

196 Early Chinese Texts on Painting

the modern concept of a catalogue in recording certain seals and colophons on them. Chou's work was written in the early Yüan period and is particularly known for its list of the paintings collected after 1295 by his friend Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322), the younger scholar-official who would eventually stimulate a new wave of literati painting and theory in the fourteenth century.

Alexander Soper has translated the *Hua-p'in* of Li Ch'ih in its entirety. Excerpts from Chao Hsi-ku's *Tung-t'ien ching-lu chi* are based on the version by Sarah Handler; those from Chou Mi's *Yün-yen kuoyen* III are based on Nancy Price's translation. Hsio-yen Shih and Susan Bush are responsible for the remaining material. The topic headings in this chapter underline the different aspects of painting as it was discussed by Su Shih and his friends and followers.

The Painter as Artisan or Scholar

Su Shih (1037-1101)

The literary work of Wen T'ung (1019-1079) is the least of his accomplishment (*te*, "virtu"), and his poetry, the minor part of his writing. What is not used up in the poetry overflows to become calligraphy and is transformed to become painting. Both are what is left over from poetry. Those who appreciate his poetry and literary work are increasingly few. As for those who love his accomplishment as they love his painting—alas!

Looking at scholars' painting is like judging the best horses of the empire: one sees how spirit (*i-ch'i*) has been brought out; but when it comes to artisan-painters, one usually just gets whip and skin, stable and fodder, without one speck of superior achievement. After looking at a few feet or so, one is tired. This work by Sung Tzu-fang [late 11th-early 12th century] is truly scholars' painting (*shih-jen hua*) . . .

The brushwork of Master Yen Su [d. 1040] is wholly divine and brilliantly fresh. It has left behind the calculations of the artisan-painter and achieved the poet's purity and beauty.

Master Chu Hsiang-hsien [active ca. 1095-1100] of Sung-ling can write but does not try to pass the examinations, and is good at painting but does not attempt to sell it. He says: "I write to express my mind and paint to set forth my ideas, that is all."

Excerpts from various colophons on painting; see Bush, pp. 12, 29–31; texts 3, 38, 40, 45; also CKHLLP, pp. 630, 49 (in part).

wright
ART 183

STUDY
RESERVE

Sung Literati Theory and Connoisseurship 197

Chang Tun-li (active ca. 1068–ca. 1102)

Although painting's role in the arts is small, its effects of causing people to examine the good and warning against the evil, and of exhorting people to see and hear [such precepts], have benefits. How can it be relegated to the masses of common artisans?

Quoted in his entry by Tang Hou, *Hua-chien* (Criticisms of Painting); and cited in CKHLLP, p. 68.

Li Ch'ih (active late 11th–early 12th century)

Li Kung-lin (1049–ca. 1105) was among the first three in the examinations for the doctorate and was famous for his literary scholarship. He studied Buddhism and apprehended the Tao, with a profound mastery of their subtleties. As a support of the dynasty he was celebrated on all sides. He made so extensive a collection of bells, tripods, old vessels, jade emblems, and rare curios that his house was packed full [of treasures]. He had a refined love of painting. His mind was imbued with imaginative subtleties, so that in very truth he created ineffable wonders, for Heaven had endowed him with talents that far surpassed the common mean . . . Consider now this icon [of an Avalokiteśvara with a long girdle]. Assuredly it is not anything that the vulgar [artisan] could imitate, yet its girdle is exceptionally long, half-again as long as the body. He has produced something strange and abstruse that amazes the vulgar, without losing the qualities in which he is supreme.

Hua-p'in (Evaluation of Paintings, HP).

Cheng Kang-chung (1088–1154)

One cannot know all the painters of the T'ang Dynasty, but even speaking of two, Cheng Ch'ien [8th century] and Yen Li-pen [d. 673], the skill or clumsiness of their use of the brush [cannot be judged because their works are] difficult to obtain and examine. However, some people now take their remaining works to sell, treating them like old masters, and placing Ch'ien above Li-pen without hesitation. Why is this? Ch'ien had great talents and was a Confucian scholar, [his character was as beautiful as] the iridescent peacock against a rose-flushed sky. When relaxed by wine, he would release his ideas, investigate the appearances of things, and speed them to his brush