

# A Quick Introduction to Chinese Painting

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宋  
唐  
清



元 · 黃公望：富春山居圖

**Huang Kung-wang, Yuan Dynasty:  
*Dwelling in the Fu-chun Mountains***

*Dwelling in the Fu-chun Mountains*, a long handscroll, is considered to be Huang Kung-wang's *magnum opus*. It is a work of his old age. It has been one of the most influential paintings in China, copied and imitated by countless artists. This painting portrays the landscape that the artist knew best, that is the region of the Fu-chun mountains, west of Hang-chou. The "mountains" appear as earthy, unimposing hills, with houses in the valleys between them and pavilions on the shore.

"It seems rather to be the product of a series of decisions, some of them a bit capricious, made by the painter at successive stages in the painting process, reflecting his state of mind at the moments when he made them. And yet, and paradoxically perhaps, it achieves the sense of 'rightness' or inherent order which the Chinese call *li*, and which Huang Kung-wang in his treatise on landscapes designates as the ultimate desideratum of painting."

Note: Paraphrased and quoted from *Chinese Painting* by James Cahill, p. 112.





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## FOREWORD

*by Professor Steve Ching, University Librarian*

To stimulate intellectual curiosity and to promote all-round development in students, the Library is pleased to present the Chinese painting promotion program as part of the outside classroom learning activities, in collaboration with the Chinese Civilisation Centre and the Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics.

Through this program, it is hoped that the Library can provide an alternative channel for students to have a very initial understanding of Chinese traditional painting, including its basic classification, basic techniques and very brief historical development. While we understand that it is almost impossible to give you a very comprehensive and in-depth guide to the topic through a few pages or in a few weeks ; we wish to at least aid you to unlock the door to Chinese painting. When your interest is sparked, we are sure that you will have the passion to make the exploration on your own.

Michelangelo says, “A man paints with his brains and not with his hands”. May the paintings we have selected can help you understand more about the cultural riches of our flourishing civilization—how our ancestors looked at the world they were living. Enjoy!

# INTRODUCTION

## *to Chinese Painting*

### ✧ Origins

Chinese painting is closely related to Chinese calligraphy since lines are used in both of them. Not only limited to contour drawing, lines are used to express feelings, thoughts and concepts. For different subjects and purposes, different lines are used. They can be straight or curved, hard or soft, thick or thin, pale or dark and the ink can also be dry or running too. The use of lines and strokes is one of the major characteristics of Chinese painting which make it distinct from other traditions of paintings in the world.

It is not hard to imagine that Chinese painting and Chinese calligraphy share the same origin. In a broader sense, it is not uncommon for a Chinese painting to have the elements of poetry, calligraphy and seal engraving integrating together. In fact, many renowned artist-scholars in ancient China are brilliant poets and calligraphers at the same time, such as the iconic writer Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037-1101).

In ancient China, “painting in poetry and poetry in painting” (詩中有畫，畫中有詩) has always been a golden rule for assessing a good piece of art work. As for inscriptions and seal impressions, they are always employed to explain what the artists think or feel. They are also the decorative elements that make the paintings more thrilling and attractive.

## ※ Basic Classification

There are mainly 4 major categories in Chinese painting:

### 1. *Landscape* (山水)



南唐·巨然：秋山問道圖

Chu-jan, Southern Tang: *Seeking after the Tao in Autumn Mountain*

南唐·巨然：秋山問道圖

2. *Figure* (人物)



明·陳洪綬：喬松仙壽圖

Chèn Hung-shou, Ming: *Admiring the Lanterns*

明·陳洪綬：喬松仙壽圖



3. *Bird and Flower* (花鳥)



南宋·李安忠：竹鷓

Li An-chung, Southern Sung: *Admiring the Lanterns*

南宋·李安忠：竹鷓

4. Genre (風俗)



南宋·李嵩：市擔嬰戲

Li Sung, Southern Song: Knick-knick Peddler and Children

南宋·李嵩：市担嬰戲

## ✧ Basic Techniques

There are mainly two techniques in Chinese painting, which are:

1. **Meticulous (Gong-bi) (工筆)**: It usually refers to “court-style” painting. The artists always pay meticulous attention to every detail in their works.



### 🔍 A Closer Look

Fine details of the cat, including the eyes, tail, ears are clearly shown

北宋·易元吉：猴猫图

I Yüan-chi, Northern Sung: *Monkey and Cats*

北宋·易元吉：猴猫图

2. **Freehand - Shui-mo (水墨)**: It usually refers to “ink and wash painting”. Only black ink is used but in various concentrations.



民國·齊白石：畫蟹

Ch'I Pai-shih, Modern Era: *Painting of a Crab*

民国·齊白石：画蟹

## PAINTINGS OF THE TANG DYNASTY

618–907

During the Tang Dynasty, figure painting flourished at the royal court. Artists such as Chou Fang(周昉) showed the splendor of court life in painting of emperors, palace ladies, and imperial horses. Figure painting reached the height of elegant realism in the art of the court of Southern Tang (937–975). Most of the Tang artists outlined figures with fine black lines and used brilliant color and elaborate details. It is also believed that landscape painting had been evolved into an independent genre during that period. On the other hand, there had been a variety of high quality wall paintings in the Tang Dynasty.

✧ Selected Works



周昉：內人雙陸

Chou Fang: *Ladies Playing Double Sixes*

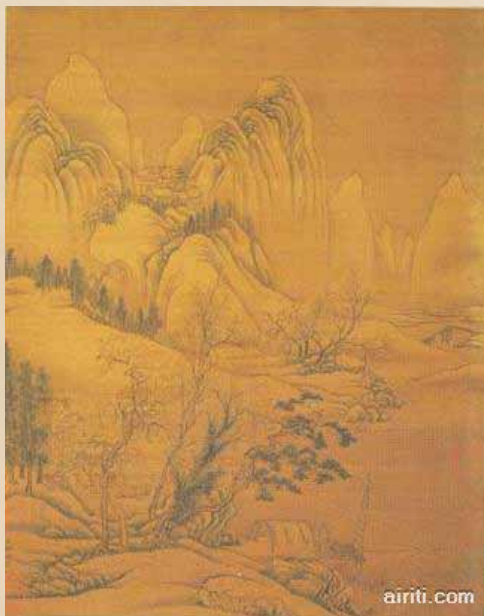
周昉：內人双陆



周昉：紈扇仕女圖

Chou Fang: A Beautiful Lady with a Silk Fan

周昉：紈扇仕女圖



王維：畫雪景  
Wang Wei: (Snowy Scenery)





閻立本：朝貢圖  
Yen Li-pen: Foreign Envoy with Tribute Bearers  
閻立本：朝貢圖



韓幹：牧馬圖  
Han kan: *Pasturing Horses*  
韓幹：牧馬圖

## PAINTINGS OF THE SONG DYNASTY

960–1279

Particularly in the Northern Song Dynasty, many Chinese artists attempted to represent three-dimensional objects and to master the illusion of space. Another group of artists, majorly the scholar-officials in the society, tried to create a new kind of art in which they used their skills in calligraphy to make ink paintings. Quite a number of scholar-artists were dissatisfied with their political engagements and they inclined to pursue painting and calligraphy for their own amusement as a media for personal expression. From this time onward, many artists strove to freely express what they felt and to capture the inner spirit of their subject instead of describing its outward appearance.

Coming to the Southern Song Dynasty, landscape painting of more subtle expression appeared; immeasurable distances were conveyed through the use of blurred outlines, mountain contours disappearing into the mist, and impressionistic treatment of natural phenomena. Emphasis was placed on the spiritual qualities of the painting and on the ability of the artist to reveal the inner harmony of man and nature, as perceived according to Taoist and Buddhist concepts.

※ Selected Works



米芾：春山瑞松圖

Mi fu: Mountains and Pines in Spring

米芾：春山瑞松圖



勾龍爽：山水  
Kou Lung-shung: Landscape  
勾龍爽：山水



李唐：坐石看雲

Li T'ang: *Sitting on a Embankment and Watching Clouds*

李唐：石に坐って雲を見る



夏珪：觀瀑圖

Hisa Kuei: Gazing at a Waterfall

夏珪：滝を見る絵



宋徽宗趙佶：蠟梅山禽

Emperor Hui-tsung: *Chimonanthus and Birds*

宋徽宗趙佶：蠟梅山禽





李嵩：花籃

Li Sung: *Basket of Flowers*

李嵩：花籃



崔白：雙喜圖  
Ts'ui Po: Magpies and Hare  
崔白：双喜图



趙昌：四喜圖  
Chao Chang: *Four Magpies*  
趙昌：四喜圖

## PAINTINGS OF THE YUAN DYNASTY

1271–1368

In the Yuan Dynasty, the whole China was under the rule of foreign conquerors, the Mongols. Many artists were resistant to the Mongol invasion and they tried to withdraw from public lives. They then turned to the pursuit of their own personal or artistic cultivation. Many of them devoted to landscape painting. However, they did not take truth to nature as their purpose was to make it a vehicle for self expression.

Generally speaking, literati painting was the mainstream in the Yuan Dynasty and most of the paintings represented the living environment, taste and ideals of the time. Many paintings were featuring landscape, withered wood, bamboo, stone, plum and orchid. On the other hand, figure paintings that directly depicted social life reduced. Most of the works in the Yuan Dynasty emphasized the literariness and calligraphic flavour, and particular emphasis was paid on the integration of poem, calligraphy and painting. In terms of creative thoughts, the painters in the Yuan Dynasty sought simplicity and freedom in painting, highlighting the natural outflow of subjective emotion.

✧ Selected Works



趙孟頫：鵝華秋色  
Chao Meng-fu : Autumn Colors on the Chiao and Hua Mountains  
趙孟頫：鵝華秋色



黃公望：富春山居圖

Huang Kung-wang: Dwelling in the Fu-chun Mountains



倪瓚：紫芝山房圖  
Ni Tsan : *The Tzu-chih Studio*



柯九思：晚香高節

Ko Chiu-ssu: *Bamboo and Chrysanthemums*



## PAINTINGS OF THE MING DYNASTY

1368–1644

During the the Ming Dynasty, Chinese painting developed greatly from the achievements in painted art during the earlier Song Dynasty and Yuan Dynasty. The painting techniques which were invented and developed before the Ming period became classical during this period. More colours were adopted and seal brown became much more widely used, and even over-used. A spectrum of new painting techniques were innovated. Calligraphy and poetry were much more closely and perfectly combined with the art of painting.

✧ Selected Works



董其昌：北固山  
Tung Chi-chang: Mt. Pei-ku  
董其昌：北固山



唐寅：山路松聲

Tang Yin: Sound of Pines on a Mountain Path

唐寅：山路での松の音



沈周：坐賞清江  
Shen Chou: Watching a Clear River  
沈周：坐賞清江



文徵明：太湖石竹

Wen Cheng-ming: *(Stone and Bamboo in Tai Hu)*



仇英：月下吹笛

Chiu Ying: *Playing the Flute Under the Moon*

仇英：月下吹笛

## PAINTINGS OF THE QING DYNASTY

1644–1911

As for the Qing Dynasty, court painting developed greatly during the reigns of Emperor Kangxi (康熙) and Qianlong (乾隆). New styles and features emerged which were completely different from those of academy painting of previous dynasties. In addition, literati painting came to be the mainstream of painting. Landscape painting and the freehand brushwork of ink painting were prevailing. Some artists admired for the ancient classic styles and some others advocated innovation. There were different pursuits in terms of the subject matter, the theme, and brushwork techniques, which resulted in a wide range of styles and schools. Moreover, the Ming loyalists, another group of artists in the Qing Dynasty, chose to draw inspiration from the natural beauty of the local scenery. Since many of them wished to escape from the chaos of the Manchu conquest, they found sanctuary in the nature.

※ Selected Works



王原祁：松壑流泉

Wang Yuan-ch'i: Streams and Pines in the Valley

王原祁：松、谷及び流れる泉の絵





吳歷：山水逸品  
Wu Li: Exquisite Artistic Work of Landscape



禪壽平：花卉  
Yü Shou-p'ing: Flowers  
禪壽平：花卉



八大山人：松鹿圖

Pa Ta-Shen Jen: A Deer at the Side of A Pine

八大山人：松鹿圖



石濤：詩書畫三絕

Shih Tao: Talents in Poetry, Calligraphy & Painting

石濤：詩書畫三絕



鄭燮(板橋)：墨竹  
Cheng Xia: *Bamboos in Ink*  
鄭燮：墨竹

# LEARNING RESOURCES ON CHINESE PAINTING IN THE LIBRARY

## Overview

1	A background to Chinese painting / by Soame Jenyns.	ND1040 .J4 1966	Circulation Collection
2	Chinese painting / T.C. Lai.	ND1040 .L33 1992	Circulation Collection
3	Chinese painting : leading masters and principles / Osvald Sirén.	ND1040 .S492 1973 v.1-7	Circulation Collection
4	Chinese painting style : media, methods, and principles of form = 中國畫之風格 / Jerome Silbergeld.	ND1040 .S47 1982	Circulation Collection
5	风格与世变 : 中国绘画十论 = Style in transformation : studies on the history of Chinese painting / 石守谦著	ND1040 .S555 2008	Circulation Collection
6	國畫論 / 魯凡之著.	ND1040 .L59 1998	Circulation Collection
7	畫境探幽 : 中國繪畫美學初探 / 高建平著.	ND1040 .K343 1995	Circulation Collection
8	繪畫 / 王耀庭著.	ND1040 .W37 1985 5-HRS	Reserve (Semi-closed)
9	歷代論畫名著彙編 / 沈子丞編.	ND1040 .L435 1982	Circulation Collection
10	中國畫論輯要 / 周積寅編著.	ND1040 .C56 1985	Circulation Collection
11	中國畫藝術欣賞 / 陳瑞林著.	ND1040 .C5165 1997	Circulation Collection
12	中国绘画 / 主編中国文物学会专家委员会	ND1040 .Z428 2008	Circulation Collection
13	中國畫論辭典 / 陶明君編著.	ND1040 .T36 1993	Reference Collection
14	中國畫論辭典 [electronic resource] = / 陶明君編著.	online access from China reference works online	
15	中國名畫鑒賞辭典 / [主編伍蠡甫].	ND1040 .Z45 1993	Reference Collection
16	中國書畫鑑賞辭典 / 郎紹君 ... [等]主編.	ND1040 .Z46 1988	Reference Collection
17	中國歷代畫目大典. 遼至元代卷 / 周積寅, 王鳳珠編著.	ND1042 .Z582 2002	Reference Collection
18	中國歷代畫目大典. 戰國至宋代卷 / 周積寅, 王鳳珠編著.	ND1042 .Z58 2002	Reference Collection

### *The Tang Dynasty*

- |   |                                                                                           |                      |                        |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Beyond representation : Chinese painting and calligraphy, 8th-14th century / Wen C. Fong. | ND1043.3 .F66 1992   | Circulation Collection |
| 2 | 晉唐古風 / [上海書畫出版社編].                                                                        | ND1043 .J45 2003     | Circulation Collection |
| 3 | 隋唐畫家史料 / 陳高華編 .                                                                           | ND1043.24 .S85       | Circulation Collection |
| 4 | 隋唐五代繪畫 / 何恭上編著 .                                                                          | ND1043.3 .H6 1995    | Circulation Collection |
| 5 | 唐朝名畫錄 / 朱景玄撰 ; 溫肇桐注 .                                                                     | C0202815             | Shatin Branch          |
| 6 | 唐朝名畫錄 / [朱景玄撰].                                                                           | AC149 .S7 1987 v.812 | Compact Storage        |
| 7 | 唐五代畫論 / 何志明, 潘運告編著                                                                        | ND1040 .H63 1997     | Circulation Collection |

### *The Song Dynasty*

- |   |                                                                                                      |                     |                        |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Poetry and painting in Song China : the subtle art of dissent / Alfreda Murck.                       | C0202818            | Shatin Branch          |
| 2 | 宋代繪畫史 : 附五代, 遼, 金 / 徐書城著 .                                                                           | ND1043.4 .X828 2000 | Circulation Collection |
| 3 | 精湛的宋代繪畫 / 徐士蘋著 .                                                                                     | ND1043.4 .X825 1999 | Circulation Collection |
| 4 | 兩宋名畫精華 / 何恭上編著 .                                                                                     | ND1043.4 .H63 1996  | Circulation Collection |
| 5 | 南宋繪畫史 / 陳野著 .                                                                                        | ND1043.4 .C437 2008 | Circulation Collection |
| 6 | 南宋四家畫集 : 李唐, 劉松年, 馬遠, 夏圭 = Collection of paintings of the four schools of the Southern Song dynasty. | ND1043.4 .N35 1997  | Circulation Collection |
| 7 | 元代四大家 : 文人畫的重要里程碑 / 顧丞峰主編 ; 萬新華著 .                                                                   | ND1043.4 .W26 2003  | Circulation Collection |
| 8 | 宋代名畫藻鑒 / 徐建融著 .                                                                                      | ND1043.4 X78 1999   | Circulation Collection |
| 9 | 宋元明清書畫家傳世作品年表 / 劉九庵編著 .                                                                              | ND1048 .L57 1997    | Reference Collection   |

### *The Yuan Dynasty*

- |   |                                    |                     |                        |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 畫外笛聲揚 : 元明清繪畫名品欣賞 / 羅青著 .          | C0202817            | Shatin Branch          |
| 2 | 元朝名畫精華 / 何恭上著 .                    | ND1043.4 .H65 1996  | Circulation Collection |
| 3 | 元代花鳥畫新風貌之研究 / 黃光男著 .               | ND1043.4 .H84 1986  | Circulation Collection |
| 4 | 元代繪畫史 / 杜哲森著 .                     | ND1043.4 .D838 2000 | Circulation Collection |
| 5 | 元代四大家 : 文人畫的重要里程碑 / 顧丞峰主編 ; 萬新華著 . | ND1043.4 .W26 2003  | Circulation Collection |

- |   |                      |                         |                           |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 6 | 元明清绘画研究十论 / 徐建融著.    | ND1043.4 .X7834<br>2004 | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 7 | 元人畫風 / 李一, 陳慶, 啓佳等編. | ND1043.4 .Y82 1997      | Circulation<br>Collection |

### *The Ming Dynasty*

- |   |                                                                                              |                         |                           |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | The distant mountains : Chinese painting of the late Ming Dynasty, 1570-1644 / James Cahill. | ND1043 .C33 v.3         | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 2 | 明代畫論 / 潘運告主編; 運告譯註.                                                                          | ND1040 .M536 2002       | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 3 | 碧叶金英: 明清花鸟画 / [郎天咏编著].                                                                       | ND1403.C6 L36 2004      | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 4 | 明代绘画 / 主編周林生.                                                                                | ND1043.5 .M5472<br>2004 | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 5 | 明代人物畫風 / 劉曉寧, 劉平, 劉春編.                                                                       | C0203009                | Shatin Branch             |
| 6 | 明代山水畫集: 南京博物院藏 / 主編徐湖平, 劉建平.                                                                 | ND1366.715 .N36<br>2000 | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 7 | 明代浙派: 大传统与现时的叠合 / 顾平著.                                                                       | ND1043.5 .G825 2003     | Circulation<br>Collection |

### *The Qing Dynasty*

- |   |                               |                                 |                           |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 清初四王畫派研究論文集 / 朵雲編輯部編.         | ND1043.5 .Q24 1993              | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 2 | 清初正統畫派 / 編譯林秀薇; 圖版解說楊美莉.      | ND1043.53.O78 Q48<br>1985 5-HRS | Reserve<br>(Semi-closed)  |
| 3 | 清代畫論 / 潘運告主編; 雲告譯註.           | ND1043.5 .Q246 2003             | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 4 | 清代绘画 / 主編周林生.                 | ND1043.5 Q243 2004              | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 5 | 清代四僧: 末世的輝煌 / 顧丞峰主編; 呂曉著.     | ND1043.5 .L825 2002             | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 6 | 清代四王: 傳統筆墨的終極展示 / 顧丞峰主編; 商勇著. | ND1043.5 .S427 2002             | Circulation<br>Collection |
| 7 | 情深筆墨靈: 清代繪畫名品欣賞 / 羅青.         | ND1043.5 .L58 1999              | Circulation<br>Collection |



## MAJOR REFERENCES

### ✧ Books

Barnhart, Richard M., et al. *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*. New Haven: Yale University Press ; Beijing : Foreign Languages Press, 1997

Cahill, James. *Chinese Painiting*. Geneva: skira; London: Macmilla, 1977.

Zhang, Anzhi. *A History of Chinese Painting*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2002.

徐琛、張朝暉著。《中國繪畫史》。台北：文津出版社。1996。

### ✧ Online Resources

Cultural China. <http://www.cultural-china.com>

NPM Online. (故宮線上). <http://www.airitinpm.com/>

Wikipedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_painting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_painting)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/qing\\_1/hd\\_qing\\_1.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/qing_1/hd_qing_1.htm)

## QUIZ

There will be an online quiz on Chinese painting from **19 March 2010 to 21 April 2010** on our website: [xxxxx.cityu.edu.html](http://xxxxx.cityu.edu.html). Please join and don't miss the chance to win fabulous prizes.

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