THE WRIST

Yün, translated here as motions, can mean "to transport or convey," "to revolve," or "to turn around." Hence Lin Yutang translates the title with the general expression "Control of the Wrist" and Siren uses "Turning the Wrist." "Motions of the Wrist" includes to and fro motion as well as the free revolving of the wrist. This responsiveness of the wrist was described earlier as flexibility or emptiness. Without such alertness and freedom, Shih-t'ao could hardly have executed the spontaneous yet controlled works which comprise his well-known twelve leaf album for a Taoist Yü. Metaphysically, yün has been taken to connote the motion of Tao as manifested in Ch'i (spirit). This interpretation is presented in interesting detail by Mai-mai Sze in an exposition of the first canon of Hsieh Ho, Ch'i Yün Shêng Tung (Circulation of the Ch'i Produces Life Movement). 1

Some may say: "Painting treatises and drawing instructions manifest quite clearly the application of brush and ink, every detail being very carefully explained.

This attitude has been well characterized and criticized by Lin Yutang: "All the formulas were known. The individual strokes of Li Ch'eng, Huang Kung-wang etc., had been scrutinized. Tung Yüan had certain dots in mountain peaks, therefore that was the 'fa,' technique, of Tung Yüan. Li T'ang had 'big axe cuts'--no, I am sorry--had 'long axe-cut strokes.' The vulgar viewer who failed to appreciate the shading lines had probably never heard of Li T'ang. In composition, there were strange rocky cliffs on top, a bank of white mists in the centre, some trees and rocks and perhaps a pavilion or a ferry at the bottom. One can shift the trees and rocks about a bit. But all would be in the manner of Pei-Yüan (Tung Yüan), or 'Great Crazy' (Huang Kung-wang). . . . Wang Hui signed himself 'Ching-yen"
'farming the Clouds'). It was all very poetic, very elegant.

The trouble was that when all formulas for painting were known, no room was left for originality. One could, always, produce a pretty picture by following the formulas, they were so familiar. The tendency toward codification of painting techniques was exemplified by the appearance of the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting (Chieh Tzü Yuan Hua Chuan) in 1679. This classic instruction manual, named after the home of its publisher, consists of thirteen books or divisions. Book one presents a summation of the fundamentals of painting. Books two, three, and four deal with the depiction of trees, rocks, people and things. Other books are devoted to orchids, bamboo, plums, chrysanthemums, grasses, insects, feathers-and-fur and flowering plants. In the book of trees, for example, various methods of painting trees are classified and illustrated in terms of such masters as: Ni Tsan, Wu Chen, Wang Wei, Hsiao Chao, Fan K'uan, Mi Fei, Mi Yu-jen, Tung Yüan, Ma Yüan, and Wang Mêng. Shih-t'ao would undoubtedly welcome such an impressive handbook, for familiarity with one's predecessors can be invaluable. As he has said, 'Works by the ancients are the means to knowledge.' A lone reservation would be that the text serve as a tool, not a crutch. In short, it should be used as raw material for one's own transformations. On the level of technique, the manual provides training in brush control, a prerequisite for free brush work. On the level of theory, comments, which accompany the hundreds of pictures, draw upon traditional ideas, especially those of Taoism.

Ever since the ancients, never before has painting the scenery of mountains and seas depended upon empty theories and the prejudice of one's own preferences. I think Ta-ti-tzü's individuality is too high, establishing a method beyond the world!

Ta-ti-tzü, one of Shih-t'ao's by-names, has been translated as "Great Wash-Stick" by Lin Yutang. Unfortunately, he gives no explanation for this peculiar epithet.
The Siren translation is "The Pure Fellow." Taking the characters individually, "ta" means great, big, tall, vast, extensive, noble, high-ranking, very, much, full grown, or to make great. "Ti" refers to washing, cleaning, purifying or reforming. "Tzu" can denote a son, a child, posterity, a bridge, a wife, young, or the young of animals, birds or insects. As a suffix, it can also mean philosopher. A possible translation of these characters would be "The Great Laundryman," suggesting one who has undergone purification or "washed his hands" of past associations (See Biographical Sketch).

Does he not disregard the simple rudiments?

"Simple rudiments" or, in Lin Yutang's words, "lowly details" are the primary essentials of painting, the fundamentals or A, B, C's without which progress is impossible. Here Shih-t'ao anticipates critics who may misjudge his approach as being devoid of any foundations, one of "no-method" in an unqualified sense. Contrary to such possible accusations, Shih-t'ao is genuinely interested in what is elementary to artistic creation. Thus, the balance of this chapter touches upon the principle of the i-hua, nature as the painter's model, four common mistakes, and the proper exercise of the wrist.

These words are strange indeed.

The charge strikes Shih-t'ao as being peculiar, given his persistent attempts to articulate the general principles of painting. Consider, for example, the various topics to which the eighteen chapters of the Hua-p'u are devoted.

Talent is from afar, but what one achieves is right at hand.

One's natural gift has been instilled by nature or heaven at birth, but any accomplishment is immediately evident in his brush work.
If one grasps what is near at hand, then he can apply it to what is distant (mountains, rivers, etc.).

What is near at hand is the unity of the one-stroke which is contained in all things. Comprehending this, the painter can apply oneness of brush strokes to the mountains towering above him as well as to flowers growing at his feet.

That which is one-stroke is the rudimentary commencement of calligraphy and painting. Transformed strokes are the rudimentary ways of applying brush and ink.

The significance of transformation, explained in chapter three, again demonstrates Shih-t'ao's attention to the fundamentals of painting.

The heights of mountains and the depths of sea are the primary models used to paint hills or valleys. Actual scenery is the fundamental guide for outlines and wrinkles.

It was absolutely necessary to re-establish this point, since all too many landscape painters of Shih-t'ao's day had occupied themselves with copying the works and styles of the masters rather than with addressing nature directly. Shih-t'ao's extensive travels (from Kwangsi to Lu Shan, Anhwei, Nanking, Peking, and Yangchou) were excellent insurance that his paintings and philosophy of art would be derived from actual contact with the scenery of China, not mere imitation of the ancients. Works like "Eight Views of Huang-shan" have the freshness of a first-hand experience. These pictorial diaries invite the viewer's vicarious participation in Shih-t'ao's nomadic experiences.

Chinese painting had long been directed toward disclosure of the Tao. Thus Shih-t'ao's words can serve as a
reminder that this is possible only if there is a true interpenetration of the artist and nature. In this exchange between man and nature, a spiritual harmony is achieved and a glimpse of the Tao may be obtained. Shih-t'ao's i-hua or oneness of brush strokes is, after all, a unity which embraces all particularities in universality; it is a fusion or reconciliation of all opposites; most importantly, it is a union of subjectivity and objectivity.

If one only understands the meaning of regional structures, then there is a pattern of regional structures (a formula which limits him). For instance, in the middle there are mountains and peaks. Once the painter has learned how to paint mountains, he always paints them (accordingly, i.e., in one particular way). Once he has learned how to paint peaks, he never changes. Mountains and peaks are made artificially from the hand of this man.

The characters "tiao" (to engrave, carve, or tattoo) and "tso" (to chisel) suggest the idea of strained carving or artificiality as opposed to what is spontaneous or natural (tzǔ jan).

Do you think this is right or not right? Furthermore, (1) if scenery is not changed, one simply knows the superficiality of outlines and wrinkles. (2) If this painting method does not transform, one only knows the rigidity of objective forms. (3) If mēng yang is not uniform, one only recognizes the connections and arrangement of mountains and streams.
Unless an atmosphere of nondifferentiation concealing potentiality is dispersed evenly throughout the work, the artist has merely succeeded in positioning various forms; objects seem arbitrarily related or externally connected, not internally integrated.

(4) When mountains and forests are not complete, one only knows the emptiness of his composition. If one wants to be free from these four mistakes, he must first begin his practice with a revolving wrist. If the wrist is flexible and alert, then painting can freely change in brush strokes, as if cutting or uncovering—then forms are not foolishly concealed.

Chih mēng (fooling concealment) is not to be confused with mēng yang (nondifferentiation concealing potentiality). In the case of the former, concealment is utter obfuscation; the latter, however, involves concealment which subtly intimates.

If your wrist is gifted in substantiality, then your brush work will be solid and transparent (will penetrate the paper). When the wrist is gifted in flexibility, it flies and dances to unlimited heights. If the wrist follows the correct position (upright), then the line is solid, concentrated in the brush tip.

The last phrase has been translated by Lin Yutang as "The strokes strike the paper squarely without showing the tip of the brush." Concentration or concealment of the brush tip simply means that the line is bold, firm and clean, i.e., free of fuzziness. As the Ch'an painters were well aware, any hesitation, even in executing a single line, leaves tell-tale traces.
If the wrist is slanted, then incline it for the fullest expression (as with plum branches). If your wrist is quick, hold it and let it go in order to achieve power. If the wrist moves slowly, then ascending and descending have beauty. If the wrist is free, then it is harmoniously natural. If the wrist transforms, then the diversity is extremely unusual. If the wrist is wonderful, then there are spirit labor and ghost axe.

"Spirit labor and ghost axe" is used to indicate that the painting appears to be not the work of a man but that of an immortal.

If the wrist has spirit, then streams and mountain peaks present their soul.

"Soul" (ling) must not be understood as a supernatural entity, rather it more closely approximates the Chinese notion of ch'i (spirit). Ch'i is a simple but subtle concept which continues to challenge translators. "Spirit" is undoubtedly the most common translation. "Vital force" or "vital energy" are also popular renderings. Waley has used "life breath"; Mai-mai Sze favors "vitality of spirit," "essence of life itself," or "vital breath." Ch'i was held to be immanent in all things, inorganic landscape forms as well as animals, birds, and plants. Given that the Tao was likewise regarded as inherent in all things, it should not be surprising that, as Rowley tells us, "ch'i . . . was finally identified with the Tao by Han Cho." In the context of painting, the ideal became a disclosure of the ch'i possessed by all forms. Grasping the ch'i of things was deemed of greater significance than capturing mere sensuous beauty. Ch'i might, therefore, be conceived of as the animating influence of Tao in a painting, the vibrations of Tao or "Tao-energy."
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 6)


3 Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, p. 34.
CHAPTER 7
HARMONIOUS ATMOSPHERE

When the brush strokes and ink wash are unified, this is called yin yün, that is, harmonious atmosphere. Yin and yün are not divided; they are harmonized (nondifferentiated).

Although everything is in yin yün, there is no differentiation. In painting, yin yün represents a revelation of p'lo, the supreme simplicity or primordial unity. Siren translates the opening sentence as: "The union of brush and ink is like yin yün." This can be construed as implying that brush and ink, like generative forces, produce myriad forms.

Who can split open the harmony, except by the one-stroke?

Oneness of brush strokes is absolutely essential in order to depict the emanation of diversities from their original Tao-state, the creative movement from nondifferentiation to differentiation.

Apply it to painting a mountain, the mountain is spiritualized. Apply it to painting a stream, the stream moves. Apply it to human figures, and they are free from mundane defilements.

Shih-t'ao must not be interpreted as advocating flight from the worldly. Indeed chapters four and fifty-six of the Tao Tê Ching exhort one to identify with the "dusty world." Since the unity of the one-stroke is contained in all things, Shih-t'ao would echo the message of the Tao Tê Ching that we should become one with the dusty world. By freedom from "mundane defilements" he simply means escape from rigid attachments to commonplace things. Thus in chapter fifteen he
When man is confused by things, he attaches himself to the commonplace. When man is ruled by things, his mind will become a servant. When the mind becomes a slave of limitation and rigidity, it destroys itself. If the mind of the artist is liberated from attachment to things, purity and transparency issue forth from the inborn primacy of his being. Such ontological transparency can be regarded as the supreme achievement of both Taoist philosophy and Chinese aesthetics.

By grasping the union of brush strokes and ink wash, understanding the role played by this harmonious atmosphere, becoming a creative artist who opens heaven and earth (the harmony), and transmitting all of the ancients and moderns, one establishes his own school. All this is obtained through wisdom.

Such wisdom (chih) is grounded upon intuitive rather than intellectual knowledge. This distinction furnishes a means of separating Confucianism from Taoism. In the case of the former, chih refers to intellectual discrimination or rational judgment. As when one employs deliberation in order to determine which rules of propriety (li) are applicable in a given situation. In Taoist philosophy, however, chih is interpreted quite differently. "Chih is the key word to understanding Tao and unlocking all the secrets of nonbeing. In other words, intuitive knowledge is pure self-consciousness through immediate, direct, primitive penetration instead of by methods that are derivative, inferential, or rational."

The painter cannot artificially execute,

Literally, this line reads: "The painter cannot carve or chisel." Brush and ink do not lend themselves to a piecemeal or bit by bit application as do Western oil paints. The work must be executed in a series of unhesitating strokes which convey a sense of immediacy. Without oneness of brush strokes, i.e., a continuous
outpouring of spirit, an artificial result is produced. Thus the forger's work, assembled part by part, is readily detected by the expert. Spontaneity of technique has, therefore, long been recognized as a major contribution of Chinese painting.

be stiff or dead,

"Pan" and "fu" (stiff and dead) can be understood as the opposite of lively; the less severe "poker-faced" might also be appropriate.

be steeped in mud,

Painters cannot sink in mud--become cloudy or unclear. This would be to fall into the obfuscation of chih mēng (foolish concealment), which is to be sharply distinguished from the vaporous--but--revealing atmosphere of mēng yang and yin yün. Thus Siren's translation states that the painter should "not make things muddy or confused" and Lin Yutang speaks of avoiding the "woolly."

become entangled,

Shih-t'ao is perhaps making reference to an excessive dependence upon tradition.

neglect coherence

This remark may be related to Shih-t'ao's mention of k'ai-ho in chapter five of the Hua-p'u.

or be without fundamental principle.

"Li" is the character which has been translated here as "fundamental principle." Siren's use of "reason" seems
less desirable owing to its rationalistic connotations. Lin Yutang's "inner nature of things" is a more consistently satisfying translation of "li." His meaning is certainly correct. But, in the present context, the very general "fundamental principle" is less awkward. Shih-t'ao's multiple uses of "li" explain why he is sometimes said to have been influenced by Neo-Confucianism.

In the midst of ink (the sea of ink) one must firmly establish that which is transcendental.

Siren's translation reads: "The first thing to be established in the sea of ink is the divine essence [shên ching]." Shên ching, however, can be stripped of any direct associations with a deity and taken to denote transcendental or spiritual reality. Lin Yutang's rendering ("stand firm in the sea of ink") is puzzling, for it completely omits any reference to the characters "shên" and "ching."

Under the tip of the brush, one should firmly produce what is lively. Thus on a one foot long scroll, through painting, the appearance and structure of things are completely transformed.

Lin Yutang's version reads: "create a new surface and texture on the foot-long material." Siren's says: "On a scroll which is no more than a foot long every bone and every hair can be rendered." As to the subject of the sentence, "mao" and "ku" refer respectively to "hair" and "bone." Hence, in the context of painting, mao denotes the outer appearance, ku, the inner structure. Shih-t'ao's point is that the appearance and structure of things must be transmuted from what is dead and mundane into what is lively and spiritual. Neither Siren nor Lin Yutang does full justice to the character "huan," meaning to change, exchange, interchange, etc. Lin Yutang's "create" is, however, definitely preferable to Siren's "rendered."
In harmonious atmosphere, illumination issues forth.

The present "harmonious atmosphere," Siren's "chaos," and Lin Yutang's "unformed darkness" are complementary rather than conflicting interpretations of the characters "hun t' un." (See chapter one in which p' o is considered as chaos.)

Even if the brush stroke is not a brush stroke (does not appear particularly desirable), ink is not ink (fails to impress), and the painting is not a painting (does not qualify as exemplary), my own reality is in the painting,

Everything about the painting reveals the disposition or state of mind of the painter. Hsü (Taoist vacuity) or great calmness characterizes the ideal frame of mind. Such tranquility, a spring to creativity rather than a stagnating quiescence, is the antithesis of the mental agitation reflected in, for example, Van Gogh's most turbulent works.

for one moves the ink; the ink does not move him. He holds the brush, the brush does not hold him; he is free from early form or style and does not wait for early style to free him. From Oneness, produce the ten thousand things; through the ten thousand things, govern the One.

Oneness is synonymous with universality, the ten thousand things representing particularity or multiplicity. Taoism teaches not only that particulars are unified by a oneness, but that oneness resides in each particular. This interpenetrating aspect of apparent opposites is of great import in Chinese painting. If one puts down a single stroke, without relationship to anything else, he achieves nothing. What is variously termed universality, Oneness (oneness
of brush strokes), absolute unity, etc., can only be realized amidst particularity or multiplicity.

Transform Oneness into this harmonious atmosphere (yin yün), and this is indeed the highest achievement of art in the world.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 7)

1 Chang, Creativity and Taoism, p. 41.
CHAPTER 8
REALITY OF MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS

The substance of mountains and rivers contains the reality of the universe.

"Li," translated in this line as "reality," has been interpreted by Lin Yutang as "inner law." While either "reality" or "inner law" is an acceptable rendering, the former is perhaps more representative of the overall tone of this chapter in which Shih-t'ao is concerned with penetrating into the underlying reality of natural phenomena. In Michael Bullock's English version of Victoria Contag's German translation of the Hua-yü Lu, 1 "li" is translated as "natural order." This conforms, in a rather general way, with such expressions as: "inner reality," "principle" or "inner law."

Painting (the method of brush and ink) shows the refinement of mountains and rivers.

Lin Yutang uses "appearance" to translate shih (refinement), Bullock's version chooses "purification." Etymologically, shih refers to adornment or ornamentation, the exterior or outer. Thus Shih-t'ao recognizes the capability of "the method of brush and ink" to present the fine or elegant appearance of mountains and rivers. These outer features are not to be taken as illusory, but they may be contrasted with li (inner principles). Bullock's "purification," which stretches shih to encompass moral connotations, does not appear justifiable.

If one only knows the refinement and neglects inner reality, this reality is jeopardized. If one merely knows the substance but ignores the method, then this method is trifling. A painter must grasp the oneness of method and reality.
This "oneness of method and reality" has its locus in the i-hua, for the one-stroke embraces both method and content. From the standpoint of technique, the i-hua represents an approach to expression which escapes from the shackles of tradition; it is a free uninterrupted flow of spirit. From a metaphysical viewpoint, i-hua signifies painting the oneness of Tao, the unity which is the ultimate reality underlying all diversities.

If this unity (oneness of brush strokes) is not understood, then the ten thousand things are obstructions.

One cannot paint the myriad things as they should be rendered, according to both their external appearance and their inner nature.

If this oneness is perfectly understood, then every one of the ten thousand things will be as it should be.

This line closely corresponds to Lin Yutang's translation: "With the understanding of the One, all things have their place." Bullock's rendering is also an interesting possibility: "If it [unity] is entirely clear, then all things are whole," for although chi includes the idea of arranging or being in order, it can also mean "even," "regular," "uniform," or "all alike."

The reality of painting and the method of the brush are simply the substance and expression (refinement) of nature. Mountains and rivers are the conditions or aspects of nature.

Mountains and water had long been recognized as the primary ingredients of nature. In fact, the Chinese expression for "landscape" is a compound of shan (mountains) and shui (water). Why these two constituents were singled out is a matter which remains open to speculation. The most obvious symbolism that comes to mind is that
which takes mountains to represent the male yang aspect of life and water to indicate the female yin aspect. As Rowley has observed: "The yin-yang relation was supposed to set up tensions throughout the universe, between the great and small, heaven and earth, male and female, and so on. The Tao resides in tension. Landscape itself is a mountain-water picture in which the opposites need one another for completion. How often Western landscapes have been exclusively studies of sky, sea, woods, meadows or some other dominant feature." The Taoist painter Tsung Ping (A.D. 37-443), in his introduction to landscape painting, commented upon the affinity between the sage and mountains and rivers. Even the Analects speaks of water and mountains: "The Wise man delights in water, the Good man delights in mountains." Water may also be regarded as a Taoist carryover. Chapter seventy-eight of the Tao Te Ching describes the merits of water as being soft and weak yet capable of eroding away the hard and strong. Chapter thirty-two compares the all-penetrating Tao to the flowing of rivers or streams. As to the great significance which was accorded to mountains, perhaps their dual nature was being affirmed; they spring from and remain fast to the very earth upon which man walks; yet, they quite literally transcend our mundane plane of existence. Possibly, their all-comprehending perspective made them objects of reverence for Chinese landscape artists. Besides the philosophical bases for emphasis upon mountains and water, mythological influences may also have been at work. Ferguson, for example, states that hills and water were central because of their long established associations with nymphs and sprites said to gather near such sites.

Wind and rain, dark and light are the expressions of the countenance of mountains and rivers.

It is through these diverse phenomena that nature, as it were, reveals various moods.

"Scattered," "dense," "deep," and "far" express the spacing of mountains and rivers. The vertical and horizontal, concealment
and disclosure, are the rhythm of mountains and rivers. Through yin and yang, light and shade, mountains and rivers focus (concentrate) their spirit.

Bullock's rendition ignores the character shên (spirit) and simply speaks of a "condensation" of mountains and rivers. Lin Yutang substitutes "demeanour" for "shên" thus losing the sense of sublimity that is conveyed by "spirit."

Water and sky (clouds), meeting and parting, suggest the connectedness of mountains and rivers.

Bullock's version reads: "The accumulation and the distribution of water and clouds are their [mountains and rivers] combination." Lin Yutang more satisfactorily gets at the interconnection and coalescence of mountains and streams: "The gathering and distribution of water and clouds express the continuity of hills and streams." Bullock's "combination" misses the subtle interpenetration and identification which follows from the merging of these two. (See chapter thirteen in which Shih-t'ao equates mountains and sea.)

Squatting, leaping, facing towards and turning away are the movements of mountains and rivers. That which is high and bright is the norm of heaven; that which is extensive and deep is the norm of earth.

This sentence touches upon the transcendental and immanent aspects of reality, heaven being associated with transcendental illumination and earth with inherence in the mundane.
Through wind and clouds, heaven formulates the particular scenery of mountains and rivers. With dashing water against rocks, earth reveals the action and reaction of mountains and rivers. Without the creative power (potentiality) of heaven and earth, mountains and rivers cannot be transformed in unexpected ways. Although there are formulations of wind and clouds, an artist cannot apply the identical forms to the mountains and rivers of nine different districts. Although there is the action and reaction of water rushing against rocks, an artist cannot distinguish all the conditions of mountains and rivers according to the brush tip.

A single technique or set of patterns cannot capture the manifold differentiations of mountains and rivers; each scene must be directly confronted and responded to on an individual basis.

Moreover, the great expanse of landscape extends for a thousand miles; the union of clouds stretches in ten thousand layers; the spread peaks and series of cliffs (continue endlessly). From a limited perspective, even flying fairies could not encompass all this.

From a finite perspective, it does not seem possible that even a (hs'ien) fairy, genii, superhuman or immortal could take account of nature's overwhelming complexity. (It is interesting to note that the compound "hsien-jia" is translated as "Taoists.") But since the painter's one-stroke contains all things, this is his mode of access to nature.
However, if one uses the one-stroke to fathom it, he can participate in the transforming and sustaining of the universe (heaven and earth). The artist can then describe the conditions of mountains and rivers, estimate the breadth and length of the terrain, judge the dispersion and density of mountain peaks, and penetrate into the obscurity of clouds and mist. Looking at it squarely, the depth of the picture reveals a distance of a thousand miles. Looking obliquely (from a side view), one sees ten thousand layers. All this falls under the power of heaven and earth (the law of nature). Because heaven has such power, heaven can transform the spiritual reality of mountains and rivers. Because earth has such power, earth can stir the breath and pulse of mountains and rivers. I, having mastered one-stroke painting, can penetrate into the form and spirit of mountains and rivers. This is why I have always kept to mountains and rivers during the past fifty years. I neither neglected them as useless nor let them conceal their secrets.

Mountains and rivers let me communicate for them. They are free from me and I am free from them.

This is the freedom achieved when the egg shell is broken and independent life begins. It is also possible to understand this line as "They were born in me and I was born in them." T'o suggests "to escape from, to get out of," t'ai designates the pregnant womb. Contag favors this latter interpretation and Lin Yutang reduces the thought to: "They are in me and I am in them."
I thoroughly investigate strange peaks, making rough sketches. Mountains, rivers and I meet on a spiritual level and mingle together without trace. Therefore, finally all belong to Ta Ti (Shih-t'ao).

This final line may also be translated as: "Finally, there is great purification."
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 8)


CHAPTER 9

LANDSCAPES EXPRESSED BY VARIOUS LINES

Literally, the title of this chapter would read: "Wrinkle Methods" (T'sun Fa) or "The methods of Wrinkles"--thus Siren employs "Methods for Wrinkles." Lin Yutang accepts the widely used "Texture Strokes"; Bullock's translation adopts the locution "Interior Drawing." The point is that varying lines are required in order to accurately reflect diverse landscape forms.

Wrinkles of the brush have the purpose of revealing different aspects (surface features). Because the forms of mountains vary in myriad ways, the same approach will not suffice to reveal their manifold aspects. Although men know these wrinkles, they nevertheless miss solidity or a three-dimensional quality.

"Shêng mian," taken here as "solidity," may also be translated as "living aspects." Thus, Bullock's version is "living countenance" and Lin Yutang selects "real surface." To translate "shêng mian" as "solidity" specifies that the living features of forms are to be rendered as volumes or with a sculptural aspect. The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting emphasizes that rocks must be alive (possess ch'i) and that their structure is to be depicted by three aspects or faces.1

Even though one employs wrinkles, what does this have to do with mountains?

As Lin Yutang freely translates: "Then the strokes have nothing to do with the mountains." To build mountains from arbitrarily selected wrinkles accomplishes nothing. Only observation of real mountains can guide one's selection of the sort of wrinkles which actually correspond.
Some mountains are rocks and some are earth. If one only paints these rocks and earth, this is a limitation of wrinkles, not the wrinkles owned by mountains and rivers themselves.

Suffering from a narrow perspective, one fails to achieve wholeness or total atmosphere.

As for the wrinkles owned by mountains and rivers themselves, if the body of a peak has a special (peculiar) form, then naturally a special appearance is produced; the forms peaks bear are not identical. Therefore, the method of wrinkles must naturally vary. There are: rolling cloud wrinkles, splitting axe wrinkles, hanging hemp wrinkles, untied rope wrinkles, skull bone wrinkles, devil face wrinkles, asymmetrical wood pile wrinkles, sesame seed wrinkles, rain drop wrinkles, jade fragment wrinkles, glittering and bright wrinkles, round hole wrinkles, alum lump wrinkles, and boneless wrinkles. These are all wrinkles.

Rolling cloud wrinkles (chüan yün ts'ün) have long flowing strokes with a curving, sweeping effect. Splitting axe wrinkles (pê fu ts'ün) remind one of the big axe cuts (ta fu pî ts'ün) attributed to Hsia Kuei in the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting. Such strokes chop away so as to reveal surface areas. Hanging hemp wrinkles (p'i ma ts'ün), so named because of their resemblance to spread hemp, are also discussed in the Manual; they are said to have been used by Chü-jan, Chao Mêng-fu, and Huang Kung-wang. Untied rope wrinkles (chieh so ts'ün)--like those of Fan K'uan, skull bone wrinkles (k'u lou ts'ün), devil face wrinkles (kuei lien ts'ün), asymmetrical wood pile wrinkles (luan ch'ai ts'ün)--favored by Yuan artists, sesame seed wrinkles (chih ma ts'ün)--minute texture strokes, rain drop
wrinkles ( yü tien ts' un ), and glittering and bright wrinkles ( chin pi ) may all be found in the above text. Jade fragment wrinkles ( yü hsieh ts' un ) may be called jade powder or jade splinter wrinkles. Round hole wrinkles ( fan wo ts' un ) are circular strokes similar to the eddies in a whirlpool--alum lump wrinkles ( fan t' ou ts' un ) are somewhat larger. Finally, boneless wrinkles ( mei ku ts' un ) indicate brush work without sharply delineated outlines. Having mastered the various ts' un one is free to combine them or create his own.

An artist must follow the different forms of peaks to reproduce the various aspects of peaks. Peaks and wrinkles are one (there must be an agreement or conformity between them). Wrinkles are produced from peaks, but the peaks cannot transform the substance and function of wrinkles.

Each peak must have its own respective wrinkles; and, one cannot randomly substitute wrinkles of one type for those of another.

On the other hand, the wrinkles are able to supply the conditions (potentiality) of peaks. If one has not yet grasped peaks,

The totality or spiritual reality of the peaks.

how can he transform wrinkles?

How will he be able to use appropriate wrinkles in each case?

If one has not yet grasped (the technique of different) wrinkles, how can he express various peaks? To render the variations of
peaks relies upon the expression of wrinkles. If the wrinkles are of a certain type, then peaks should have such an appearance—for example: sky post peak, bright star peak, lotus flower peak, immortal peak, five old men peak, seven worthy men peak, cloud terrace peak, heavenly horse peak, lion peak, high eyebrows peak, round jade peak, gold wheel peak, incense burner peak, small flower peak, one piece cloth peak, returning wild geese peak—these are all peaks. Among these peaks, form dwells within and wrinkles reveal their appearances (surfaces, aspects, or countenances). However, at the moment when I move the ink and hold the brush (when painting), how can I wait for the manifestation of the wrinkles of peaks?

While executing a work, there is no time for the deliberate selection of particular wrinkles.

As soon as one stroke is put on paper, all others follow it.

Line follows line, smoothly and unhesitatingly, each contributing to the total unity.

As soon as one principle is formulated, all others adhere to it.

All subsequent principles grow out of the first principle. This insures that a painting will have coherency, for its source is the unifying one-stroke and the product consists of universality in particularity.
If one examines the practice of the one-stroke and understands the application of all other basic principles, then the structure of mountains and rivers is determined and the method of wrinkles of ancients and moderns is not different. The potentialities of mountains and rivers reside in the painting; the evasive concealment of the painting lies in the ink;

"Evasive concealment" is an alternative translation of 無常 (nondifferentiation concealing potentiality). For Shih-t'ao, this is a valuable element in the cultivation of a spiritual atmosphere. Bullock's expression, "the quality of that which is unconsciously evolving," seems unduly psychological. Thus Lin Yutang's "prevailing spirit" is preferable.

the vitality of the ink depends upon catching the absolute moment; the action of grasping the moment requires continuity of execution. Among those who know how to control movement, their brush work is inwardly real and outwardly transparent.

Bullock's version of this line says: "With a well-controlled movement the interior is filled and the exterior is empty." Lin Yutang's rendering is: "One who has mastery of the ink gives the impression of solid interior and spacious exterior surface." In these cases, shih (solid, substantial, real, reality) is taken to mean filled or solid, and k'ung (empty, hollow, etc.) is understood as emptiness or spaciousness. It is not necessary to limit these key terms to the context of physical composition. In the present translation, to claim that "brush work is inwardly real" is to assert that reality is thereby captured and contained. While k'ung is ordinarily translated as emptiness, it can also be interpreted as the emptiness which contains Tao and is empty only in a relative sense. Therefore, brush work is outwardly empty or transparent when it subtly conveys the form of the formless.
Because one receives the principle of the one-stroke, he applies it in ten thousand directions. Therefore, he is completely free of errors. However, there can also be inward vacancy and outward solidity.

Bullock's translation states: "It can also happen that interior is empty and the exterior is filled." Similarly, Lin Yutang says: "There are also times when the interior is left empty while the exterior is fully indicated." However, even when "k'ung" and 'shih' are used in this relative sense, they need not refer to spacial arrangement. Brushwork that is characterized by inward "k'ung" is empty, hollow or devoid of significance; this is relative emptiness, not the emptiness of non-being. Brushwork which is outwardly "shih" is solid, opaque, impenetrable and lacking in spiritual reality.

Because one is free of method (the method of no-method) and he fails to rely upon thinking,

Ssu (thinking) is not to be restricted to reflection or meditation, for it denotes intuitive understanding.

outwardly, form is already possessed, but inwardly there is nothing that is carried.

No important content is conveyed. If "inward" and "outward" of this chapter are interpreted in terms of subjective and objective categories, the translation is definitely strained.

Therefore, the ancients hit the proper measure between emptiness and reality; inwardly and outwardly there was fit control; their method of painting was completely perfected.
Here "emptiness" is the absolute void of Taoism and "reality" is profound, spiritual reality. Taoists use "hsü" and Buddhists "k'ung." To express ultimate emptiness, Shih-t'ao employs them interchangeably.

Without flaws or defects, they obtained the spirit of evasive concealment and the spirit of movement. Thus what should be facing was facing, what should be slanted was slanted, and what should be sideways was sideways. With regard to those who face a wall, dust covered and obstructed by things, how can they avoid hatred from the creator (nature)?

Attachment to the dusty and commonplace is the topic of chapter fifteen.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 9)

1 Sze, The Way of Chinese Painting, p. 191.
CHAPTER 10
THREE PLANES AND TWO GROUNDS

"Ching chieh" refers to a boundary or region. Lin Yutang's rendering is "Dividing Sections." Siren prefers the somewhat general "Outlines." The rationale for the present translation will become clear as the chapter is read. "Limiting Regions" might also serve as the title for this chapter.

To divide an area into three levels and two sections seems to be a fault of landscape painting.

Compare Lin Yutang's version of this sentence: "The practice of dividing a picture into 'three levels' and 'two sections' seems to ascribe a fault to nature." The characters shan (mountain) and shui (water), which Lin Yutang has taken to mean "nature," are normally translated as "landscape." Thus the present translation, agreeing with Contag, takes shan and shui as referring to landscape art, not nature itself. It does appear to be a weakness if a landscape painting conforms to such a stereotyped mode of compositional division.

However, there is something which is not wrong (in such divisions)—as with areas which are naturally separated.

Nature itself may present such an arrangement.

For example, when one reaches the river that is the end of the Wu territory, there on yonder shore the many mountains of Chekiang appear. Often times when one paints landscapes such as open peaks, he divides and breaks the monotony.
The addition of small details can often relieve the monotonous quality of a landscape.

If this is mechanical (automatic), when one sees it, he immediately knows.

If there is no spiritual life, then one immediately recognizes this artificiality.

Regarding those divisions which separate the area into three parts, the first level is the ground, the second level includes the trees, and the third level has mountains. Looking at it, how can one distinguish between far and near? If one paints these three levels, how can he avoid artificiality?

Following such a set pattern, how can one's work escape an engraved, printed or routinely stamped out effect? Shih-t'ao's answer, given in subsequent lines, is to avoid rigidity through integration of all divisions. Thus one substitutes creative painting for lifeless copying. This is simply a more specific reiteration of Shih-t'ao's general admonition against conforming to the methods of past masters.

In terms of the two sections, scenery is below (horse, bridges, man, etc.) and mountains are on the upper section.

"Scenery" and "mountains" are mutually exclusive terms as used by Shih-t'ao. The contrast is well illustrated in chapter eleven.

The common way uses clouds in the middle in order to clearly separate the painting into two sections. To paint these three
(scenery, clouds, and mountains), first one must integrate them into a unity (a unified atmosphere).

A more direct translation would read: "One must penetrate them with a single breath." Such painting is accomplished with one continuous effort or flow of energy.

One cannot rigidly divide the area into three levels and two sections. What is particularly required is the action of the free hand.

The sudden or spontaneous (t'fu) action of this free hand, which overcomes the rigidity of formulae, is reminiscent of the Ch'an painters' dynamic, "untrammeled" approach.

Then one can see the strength of the brush and even put one thousand peaks and ten thousand valleys into a picture.

This may also be translated as: "Then one can see brush power and even enter into [become one with] a thousand peaks and ten thousand valleys."

One is entirely free from the mundane.

Freedom from the mundane is marked by the transcendence of ordinary effects or what Lin Yutang calls "common tricks."

To paint these three, make them alive.

Literally, infuse them with spirit. This can also be taken as "enter or penetrate into their spirit."
Then even if, with reference to details, there are some mistakes, it will not matter.
CHAPTER 11

SIX ESSENTIALS

The two characters which make up this title are hsi and ching. Hsi describes a foot path or a track over a hill; a ching is a by-way or short-cut. Thus both Lin Yutang and Siren have translated this title as "Short-cuts." Hsi-ching can also refer to economy of expression, as when a minimum of brushwork produces a maximum of effect. This articulation through skillful abbreviation is a well-known earmark of Ch'ao Buddhist painters. Broadly speaking, hsi-ching is that upon which one walks, thereby leaving traces for followers. Hence it can be understood as a way. Since there are actually six ways or approaches under discussion, "Six Essentials" announces Shih-t'ao's analysis of these fundamental principles. Just as Hsieh Ho (A.D. 479-501) laid the foundation of Chinese aesthetics with his six fa or criteria of painting and Kuo Jo-hsu (A.D. 1070-11th Century) elaborated three basic faults of painters, Shih-t'ao is here concerned with what he regards as six cardinal points in landscape painting.

Painting mountains has six basic essentials: Concentrate on the scenery but not upon mountains,

According to Shih-t'ao, a painter is not to focus upon both mountains and scenery, for a painting is always an exercise in selectivity--one should choose either mountains or scenery as primary. "Scenery" (ching) has a slightly narrower scope than is usual. It embraces all within a given scene, with the exclusion of mountains. Typically, mountains form the background and scenery occupies the foreground of a canvas.

concentrate on the mountains but not upon the scenery, reversed scenery,
In "reversed scenery," variety is the keynote. Lin Yutang's "contrast" summarizes the idea quite well. Straight trees are juxtaposed with mountains which are crooked or winding; straight mountains are coupled with trees which are leaning or bent.

borrowing scenery,

An artist can enliven his picture with the addition of trees, bridges, buildings, figures, etc.

cutting away mundane taste,

Sensuous beauty or vulgar ornamentation is eschewed.

and dangerous and steep locations.

Dangerous and steep locations are characterized by their being inaccessible to ordinary men. Among the things which a painter is to avoid, Jao Tzŭ-jan lists scenes which lack locations that nature has made inaccessible.

These six essentials must be clearly distinguished. When one concentrates on the scenery and not upon the mountains, the appearance of ancient mountains is as if in winter (dead), but the scenery becomes alive as though it were spring. This is the meaning of concentrating upon the scenery and not upon the mountains. When the trees are withered as in winter,

These withered or weathered trees are actually described as ancient (gu) and plain (p'ō); p'ō, in this context, has reference to what is simple, stark--things in the rough, so to speak.
but the mountains look like spring, this is what is meant by
turning toward mountains and not toward scenery. Things such
as erect trees and tilted rocks or upright rocks and toppling
trees, all these are called "reversed scenery."

With this principle, Shih-t'ao reminds the artist that
variety and dynamic balance are important components
in landscape painting.

Among things such as quiet mountains where nothing is visible,
lively atmosphere is borrowed from these sorts of things:
scattered willow trees, bending bamboo, bridges, and thatched
huts.

A more literal rendering would be: "Among things such
as empty mountains, cloudy and without features, etc."

This is called borrowing scenery. That which cuts away mun-
dane taste yields freedom from the vulgar sphere.

To be released from the common realm is to enjoy
illumination.

Mountains, rivers and trees are devoid of excess ornamentation.

"Chien tou" (cutting off the head) and "ch'u wei" (getting
rid of the tail) are interpreted by Lin Yutang as: "all
the trees and rocks are left uncompleted where the lines
break off." Actually Shih-t'ao is urging the painter to
eliminate cloying prettiness from his work, to omit the
extraneous or inessential. Shih-t'ao's remarks possess
the spirit of Ch'lan simplicity which might be expressed as: "Whatever is superfluous in a work of art is detrimental."

All the brush strokes follow the principle of cutting away mundane taste. But the method of cutting away mundane taste cannot be achieved unless the brush strokes have perfect flexibility.

Concerning dangerous and steep locations, the foot prints of man cannot reach them, for there is no path by which to gain access.

Shih-t'ao's interest in inaccessible locations is mirrored in his famous Lu-shan landscape. Siren comments as follows: "The Lu-shan picture . . . is by its extraordinary size and imaginative grandeur the most impressive of Shih-t'ao's large landscapes in spite of its lack of conventional structure. . . . The painter takes us here right into the heart of a wild and inaccessible mountain, to a place on a rocky ledge rising out of mist, where he stands looking at the foaming waters and the circling wisps of light fog between the rocks, while his companion is resting by a tree. The whole scene is, so to speak, detached from the common world. The foreground or lowest section is marked only by the tops of some trees projecting from the unseen, while the foot of the cliff on which the painter stands is lost in a bottomless gorge. Far beyond rises the precipice in successive steps washed by the foaming water and partly covered by layers of clouds and mist. The final stage at the top is marked by the broad square peak on which the leading lines of the composition converge. The rising rhythm is accentuated by the cliff that projects obliquely into the picture, enclosing the place in a kind of gigantic cavern filled by phantoms of swaying mist. The very rocks seem to re-echo the din of the cascades and vibrate with the surging life that pulsates through the gorge; it is a picture in which the dramatic import of a gigantic motif has been rendered by an inspired brush." Here there is something of the Sung intention to transport the viewer to the actual site, to confront him with awe-inspiring nature. Shih-t'ao's principle of depicting inaccessible locations seeks to present aspects of nature which would
otherwise be out of the reach of mortals. Such settings are particularly conducive to meditation, to concentration, to entering into harmony with the all-pervading Tao of nature.

Regarding locations such as a mountain on an island in the big sea, Pêng-lai (fairyland)

In antiquity, Japan was thought to be a fairyland to the east.

and Fang Hu (fairy mountains), unless one is an immortal, he cannot dwell there. Worldly people cannot imagine such places. This is the danger and steepness of mountains and seas. If one tries to paint this danger and steepness, he can do so only at the actual site of steep peaks, hanging cliffs, wooden walk-ways attached to mountain sides, and dangerous conditions of winding and rugged paths. One must reveal the strength of the brush, then it will be a wonder.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of brush strength (pî li) in Chinese painting. As Rowley has put it: "What is the quality in brush which directly and abstractly reveals the ch'i spirit? The answer was strength or li, which is certainly the most difficult of the fruits of ch'i for the Western eye to estimate." Shih-t'ao himself has stated: "Painting is transmitted by the ink, ink is transmitted by the brush, brush is transmitted by the wrist, and the wrist is transmitted by the mind." Brush strength is, therefore, an essential link in the continuity of creative expression. Naturally, the power of the brush must always be restrained or disciplined so
as to prevent a frenzied or chaotic effect. In chapter twelve, Shih-t'ao warns: "However, when one uses a heavy brush, he must quickly lift it up from the paper in order to avoid a rough atmosphere (fierceness or violence)."
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 11)

1 Sze, The Way of Chinese Painting, p. 133.

2 Siren, Chinese Painting, Leading Masters and Principles, p. 165.

3 Rowley, Principles of Chinese Painting, p. 45.
CHAPTER 12
FORESTS AND TREES

The ancients painted trees in groups of either three or five.

Why these particular numerical sets were adopted is, of course, open to speculation. Rowley's discussion of composition (chang-fa) includes some interesting suggestions: "Centuries ago they [the Chinese] intuitively sensed that the average person cannot grasp more than five as a numerical group, a fact we have only recently demonstrated in our psychological laboratories. Whenever the theme lent itself to this principle, the 'law of five' was invariably preferred, as in the favorite theme of a whole painting devoted to a single group of trees. However, this principle was not permitted to become a dogma; if the situation or the nature of the idea demanded a contrary principle, the quest for ch'i and k'ai-ho always came first. The very essence of our experience of reeds and grasses is multiplicity and therefore the Chinese massed them together; sometimes the stalks actually followed the five rule although their numerical sparsity was concealed by the density of leaves to give the effect of profuse growth." It is possible that groups of three are associated with the I-Ching. Mai-mai Sze has noted that "The Trigrams and Hexagrams were based on the number Three, representing the ways of Heaven, Earth, and Man, often called in the commentaries the Three Powers. Three was regarded as the actively creative number." It might also be mentioned that Hisamatsu has linked odd numbers with the Oriental tendency toward asymmetry. However one regards such explanations of "grouping," they do serve to draw attention to the Chinese practice.

They let there be front views, back views, darkness and light (yin and yang), each thing having its own perfect form (its own expression or correct face). Asymmetry is represented by dwarfed trees among giant ones, thus liveliness is brought about.
The method by which I paint pine trees and cypress trees, old locusts and old junipers is, for example, in groups of three or five. This attitude (in holding the brush) resembles that in which a hero rises to dance, looks up and down, squats and stands, dances in a circle, and sways back and forth.

Shih (attitude) applies to the disposition of the painter and to the overall atmosphere or mood. Usually associated with power or authority, "shih" can also designate general conditions or circumstances.

The way (method) is sometimes hard, sometimes gentle, moving both the brush and the wrist. For the most part, I use the method of painting stones to paint (trees etc.).

This may be compared with the opening passage in the "Book of Rocks" from the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting. Here it is pointed out that rocks without ch'i are necessarily lifeless. Thus the painter, depicting the three faces of a rock, seeks to capture its ch'i. Since it is said that nothing could be more challenging, the implication is that a painter, who successfully grasps the ch'i of rocks, is capable of disclosing the vital force in any other object.

Three fingers all move along with the turning wrist and the forearm stretches out and pulls in—all working together as one force (harmoniously and with unified strength).

This is a difficult sentence to interpret. It may indicate that the third, fourth, and fifth fingers are to accompany the wrist, while the forefinger and thumb have their own movement.
However, when one uses a heavy brush, he must quickly lift it up from the paper in order to avoid a rough atmosphere.

Lin Yutang's translation reads: "When the stroke is very heavy the brush must quickly be lifted from the paper, to dissipate the force of movement." The point is that unchecked energy can become a disruptive force in a painting.

Therefore, whether painting in dark or light shades, the work is formless yet spiritual, empty yet a wonder.

Hsū (formless) and k'ung (empty) are alternative ways of expressing nonbeing or emptiness. The former is a Taoist term, the latter, Buddhist. Śūnyatā and the void are still other associated terms which can be used to convey the same meaning. Painting, which embraces hsū and k'ung, conveys what Taoism calls the image of the imageless, the form of the formless. In the emptiness of the canvas, all subject-object categories have been eliminated and the Tao that cannot be spoken is vaguely hinted at. Although Tao is responsible for all things, it is not itself another thing. Therefore, the unifying ideal of Chinese painting has been to somehow express this invisible Tao which underlies all else.

The method of painting a great mountain follows this method. All other methods are inadequate.

Lin Yutang's reading: "This method may also be applied to large mountains, but not to other objects," is mistaken. Shih-t'ao is saying that the method which applies to forests and trees is also applicable to great mountains, all other methods being unsatisfactory.
Unusual in the method of fresh and biting strokes, seek the picture of the appearance of differentiation. This is the explanation of no-explanation.

Lin Yutang's "This is so, not to be explained," misses the Taoist paradox embedded in this line.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 12)


CHAPTER 13
OCEANS AND WAVES

The sea has vast currents and mountains sink to a lying down posture. The seas swallow and disgorge; mountains ascend and descend.

"Kung" (ascend) suggests bringing one's hands together reverentially and with a slight bow. "I" (descend) refers to a deep bow. Thus mountains act with respect and humility, passive qualities of the sort usually associated with water in Taoism. As chapter eight of the Tao Te Ching states: "Water is satisfied with the places which all men disdain."

The sea can present its spirit; mountains can convey their pulse. Mountains have peak after peak, numerous cliffs, deep ravines, aged rocks, and sharp features which suddenly rise up. Vapors (on mountain tops), fog, and misty clouds—all are pleasant. This is very similar to the vast currents of the sea. The swallowing and disgorging of the sea is not the seas revealing their spirit, but it is the mountains functioning as the sea.

The sea can likewise function as the mountains. The sea possesses a wide expanse, inexhaustible depths, the roaring sound of tide,

Lin Yutang's "wild laughter" is understandable, since the text does contain the character hsiao (to laugh) rather than the hsiao which refers to a sound such as roaring or moaning. It appears, however, as though Shih-t'ao probably wrote the wrong character at this point.
a magical spirit,

"Shên lou chih ch'i" is a challenging expression to translate. The first two characters combine to give the idea of a mirage; thus, Lin Yutang translates the entire expression as "mirages." Chih is the ringed neck pheasant, a bird of special significance in the *Classic of Propriety*. Ch'i is, of course, the familiar "spirit" or life force. Taken together, the line seems to predicate a magical temperament of the sea.

dancing whales, and soaring dragons. Sea tide resembles mountain peaks and night tides are like mountain ranges. This is the way the sea acts like mountains, not that mountains actually dwell in the sea. Thus mountains and seas act like themselves and man has the eye to recognize them. Consider the islands of Ying-chou, Lang-yüan, Jo-shui, Pi'êng-lai, Yüan-p'u and Fang-hu. Even if, like chess pieces or stars, they are widely scattered, one can still make deductions and learn about them by means of springs and dragon veins.

Certain inferences can be made by turning to the water of springs and the sinuous wrinkles of rocks and mountains which are close at hand.

If what is obtained from the sea is omitted from mountains, or what is obtained from mountains is omitted from the sea, then men are misconceiving their interrelationship. The way I understand the interrelationship, the mountain is the sea, the sea is the mountain.
For a painter, to treat mountains and seas as independent is to neglect their profound coalescence. The entire chapter has sought to make clear this interpenetration. Now Shih-t'ao is telling us that the relationship is more than one of similarities or mutual emulation. Just as it is the role of ch'i to integrate yin and yang, the painter must capture the harmonious atmosphere (yin yün) of mountains and seas. Their unification through wholeness of spirit must be caught and transmitted by the artist. Similarly, chapter two of Chuang Tzu replaces "relative distinctions" with the equality or identification of apparent opposites.

Mountains and seas know that I understand.
Whenever one paints the scenery of the four seasons, the style and flavor vary accordingly. Cloudy weather and clear weather differ from each other.

It is the responsibility of the painter to carefully distinguish between them.

Observe the seasons and determine the weather in order to express them. The ancients have transmitted scenery in poetry. As for spring, it is said: "Always together, grass begins to grow amidst sand; water and clouds expand together and meet."

When grass appears and flourishes in sand and clouds from above join water below, that moment is spring. This conjunction of clouds and water occurs after water has risen due to irrigation in spring. Then, as when floating on a large body of water whose edges are beyond one's range of vision, it seems as though sky and water merge. Wang Wei (A.D. 699-759) had spoken of rain as a merging of sky and earth. Again, the interfusion of opposites is suggested.

As for summer, it is said: "Under trees the ground is always shady; on the banks of streams, the breeze is very cool."

Of course, there is some shade in winter, but only in summer can the shade be appreciated.

As for autumn, it is said: "From a chilly city wall one can gaze
afar (the leaves have fallen); forests produce a sense of melancholy."

As for winter, we read: "Where the road disappears, the brush stroke first arrives; when a pond is cold, the ink wash fully expresses it." Also there is winter which does not follow the seasonal pattern. This is poetically expressed as: "Snow is sparse and the weather is lacking in coldness; toward the end of the year, days increase in length." Although one meets winter, he seems to have no feeling of coldness. There is also a poetic line which says: "At year's end, daybreak is earlier; between snow and rain, the sky clears." To apply these two poems to painting (weather lacking coldness, days growing longer, early dawn, clearing between snow and rain), these paradoxes of weather, which can be described through painting, are not limited to winter. They extend to the other three seasons. There are also half-clear and half-cloudy days, as when: "A veil of clouds obscures the bright moon; just after the rain clears up, the evening sun shines." Also there are days which seem clear and cloudy (at the same time?). It is not necessary to suppose that darkness indicates the sunset; darkness may be just the shade of passing clouds. I take the idea of a poem and express it in painting. There is no scenery which does not follow the seasons.

The scene must always conform to the seasons, as in haiku poems associated with Japanese Zen Buddhism. Kenneth Yasuda has elaborated on the indispensability of a seasonal theme in haiku: "The things of nature
are born and fade away in the rhythm of the seasons. Realization of their quality must take into account the season of which they are inseparably a part.

Obviously, without a seasonal theme—i.e., without a realized quality—the state of oneness is not achieved. The objective correlative is not adequate to convey the experience; and its omission shows that the poet did not become one with nature. Haiku written from such a basis run the risk of being about an experience, rather than becoming an experience.1

In China, the eighth century Taoist Wang Wei advocated that landscape paintings should always be in accord with the seasons; the tenth century Ching Hao chose ching (seasonal aspect) as one of his "six essentials" of painting; and Kuo Hsi, an eleventh century student of Taoism, emphasized that mountains change with the seasons and climate. Thus for him, a single mountain embraces within itself a multitude of mountains, for it varies with the seasons and weather.

A seasonal element is of paramount concern in Taoist as well as Zen aesthetics. Tao can be regarded as a process, the being the product, i.e., Tao as individualized in particular things. Tao, then, is the process of processes; all derivative processes serving as manifestations of the ultimate Tao. Painting which attends to these processes (the sequence of the seasons, the fluctuations of weather) serves to convey the direct expressions of that invisible process which is called the Tao.

To paint the clouds and mountains before one (full scenery), follow the seasons and transform accordingly. Following this, one will understand that painting reveals the ideas of poetry and poetry is the Zen of painting.

Painting and poetry have a common well spring, inner sublimity which is expressed in outward transparency. Freed from attachment to things, the artist has eliminated his ego-self, thereby allowing his true Self
to participate in an ontological identification with all things. Such ontological purity is the origin of both great poetry and painting. This is evidenced in the way Su Tung-p'o's poems moved Shih-t'ao. While Shih-t'ao was skeptical as to whether or not his paintings did justice to Su Tung-p'o's poetry, other judges have been less critical. What is important is that the artist's serenity of spirit or harmony with nature be objectified—whether as painting or poetry.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 14)

CHAPTER 15
SUBLIMITY AND THE COMMONPLACE

This title may also be understood as "Freedom from the Commonplace." Lin Yutang uses the somewhat colloquial "Keep Away from the Hustle-Bustle." Siren's "Far from the Dust of the World" is a more direct translation, yüan meaning "distant" or "far" and ch'en designating "dust" or "dirt." Ch'en was taken by Buddhists as referring to worldliness, the commotion and turmoil of mundane existence, the dusty or common world of everyday life. Of this dusty world, Wing-tsit Chan has said: "To describe the world as dusty may suggest a lack of enthusiasm for it; indeed both Buddhism and later Taoism employ the word 'dust' to symbolize the dirty world from which we should escape. It is significant to note, however, that Taoism in its true sense calls for identification with, not escape from such a world." In fact, chapters four and fifty-six of the Tao Te Ching mention becoming one with the everyday world, "tathāta," or "suchness" of things.

From the preceding, it might naturally be inferred that Shih-t'ao, unlike Taoism, seeks flight from, rather than union with, the mundane. Such a conclusion would be mistaken, for Shih-t'ao is not advocating escape from the dusty world, but merely the severing of attachments to it--this step being the very prerequisite for penetration into the ten thousand things.

When man is confused by things, he attaches himself to the commonplace.

If a man is obstructed by material things, he develops worldly attachments.

When man is ruled by things, his mind will become a servant.
When the mind becomes a slave of limitation and rigidity, it destroys itself. Confused by the common taste in his brush work
and limited by it, this is the man of rigidity. This can only be harmful and of no advantage to him. Finally, there can be no satisfaction or joy in his mind.

Siren's version of this passage reads: "The dust of the world beclouds their brush and ink, and they become tied up. Such painters are cramped. There is no advantage only disadvantage in it. It brings after all no joy to the heart." This rendering is fairly consistent with the present translation. Lin Yutang's opening line, however, hints only very vaguely at the obstructing quality of the commonplace or dusty world: "He who moves among the hustle and bustle of the world handles his brush and ink with caution and restraint." Lin Yutang continues: "Thus the environment impinges upon a man, can only do him harm and in the end make him unhappy."

As for me, let things obstruct themselves.

When one is emancipated from bondage to things, obfuscation can only take place among things themselves.

Let the commonplace associate with the commonplace. Then my mind will be set free.

There is no longer any disturbance or distortion. As Lin Yutang puts it, one attains "peace of mind."

When the mind is set free, the art of painting emerges.

From such a tranquil frame of mind, painting can freely issue forth. Quietism is here refuted, for inner serenity is neither inert nor effete, rather it is the dynamic ground which gives rise to creativity.

The talent to paint is originally possessed by man. But as for
one-stroke painting, men have never before achieved it. To engage oneself in painting one must value thinking (intuition).

For this line, Siren has: "The most important point in painting is thought." Lin Yutang's version reads: "For the important thing in art work is contemplation." Contag employs the term "nachdenken," meaning meditation or reflection. While ssu (to think) ordinarily refers to thinking, meditation, consideration, etc., in the present context, "intuitive thinking" is perhaps most appropriate. For in the next line, where Shih-t'ao speaks of grasping oneness, intuition rather than rational thought is more consonant with the comprehension of this unity.

Intuiting oneness, man's mind arrives at his destination and is joyful. Therefore the art of painting will enter into what is subtle, refined, and beyond imagination.

This chapter of the Hua-yü Lu concludes with an additional sentence: "Since I think it is unlikely that the ancients have touched upon this, I have expressly revealed it."

CHAPTER 16
PURITY THROUGH WU-WEI

Lin Yutang translates "T'o Su" with the single term "Nonconformism." Siren stays with the more literal "To Escape from the Common." The characters "t'o su" suggest abandonment or renunciation of what is vulgar. Such renunciation is aimed at engendering a state of mental purity. When one is no longer disturbed by things and his actions leave no traces, the purity of wu-wei has been realized.

The ignorant man and the ordinary man are equally ridiculed.

If the ignorant man is not unclear, then he becomes wise.

The character "mêng" (unclear) suggests confusion due to concealment. It refers to covering or clouding which shields one from the actual state of things. Wisdom is, therefore, quite literally an uncovering or discovering of truth. As Lin Yutang has phrased it: "Remove the veil and the ignorant become wise."

If the ordinary man is not vulgar, then he is pure.

Undefiled by things, one enjoys purity of mind. Lin Yutang has commented upon this purity of mind: "This [the purified mind] is essentially Zen (Ch'an) in a narrow sense. In a broader sense, it is Taoist and even Confucianist. The extraordinary thing about some aspects of Confucianism is that it demanded 'keep clear the originally clear character' and 'constant renewal.'" Similarly, chapter ten of the Tao Te Ching asks if one can purify his vision, insight or intuition. Finally, as Lin Yutang has suggested, Zen also recognizes the significance of cleansing one's mind, emptying it of all dross. Thus is achieved the Buddha mind, the mind of no-mind.

The ordinary man becomes ordinary because he is ignorant.
The ignorant man becomes ignorant because he is unclear.
Therefore the perfect man cannot not be wise, cannot not be enlightened. Because he is wise, he transforms; because he is enlightened, he is free. When confronted by things, he is undisturbed. When he deals with forms, he leaves no traces.

In chapter twenty-seven of the Tao Te Ching we have: "Perfect travel leaves no wheel tracks or traces." According to Wing-tsit Chan: "In Neo-Taoism this prominent idea [having no trace (ch'î)] has developed to mean that true reality lies in noumena and shows no traces. The whole history of Taoism shows a tendency to undermine traces, although its philosophy is not nihilistic." In Taoism, preoccupation with "no traces" can be interpreted ethically as well as metaphysically. Wing-tsit Chan's remarks explain the metaphysical implication; if ultimate reality is noumenal then it is invisible to us in the phenomenal realm, it gives no signs. The difficulty with such an interpretation is that although the Tao is invisible, Taoism does acknowledge manifestations or expressions of the Tao. How, then, would these differ from traces or signs? An ethical interpretation avoids this problem. To act without leaving traces is to follow wu-wei. When one does so, he leaves no traces; he apparently does nothing (i.e. nothing unnatural); no assertiveness is evident in his actions; yet, everything is accomplished. As chapter forty-eight of the Tao Te Ching states: "There is no action (wu-wei); yet there is nothing which is not done."

When he moves the ink, it is as if the work were already finished.

His execution is neither artificial nor strained; his work is not marred by a "carved" or "chiseled" effect. It is as though the painting had been previously completed, for there is an effortlessness to the actual creative process. George Rowley concludes his Principles of Chinese Painting with a discussion of effortlessness: "The same term (i) or effortlessness, which we encountered as the first fruit of ch'i (spirit), was also used for this highest
level of experience because it most nearly suggested the relation between artistic creation and mystical oneness with the Tao. . . . Perhaps untrammeled is the one word which comes closest to suggesting this ultimate quality.2

When he grasps the brush, it is as if he were doing nothing.

Again, as Lin Yutang has pointed out, the principle of wu-wei is at work. His translation reads: "... and his brush moves as if not doing anything." Commenting upon this use of wu-wei (non-action), Lin Yutang says: "Here it means 'essentially in accordance with nature,' or 'by the action of nature itself without human interference.'" Hence, this line may be read as: "When he grasps the brush, it is as if he were not grasping it."

On a one foot wide canvas (small area), he manages heaven, earth, mountains, rivers, and the ten thousand things; yet, his mind is as pure as nothing.

"Pure as nothing" has reference to the artist's unchecked freedom. Because the artist's mind is pure and he is not preoccupied with imposing myriad forms upon the canvas, he is free to manage "heaven, earth, mountains, rivers and the ten thousand things."

Because ignorance is diminished, wisdom is produced. Because ordinariness has vanished, purity of mind is attained.
FOOTNOTES (Chapter 16)

1 Lao Tzu, The Way of Lao Tzu, p. 147.

2 Rowley, Principles of Chinese Painting, p. 80.
ORIGIN OF HEAVEN AND COMPLETION BY MAN

The actual title (Chien Tzü) may be rendered as "Union with Calligraphy," since chien suggests "uniting" or "relating" and tzü means "calligraphy." Thus Lin Yutang uses "Calligraphy Included" and Siren's title is "To Combine with Calligraphy." Since Shih-t'ao's discussion of calligraphy occupies but a small part of what is to follow, the present title seeks to convey the more central idea of this chapter: Art is a gift from heaven which must be nurtured by man.

Ink can nourish the forms of mountains and rivers. Brush can overturn their structure (break conventional rules of landscape composition). But brush and ink cannot accomplish anything with one hill and one valley; this obstructs brush and ink.

Conformity to stereotyped patterns, small hills and valleys, imposes limitations which make one a minor talent.

Ancient and modern artists all know the details of painting. The best way will let the ink be all-embracing like the great sea.

One's approach or attitude must be as encompassing as the sea. He cannot be restricted by fixed techniques or a narrow outlook.

Then if one takes up his brush, he can manage mountains.

He does not confine himself to the small hills and streams of an ordinary artist.
He can expand the application of brush strokes and ink wash.

This is an advancement over the traditional rendering of landscapes.

Therefore one grasps the boundaries of the eight directions, the variety of the nine continents, the solemnity of the five sacred mountains, and the expansiveness of the four seas. When one's brush work expands, it is without outer limits; when it gathers together, there is no inner point.

Nothing is greater than this brush work; yet nothing is smaller, for it is extremely fine and subtle.

The world does not withhold method (anyone can learn it) nor does heaven withhold talent (anyone can receive it). Talent cannot only be displayed in painting but also through calligraphy. The material forms of calligraphy and painting are different, but their merits as achievements are the same. Oneness of brush strokes is the prerequisite and foundation for calligraphy and painting.

Unity of brush strokes requires the painter's ontological identification with all things.

Calligraphy and painting are the subtle manifestations of oneness of brush strokes which has been acquired.
Ching chʻüan (subtle manifestations) refer respectively to permanence and change, constancy and the ever-changing. Oneness of brush strokes expresses both the eternal and the changing. Change and permanence are mutually indispensable elements in the fundamental operation of the universe. To the mind of no-mind, they interpenetrate and become identified. Thus the Tao is regarded as the unchanging principle of change.

Those who know the subtle manifestations, but forget the origin of the fundamental principle of oneness of brush strokes, are like children who forget their ancestors. If one knows that ancient and modern works never perish, yet forgets that their achievement of merit is not limited to men, this is the same as the ten thousand things losing what is given by nature. Heaven can give man a method, but cannot give him skill.

The attainment of skill is clearly something for which one must work.

Heaven can give men painting, but cannot give men transformations.

Only man's actualization of his potential can produce creative changes.

If men disregard technique and claim their own skill, if they ignore theory and merely look for innovations, nature no longer exists in men.

Man has lost what heaven (heaven and nature are interchangeable in this chapter) has conferred upon him.
And although there is calligraphy and painting, they cannot endure.

That is to say, they will not be transmitted to future generations.

This is what heaven gives to man: Because he can receive, heaven gives to him. If one has a great capacity, then he receives a great gift. If his capacity is small, he receives a small gift. Therefore, ancient and modern works of calligraphy and painting originated from heaven and were completed by man. From heaven, there is this kind of gift. Whether they had great or small capacity, all mastered the method of calligraphy and painting and advanced it to some degree. I, therefore, have included this discussion of calligraphy.
CHAPTER 18

CREATIVITY AND THE FULFILLMENT OF NATURE

This is a particularly difficult title to translate. "Tzū" may be taken as one's disposition or natural gift; thus, the present rendering is "creativity." Jên denotes action, function, and, at times, quality, "fulfillment" being the present interpretation. Siren's "To Nourish Oneself with Painting" seems more meaningful than Lin Yutang's "Maintaining Function."

In the past, men expressed their feelings through brush strokes and ink wash by painting mountains and rivers. Their approach was to meet all variations through the invariable. They proceeded to action through non-action.

This is, of course, wu-wei.

They did not display themselves, yet they were known, because they achieved awakening from their cultivation of nondifferentiation and grasped the life spirit. Thus, these qualities carried them to the universe, which means that ancient artists obtained the essence of mountains and rivers.

Siren's translation reads: "They had thus incorporated into themselves the substance of hills and streams."

Hence, when we examine the movement of the ink wash, we know that the artists had obtained awakening from the cultivation of nondifferentiation. When we examine the exercise of brush
strokes, we see that the artists had obtained the life spirit. When we examine the mountains and rivers, we see that the artists had grasped their fundamental structure. When we examine the contours and wrinkles, we see that they had grasped the various expressions of the brush work.

Their brush work possessed the ability to transform.

When we examine the vastness of the ocean, we see that they had grasped the essence of heaven and earth. When we examine the little bits of grass floating on the water, we know that they had grasped the essence of the moment.

Literally, this line states: "When we examine the hollow space or depression, etc." The actual reference is to chapter one of Chuang Tzu in which mention is made of bits of matter floating like boats in a small water-filled cavity. Grasping the essence of the movement involves seeing things in their "thusness" or "suchness." They are plain and simple; yet, nothing could be more profound.

When we examine the non-action, we know that they had grasped the essence of action. When we examine one-stroke, we know that they had grasped the essence of myriad strokes. When we examine the freedom of the wrist, we know that their achievement had gone beyond the brush.

To go beyond the brush is to reach a point at which the brush does not "hold" the artist, rather he holds the brush. For the beginner, imitator or uninspired artist,
the brush acts as an obstacle which obstructs and limits his accomplishments.

Those who possess these qualities must first let them be revealed by themselves, then they will be able to be applied by the brush.

Self-revelation signifies that these qualities must issue forth with spontaneity. Following this, the brush can effortlessly express them.

If one should not let these qualities be revealed by themselves, then the brush work will become rigid, shallow, and awkward, and he will not be able to let them be fulfilled spontaneously by themselves. The qualities that heaven gave to the mountain are limitless. The mountain obtains its solidity by being properly placed. It becomes lively through the revelation of spiritual reality. Its forms vary through free transformation. It awakens from nondifferentiation through freedom from opposition.

"Freedom from opposition" is a translation of "jên." In Confucianism, jên represents the supreme virtue which may be understood as goodness, human-heartedness, benevolence, or man-to-manness. The character itself suggests a union of two men. Extending its application from the ethical to the metaphysical, Taoism views jên as an ontological unity or harmony. Thus the One of Taoism is free of all opposition, for all opposites have been reconciled or harmonized. It is in this latter sense that Shih-t'ao uses the term.

It stretches in all directions through powerful action. It remains
prostrate through quiescence.

Such quiescence may be thought of as non-action which conceals.

It faces upwards and looks downward through propriety.

Here, "propriety" is the Confucian "li." In effect, the bending and bowing of mountains express their appropriate or proper behavior.

It winds circuitously through inner harmony. It stands together round-about through careful arrangement.

This describes the collected and encircling formations to which individual mountains contribute.

It obtains emptiness and spirituality through wisdom. It obtains purity and delicacy through refinement of the brush work. It obtains its crouching and jumping qualities through courageous force. It obtains its lofty steepness through precipitousness and danger. It shoots up toward heaven through its summit. It obtains its all-embracingness through magnitude. It appears near at hand and clear through its detail. The mountain receives all these qualities from heaven and spontaneously fulfills them. It is not that the mountain receives these qualities and interferes with heaven. Man receives his qualities from heaven and fulfills them. It is not for the mountain to interfere with man.
As Shih-t'ao says in chapter eight: "They [mountains and rivers] are free from me and I am free from them."

From this point of view, we see that the mountain spontaneously fulfills its qualities as they should be fulfilled. We cannot change the qualities of the mountain and fulfill them. Therefore the integrated man cannot change the real qualities of the mountain and enjoy the mountain.

The integrated man is the man of jên, one who has attained tranquility, a harmony with all things. He neither disturbs nor is disturbed.

As the mountain possesses its qualities, how can we say that the water has none? Indeed, the water possesses many qualities. The water flows everywhere and benefits all things, that is its virtue.

Virtue (tê), according to Taoism, is Tao as individualized in things. It describes their most natural characteristic.

It flows gently downward according to regular channels, that is its righteousness.

Righteousness (i), in a Confucian context, refers to what is morally correct in a given situation. Speaking more generally, righteousness can refer to what is fitting.

Its tides rise and fall and flow without stopping, that is its Tao. It breaks in splashing waves, that is its bravery. Sometimes it
whirls about, and sometimes it is tranquil, that is its principle. It flows to the far distance and reaches everywhere, that is its penetration. It is transparent and pure, that is its refinement. It turns and flows eastward, that is its will.

The geography of China is such that an elevation in the west naturally disposes her waters, such as the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers, to flow eastward.

The water receives its qualities from the boundless ocean and the immeasurable depths of the sea, and then fulfills its duties. If it should not fulfill its qualities and perform its primary duties, then how could the water embrace all the mountains and rivers and penetrate into all the veins of the world?

The qualities of the water that are assumed by man are limited, as if man were drowning in the vast sea and could not see the shore; also, as if he were standing on the shore and could not see the other shore of the vast sea. Therefore, what the wise man knows is the other shore of the sea. Thus when Confucius stood on the shore by the flowing stream, he listened to its unceasing murmuring and enjoyed the water.

Confucius is not mentioned in the text, but the reference is to Book IX, chapter sixteen of the Analects. This passage is usually interpreted in terms of the infinite flow of water, a reminder that men should be unceasing in their moral strivings.

Without knowing the qualities of the mountain, one cannot see
enough of the vastness of the world. Without knowing the qualities of the water, one cannot see enough of the greatness of the world. As for the qualities of the water, without the cooperation of the mountain, we would not see the flowing and circling of the stream.

Only when the stream meets mountains is it fully expressive; without such reaction there is no animation.

As for the qualities of the mountain, without the cooperation of the water, we could not see them standing, embracing and encircling each other.

Without the streams which thread themselves around and between mountains, there would be no connection, no relation, or encirclement among mountains.

If the qualities of the mountain and water are not clearly manifested, then there would not be any flowing, or embracing and encircling each other. When flowing everywhere, and embracing and encircling each other are not clearly manifested, then the awakening of nondifferentiation and lively spirit cannot be achieved. When the awakening of cultivation of nondifferentiation and lively spirit is grasped, then flowing everywhere, and embracing and encircling each other, will take place. When flowing everywhere, and embracing and encircling each other take place, then the function of mountains and rivers is fulfilled.
When we artists engage in painting mountains and water, our task is not just to value their vastness, but their composition; not to value their quantity, but to select the best.

Lin Yutang's "flexibility in change" is another possible rendering of this last phrase.

Without knowing the selection, we cannot engage in painting more mountains. Without knowing the composition, we cannot engage ourselves with the vastness of the scenery. Furthermore, the work of the brush is not limited to the brush, but lies with what the brush can transmit. The work of the ink wash is not limited to the ink wash, but lies with what is hidden in the ink wash.

"What the brush can transmit" is life spirit. "What is hidden in the ink wash" is mèng yang.

So it is true that the work of the mountain does not lie just with the mountain, but with its quiescence. So it is true that the work of the water does not lie just with the water, but with its movement.

Here the yin yang relationship is reflected by the quiescence of mountains and the motion of water.

Moreover, the work of antiquity does not lie just with its antiquity, but with its freedom from error. The work of the present does not lie just with the present, but with its freedom. Therefore, the
value of antiquity and the present are not confused, and the value of the brush work and ink wash become everlasting, because their functions are perfectly fulfilled. Thus, when we discuss the function of painting, we see the truth of the awakening from non-differentiation and lively spirit. From oneness, deal with the ten thousand things; from the ten thousand things, deal with the oneness. It is not the function of particular aspects of mountain or water or the function of mere brush strokes or ink wash, or the function of antiquity or the present, or the function of the wise man. Within this function, there is reality. In short, it is the oneness of strokes. It is the limitless, it is the Tao of heaven and earth.

To deal with the ten thousand things through oneness and to deal with oneness through the ten thousand things, only the i-hua, which is equated with the Tao of heaven and earth, will suffice.
THE
UNINTERRUPTED
TRANSLATION
CHAPTER 1
ONENESS OF BRUSH STROKES

In remote, ancient days there were no principles. The primordial p'0 (or state of uncarved block) had not been dispersed. As soon as the primordial p'0 was dispersed, principles emerged. How did these principles emerge? They were founded upon the oneness of strokes. This oneness of strokes is the origin of all beings, the root of myriad forms. It is revealed through spiritual reality, and is innate in man. However, man in the world does not realize this. I was the first to discover the principle of oneness of strokes. The principle of oneness of strokes is such that from no-method method originates; from one method, all methods harmonize.

The art of painting is a manifestation of truth. With regard to the delicate arrangement of mountains, streams, and human figures, or the natural characteristics of birds, animals, grass, and trees, or the proportions of ponds, pavilions, towers, and terraces, if one's mind cannot deeply penetrate into their reality and subtly express their appearance, one has not yet understood the fundamental meaning of the oneness of strokes. (As for instance) to both travel far and ascend heights, one's step begins with a single inch near at hand. Hence, oneness of strokes embraces all strokes before their differentiation. Myriad brush
strokes and ink wash all derive and diminish here. Merely rely upon the grasp of men. A single stroke which identifies with universality can clearly reveal the idea of man and fully penetrate all things. Thus the wrist seizes reality. When the wrist seizes reality, it moves the brush with a revolving movement, enriches the strokes by rolling the brush hairs, and leaves them unbounded by any limitations. When the brush moves outward, it is like cutting something; when the brush moves inward, it is like lifting something. To make either a square or a circle, to make a straight line or a bent line, either upward or downward, left or right, all of these movements are similar to water flowing naturally downward and flames burning upward. They are natural and are free from the slightest artificiality. All of these actions possess a lively spirit and their methods are always integrated. All things become real and their manner is vividly and fully expressed. This is because when the primordial uncarved block was dispersed, the principle of oneness of strokes emerged, and ten thousand things were manifested. Confucius said: "My doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity." This proves that oneness is not merely idle talk.
CHAPTER 2
LIBERATION FROM METHODS

Compasses and carpenters' squares are the perfect patterns of circles and squares. Heaven and earth are the motions of circles and squares. The world (society) realizes that there are compasses and squares, but does not understand the meaning of the revolution of heaven and earth. Thus men are bound by method. The enslavement of men by method is from the very time that they initiate their study of art. Although men seize the methods of former and later heaven, still they fail to grasp the real meaning of method. Therefore, even though there is method, men cannot be free from it; to the contrary, method obstructs them. If the oneness of brush strokes is understood, then there is no veil before one's eyes and painting can flow freely from his mind. When painting issues directly from the mind, obstructions naturally recede. To have the true method is to be free from obstructions; to have obstructions is to lack the genuine method. The method is produced in the act of painting and obstructions diminish. When method and obstructions do not mix, the meaning of the action of nature is obtained, the Tao of painting is clear, and the one-stroke is thoroughly understood.
CHAPTER 3
TRANSFORMATION AND FREEDOM

Works by the ancients are the means to knowledge. Those who transform know these sources of inspiration; yet, they are not trapped by them. I have often regretted the bondage of artists by ancient principles. These men cannot be free, since their "knowledge" restrains them. If knowledge is restricted to similarities, it is not broad knowledge. Thus the perfect man has no method. No-method is the method which is the perfect method. Therefore, to have method, one must have transformations. Transformations, then, yield the method of no-method. Painting is the great way of the transformation of the world. The very essence of the conditions of mountains and rivers, the creation of nature (both ancient and modern), the movement of yin yang forces, all these are revealed through brush and ink; upon sketching heaven, earth, and the ten thousand things, their forms joyfully swim in my mind. Contemporary painters do not understand this. They always say, "A certain painter's (or school's) wrinkles and dots can establish a base. If one does not resemble certain painters, his landscapes cannot endure. Certain painters, who are pure and tranquil, can establish actions (show the way). If one does not resemble such painters his art is only sufficient to give pleasure to men (shallow entertainment)." But then I will be
the slave of these artists and not apply them to my own advantage. Even if one closely resembles such painters, then he only eats their leftovers (spoiled soup or broth). Regarding myself, what value does this have for me? The reason I am myself is that there is a real self present. Confucius said: "I am not one born with innate knowledge. I love the past and earnestly pursue it." To love the past and earnestly pursue it, one should carry out transformations.
CHAPTER 4

THE VALUE OF INBORN NATURE

Distinguishing between intuition and knowledge, first there is intuition, then knowledge; or, first there is knowledge, then intuition. Throughout history, even very learned scholars—who relied upon their knowledge and developed their intuition, and, being aware of their intuition then developed their knowledge—were only capable of a single thing. This is small intuition and small knowledge. These men did not yet comprehend the power of the one-stroke, expand it and enlarge it. That which is the one-stroke contains myriad things within it.

Painting is transmitted by the ink, ink is transmitted by the brush, brush is transmitted by the wrist, and the wrist is transmitted by the mind, just as heaven creates life and earth completes it. This is creative intuition. However, it requires that people consider valuable the obtaining of this primordial intuition and do not underestimate or deprecate themselves. If one has reached this type of painting but cannot be free from it, he has bound himself. Regarding primordial intuition, the artist must honor and preserve it, strengthen and apply it. Outwardly, there is no gap (everything in the universe has been penetrated). Inwardly, there is no cessation. Thus the I-Ching states: "The action of
nature is constant, so the chün-tzŭ himself should be strong and unceasing." This means that he values his primordial intuition.
CHAPTER 5
UTILITY OF BRUSH STROKES AND INK WASH

Among the ancients, some have both brush strokes and ink wash. There are also some who have brush strokes without ink wash. Furthermore, there are some who have ink wash but no brush strokes. This is not because the boundaries of mountains and streams are limited (imperfect), but due to variations in the talent of man. The splashing of the ink onto the brush is to be done with spirit. The revolving of the brush moves the ink with spirit. Ink wash cannot be spiritual unless one has achieved the state of concealment in nondifferentiation. If the brush stroke is not endowed with vitality, then the brush is without spirit. If the brush contains the spirit of concealment in nondifferentiation yet cannot release the spirit of life, then this is ink wash without brush strokes. If one's brush can contain the spirit of life, but cannot transform this into concealment in nondifferentiation, then this is having brush strokes without ink wash.

To paint the reality of mountains, streams and the manifold things, depict the back and the front, the different aspects (vertical and horizontal), that which is clustered or scattered, near or distant, inside or outside, vacant or solid, broken or connected, gradations and roughness, richness and elegance, and misty vagueness. These are the essential elements of lively
potentiality. Thus, because men grasp the power of evasive concealment and vitality, mountains, streams and the myriad things offer their spirit to man. If it were not the case, how could one enable brush strokes and ink washes, within the ink, to create embryonic and structured forms, openness and closedness, substance and function, forms and power, bowing and standing, squatting and leaping, that which hides in waters or soars into the clouds, teetering cliffs, vastness, irregular peaks, monumental and awesome heights, odd peaks and dangerous precipices. Without all this, how can one enable brush and ink to fully reveal the spirituality of things?
CHAPTER 6
MOTIONS OF THE WRIST

Some may say: "Painting treatises and drawing instructions manifest quite clearly the application of brush and ink, every detail being very carefully explained. Ever since the ancients, never before has painting the scenery of mountains and seas depended upon empty theories and the prejudice of one's own preferences. I think Ta-ti-tzū's individuality is too high, establishing a method beyond the world! Does he not disregard the simple rudimentaries?"

These words are strange indeed. Talent is from afar, but what one achieves is right at hand. If one grasps what is near at hand, then he can apply it to what is distant (mountains, rivers, etc.). That which is one stroke is the rudimentary commencement of calligraphy and painting. Transformed strokes are the rudimentary ways of applying brush and ink. The heights of mountains and the depths of sea are the primary models used to paint hills or valleys. Actual scenery is the fundamental guide for outlines and wrinkles.

If one only understands the meaning of regional structures, then there is a pattern of regional structures (a formula which limits him). For instance, in the middle there are mountains and peaks. Once the painter has learned how to paint mountains, he
always paints them (accordingly, i.e., in one particular way). Once he has learned how to paint peaks, he never changes. Mountains and peaks are made artificially from the hand of this man. Do you think this is right or not right? Furthermore, (1) if scenery is not changed, one simply knows the superficiality of outlines and wrinkles. (2) If this painting method does not transform, one only knows the rigidity of objective forms. (3) If měng yang is not uniform, one only recognizes the connections and arrangement of mountains and streams. (4) When mountains and forests are not complete, one only knows the emptiness of his composition. If one wants to be free from these four mistakes, he must first begin his practice with a revolving wrist. If the wrist is flexible and alert, then painting can freely change in brush strokes, as if cutting or uncovering—then forms are not foolishly concealed. If your wrist is gifted in substantiality, then your brushwork will be solid and transparent (will penetrate the paper). When the wrist is gifted in flexibility, it flies and dances to unlimited heights. If the wrist follows the correct position (upright), then the line is solid, concentrated in the brush tip. If the wrist is slanted, then incline it for the fullest expression (as with plum branches). If your wrist is quick, hold it and let it go in order to achieve power. If the wrist moves slowly, then ascending and descending have beauty. If the wrist is free, then it is harmoniously natural. If the wrist transforms, then the
diversity is extremely unusual. If the wrist is wonderful, then there are spirit labor and ghost axe. If the wrist has spirit, then streams and mountain peaks present their soul.
CHAPTER 7
HARMONIOUS ATMOSPHERE

When the brush strokes and ink wash are unified, this is called yin yün, that is, harmonious atmosphere. Yin and yün are not divided; they are harmonized (nondifferentiated). Who can split open the harmony, except by the one-stroke? Apply it to painting a mountain, the mountain is spiritualized. Apply it to painting a stream, the stream moves. Apply it to human figures, and they are free from mundane defilements.

By grasping the union of brush strokes and ink wash, understanding the role played by this harmonious atmosphere, becoming a creative artist who opens heaven and earth (the harmony), and transmitting all of the ancients and moderns, one establishes his own school. All this is obtained through wisdom. The painter cannot artificially execute, be stiff or dead, be steeped in mud, become entangled, neglect coherence or be without fundamental principle. In the midst of ink (the sea of ink) one must firmly establish that which is transcendental. Under the tip of the brush, one should firmly produce what is lively. Thus on a one foot long scroll, through painting, the appearance and structure of things are completely transformed. In harmonious atmosphere, illumination issues forth. Even if the brush stroke is not a brush stroke (does not appear particularly desirable), ink is not ink
(fails to impress), and the painting is not a painting (does not qualify as exemplary), my own reality is in the painting, for one moves the ink; the ink does not move him. He holds the brush, the brush does not hold him; he is free from early form or style and does not wait for early style to free him. From Oneness, produce the ten thousand things; through the ten thousand things, govern the One. Transform Oneness into this harmonious atmosphere (yin yün), and this is indeed the highest achievement of art in the world.
CHAPTER 8
REALITY OF MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS

The substance of mountains and rivers contains the reality of the universe. Painting (the method of brush and ink) shows the refinement of mountains and rivers. If one only knows the refinement and neglects inner reality, this reality is jeopardized. If one merely knows the substance but ignores the method, then this method is trifling. A painter must grasp the oneness of method and reality. If this unity (oneness of brush strokes) is not understood, then the ten thousand things are obstructions. If this oneness is perfectly understood, then every one of the ten thousand things will be as it should be. The reality of painting and the method of the brush are simply the substance and expression (refinement) of nature. Mountains and rivers are the conditions or aspects of nature. Wind and rain, dark and light are the expressions of the countenance of mountains and rivers. "Scattered," "dense," "deep," and "far" express the spacing of mountains and rivers. The vertical and horizontal, concealment and disclosure, are the rhythm of mountains and rivers. Through yin and yang, light and shade, mountains and rivers focus (concentrate) their spirit. Water and sky (clouds), meeting and parting, suggest the connectedness of mountains and rivers. Squatting, leaping, facing towards and turning away are the
movements of mountains and rivers. That which is high and bright is the norm of heaven; that which is extensive and deep is the norm of earth. Through wind and clouds, heaven formulates the particular scenery of mountains and rivers. With dashing water against rocks, earth reveals the action and reaction of mountains and rivers. Without the creative power (potentiality) of heaven and earth, mountains and rivers cannot be transformed in unexpected ways. Although there are formulations of winds and clouds, an artist cannot apply the identical forms to the mountains and rivers of nine different districts. Although there is the action and reaction of water rushing against rocks, an artist cannot distinguish all the conditions of mountains and rivers according to the brush tip.

Moreover, the great expanse of landscape extends for a thousand miles; the union of clouds stretches in ten thousand layers; the spread peaks and series of cliffs (continue endlessly). From a limited perspective, even flying fairies could not encompass all this. However, if one uses the one-stroke to fathom it, he can participate in the transforming and sustaining of the universe (heaven and earth). The artist can then describe the conditions of mountains and rivers, estimate the breadth and length of the terrain, judge the dispersion and density of mountain peaks, and penetrate into the obscurity of clouds and mist. Looking at it squarely, the depth of the picture reveals a distance of a
thousand miles. Looking obliquely (from a side view), one sees
ten thousand layers. All this falls under the power of heaven
and earth (the law of nature). Because heaven has such power,
heaven can transform the spiritual reality of mountains and rivers.
Because earth has such power, earth can stir the breath and
pulse of mountains and rivers. I, having mastered one-stroke
painting, can penetrate into the form and spirit of mountains and
rivers. This is why I have always kept to mountains and rivers
during the past fifty years. I neither neglected them as useless
nor let them conceal their secrets. Mountains and rivers let me
communicate for them. They are free from me and I am free
from them. I thoroughly investigate strange peaks, making rough
sketches. Mountains, rivers and I meet on a spiritual level and
mingle together without trace. Therefore, finally all belong to
Ta Ti (Shih-t'ao).
Wrinkles of the brush have the purpose of revealing different aspects (surface features). Because the forms of mountains vary in myriad ways, the same approach will not suffice to reveal their manifold aspects. Although men know these wrinkles, they nevertheless miss solidity or a three-dimensional quality. Even though one employs wrinkles, what does this have to do with mountains? Some mountains are rocks and some are earth. If one only paints these rocks and earth, this is a limitation of wrinkles, not the wrinkles owned by mountains and rivers themselves. As for the wrinkles owned by mountains and rivers themselves, if the body of a peak has a special (peculiar) form, then naturally a special appearance is produced; the forms peaks bear are not identical. Therefore, the method of wrinkles must naturally vary. There are: rolling cloud wrinkles, splitting axe wrinkles, hanging hemp wrinkles, untied rope wrinkles, skull bone wrinkles, devil face wrinkles, asymmetrical wood pile wrinkles, sesame seed wrinkles, rain drop wrinkles, jade fragment wrinkles, glittering and bright wrinkles, round hole wrinkles, alum lump wrinkles, and boneless wrinkles. These are all wrinkles. An artist must follow the different forms of peaks to reproduce the various aspects of peaks. Peaks and wrinkles are one (there must be
an agreement or conformity between them). Wrinkles are produced from peaks, but the peaks cannot transform the substance and function of wrinkles. On the other hand, the wrinkles are able to supply the conditions (potentiality) of peaks. If one has not yet grasped peaks, how can he transform wrinkles? If one has not yet grasped (the technique of different) wrinkles, how can he express various peaks? To render the variations of peaks relies upon the expression of wrinkles. If the wrinkles are of a certain type, then peaks should have such an appearance—for example: sky post peak, bright star peak, lotus flower peak, immortal peak, five old men peak, seven worthy men peak, cloud terrace peak, heavenly horse peak, lion peak, high eyebrows peak, round jade peak, gold wheel peak, incense burner peak, small flower peak, one piece cloth peak, returning wild geese peak—these are all peaks. Among these peaks, form dwells within and wrinkles reveal their appearances (surfaces, aspects or countenances). However, at the moment when I move the ink and hold the brush (when painting), how can I wait for the manifestation of the wrinkles of peaks? As soon as one stroke is put on paper, all others follow it. As soon as one principle is formulated, all others adhere to it. If one examines the practice of the one-stroke and understands the application of all other basic principles, then the structure of mountains and rivers is determined and the method of wrinkles of ancients and moderns is
not different. The potentialities of mountains and rivers reside in the painting; the evasive concealment of the painting lies in the ink; the vitality of the ink depends upon catching the absolute moment, the action of grasping the moment requires continuity of execution. Among those who know how to control movement, their brush work is inwardly real and outwardly transparent. Because one receives the principle of the one-stroke, he applies it in ten thousand directions. Therefore, he is completely free of errors. However, there can also be inward vacancy and outward solidity. Because one is free of method (the method of no-method) and he fails to rely upon thinking, outwardly, form is already possessed, but inwardly there is nothing that is carried. Therefore, the ancients hit the proper measure between emptiness and reality; inwardly and outwardly there was fit control; their method of painting was completely perfected. Without flaws or defects, they obtained the spirit of evasive concealment and the spirit of movement. Thus what should be facing was facing, what should be slanted was slanted, and what should be sideways was sideways. With regard to those who face a wall, dust covered and obstructed by things, how can they avoid hatred from the creator (nature)?
CHAPTER 10
THREE PLANES AND TWO GROUNDS

To divide an area into three levels and two sections seems to be a fault of landscape painting. However, there is something which is not wrong (in such divisions)--as with areas which are naturally separated. For example, when one reaches the river that is the end of the Wu territory, there on yonder shore the many mountains of Chekiang appear. Often times when one paints landscapes such as open peaks, he divides and breaks the monotony. If this is mechanical (automatic), when one sees it, he immediately knows.

Regarding those divisions which separate the area into three parts, the first level is the ground, the second level includes the trees, and the third level has mountains. Looking at it, how can one distinguish between far and near? If one paints these three levels, how can he avoid artificiality? In terms of the two sections, scenery is below (horse, bridges, man, etc.) and mountains are on the upper section. The common way uses clouds in the middle in order to clearly separate the painting into two sections. To paint these three (scenery, clouds, and mountains), first one must integrate them into a unity (a unified atmosphere). One cannot rigidly divide the area into three levels and two sections. What is particularly required is the action of the
free hand. Then one can see the strength of the brush and even put one thousand peaks and ten thousand valleys into a picture. One is entirely free from the mundane. To paint these three, make them alive. Then even if, with reference to details, there are some mistakes, it will not matter.
CHAPTER 11
SIX ESSENTIALS

Painting mountains has six basic essentials: Concentrate on the scenery but not upon mountains, concentrate on the mountains but not upon the scenery, reversed scenery, borrowing scenery, cutting away mundane taste, and dangerous and steep locations. These six essentials must be clearly distinguished. When one concentrates on the scenery and not upon the mountains, the appearance of ancient mountains is as if in winter (dead), but the scenery becomes alive as though it were spring. This is the meaning of concentrating upon the scenery and not upon the mountains. When the trees are withered as in winter, but the mountains look like spring, this is what is meant by turning toward mountains and not toward scenery. Things such as erect trees and tilted rocks or upright rocks and toppling trees, all these are called "reversed scenery." Among things such as quiet mountains where nothing is visible, lively atmosphere is borrowed from these sorts of things: scattered willow trees, bending bamboo, bridges, and thatched huts. This is called borrowing scenery. That which cuts away mundane taste yields freedom from the vulgar sphere. Mountains, rivers and trees are devoid of excess ornamentation. All the brush strokes follow the principle of cutting away mundane taste. But the method of cutting away mundane
taste cannot be achieved unless the brush strokes have perfect flexibility. Concerning dangerous and steep locations, the footprints of man cannot reach them, for there is no path by which to gain access. Regarding locations such as a mountain on an island in the big sea, Pêng-lai (fairyland) and Fang Hu (fairy mountains), unless one is an immortal, he cannot dwell there. Worldly people cannot imagine such places. This is the danger and steepness of mountains and seas. If one tries to paint this danger and steepness, he can do so only at the actual site of steep peaks, hanging cliffs, wooden walk-ways attached to mountain sides, and dangerous conditions of winding and rugged paths. One must reveal the strength of the brush, then it will be a wonder.
CHAPTER 12
FORESTS AND TREES

The ancients painted trees in groups of either three or five. They let there be front views, back views, darkness and light (yin and yang), each thing having its own perfect form (its own expression or correct face). Asymmetry is represented by dwarfed trees among giant ones, thus liveliness is brought about. The method by which I paint pine trees and cypress trees, old locusts and old junipers is, for example, in groups of three or five. This attitude (in holding the brush) resembles that in which a hero rises to dance, looks up and down, squats and stands, dances in a circle, and sways back and forth. The way (method) is sometimes hard, sometimes gentle, moving both the brush and the wrist. For the most part, I use the method of painting stones to paint (trees etc.).

Three fingers all move along with the turning wrist and the forearm stretches out and pulls in—all working together as one force (harmoniously and with unified strength). However, when one uses a heavy brush, he must quickly lift it up from the paper in order to avoid a rough atmosphere. Therefore, whether painting in dark or light shades, the work is formless yet spiritual, empty yet a wonder. The method of painting a great mountain follows this method. All other methods are inadequate.
Unusual in the method of fresh and biting strokes, seek the picture of the appearance of differentiation. This is the explanation of no-explanation.
CHAPTER 13
OCEANS AND WAVES

The sea has vast currents and mountains sink to a lying down posture. The seas swallow and disgorge; mountains ascend and descend. The sea can present its spirit; mountains can convey their pulse. Mountains have peak after peak, numerous cliffs, deep ravines, aged rocks, and sharp features which suddenly rise up. Vapors (on mountain tops), fog, and misty clouds—all are pleasant. This is very similar to the vast currents of the sea. The swallowing and disgorging of the sea is not the seas revealing their spirit, but it is the mountains functioning as the sea.

The sea can likewise function as the mountains. The sea possesses a wide expanse, inexhaustible depths, the roaring sound of tide, a magical spirit, dancing whales, and soaring dragons. Sea tide resembles mountain peaks and night tides are like mountain ranges. This is the way the sea acts like mountains, not that mountains actually dwell in the sea. Thus mountains and seas act like themselves and man has the eye to recognize them. Consider the islands of Ying-chou, Lang-yüan, Jo-shui, P‘êng-lai, Yüan-p’u and Fang-hu. Even if, like chess pieces or stars, they are widely scattered, one can still make deductions and learn about them by means of springs and dragon veins.
If what is obtained from the sea is omitted from mountains, or what is obtained from mountains is omitted from the sea, then men are misconceiving their interrelationship. The way I understand the interrelationship, the mountain is the sea, the sea is the mountain. Mountains and seas know that I understand.
CHAPTER 14

EXPRESSIONS OF THE FOUR SEASONS

Whenever one paints the scenery of the four seasons, the style and flavor vary accordingly. Cloudy weather and clear weather differ from each other. Observe the seasons and determine the weather in order to express them. The ancients have transmitted scenery in poetry. As for spring, it is said: "Always together, grass begins to grow amidst sand; water and clouds expand together and meet." As for summer, it is said: "Under trees the ground is always shady; on the banks of streams, the breeze is very cool." As for autumn, it is said: "From a chilly city wall one can gaze afar (the leaves have fallen); forests produce a sense of melancholy." As for winter, we read: "Where the road disappears, the brush stroke first arrives; when a pond is cold, the ink wash fully expresses it." Also there is winter which does not follow the seasonal pattern. This is poetically expressed as: "Snow is sparse and the weather is lacking in coldness; toward the end of the year, days increase in length." Although one meets winter, he seems to have no feeling of coldness. There is also a poetic line which says: "At year's end, daybreak is earlier; between snow and rain, the sky clears." To apply these two poems to painting (weather lacking in coldness, days growing longer, early dawn, clearing between
snow and rain), these paradoxes of weather, which can be
described through painting, are not limited to winter. They extend
to the other three seasons. There are also half-clear and half-
cloudy days, as when: "A veil of clouds obscures the bright
moon; just after the rain clears up, the evening sun shines."
Also there are days which seem clear and cloudy (at the same
time?). It is not necessary to suppose that darkness indicates
the sunset; darkness may be just the shade of passing clouds. I
take the idea of a poem and express it in painting. There is no
scenery which does not follow the seasons. To paint the clouds
and mountains before one (full scenery), follow the seasons and
transform accordingly. Following this, one will understand that
painting reveals the ideas of poetry and poetry is the Zen of
painting.
CHAPTER 15

SUBLIMITY AND THE COMMONPLACE

When man is confused by things, he attaches himself to the commonplace. When man is ruled by things, his mind will become a servant. When the mind becomes a slave of limitation and rigidity, it destroys itself. Confused by the common taste in his brush work and limited by it, this is the man of rigidity. This can only be harmful and of no advantage to him. Finally, there can be no satisfaction or joy in his mind.

As for me, let things obstruct themselves. Let the commonplace associate with the commonplace. Then my mind will be set free. When the mind is set free, the art of painting emerges. The talent to paint is originally possessed by man. But as for one-stroke painting, men have never before achieved it. To engage oneself in painting one must value thinking (intuition). Intuiting oneness, man's mind arrives at its destination and is joyful. Therefore the art of painting will enter into what is subtle, refined, and beyond imagination.
CHAPTER 16

PURITY THROUGH WU-WEI

The ignorant man and the ordinary man are equally ridiculed. If the ignorant man is not unclear, then he becomes wise. If the ordinary man is not vulgar, then he is pure. The ordinary man becomes ordinary because he is ignorant. The ignorant man becomes ignorant because he is unclear. Therefore the perfect man cannot not be wise, cannot not be enlightened. Because he is wise, he transforms; because he is enlightened, he is free. When confronted by things, he is undisturbed. When he deals with forms, he leaves no traces. When he moves the ink, it is as if the work were already finished. When he grasps the brush, it is as if he were doing nothing. On a one foot wide canvas (small area), he manages heaven, earth, mountains, rivers, and the ten thousand things; yet, his mind is as pure as nothing. Because ignorance is diminished, wisdom is produced. Because ordinariness has vanished, purity of mind is attained.
CHAPTER 17

ORIGIN OF HEAVEN AND COMPLETION BY MAN

Ink can nourish the forms of mountains and rivers. Brush can overturn their structure (break conventional rules of landscape composition). But brush and ink cannot accomplish anything with one hill and one valley; this obstructs brush and ink. Ancient and modern artists all know the details of painting. The best way will let the ink be all-embracing like the great sea. Then if one takes up his brush, he can manage mountains. He can expand the application of brush strokes and ink wash. Therefore one grasps the boundaries of the eight directions, the variety of the nine continents, the solemnity of the five sacred mountains, and the expansiveness of the four seas. When one's brush work expands, it is without outer limits; when it gathers together, there is no inner point. The world does not withhold method (anyone can learn it) nor does heaven withhold talent (anyone can receive it). Talent cannot only be displayed in painting but also through calligraphy. The material forms of calligraphy and painting are different, but their merits as achievements are the same. Oneness of brush strokes is the prerequisite and foundation for calligraphy and painting. Calligraphy and painting are the subtle manifestations of oneness of brush strokes which has been acquired. Those who know the subtle manifestations,
but forget the origin of the fundamental principle of oneness of brush strokes, are like children who forget their ancestors. If one knows that ancient and modern works never perish, yet forgets that their achievement of merit is not limited to men, this is the same as the ten thousand things losing what is given by nature. Heaven can give man a method, but cannot give him skill. Heaven can give men painting, but cannot give men transformations. If men disregard technique and claim their own skill, if they ignore theory and merely look for innovations, nature no longer exists in men. And although there is calligraphy and painting, they cannot endure.

This is what heaven gives to man: Because he can receive, heaven gives to him. If one has a great capacity, then he receives a great gift. If his capacity is small, he receives a small gift. Therefore ancient and modern works of calligraphy and painting originated from heaven and were completed by man. From heaven, there is this kind of gift. Whether they had great or small capacity, all mastered the method of calligraphy and painting and advanced it to some degree. I, therefore, have included this discussion of calligraphy.
CHAPTER 18
CREATIVITY AND THE FULFILLMENT OF NATURE

In the past, men expressed their feelings through brush strokes and ink wash by painting mountains and rivers. Their approach was to meet all variations through the invariable. They proceeded to action through non-action. They did not display themselves, yet they were known, because they achieved awakening from their cultivation of nondifferentiation and grasped the life spirit. Thus, these qualities carried them to the universe, which means that ancient artists obtained the essence of mountains and rivers. Hence, when we examine the movement of the ink wash, we know that the artists had obtained awakening from the cultivation of nondifferentiation. When we examine the exercise of brush strokes, we see that the artists had obtained the life spirit. When we examine the mountains and rivers, we see that the artists had grasped their fundamental structure. When we examine the contours and wrinkles, we see that they had grasped the various expressions of the brush work. When we examine the vastness of the ocean, we see that they had grasped the essence of heaven and earth. When we examine the little bits of grass floating on the water, we know that they had grasped the essence of the moment. When we examine the non-action, we know that they had grasped the essence of action. When we examine one-stroke,
we know that they had grasped the essence of myriad strokes. When we examine the freedom of the wrist, we know that their achievement had gone beyond the brush.

Those who possess these qualities must first let them be revealed by themselves, then they will be able to be applied by the brush. If one should not let these qualities be revealed by themselves, then the brush work will become rigid, shallow, and awkward, and he will not be able to let them be fulfilled spontaneously by themselves. The qualities that heaven gave to the mountain are limitless. The mountain obtains its solidity by being properly placed. It becomes lively through the revelation of spiritual reality. Its forms vary through free transformation. It awakens from nondifferentiation through freedom from opposition. It stretches in all directions through powerful action. It remains prostrate through quiescence. It faces upwards and looks downward through propriety. It winds circuitously through inner harmony. It stands together round-about through careful arrangement. It obtains emptiness and spirituality through wisdom. It obtains purity and delicacy through refinement of the brush work. It obtains its crouching and jumping qualities through courageous force. It obtains its lofty steepness through precipitousness and danger. It shoots up toward heaven through its summit. It obtains its all-embracingness through magnitude. It appears near at hand and clear through its detail. The mountain receives all these
qualities from heaven and spontaneously fulfills them. It is not that
the mountain receives these qualities and interferes with heaven.
Man receives his qualities from heaven and fulfills them. It is not
for the mountain to interfere with man. From this point of view,
we see that the mountain spontaneously fulfills its qualities as they
should be fulfilled. We cannot change the qualities of the mountain
and fulfill them. Therefore the integrated man cannot change the
real qualities of the mountain and enjoy the mountain.

As the mountain possesses its qualities, how can we say that
the water has none? Indeed, the water possesses many qualities.
The water flows everywhere and benefits all things, that is its
virtue. It flows gently downward according to regular channels,
that is its righteousness. Its tides rise and fall and flow without
stopping, that is its Tao. It breaks in splashing waves, that is
its bravery. Sometimes it whirls about, and sometimes it is
tranquil, that is its principle. It flows to the far distance and
reaches everywhere, that is its penetration. It is transparent and
pure, that is its refinement. It turns and flows eastward, that is
its will. The water receives its qualities from the boundless
ocean and the immeasurable depths of the sea, and then fulfills its
duties. If it should not fulfill its qualities and perform its primary
duties, then how could the water embrace all the mountains and
rivers and penetrate into all the veins of the world?

The qualities of the water that are assumed by man are limited,
as if man were drowning in the vast sea and could not see the
shore; also, as if he were standing on the shore and could not
see the other shore of the vast sea. Therefore, what the wise
man knows is the other shore of the sea. Thus when Confucius
stood on the shore by the flowing stream, he listened to its
unceasing murmuring and enjoyed the water. Without knowing the
qualities of the mountain, one cannot see enough of the vastness of
the world. Without knowing the qualities of the water, one cannot
see enough of the greatness of the world. As for the qualities of
water, without the cooperation of the mountain, we would not see
the flowing and circling of the stream. As for the qualities of the
mountain, without the cooperation of the water, we could not see
them standing, embracing and encircling each other. If the qualities
of the mountain and water are not clearly manifested, then there
would not be any flowing, or embracing and encircling each other.
When flowing everywhere, and embracing and encircling each
other are not clearly manifested, then the awakening of non-
differentiation and lively spirit cannot be achieved. When the
awakening of cultivation of nondifferentiation and lively spirit is
graped, then flowing everywhere, and embracing and encircling
each other, will take place. When flowing everywhere, and
embracing and encircling each other take place, then the function
of mountains and rivers is fulfilled.

When we artists engage in painting mountains and water, our
task is not just to value their vastness, but their composition; not to value their quantity, but to select the best. Without knowing the selection, we cannot engage in painting more mountains. Without knowing the composition, we cannot engage ourselves with the vastness of the scenery. Furthermore, the work of the brush is not limited to the brush, but lies with what the brush can transmit. The work of the ink wash is not limited to the ink wash, but lies with what is hidden in the ink wash. So it is true that the work of the mountain does not lie just with the mountain, but with its quiescence. So it is true that the work of the water does not lie just with the water, but with its movement. Moreover, the work of antiquity does not lie with just its antiquity, but with its freedom from error. The work of the present does not lie with just the present, but with its freedom. Therefore, the value of antiquity and the present are not confused, and the value of the brush work and ink wash become everlasting, because their functions are perfectly fulfilled. Thus, when we discuss the function of painting, we see the truth of the awakening from nondifferentiation and lively spirit. From oneness, deal with the ten thousand things; from the ten thousand things, deal with the oneness. It is not the function of particular aspects of mountain or water or the function of mere brush strokes or ink wash, or the function of antiquity or the present, or the function of the wise man. Within this function, there is reality. In short, it is the oneness of strokes. It is the limitless, it is the Tao of heaven and earth.
FINAL REMARKS

As we have seen in the Introduction, Shih-t'ao's Hua-p'u anticipated much of what has been articulated by the twentieth century Japanese aesthetician, Hisamatsu. For the most part, however, this dissertation has been concerned with presenting the words of Shih-t'ao and explicating his message from the point of view of classical Taoism. One may now raise the question: "Apart from his historical significance as an outstanding exponent of Taoist theory of art, what relevance, if any, do Shih-t'ao's philosophical views have for Chinese painting of the twentieth century?"

One may approach this issue in terms of a select circle of Chinese artists in Taiwan who are called the "Fifth Moon Group."¹ In his introduction to an exhibition of the Fifth Moon painters in 1964, Yu Kwang-chung has drawn attention to a most fundamental point which is reflective of Shih-t'ao's philosophy of art. "Art aims at pursuing the infinite through the finite, at grasping nothingness . . . by means of something. . . . Tao is the Form without a form, the Image without an image, yet it appears multi-form to different artists."² Thus, as for Shih-t'ao or Hisamatsu, the purpose of art is to convey formlessness through forms. Describing the approach of the Fifth Moon artists, Yu Kwang-chung states: "To paint as metaphysically and intuitively as do
the Fifth Moon painters, is to create in the spirit of CLAIRVOYANCISM. Clairvoyance is defined as the discernment of a reality which is unavailable to the ordinary senses. It will be remembered that in chapter three, Shih-t'ao discusses "Transformation and Freedom." The freedom of which he speaks is a liberation from methods in the ordinary sense; instead one follows the method of no-method, the only method which leads to the discernment of reality.

The form of the formless, which we have seen to be so central to Oriental philosophy of art, may be difficult for the ordinary reader to grasp. However, when one refers to chapter fourteen of Lao Tzu, he finds:

That which you look at but cannot see Is called the Invisible
That which you listen to but cannot hear Is called the Inaudible
That which you grasp but cannot hold Is called the Unfathomable

None of these three can be inquired after, Hence they blend into one.

This "one" is what Shih-t'ao's principle of the i-hua has applied to Chinese aesthetics.
FOOTNOTES (Final Remarks)

1 Now internationally known, the Fifth Moon Group was founded by Liu Kuo-sung in May of 1956.


3 Ibid., p. 5.

4 Although freedom and transformation are of great importance to both Shih-t'ao and the Fifth Moon artists, individual interpretations of these key notions naturally give rise to basic differences in their actual paintings. In other words, the Fifth Moon painters seek to convey the formless through the images of abstract forms or shapes, Shih-t'ao favoring suggestive landscape forms as a means of expressing formlessness. Therefore, the Fifth Moon artists, like Shih-t'ao, realize the significance of formlessness, but whether their approach leads to this goal is a question for another study.

5 Chang, *Creativity and Taoism*, p. 31.
APPENDIX I

The Original Chinese Text of the Hua-p'u in the Calligraphy of Shih-t'ao Himself‡
畫 譜

畫 堂 第 一

太古無心太朴不散太朴一散而自立笑法于何

藏用于人而人不知所以一畫之法乃自我立

清 湘石 濤 大 溪 材 著

廣 寧 閣 山 材 植 胡 華 著
一画之法者盖以无法生有法以有法生无法也。书法者表也，山川人物之秀，鸟兽生物之性情，池榭楼萱之矩度，未能深入其理曲盡其態，終未能至。一画之洪規也，行遠登高悉起膚寸此一画收盡鴻濛之外即億萬上筆墨未有不始于此而終于此惟聼人之取法耳人能以一畫具體而徵意朗筆通則手腕不虚腕不虚動以旋潤之以轉居之以曠出如
自然而不容毫髮強也，用無不神而法無不貫也理
無入而態無不盡也，蓋自太朴散而一畫之法立
一畫之法立而萬物著矣，孔子曰吾道一以貫之

虛語哉
了法章第二

规矩者方圆之极则也天地规矩之运行也世知有

规矩而不知夫乾旋坤转之义此天地之缚人於法

人之役法於蒙虽攘先天後天之法终不得其理之

所存所以有是法不能了者反为法障之也一画明

则障不在目而画可从心画从心而障自退法障

障无法自画生障自画退法障不参而乾旋坤
古者，識之具也，化者，識其具而弗為也，當其未至也，不化者，識之拘也，識拘於似則不廣故至人無法而法乃為至法，蓋有法必有化，然後為無法，夫畫天地變通之大法也，山川形勢之精英也，古今造物之陶冶也，陰陽氣度之流行也，僧筆墨以寫天，地萬物而陶冶乎我也，今人不明乎此動則曰某家。
可以立基非似某家山水不能傳久某家清淡
可以立基非似某家山水不能傳久某家清淡
非某家為我用也縱逼似某家亦食某家殘羹耳
非某家為我用也縱逼似某家亦食某家殘羹耳
我何有哉我之為我自有我在孔子曰我非生而知
之者好古敏以求之也夫好古敏求則變化出矣
之者好古敏以求之也夫好古敏求則變化出矣
受畫者必尊而守之，彊而用之，無間于外，無息于內。
易曰：天行健，君子以自彊不息，此乃所以尊受也。
古之人有：筆有墨者有，筆無墨者亦有，墨無
筆者非山川限於一偏而人之賦受不齊也，墨之淡
筆也以靈筆之運筆也以神墨非蒙養不靈筆非生
活不神能受蒙養之靈而不解生活之神是有墨無墨
筆也能受生活之神而不變蒙養之靈是有筆無墨
也山川萬物之具體有及有正有偏有側有聚有散
有近有遠有內有外有虛有實有斷有連有層次，
有剩落有半致有飄渺此生活之大端也。故山川
萬物薦靈于人因人樞此營養生活之權苟非其
然焉能使筆墨之下有胎有骨有關有關體有
用有形有勢有形有勢有形有勢有形有勢有形
劑另有磅礴有巖巖有巖巖有巖巖有巖巖有巖巖
書其靈而其神。
或曰：绘语画训章，发明用笔用墨处，精细自古以来，未有山海之势，驾空言托之，同好想大字，字性分太高，世立法不肖，唐浅近处下手，亦异哉。斯言也，受之于广得之，是近识之，于近役之，于远一。画者，字画下手之，浅近功夫也，变画者，用笔用墨，浅近法度也。山海者，一丘一壑之，浅近张本也，形势。
者حرف 之 浅 近 網 領 之 合 得 下 之 三 方 易 之 稽 道 有 方 易 之 三

山 始 终 图 之 手 之 一 方 始 可 不 稽 之 也 是 也 是 始

轉 使 恭 說 雕 磨 於 斯 之 手 可 不 可 之 手 且 也 形 式

不 轉 知 稽 之 是 之 皮 毛 畫 恭 不 化 稽 之 手 也 形 式

蒙 裹 之 蹙 知 之 山 山 之 境 列 山 林 不 備 稽 之 張 本 之

空 虛 為 化 此 四 者 必 先 蹴 之 息 入 也 也 若 虛 蜜 之
混沌裹放出光明纵横笔不笔墨不墨画不画自有我在墨以运夫墨非墨运也操之笔非笔操也脱之笔非笔脱也自一以至万自万以治化一而感氤氲天下之能事毕矣
山川與字神遇而歸化也，聖以終歸不言，大衍也。
頭皴没骨皴皆是皴也必因峰之體異峰之高生峰與皴
皴令皴自峰生峰不能變皴之體用皴却能資峰之形
皴不得其峰何以變不得其皴何以現峰之變不變
在於皴之現与不現皴有是名峰亦有是名如天柱峰
明月峰蓮花峰仙人峰五老峰七賢峰雲華峰天馬峰
獅子峰峨嵋峰劍那峰金輪峰香爐峰小華峰匹練峰
回雁峰玉峰也居其形是皴也開其面然命運墨擀

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筆之時又何待有筆之見，畫之洛紙，衆書隨之，
理者具象理付之而書之，去達理之範圍，其
之形勢得之古今之處，不殊山川之形势在畫之
營養在墨之生活在覺之作用在持若探運者
內實而外空，因受畫之理而應諸萬方所以毫
無悖謬者，亦有內空而外實者，因得化不假思索
外形已具而內不載，也是故古人虛實中度内外
汉武帝第十一

山有汉武帝第十一，然后对山之形不对山之景。景截断险峻，六则者须辨明之，其后对山者不同。景如冬夏，春不处则不如其后。山如春不处则不处，如夏不处则不处。山如春不处则不处，如夏不处则不处。
頭云：尾筆，處皆截斷而截斷之法非至鬆之筆業能入也。除隴者人跡不能到處，可入也。如島山渤海峰表，方壺非仙人莫居非世人可測。山海之險，峻也。若以畫圖隴峻專在削降窪窪槎道崎邁之險，耳頦見筆力是妙。
古人写字或三或五，全其反正阴阳各自同目参。差而不生动有致吾写格格古画之法如三五株其势似英雄起舞俯仰蹲立隔鞭排管或硬或软运笔运腕大都多以写字之法写之。运四指三指直随其婉转或伸或缩齐开齐闭其运笔极重处却须飞提纸上消去猛气故以或浓或淡墨而笔宜而
海涛章第十三

海有涛流山有潜伏海有吐吞山有摧摜海能摇震

能兖运山有层巘叠嶂遂谷溪岫嶂突兀岚气雾

露烟零翠至独无海之涛流海之吞吐山川海之吞

之自居於海也海亦能自居於山也海之洋海之含

之激笑海之层樛wget海之照龙腾海潮如峰汐

如频生海之自居於山亦山之自居於海也山海自居若
四時章第十

元鳥五時之景，風味不同，陰晴之異，寒暑之度，候為之變。

春，水澤草木蕃。夏，草木蕃。秋，水澤草木蕃。冬，草木蕃。
遠塵章第十五

人為物蔽則與塵交人為物使則心受勞。心於刻畫而
自變蔽塵於筆墨而自拘於局隘人也但損無益終不快。
其心也我則物隨物蔽塵隨塵交則心不勞心不勞則有
畫矣畫乃人之所有一畫人所未有夫畫貴乎思。其一則
有所著而快所已畫則精微之入不可測矣。
愚者與俗同識，愚不蒙則智悟，不淺則清悟。因愚受愚，因聰明故至人不處不達，不明達則變明則化，事無形，則無跡，運萬物成器，雖遠如無為，足皆。善天地出萬物而必深若無者愚去，智生，俗除清至也。
兼字章第十七

墨能栽培山川之形笔能倾覆山川之势未可以正经而限量之也今人物无不细悉必使墨海抱驳笔山驾驭然浚广其用所以八极之表九土之变五岳之尊四海之广放之无外收之无内某执法天不执法不但其显于画而又显于字与字者其具两端其功一体画者字画先有此根本也字画者画浚天之经权也能知经权而忘经者之本者
古之立大事者，不惟有超世之才，亦必有坚忍不拔之志。故虽处逆境而志弥坚，遇困境而志益锐。
之是亦受万山之任，以虚脉观之则受颖脱之任，有是任者必先赏其任之所在，然后可以施之于笔，如不赏之则局隘狭陋有不任其任之所为，且天之任於山，万山之得体也以任山之著，便以神之变也以变化之蒙，也以仁山之横，也以动山之潜伏也，以静山之措也，以礼山之秀也以文山之蹲跳也，以武山之峭，也以阴山之逼，也以阳山之舒。
以高山之渾厚也以洪山之淺延也以山天之任而任
非山受任以任天也人能受天之任而任非山之任而任
者自任而任也非山之任而任也自任而任也非而任
者不逆此而樂山也山有是任水豈無任耶水派無
而無任也夫水汪洋廣澤也以德中下循禮也義
朝為不息也以道決於激躍也以勇濺洄平也以法
盈遠通遠也以容泥泓鮮滅也以善折旋朝東也以
言之書也無極也天地之道也
FOOTNOTES (Appendix 1)

APPENDIX II

A Complete English Translation of the Hua-yu Lu
by Lin Yutang
The following essay by Shih-t'ao, dated around 1660, may be called an 'expressionist credo'. It is completely original and shows a psychological insight into the process of artistic creation not found elsewhere in Chinese literature. In style, it is archaically beautiful, terse and taut with meaning, and very difficult to render into English. But of all Chinese essays on art, this is the most profound ever written, both as regards content and style.

The author uses many big, simple words to express certain philosophical ideas. 'Method' (shou) means the method of drawing, with deprecation of the 'methods' of those imitating the old masters. 'Recognition' (shih) means the gift of insight. 'Development' (hua) means often the flexibility that comes from true understanding. 'Reception' (shou) refers often to a natural 'born gift', but also means to 'derive from', to 'be guided, inspired by'. 'Substance' (shih) and 'decoration' (shih) are self-explanatory. Li, as usual, refers to the inner law of being, the inner nature of things. The distinction between shen ('spirit') and ling ('soul') is vague, as in English. 'Function' (jen) has a more philosophic meaning; it refers to the logical place in nature of a phenomenon. Everything in nature (such as hills, streams) has a proper logical function in the universe.

The artist penetrates into the life of the universe and expresses it by means of brush and ink. This should not be construed as Zen. It could just as well be interpreted as polytheism. The universe is alive - that is about all that it says.

All in all, the 'Great Wash-Stick' says some unheard-of things.

1. The One-Stroke Method. In the primeval past there was no method. The primeval chaos was not differentiated. When the primeval chaos was differentiated, method (law) was born. How was this method born? It was born of one-stroke. This one-stroke is that out of which all phenomena are born, applied by the gods and to be applied by man. People of the world do not know this. Therefore this one-stroke (t-hua) method is established by me. The establishment of this one-stroke method creates a method out of no-method, and a method which covers all methods.

All painting comes from the understanding mind. If, then,
the artist fails to understand the inner law and catch the outward gestures of the delicate complexities of hills and streams and human figures, or the nature of birds and animals and vegetation, or the dimensions of ponds and pavilions and towers, it is because he has not grasped the underlying principle of the one-stroke. Even as one makes a distant journey by starting with a first step, so this one-stroke contains in itself the universe and beyond; thousands and myriads of strokes and ink all begin here and end here, waiting only for one to take advantage of it. A man should be able to show the universe in one stroke, his idea clearly expressed, the execution well done. If the wrist* is not fully responsive, then the picture is not good; if the picture is not good, it is because the wrist fails to respond. Give it life and lustre by circular movement and bends, and by stopping movement give it spaciousness. It shoots out, pulls in; it can be square or round, go straight or twist along, upwards or downwards, to the right and to the left. Thus it lifts and dips in sudden turns, breaks loose or cuts across, like the gravitation of water, or the shooting up of a flame, naturally and without the least straining of effort. All this way it penetrates all inner nature of things, gives form to all expressions, never away from the method, and gives life to all. With a casual stroke, hills and streams, all life and vegetation and human habitations take their form and gesture, the scene and the feeling connected with it caught hidden or exposed. People do not see how such a painting is created, but the act of drawing never departs from the understanding mind.

For since the primeval chaos became differentiated, the one-stroke method was born. Since the one-stroke method was born, all objects of the universe appeared. Therefore I say, 'This one principle covers all.'

2. From Method Freed. The T-square and compasses are the perfect norms of squares and circles, and the universe is the revolving movement of squares and circles. People know that there are such squares and circles, but do not know the revolving movement of heaven and earth. Thus heaven and earth bind man to a 'method', and through ignorance man becomes

* In Chinese painting technique, the palm and fingers are held fairly rigid and all movement should start from the wrist.
enslaved by it. Despite all natural and acquired intelligence, one never understands the inner law of things. Thus one is not freed by the method, but on the contrary is obstructed by it. In ancient as well as modern times, the obstructions due to method remain because the nature of one-stroke is not understood. Once it is understood, the obstacles fall away from man's vision and he can paint freely according to his will; painting according to his will automatically removes the obstacles. For painting is depicting the forms of the universe. How can it be done except by brush and ink? Ink comes by itself in heavy and light shades, in wet and dry. The brush is held by man, and from it come contours and texture lines and dry and wet inks. Of course there was a method among the ancients for without the method [of squares and circles] they would be without formal limits. Thus it is seen that the one-stroke is not just to establish formal limits to the limitless, nor does it establish the limits by a 'method'. Method and obstructions do not coexist. Method is created of the painting and obstructions fall away during the creation. When method and obstructions do not interfere, the nature of the revolutions of heaven and earth is understood. Thus the principle of painting is revealed and the principle of the single-stroke is fully comprehended.

3. Development. The ancients furnish the means for insight, recognition. To 'develop' means to know such means and spurn them. I seldom see people who inherit the bequest of the past and can further develop it. Those who inherit but do not develop fail because of their limited insight. If the insight or recognition is limited to being like the past, then it is not a broad insight. Therefore the gentleman takes the past merely as a means of modern development.

Again it is said, 'The perfect man has no method.' It is not that he has no method, but rather the best of methods, which is the method of no-method. For there is expediency besides the principle, and flexible development besides the 'method'. One should know the principle and its flexible adaptation in expediency, as one should know the method and apply it flexibly. For what is painting but the great method of changes and developments in the universe? The spirit and essence of
hills and streams, the development and growth of the creation, the action of the forces of the jin and the yang, all are revealed by the brush and ink for the depiction of this universe and for our enjoyment. People nowadays do not understand this. They always say, ‘The texture strokes of such-and-such an artist can be the foundation of art. One’s art will not have permanent appeal unless it is like the landscape of such-and-such an artist. The calm and detached atmosphere of such-and-such an artist can establish one’s moral tone. Without such skill, art will be merely an amusement.’ Thus the painter becomes a slave to a certain known artist and not his master. Even if he succeeds in imitating the model well, he is only eating the left-overs of his home. Of what value is that to the artist himself? Or some say to me, ‘A certain artist broadens me. Another artist deepens me. To what school shall I belong? What class shall I choose? To whom shall I want to be compared? What should be the influence? What kinds of dots and washes? What kinds of contour and texture lines? What kind of structure and disposition will enable me to come near to the ancients and the ancients to come near to me?’

People who talk like this forget they have a self (‘me’) too, besides the ancient models. I am as I am; I exist. I cannot stick the whiskers of the ancients on my face, nor put their entrails in my belly. I have my own entrails and chest, and I prefer to twitch my own whiskers. If sometimes by chance I happen to resemble someone, it is he who happens to come to me, and not I who try to be his death. This is the way it is. Why should I model myself upon the ancients and not develop my own forte?

[The above is a most important statement of individualism in art, like Yuan Chung-lang’s statement of individualism (hsing-ling) in literature. The full importance of such a statement will be appreciated when one remembers: (1) the horrible, ceaseless and unremitting imitation of all things ancient in art and literature, and (2) the superficial grammarians, stylists and critics who tried to explain all artistic appeal by pointing out the tricks and devices of style. See also the very important colophon in No. 22A below.]
4. Respect Your Gift. As between natural gift and insight, the natural gift comes first. For if insight comes before the gift, it is not an [inborn] gift. The wisest of the ancients developed their inborn gifts from what they learned, and developed what they learned fully aware of what their inborn gift was. But it could concern knowledge of some special thing: this would be a minor talent, for minor ability. They were not able to recognize the power of the one-stroke and fully develop it. For the one-stroke is contained in all things. A painting receives the ink, ink receives from the brush, the brush from the artist's wrist, and the artist's wrist from his directing mind. This receiving is like the way life is created by heaven and forms are made by the earth.

The important thing is that a man should respect his natural gift and not neglect it. To know or conceive a painting and not develop it is to shackle oneself. One who receives the gift of painting must respect it and keep it, strengthen it, not dissipate it abroad, nor let it go to sleep inside. The Yi-ching says, 'The forces of heaven are strong. A gentleman constantly strengthens himself without cease.' This is the way to respect your gift.

5. On Brush and Ink. Among the ancients, some have brush [-power] but no ink [-power]. Others have ink [-power] but no brush [-power]. The difference lies not in external nature but in the man's natural talent itself. The ink splashes on to the brush by soul and the brush controls the ink by spirit. Without nourishment and culture the ink lacks soul; without vitality the brush lacks spirit. Those who receive the well-nourished ink but have not the vital spirit have ink-power but no brush-power. Those who have the vital spirit but do not transform the cultured soul have brush-power, but no ink-power. Life in nature consists in the ink-wash expressing the concrete forms of hills and rivers and things, seen from the front or the back, from the side and on a slant, scattered or clustered together, distant or near, external or internal, solid or empty, continuous or broken; they have layers and sections and falling aspects; they have charm and elusive expanse. Thus all nature presents its soul to man and man has the power to control its vitality and culture. If it were not so, how could the brush and ink create the embryonic form and skeletal structure, the opening up and
Shih-t'ao 1641–c. 1717

6. Control of the Wrist. Some may object, saying, ‘There are instructions on art, in chapter and verse, and detailed instructions on the use of the brush and ink. We have never heard of one talking in vague, general terms about the life and movement of hills and streams and trying to communicate it to others. Perhaps Ta-ti-tse (Great Wash-Stick – Shih-t’ao) thinks highly of himself and wants to establish some kind of esoteric art. So he spurns the lowly details.’

It is certainly not so. What is born in us may be from unknown depths, but its expression is here and now. What can be put into the distance comes from the recognition of some object close at hand. The one-stroke is something elementary in calligraphy and painting; the modified line is a common elementary way of controlling the brush and ink. The mountains and seas are but copies of swellings and hollows of things near by. Life and movement are the elementary principles of contour and texture lines. If one knows, for instance, objects confined to a particular locality, that is the original for a locality. If, then, that particular locality has a certain hill and a certain group of peaks and the artist confines himself to drawing that hill and those peaks, without change, then these become laborious restrictions on the artist’s talent. Would that do?

Besides, without change in the life and movement, attention is given to the superficial contour and texture strokes. Without change in method, the life and movement become stereotyped. Without knowledge of light and shadow, one sees only a row of hills and connections of waterways. Without the provision of woods and hills, one feels the emptiness of the scene. To avoid these four errors, one must begin with wrist control. For if the wrist is infinitely flexible and responsive, then the drawing goes in different ways. If the brush is quick and sure, then the forms take definite shape. When the wrist is firm, the drawing is sure
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and expressive, and when it is flexible, it darts and dances and soars. Or with a perpendicular position, the strokes strike the paper squarely without showing the tip of the brush. Or it may incline and make possible many graceful dragging lines. When it moves fast, it gathers force; when it moves slowly, there is a meaningful dip and turn. When the wrist moves, unconsciously inspired, the result is true to nature, and when it changes, the result can be weird and fantastic. When the wrist is gifted with genius, the painting is beyond the work of human minds, and when the wrist moves with the spirit, the hills and streams yield up their souls.

7. Cloudy Forms. Where the brush and ink blend, cloudy forms are produced. Undifferentiated, such cloudy forms represent chaos, and to bring definition out of chaos, there is inevitably the single-stroke. For with the stroke, the hills come alive, the water moves, the woods grow and prosper and the men are given that carefree atmosphere. To be able to control the mixture of brush and ink (stroke and wash), disperse the cloudy forms and create the universe and thus become a good artist on one's own and be known to posterity – this comes from intelligence. One must avoid laborious details, flatness, or falling into a set pattern, being woolly, lacking coherence or going against the inner nature of things. Stand firm in the sea of ink, seek life in the movement of the brush-tip; create a new surface and texture on the foot-long material, and give forth light from the unformed darkness. Then, even if the brush and ink and the drawings are all wrong, the 'me', the 'self', remains there. For one controls the ink and is not controlled by it, handles the brush and is not handled by it. One gives form to the embryo, the embryo does not assume its own form. From one, it divides into tens of thousands, and from the ten thousand shapes of things, one attends to the One, transforming the One into the primeval cloudy forms – this is the height of artistic ability.

8. Hills and Streams. The substance of hills and streams embodies the inner law of the universe. But by the method of brush and ink one catches their appearance. One cannot attend to the appearance without regard to the inner law, or attend to the substance alone without regard to the method, for thus the
inner law would be violated and the method become futile. To avoid the violation of inner law and the degeneration of method, the ancients tried to reach out to the One. For if the One was not understood, all phenomena would become obstacles; on the other hand, with the understanding of the One, all things have their place. The inner law of painting and the method of the painting brush are but [to catch] the substance and appearance of the universe. The hills and streams are the life and movement of the universe. The changes of light and darkness and rain and clear days are the expression of the hills and streams; the distances and distribution, their layout; the crossing and recrossing and meeting and merging, their rhythm; the light and shade, the yin and yang, their demeanour. The gathering and distribution of water and clouds express the continuity of hills and streams; the gestures of crouching and leaping up and turning of directions express their movements. That which is high and clear constitutes the standard of heaven; that which is thick and heavy forms the norm of earth. Heaven binds the hills and streams by means of winds and clouds; the earth awakens them to movement by means of water and rocks. Without these powers of heaven and earth, there would be no natural disasters. Yet heaven cannot bind up the hills and streams to make them conform to one shape, nor can the movement of the surf striking upon rocks serve to point out the differences in live, moving landscapes.

Besides, the mountains and waters are immense, and cloud formations spread across peaks for ten thousand miles. From a narrow point of view, even genii cannot cover the entire expanse. But with the one-stroke, man takes part in the creation of the universe. The artist surveys the layout of hills and streams, estimates the width and length of the land, examines the distribution of mountain peaks and observes the airy forlornness of clouds and mists. He looks at the earth spread out before him and takes a swift glance at the distant ranges, and knows that they are all under the overlordship of heaven and earth. Heaven has the standard to transform the spirit of hills and streams, earth has this norm to activate their pulse beat, and I have this one-stroke to penetrate into their very body and spirit. Well, then, fifty years ago I was not yet born out of the hills and streams. Nor do I intend to neglect them and let them hide
away their secrets. The hills and streams have appointed me to
speak for them. They are in me and I am in them. I search out
the extraordinary peaks and put them on paper. We meet and
comprehend one another in spirit. Therefore all belong to
Ta-ti-tse.

9 Texture Strokes. The texture strokes are for showing the
surface texture. Since mountains have numerous forms, their
surfaces are also different. People only speak of the texture
strokes without reference to the real surface. Then the strokes
have nothing to do with the mountains. Some are of rocks or
soil, where such surfaces should be indicated, but these are not
the natural textures of the mountains themselves. The different
names of mountain peaks indicate their real convolutions; the
different forms have different surfaces of all kinds. Therefore
there are different kinds of texture strokes (ts'un), such as
'curling-cloud ts'un', 'axe-cut ts'un', 'split-hemp ts'un', 'loose-rope
ts'un', 'ghost-face ts'un', 'skull-like ts'un', 'wood-pile ts'un',
'sesame seed ts'un', 'golden-blue ts'un', 'jade-powder ts'un',
'bullet-hole ts'un', 'pebbles ts'un', 'boneless ts'un'. These are
different ts'un strokes. They must vary as the masses and surfaces
of the peaks demand, and the two, the strokes and the nature of
the real surfaces, have an inner relation. The peaks change their
masses according as their own convolutions change. Such names
of peaks indicate that they are there: The Skycore Peak, Bright
Star Peak, Lotus Peak, Fairy Peak, Five Old Men Peak, Seven
Wise Men Peak, Cloud Terrace Peak, Lion Peak, Crescent
Peak, Lang-yeh (Fairyland) Peak, Golden Wheel Peak,
Incense Pot Peak, Little Flower Peak, White Chain Peak,
Returning Stork Peak. These peaks suggest such forms and the
texture strokes should bring out their surfaces. However, at the
time of drawing, no one has the time to think of the particular
kind of stroke used. One stroke follows another, all following the
natural inner law of their being. The movement of the line
expresses the nature of all.

Thus the life and movement of hills and streams are caught,
and the method of indicating surface texture does not vary
with the schools. The life and movement of hills and streams
are thus contained in the painting; the prevailing spirit of a
painting lies in the ink, and the life of the ink lies in control.
One who has mastery of the ink gives the impression of solid interior and spacious exterior surface. Thus through the gift of the stroke, the artist confronts all without error. There are also times when the interior is left empty while the exterior is fully indicated. Because the stroke swiftly changes and the exterior is fully indicated, further adumbration of the interior is not necessary. Therefore the ancients suited the solids and spaces to the interiors and exteriors, changed their methods as they went along without error; in the full possession of the spirit and atmosphere, they daubed, or cut, or slanted as they pleased. As for those whose vision is completely obstructed as if by a wall, do they not invite disgust from the Creator?

10. Dividing Sections.* The practice of dividing a picture into 'three levels' and 'two sections' seems to ascribe a fault to nature. It is true that on some occasions the natural scene is so divided. Such dividing lines seem to exist as when the Yangtse leads into the sea, and the many mountains of Chekiang rise up on the opposite bank across a river. But often when we see landscapes with such perfunctory divisions, we feel at a glance that they are made to order. The three levels say that the first level is the ground, the second level contains the trees and the third level the mountains. How is one to distinguish the distances? Do they not look like stereotypes? the so-called two sections say that the mountains are on top and the immediate scene is below. In the centre some clusters of cloud cut the picture sharply in two. But to paint a picture one should not stick to the arbitrary three levels and two-sections, but should give the whole picture a sense of cohesion. There should be unexpected break-throughs to show the strength of the artist's conception. Then wherever the brush leads it will not show the common tricks. If this sense of cohesion is established, minor faults may be forgiven.

11. Short-cuts. There are six short-cuts in painting: emphasis on scene, emphasis on mountains, contrast, additions, abrupt

* The following sections, Nos. 10-18, with the exception of 15 and 16, have not been translated by Osvald Sirén in his The Chinese on the Art of Painting. They deal with more specific problems of art, but are illustrative of how Shiht-t’ao’s principle is carried out, and are quite significant.
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endings and suggestions of danger. Emphasis on scene means the scene is in spring, but the hills may be of archaic type as in winter. Emphasis on mountains means the trees are sparse as in winter, but the hillsides may be in spring. Straight trees contrast with leaning rocks, and straight cliffs contrast with down-bending trees: that is contrast. When the hill-lines are vague and there is no sign of life, willows and bamboos, bridges and summer houses are added: that is addition for aesthetic effect. Abrupt endings mean that the scene suddenly comes to a stop, and all the trees and rocks are left uncompleted where the lines break off. Such lines breaking off must disappear into the thinnest possible stroke. There are places suggesting danger where roads are blocked off and no access is possible. There are groups of islands in the sea, like the Gulf of Pei-chih-li and the islands of Peng-lai and Fang-hu, the lands of the fairies, inaccessible to mortals. These are natural inaccessible formations on the seas. As to dangerous places in drawings, they consist mainly of high peaks, sharp bluffs and plank roads built on hillsides; rugged and dangerous for visitors. Here great strength in brush-strokes must be shown.

12. \textit{Woods and Vegetation}. The ancients painted trees in groups of threes or fives, or even nine or ten trees together. They were so arranged that they faced in different directions with light and shadow at different heights, giving a sense of life-likeness. When I paint old pines and cypresses, ash and locust, and there are four or five of them, I make them look like sportsmen rising to dance in different bending, crouching and stretching positions. They seem to move freely. Sometimes the lines are hard and sometimes soft, both the brush and the wrist being moved. Mostly the movement of lines is like that used for painting rock surfaces. Five, four or three fingers move back and forth with evenly distributed energy coming from the wrist and further from the elbow. When the stroke is very heavy the brush must quickly be lifted from the paper, to dissipate that force of movement. Thus there are changes of light and heavy spots, and the result is a spaciousness fraught with life. This method may also be applied to large mountains, but not to other subjects. The goal is to create vibrant energy with haphazardness. This is so, not to be explained.
13. Sea Woves. There are currents in the sea, and hidden veins in mountains. The seas ebb and flow; the mountains dip and bow. The sea can raise spirits, and the mountains have pulse beats. The mountains pile up on one another, break off into ravines and deep valleys in the most unexpected zigzag manner, and the air and clouds and mist breathe through them. This is like currents and tides in the sea; the life does not come from the sea, but the mountain acts like the sea. The sea can also act like the mountains. It has a vast expanse, its calm swish and its wild laughter, its mirages, its leaping whales and roaring dragons. Its surf rises like hill crests and its ebb resembles mountain ranges. This is how the sea acts like the mountains, not because the mountains give it these movements. They act like themselves, and appear so to the human spectator. Take the islands in the sea like Ying-chow, Lang-yuan, Juo-shui, Peng-lai, Yuan-p’u and P’ang-hu. Even though they are scattered around, it can be surmised that there are mountain ranges and springs under the water. One might think of the sea only as the sea and of the mountains strictly as mountains only, which would be a mistake. To me mountains are seas and seas are mountains, and the seas and mountains know that I know. This is the romance of brush and ink.

14. The Four Seasons. The scenes vary with the seasons, each having its own flavour, and they change with the weather. In doing a painting we must have proper regard for the changes. There are ancient sayings that describe them: ‘[The strokes] grow with the grass on sandy banks and their lines join with the water and clouds’ (spring); ‘The land lies always in the shade, and the air is coolest along the bank’ (summer); ‘I look afar at a desolate city and the flat woodland is still dark green’ (autumn); ‘The brush moves ahead where the road fades away; the ink is heavy where the pond is cold’ (winter). There are also days out of season, as, ‘Snow is hard but the temperature is still warm; New Year’s Eve is approaching and the days begin to grow long.’ This indicates that one does not feel cold even in winter. There are also the lines, ‘At the year’s end, the dawn begins to come early; with snow still on the ground, the rainy sky has cleared.’ As applied to painting these [mixed up] scenes can apply not only to winter, but also to the other three
seasons. There are days that are in between clear and rainy, such as, 'A wisp of cloud shadows the moon; the slanting sun shines through a spell of rain.' There are dull days, like, 'Do not mistake it for twilight; around the horizon there is a bank of clouds.'

I have pointed out these lines as appropriate inspiring thoughts for paintings. The scene always indicates the season. All clouds and hills change. Lines sung in this spirit show that a painting often expresses the idea of a poem, and a poem is the Zen of a painting.

15. Keep Away from the Hustle-Bustle. A materialist attends to the affairs of the world. A man enslaved by the material world lives in a state of tension. He who is tense labours over his paintings and destroys himself. He who moves among the hustle and bustle of the world handles his brush and ink with caution and restraint. Thus the environment impinges upon a man, can only do him harm and in the end make him unhappy. I meet the world as it comes, yield superficially to the hustlers, and thus achieve peace of mind. With peace of mind comes a painting. People know about paintings, but do not understand paintings of one-stroke. For the important thing in art work is contemplation. When one contemplates the One (unity of all things), one sees it and that makes one happy. Then one's paintings have a mysterious depth which is unfathomable. I believe nobody has said this before, and therefore touch upon it again.

16. Nonconformism. The intelligence of the ignorant and the conventional people is about the same. The conventional people follow the ignorant and the ignorant have a mind completely veiled. Remove the veil and the ignorant become wise; leave the conventional man uncontaminated and his mind remains pure. Therefore the perfect man has to think his way through, has to have a perspective. With a perspective, he becomes transformed; by thinking his way through, he merges into nature.

* This is essentially Zen (ch'ên) in a narrow sense. In a broader sense, it is Taoist and even Confucianist. The extraordinary thing about some aspects of Confucianism is that it demanded 'Keep clear the originally clear character' and 'constant renewal' (cf. 'Great Learning' chapter in Lîhi).
He responds to the affairs of the world without signs and deals with them without visible traces. His ink seems to be there by itself, and his brush moves as if not doing anything. Thus the little scroll controls all objects of creation. One who keeps his mind calm will find that ignorance is replaced by wisdom and conventionality by purity of mind.

17. Calligraphy Included. Ink can build up the forms of hills and streams, and the brush can threaten and overthrow their foundations. They are not to be treated lightly. After knowing well all human history, one must have a sea of ink controlled by a mountain of brushes to have a wide range of subjects. Let go and it encompasses the eight extremities and the nine continents, the four sacred mountains and the four oceans; gather it up and they are conveniently tucked away in your breast. There is no limitation to methods or skills, and the skills can be shown in calligraphy as well as in paintings. For these are twin arts with the same function. The single-stroke is the origin of all calligraphy and painting, which are, as it were, the material application of the first principle. To know the applications and forget the first principle of the one-stroke is like children who forget their ancestry. One might forget the God-given while entangled with material objects, and so know that the universe is eternal and yet ascribe the work to man. Heaven can give man his method, but not his skill, inspire him with a painting, but the change and development are up to the man himself. When a man, however, strives after skill apart from the method, or makes changes apart from the [concept of the] painting, he is forsaken by heaven, and his work will not last. For heaven grants unto man according to his ability: to the great he grants great wisdom; to the small, petty wisdom.

Therefore all painting and calligraphy are based on heaven and perfected by man. A man acting according to his greater or lesser talent given by heaven will have the [true] method of calligraphy and painting, and develop it further. Therefore I have added this section on calligraphy.

* This is Lao-tse.
† Waiti, inaction. Here it means 'essentially in accordance with nature', or 'by the action of nature itself without human interference'.
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18. *Maintaining Function.* The ancients were able to express forms through brush and ink and by means of hills and streams, the actions without action and transformations of things without [visible means of] transformation. They left a name for posterity without being well known in their lifetime, for they had gone through the awakening and growth and life, recorded in the work they left behind, and had thus incorporated into themselves the substance of hills and streams. With regard to ink, the artist has received the function of awakening and growth; with regard to the brush, the function of life; with regard to mountains and rivers, the function of understructure; with regard to contour and surface lines, the function of spontaneity. With regard to the seas and oceans, he has received the function of the universe; with regard to the low backyards, the function of the moment; with regard to no-action, that of action; with regard to the one-stroke, that of all strokes; with regard to the responsive wrist, that of the tip of the brush.

The artist who takes these functions upon himself must maintain such functions and know what the several functions are before he commits them to paper. If not, his mind is limited and superficial and cannot carry out the functions he undertakes.

For heaven has invested the mountains with many functions. The body of the mountain comes from its location; its spirituality from its spirit; its changes of mood from growth and change; its first awakening and growth (*meng-yang*) from its clarity; its stretching across vast areas from movement; its hidden potentialities came from silence; its bowing and curtsying features from courtesy; its rambling manner comes from a peaceful disposition; its grouping together from caution; its airiness from wisdom; its beauty from delicacy of spirit; its leaping and crouching from the military spirit; its awe-inspiring

* This is the strangest discourse I have ever translated. In this whole section, the artist identifies himself with the universe and its various manifestations. He must justify and maintain the proper 'functions' (*jen*) of the myriad things.

† The artist's creation is compared with the creation of the world of forms out of chaos and life out of forms. When the first vague shapes take form in ink, this is comparable to the awakening and growth of a child's consciousness (*meng-yang*), and later life is given to the picture through the brush-strokes. See above, especially section 5.
aspect from its dangerous shapes; its reaching out to heaven from its height; its massiveness from its generosity; and its superficialities come from what is small in it. These are the functions of the nature of the mountain itself, not what it receives from others to thrust upon Nature. Man can take these functions from Nature and maintain them and not because the mountain thrusts them upon man. Thus it is seen that the mountain takes up these functions and maintains them and they cannot be changed or substituted. Therefore the true man (jen) never leaves his true manhood and enjoys the mountains.

It is the same with water. Water does many things. These are things that water does. It reaches out in vast rivers and lakes to spread its benefits — such is its virtue. It seeks the lowly humble places — such is its sense of courtesy. Its tides ebb and flow ceaselessly — such is its Tao. It breaks out in crashing waves — such is its strength. It swirls about and seeks its level — such is its law. It reaches out to all places — such is its far-reaching power. Its essence is clear and pure — such is its goodness. It turns about and reaches towards the (East China Sea) — such is its goal. For water carries out these functions from the primeval damp chaos. Unless it were able to carry out these functions, it would not be able to circulate to all parts and be the arteries of the world. To know the functions of the mountain without knowing the functions of water is like a man sinking in a sea without knowledge of its shores or standing upon its shores without knowledge of the vast expanse beyond. Therefore the wise man knows the shores and watches the water passing by and his spirit is pleased.

For the immensity of the world is revealed only by the functions of water, and water encircles and embraces it through the pressure of mountains. If the mountains and water do not come together and function, there will be nothing to circulate with or about, nothing to embrace. And if there is no circulation and embracing, there will be no means of life and growth. When the means of life and growth are under control, then there is the wherewithal of circulation and embracing, and with circulation and embracing open and possible, the functions of mountains and water are fulfilled.

As for the painter, the value lies not in the vastness of mountains and water, but in their controllability, not in their number
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and quantity, but in their flexibility in change. Only flexibility in change enables one to paint like a great master, and only control can manage their vastness. The function of the brush is not in the brush, but in something of value created – the function of ink is not in the ink but in its receptivity and response. Likewise the functions in mountains and water lie not in themselves, but in their respective silence and mobility. The proper functions of the ancients and the moderns are not in themselves but in their respective primitiveness (hüang) and freedom. Thus each has its proper function clearly defined, and the ink and brush-work last for ever, for their functions are adequately fulfilled.

So in speaking of these functions, one sees that they are laws of growth and life. The One controls All, and All are controlled by One – not by mountains, not by waters, not by brush and ink, not by the ancients, nor by the moderns, nor by the sages. Such are the functions when they are properly maintained.

[This essay has a postscript by Chang Yüan, dated July 1728.]

22A. Shih-t'ao

[Many of Shih-t'ao's inscriptions on various paintings have been collected. The following are selected as reinforcing the opinions in the Expressionist Credo above.]

People speak of the Northern and Southern School of painting, and of the style of the two Wangs (Wang Hsi-chih and his son) in calligraphy. Chung Yung said once, 'I don't apologize for not having the style of the two Wangs, but for the two Wangs not having my style.' Now if it is asked, Do I belong to the Northern or Southern School, or does the school belong to me? I would laugh and answer, 'I have my own style.'

One wonders what models the ancients followed before they themselves became models for others. But since the ancients have established certain models, modern artists are not permitted to create new models [or styles]. The consequence is that there is no chance of creating a new style. The artists copy
FOOTNOTES (Appendix II)

APPENDIX III

Partial Translation of the Hua-yü Lu in English
by Osvald Siren
technical means, such as brush and ink, become transformed into some mysterious forces, which act like the generative influences of nature by which all things are reproduced. Like so many other critics and painters he extolls the life-impacting power of brush and ink; but it must be acquired by early training, otherwise one cannot move the brush freely nor impart and transmit the spiritual force. On this point he could, no doubt, have found the agreement of practically all Chinese painters, whatever school or style they followed, but when he describes the painter’s psychological attitude, he is no longer in accord with the wen fei or other famous painters of the time: “Men who are dominated by things reap trouble in their hearts . . . . they are carving their pictures and wear themselves out.” The real painter must be completely detached from all worldly cares; he must concentrate on the inner meaning of things; his whole soul must be in the work, only then can it become inscrutable. A peculiar combination of Chinese traditionalism and extreme individualism permeates Shih-t’ao’s essay from the first to the last chapter.

Hua Yü Lu. Notes on Painting. (Edit. Chao Tai Ts’ung Shih).

I. I Hua. All-inclusive Creative Painting.*

“The most ancient had no method; their state of natural simplicity had not been shattered. When this state of natural simplicity was broken up, a method was established:† In what did the method consist? It was the i hua. In this all-inclusive creative painting all

* Our translation of i hua by the above explanatory words is merely tentative. Its correspondence to the Taoist expressions t’ai i, i yin, etc., is evident, but it should also be remembered, that Confucius uses the expression i hoan tih, translated by Legge: "all pervading unity."

† This statement reminds us of certain passages in Chuang-tzu, as for instance the following: "The knowledge of the ancients was perfect. How perfect? At first they did not yet know that there were things. This is the most perfect knowledge; nothing can be added. Next they knew that there were things but did not yet make distinctions between them. Next they made distinctions between them, but did not yet pass judgment upon them. When judgment was passed, Tao was destroyed. With the destruction of Tao individual preferences came into being."
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methods have their origin; it is the root of numberless modes of representation. It lies open to the gods but is hidden to men. The people of the world do not know the i hua method, but I have established it for myself. I have established it by creating a method from no method. It pervades (includes) all other methods.

"In painting one should follow the heart (mind). If one cannot completely enter into the reason and render all the details of beautiful landscapes and figures, the characteristics of birds, animals, grass and trees, or the designs of pavilions, buildings and terraces, the great principle of the all-inclusive creative painting cannot be grasped. If one is going to walk far and climb high, one must start by taking a small step. Thus one can completely gather, in the all-inclusive creative painting, the whole chaos, and numberless works of brush and ink will find their beginning and end in it. If men only fall in with it and grasp it, they can give by this i hua the gist of everything on a small scale. Their ideas will be clear and their brush will be bold, whereas poor pictures reveal a lack of spiritual force in the wrist. The movements of the wrist must be freely revolving, they must transmit the richness of the ink and dominate the open spaces; they must start out as if cutting, draw in like ripping, form circles and squares, straight lines and curves, make swellings and hollows, break and cut resolutely, move horizontally and transversely like water that penetrates deep, or like rising flames of fire, and they must do it all naturally without being in the least forced. If this is done without spirit, the manner is not penetrating, there is no reason in it, and the appearance is not complete. But if one does it without hesitation, with a stroke of the brush, landscapes, figures, birds, animals, grass, trees, pavilions, buildings and terraces will be represented with proper form and strength, life and character. One must give the emotional expression of the landscapes by making some parts in them wide open and other parts hidden or screened. People cannot discover how such paintings are done, but they are never contrary to the heart’s desire. Thus ever since the state of natural simplicity was shattered and
the method of the all-inclusive original painting (i hua) was established, innumerable things of nature have been made manifest by this method. Therefore it has been said:* 'My doctrine is that of an all pervading unity.'

II. Liao Fa. PERFECTED METHOD.

"The compasses and squares produce perfect circles and squares.† The circulations of Heaven and Earth are the origin of compasses and squares. The world knows that there are compasses and squares, but it does not know the principle of the circulations of Heaven and Earth. Yet, it is Heaven and Earth which form the rules (methods) of men. The methods people commonly use are stupid. Some methods are derived from the natural disposition of the painters, some from what they have learned, but they do not contain either reason or meaning. The painters cannot command their methods but are, on the contrary, obstructed by them.

"Such obstructive methods have been practised from old to modern times, because the principle of the all-inclusive original painting (i hua) has not been understood. When the i hua is understood, there is no longer any veil before the eyes, and painting follows the heart. When painting follows the heart, the obstructing veils are removed, and all the innumerable things of Heaven and Earth can be represented. But nobody can do it without the use of brush and ink. The ink is a natural product, it may be rich or thin, dry or moist, but the brush-work is accomplished by man; he makes the hooks and wrinkles and soaks and dries the colours.

"The ancients never did it without a method. If there is no method, then nothing has a proper limit. In the i hua there is nothing which has not its proper limits. There is no method, yet there are proper limits. It is a method without obstructions, or obstructions without a method: The method is born by painting and the obstructions disappear; the method and the obstructions

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* Confucius, Analects. Book IV, Li Jia.
† This expression is taken over from Mencius.
do not blend. The principle of the circulations of Heaven and Earth is reached, and the Tao of painting is made manifest. That is the perfection of i hua.

III. Pien Hua. Transformations.

"The works of the old masters are instruments of knowledge. Transformations mean to understand (these instruments), but not to be as they. I never saw a painter who being like the old still could transform them, and I have often regretted the (conventional) manner of adhering to them, which causes no transformations. This depends on a limited understanding and on adhering simply to the outward likeness. When the superior man borrows from the old masters, he does it in order to open a new road. It has also been said: 'The perfect man has no method,' which does not mean that he is without method. The method which consists in not following any method (of the ancients) is the perfect method.

"Everything has its constant principle but has also its variations. The method should also include transformations. If one knows the constant principle, one can modify it by variations, and if one knows the method, one is also skilled in transformations.

"Painting is the great method to be in harmony with everything in the world. It gives the very essence of the aspects of mountains and rivers. Like the Great Creator it gives shapes to everything, be it old or new. It gives the circulations of the Yin and the Yang. It borrows brush and ink to draw innumerable things of Heaven and Earth and puts one into a happy frame of mind.

"Painters of to-day do not understand this. They say quite often: 'This painter's wrinkles and dots stand on their feet (are firmly fixed); they are not like those of another man whose landscapes will not survive to posterity.' Or: 'This painter is pure and fresh; he is of a high class and not like that other man whose great skill and cleverness serve simply to amuse people.'—One becomes thus the slave of a certain painter instead of using him for one's benefit. Even if one's work is quite like
that of a certain painter, one simply eats the dregs of his soup. What is there in that for oneself?

“Someone said to me: ‘Through this painter my knowledge has been extended, through the other it has been restrained. I am now going to follow a certain school, I shall climb certain steps, I shall imitate certain points, I shall follow certain models, I shall learn how to use colours, how to draw wrinkles and outlines, how to render the shapes; when I know all this, I shall become one of the old masters, and the old master will be myself.’

“He who talks this way knows only that there are old masters, but does not know himself. I am always myself and must naturally be present (in my work). The beards and eyebrows of the old masters cannot grow on my face. The lungs and bowels (thoughts and feelings) of the old masters cannot be transferred into my stomach (mind). I express my own lungs and bowels and show my own beard and eyebrows. If it happens that my work approaches that of some old painter, it is he who comes close to me, not I who am imitating him. I have got it by nature (genius), and there is no one among the old masters whom I cannot follow and transform.”

IV. Ts'ou Shou. Receivings from Nature (Appreciation of Natural Gifts).

“Natural gifts and knowledge (are different things); first come natural gifts, then comes knowledge. Gifts which have been acquired by knowledge are no gifts. The greatest among old and modern masters availed themselves of knowledge, but projected (issued forth) their natural gifts. If one has no natural gifts but expresses simply what one has learned, it does not exceed the work of a minor talent. By such small gifts and little knowledge one cannot realize the power of all-inclusive creative painting (i hua); one cannot expand nor grow. The all-inclusive creative painting contains innumerable things.

“Painting receives (depends on) the ink, the ink depends on ('receives') the brush, the brush depends on the wrist, the wrist depends on the heart (mind), just as Heaven creates life and Earth makes it mature. That
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is really what is meant by natural gifts (receiving). But one must know how to esteem them. If one has gifts by nature but does not appreciate them, it is like throwing oneself away; if one has reached this kind of painting, but does not apply transformations one is tied up. Those who have the gift of painting must know to appreciate it and how to take care of it. They should use it with strength and not open any loop-holes for it, nor let it stop within. In the I Ching it is said: 'The heavenly bodies are regular in their courses, so should the superior man be (strong and indefatigable) in his practice of virtue.' In this saying the gifts of nature are rightly esteemed.

V. Pi Mo. Brush and Ink.

"Among the old painters there are some who have both brush and ink, others who have brush but no ink, others again who have ink but no brush. It is not the boundaries of the mountains and streams which are unequal, but the human talents which are disparate. The ink should be spread about as by the spirit, and the brush should be moved as by a god. If one has no early training, there will be no spirit in the ink; if the brush is not alive, it cannot be divine. If one has acquired the spiritual quality by early training but cannot express the soul of life, then one has ink but no brush. If, on the other hand, one knows how to convey the soul of life but does not combine it with spirit acquired through early training, one has brush but no ink.

"Mountains and streams and the innumerable things of the world are sometimes turning backward, sometimes forward, sometimes inclining one way or other, sometimes brought together, sometimes scattered, sometimes near, sometimes far away; they may be within or without, empty or full, broken or continuous, forming series or appearing without order, luxuriant or like floating fairy mountains. These are all important manifestations of life. Thus mountains and streams and the innumerable things of the world all reveal their spirit to men. Therefore the power of imparting life can be grasped by early training; but how can those who have not grasped it manage brush
and ink and express the pregnant things and the bones, the open and the hidden, form and substance, shape and strength, bending and upright, squatting and jumping, things that dive into the sea or soar to the sky, collapsing ruins, vast spaces, hills and mounds, lofty peaks, strange cliffs and dangerous ravines with all their spiritual force and divine qualities?"

VI. Yin Wan. TURNING THE WRIST.

VII. Yin Yin.* THE GENERATIVE INFLUENCES OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

"The union of brush and ink is like yin yin. This yin yin has no divisions; it is like chaos. In order to open up chaos one must use the i hua. But how? In painting mountains one must give them spirit, in painting water one must give it movement, in painting trees one must make them grow, in painting figures one must give them ease.

"When one has mastered the union of brush and ink, one can express the divisions of yin yin, open up chaos, transmit everything old and new and form a school of one's own. All this must be done with intelligence, one must not carve or chisel the paintings, not be stiff or weak, not make things muddy or confused, not neglect the partitions (of the compositions), nor leave out reason. The first thing to be established in the sea of ink is the divine essence; then life must be brought in at the point of the brush. On a scroll which is no more than a foot long every hair and every bone can be rendered. One must bring light and clearness into chaos.—Even though the brush is not brush, the ink not ink, the painting not painting, I am in it myself: As I turn the ink it is no longer ink, as I grasp the brush it is no longer brush, and as I find an outlet for my pregnancy it is no longer pregnancy. By i hua (all-inclusive creative painting) all the innumerable things of the world may be divided, and these will again

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* Yin Yin is a term used in Taoistic philosophy signifying the generative influence of Heaven and Earth by which all things in nature are constantly reproduced. Cf. Giles, Dictionary 13.826.
unite in regulating the whole. When by this transformation the yin yin has been achieved it is the consummation of ability.”

The titles of the following seven chapters may be noted as they give some general idea about their contents which are, on the whole, less original than those communicated above: VIII. Shan Ch'ian. Landscapes. IX. Ts'un Fa. Methods for Wrinkles. X. Ching Chieh. Outlines. XI. Hsi Ching. Short Cuts. XII. Lin Mu. Forests and Trees. XIII. Hai Tao. The Sea and the Waves. XIV. Ssu Sibh. The Four Seasons.

XV. Yüan Ch'ü. Far from the Dust of the World.

“Men who are beclouded by things become attached to the dust of the world. Men who are dominated by things reap trouble in their hearts. With such trouble in their hearts they carve their pictures and wear themselves out. The dust of the world beclouds their brush and ink, and they become tied up. It is like walking into a blind alley. There is no advantage, only disadvantage in it, it gives no joy to the heart.

“As to me, I leave things to be concealed by things and let the dust mix with the dust. Thus my heart is free from trouble, and when there is no trouble, peace will ensue. Painting may be done by anybody, but ‘inclusive creative painting’ is not done by anyone. It is not done without penetrating thought, only when the thought reaches the origin (or meaning) of things, the heart is inspired, and the painter’s work can then penetrate into the very essence of the smallest things; it becomes inscrutable.—As it seems to me that the ancients have not taken note of this, I mention it in particular.”

The last three chapters are devoted to the following subjects:

XVI. T'o Su. To Escape from the Common. XVII. Chien Tzü. To Combine with Calligraphy. XVIII. Tzü Jen. To Nourish Oneself (with Painting).
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