

30 Most Famous Chinese Painting Art Masterpieces You Really Need to Know

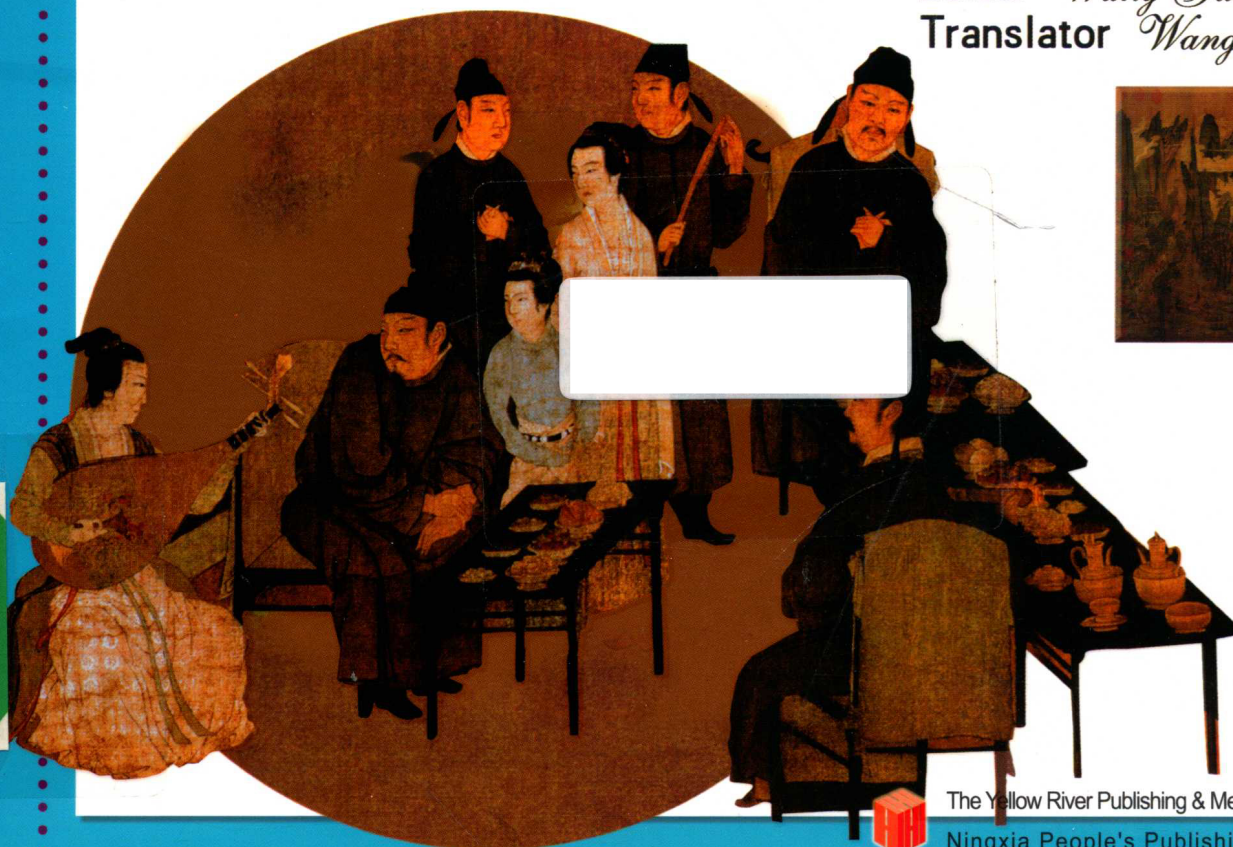


**Classics
Appreciation of
Chinese
Visual Arts**



Painting

Editor *Wang Yunliang*
Translator *Wang Rong*



The Yellow River Publishing & Media Group Co., Ltd
Ningxia People's Publishing House

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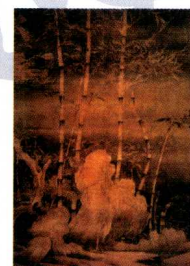
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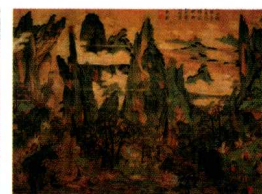
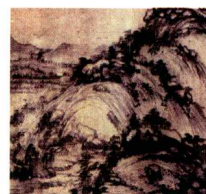
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NYMPH OF THE LUO RIVER

Painter: Gu Kaizhi

Painting Year: the Eastern Jin Dynasty

Material: silk scroll

Dimension: vertical length of 27.1 centimeters of and horizontal length of 572.8 centimeters

Collection Place: the Palace Museum in Beijing



The *Nymph of the Luo River* was created by Gu Kaizhi, a great painter in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, according to Cao Zhi's literary masterpiece *Ode to the Nymph of the Luo River*. This artwork makes

a vivid and affecting depiction of the story about original ode in the form of long scroll through affluent artistic imaginations. The story plot of the painting develops from right to left and the images of Cao Zhi and the Nymph of the Luo River repeatedly appears in different parts of the painting. The painting shows the beauty of the Nymph of the Luo River, as well as Cao Zhi's admiration for her and his melancholy resulted from his unfulfilled wish. The picture has bright colors and a simple style with exquisite manifestations of characters and their personalities. The stones, trees, mountains and water that serve as the foils divide the story of the picture and simultaneously highlight the circumstance of the picture.

The original copy of the *Nymph of the Luo River* has been lost. What you see now is the facsimile painted in the Song Dynasty.

The Long Scroll

The Chinese painting painted on the silk and rice paper is called "scroll" if the painting's "vertical length" is shorter than its "horizontal length" and the picture can be rolled up. Otherwise, the painting is called "long scroll" if its "horizontal length" is particularly long.

Brief Background

Story Corner

Cao Zhi and the *Ode to the Nymph of the Luo River*

Cao Zhi and Cao Pi were both sons of Cao Cao in the Three-Kingdom Period. After defeating Yuan Shao, Cao Cao got a beauty with the surname of Zhen. Cao Zhi was quite infatuated with Lady Zhen but Cao Pi took her way. Later Cao Pi became the emperor and Lady Zhen became the queen. However, she passed away with melancholy before long. One day, Cao Zhi came to the capital to meet the emperor, who gave him the pillow Lady Zhen had used. Cao Zhi felt very sad upon seeing the pillow which reminded him of Lady Zhen. When he was on his way back to his fiefdom, he walked past the Luo River and had a dream at night, in which he saw Lady Zhen was became the nymph of the Luo River and came to meet him. Cao Zhi was full of sadness and sensations after waking up and wrote the famous *Ode to the Nymph of the Luo River* to express his pain of missing Lady Zhen and his dissatisfaction with no freedom in marriage.

Art Master

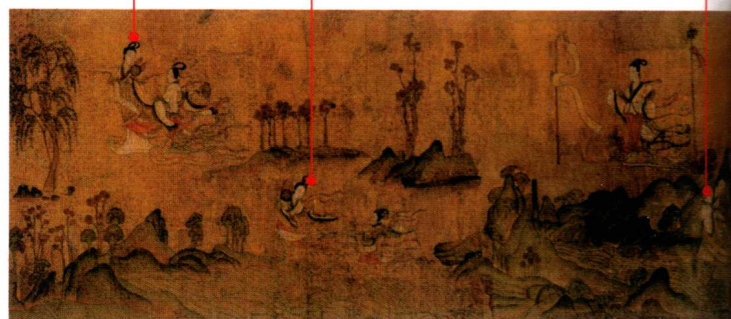
Gu Kaizhi (circa 345-409)

He was a famous painter in the Eastern Jin Dynasty and came from Jinling (today's Wuxi, Jiangsu). He was well learned and capable with superb painting skills. He was good at painting religious figures, famous people and females. His pictures had great influence upon his time and the later ages.

This part shows the scene when Cao Zhi saw the Nymph of the Luo River for the first time. Cao Zhi was very excited but reminded himself of being calm. In the painter's design, he took a sitting position, which expressed this psychological action. The Nymph of the Luo River wanted to approach Cao Zhi and was about to speak but hesitantly bit her tongue. The expressions of people were richly and exquisitely painted with fine and powerful lines. These lines were fluent and continuous like the silk just spun by the silkworm in the spring. People of later generations called this method of painting people "Gaogu Silk-line Painting."

The Nymph of the Luo River was wandering, singing and dancing in the mountains, in the air and above the water.

The beauty of the Nymph of the Luo River was shown by comparison. It looked like the sun rising from the rosy clouds of the dawn while being looked at from a distance and resembled the lotus coming out of the clean water in a close view.



Cao Zhi was sitting on a horse-drawn carriage that was flying away and looked back with the reluctance to leave.

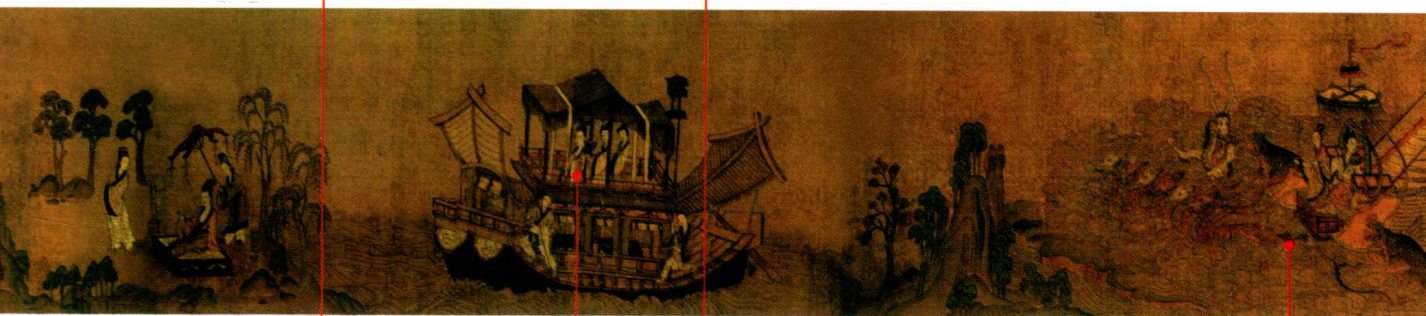
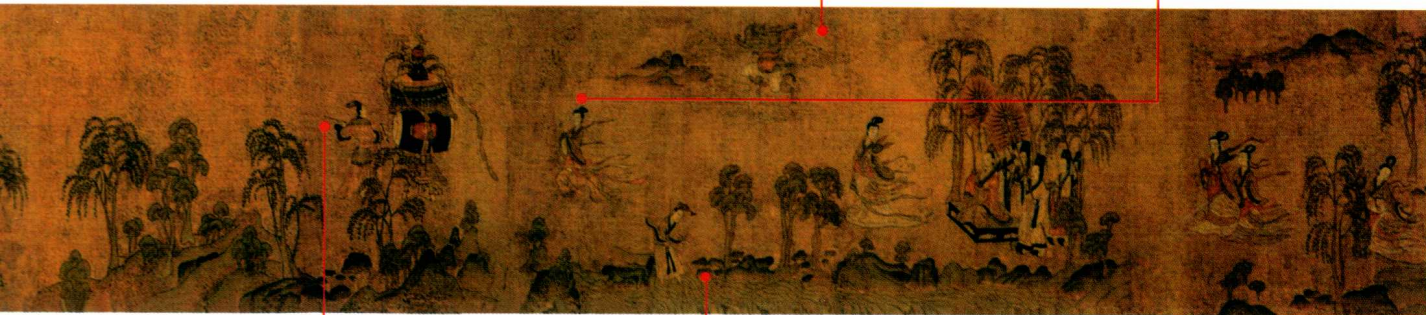


The Nymph of the Luo River came over lightly on the water. She was about to walk forward but hesitantly stopped her pace. Her posture is as light as the flying wild goose while her graceful gesture is like a swimming dragon.

Cao Zhi came to the waterside of the Luo River surrounded by his servants.

The Goddess of Wind was taking the wind.

The Goddess of Songs was singing.



The Goddess of Water was beating the drum.

Cao Zhi was standing on the upper deck of a ship and focusing on the long distance, hoping that the Nymph of the Luo River would appear again.

The Goddess of River was calming the water waves.

The Nymph of the Luo River took the carriage drawn by weird legendary animals and left walking over ripples.

Do You Know?



Paintings of the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties

The Chinese painting began to mature in the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties. The painting style shifted from being rough and grand to being fine and exquisite. Because many men of letters such as Gu Kaizhi were also engaged in painting, the cultural taste of paintings was greatly improved. The figure painting had been matured and the painting of landscape gradually evolved into an independent school.

EMPEROR TAIZONG RECEIVING THE TIBETAN ENVOY

Painter: Yan Liben

Painting Year: the Tang Dynasty

Material: silk scroll

Dimension: vertical length of 38.5 centimeters and horizontal length of 129.6 centimeters

Collection Place: the Palace Museum in Beijing



The *Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy* was one of the important figure paintings in the early Tang Dynasty. This artwork depicts the scene that Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty, who sat on a sedan chair, received Gar Songtsen, a Tibetan envoy that came to escort Princess Wencheng back to Tibet to finish the marriage. It truly reflects the historical facts about the friendly communication between the Han people and the remote minorities in the Tang Dynasty.

The shapes of figures in the painting are clear and beautiful. The lines of these people's clothes are drawn in a simple and solemn method. The facial features of these figures are exquisitely drawn with bright and steady colors. In the ancient figure paintings, the sizes of figures were usually based on their social status. People with higher status were bigger in size in the painting while people with lower status had smaller sizes. Therefore, we can judge whether the people in the painting are noble or humble according to their sizes in the picture. In this painting, the size of Emperor Taizong is the biggest while the Tibetan envoy is drawn with a smaller size and the images of maids are the smallest. Moreover, the picture highlights people while ignoring the background, which is another feature of the figure painting at that time.



Gar Songtsen was saluting to Emperor Taizong. His expression displayed his admiration. He wore a traditional Tibetan gown decorated with stringed pearls and his face carried the features of Tibetan people.

Emperor Taizong took the most important position in the painting. He wore a graceful, grand, solemn and stately expression but looked very peaceful, gentle and wise, fully showing his welcome for the Tibetan envoy, as well as his foresight in making the important decision of marrying Princess Wencheng to the Lord of Tibet.

The person wearing white clothes and holding an office plate seemed to be a translator or a eunuch.

Art Master

Yan Liben (circa 601-673)

He was an excellent painter in the early Tang Dynasty and came from Wannian, Yongzhou (today's Xi'an, Shaanxi). He once served the court as the Minister of Works and then was promoted to the Right Prime Minister. He was good at painting portraits and historical events. The topics of his pictures were usually portraits of emperors, nobles and officials, as well as the historical events in the court.

Showcase Window



Elaborate-style Painting

It is one category of the Chinese painting. The drawings of objects and figures in the picture, as well as the application of colors, are finished in a meticulous and exquisite method. Among them, the paintings with heavy and rich colors are called "heavy-color elaborate-style paintings" while the ones with light colors are called "light-color elaborate-style paintings."

Gar Songtsen wore the Tibetan clothes and stood behind the protocol officer, saluting to Emperor Taizong.

The protocol officer who wore a red gown took an office plate in his hands and introduced Gar Songtsen to Emperor Taizong.





Princess Wencheng's Marriage in Tibet

In the first year of the Tang Dynasty, a minority country rose in the Tibetan Plateau. Its name was Tubo (today's Tibet). In 629 AD, the 13-year-old Songtsan Gampo became the Tsanpo (i.e. the emperor) of Tubo. He admired the Tang Dynasty very much and wanted to build friendly relations with the Tang Dynasty. In 634 AD, Songtsan Gampo asked the Tang Dynasty for a royal marriage. Emperor Taizong also wanted to achieve peace and friendship with Tubo, so he promised to marry Princess Wencheng to Songtsan Gampo. In the first month of 641 AD, Princess Wencheng married the Lord of Tubo. Songtsan Gampo sent his Prime Minister Gar Songtsen to escort the princess to Tibet. He also built city walls and palaces following the construction styles of the Tang Dynasty in Luoxie City (today's Lhasa, Tibet) for Princess Wencheng. The legend said that they were the prototype of the Potala Palace. After Princess Wencheng's marriage in Tibet, the advanced culture of the Central Plains successively moved into Tubo, which boosted the development of the Tibetan area. The relation between the Tang Dynasty and Tubo became closer and closer. Therefore, Princess Wencheng and Songtsan Gampo were always remembered and admired by the people of the Han and Tibetan nationalities. Till now, their statues are still consecrated in the Potala Palace and the Jokhang Temple in the present-day Lhasa.



Two maids were respectively holding a big fan slantingly while standing on both sides of Emperor Taizong.

Two maids were carrying the sedan chair with one walking in front of the sedan chair and the other one moving behind it.

Emperor Taizong, who was sitting on the sedan chair with crossed legs, met the Tibetan envoy Gar Songtsen while being surrounded by maids.

Four maids were standing on the four corners of the sedan chair to support it.

A maid was lifting a red canopy and closely following behind the Emperor.



THE HEAVENLY KING OF SENDING SONS

Painter: Wu Daozi **Painting Year:** the Tang Dynasty

Material: paper scroll

Dimension: vertical length of 35.6 centimeters and the unknown horizontal length

Collection Place: Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, Japan



The Heavenly King of Sending Sons was the representative work of Wu Daozi, a master of painting in the Tang Dynasty. The picture tells the story that the Buddha Sakyamuni was born as the prince of King Suddhodana. It is divided into three scenes: the Heavenly King rode an auspicious animal and sent the son; King Suddhodana sat up in the palace and received the Heavenly King of Sending Sons; and King Suddhodana walked slowly with prince carried in his arms.

The way of "orchid-leaf sketching" is used in this artwork many times. The brushwork is fluent, unstrained and powerful. The figures brim with energy and vitality. The military officers and the Heavenly King wear exaggerated but vivid expressions. The apparels of characters in the picture are mostly the clothes of the Tang Dynasty. Apart from the military officers and the Heavenly King whose shapes retain the marks of foreign Buddhist painting, King Suddhodana, the queen, concubines, eunuchs and ministers all have facial features completely matching the Chinese images. This means that the Chinese elements had already been integrated into the Buddhist painting at that time. This artwork is a facsimile made in the Song Dynasty. But it also reflects the painting style of Wu Daozi and his superb painting skills.

Quick Link

The Introduction of Buddhism

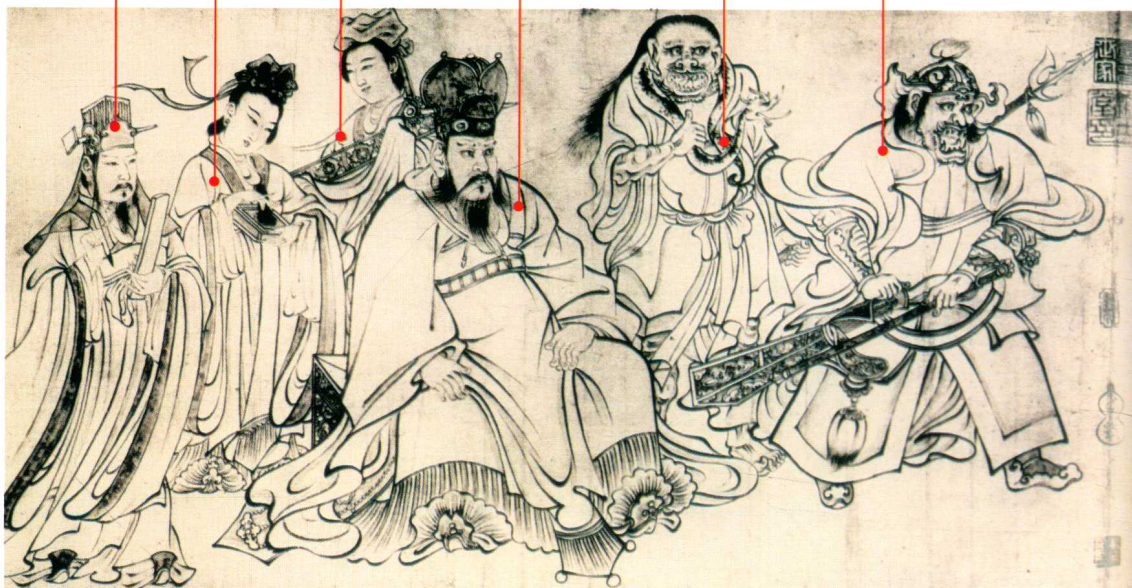
See Page 21 of *Classics Appreciation of Chinese Visual Arts: Sculpture* in this series

With a solemn expression, King Suddhodana was sitting up with full stateliness when he received the Heavenly King of Sending Sons. His ministers, military officers, concubines were waiting on the left and right sides of him. The lines of the picture looked like the orchid leaves, which are simple but powerful. The belts of people in the picture are fluent and floating.

The minister holding an office plate, a maid holding an ink slab and a maid taking a papeterie

King Suddhodana was sitting up with a graceful and composed manner

There is a mighty man with a snake tied around his neck and a halberd in his hand, as well as a military officer wearing a helmet and holding a mace. Both had strange appearances.



The heavenly maids holding basket of flowers and a military officer holding a long-handled ax

The Heavenly King of Sending Sons was riding an auspicious animal, swiftly flying over the clouds and fogs. The lines of the picture are unstrained and powerful. The belt of the Heavenly King of Sending Sons was flying while the clouds and fogs were flowing, possessing a grand momentum. The figures Wu Daozi painted in the picture all wore loose clothes and their skirt bands flew just like being blown by the wind. People call this "the bands drawn by Wu like being blown by wind" to refer to his excellent painting skill.



Art Master

Wu Daozi (circa 689-758)

He was a famous painter in the Tang Dynasty and came from Yangzhai (today's Yuzhou, Henan). He had versatile painting skills and was proficient in painting figures, Buddhist objects, gods and ghosts, landscape, trees and flowers, palaces and animals. He was especially good at painting Buddhist frescos and totally drew pictures on more than 300 walls in his life. Wu Daozi's paintings were mainly based on line drawings and sometimes light colors were applied as well. People refer to the painting style with lines as the core and simple and light colors created by Wu Daozi as "Wu Zhuang" (the Wu Style). People of later generations revered Wu Daozi as the "Saint of Painting." The religious painting style created by him was called "Wu Jia Yang" (the Wu-school Style).



Brief Background

Orchid-leaf Sketching

Orchid-leaf Sketching refers to a way of painting figures in ancient China. It was suitable for showing the flying belts. It was created by Wu Daozi in the Tang Dynasty. The lines of figures drawn in this method look like the orchid leaves.

The elephant means getting into the embryo by elephant.

The son sent by the Heavenly King was Sakyamuni. This image predicted the appearance of Sakyamuni when he became the Buddha in the future.

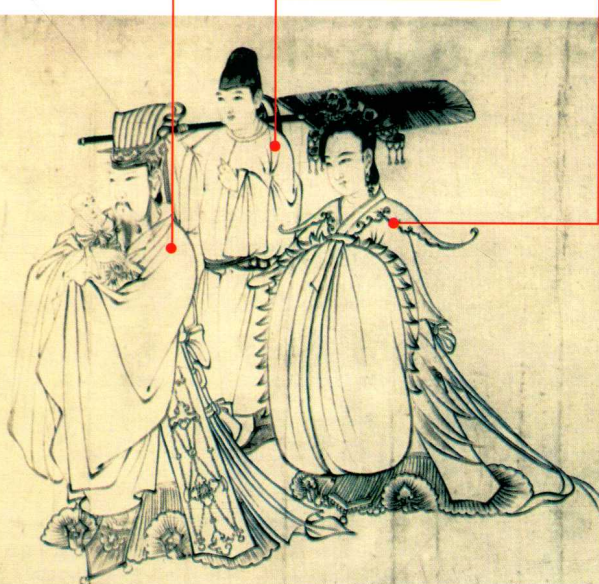
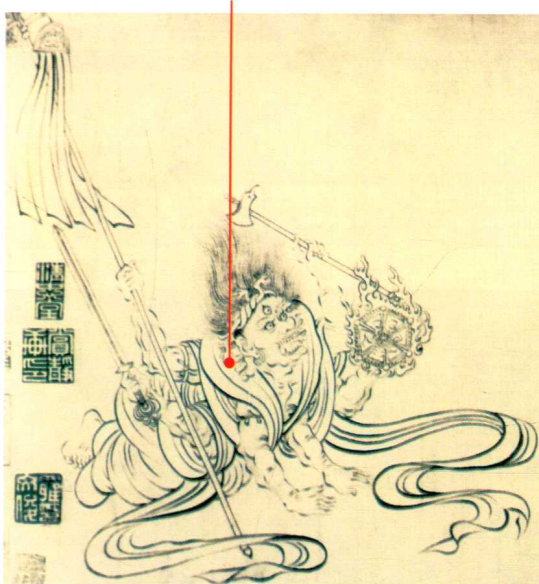
The Heavenly King of Sending Sons rode an auspicious animal and came over swiftly.

The Heavenly King with three heads and six arms knelt before the prince. The middle hands of the Heavenly King touched the ground while the other two left hands gripped a hexagonal fire ring and an ax while a spear and a sword were taken by the other two right hands.

King Suddhodana walked forward slowly while carrying the prince in his arms.

A eunuch was carrying a fan over his shoulder

Queen Maya was following behind King Suddhodana.



King Suddhodana carefully carried the prince and was closely followed by the queen wearing a set of Chinese-style clothes. A eunuch was holding a fan and waiting beside them. The Heavenly King groveled on the ground and hastily kowtowed to the prince.

There was a country named Kapilavastu (in today's Nepal) in the northeastern part of ancient India. Its ruler King Suddhodana and his wife Queen Maya failed to produce a child years after their marriage. One day, Queen Maya had a dream in which a person who had light around his body rode a white elephant with six teeth and flew into her body. Several days later, she felt that she was pregnant.

King Suddhodana followed the traditions and ordered people to escort his wife back to his father-in-law's palace to give birth to the child. When walking past the garden of her father, Queen Maya got into the garden to have a casual walk. When she stopped before a sal tree, she raised her hand to pick the flower. At that time the prince came to the world from her right flank. The prince was able to walk when he was born. His feet were four feet away from the ground and stepped on a lotus. He walked towards four directions respectively by seven steps and then opened his mouth, saying: "Between the earth and the heaven, the Buddha's nature, the only way to be enlightened to reach the perfection of benevolence, is the cleanest and most respectable. Every being has its own Buddha nature and I was born to enlighten their Buddha natures." At this time, clean water poured down from the heaven like a silver chain to wash the prince. Then the heaven clothes made of thin yarns flew down and covered him.

The prince was given the name Siddhartha. He became a monk to practice the religious behaviors when he was 29. Then he became the founder of the Buddhism and was revered as "Sakyamuni." "Sakyamuni" is the transliteration of the Indian, which meant the "Saint of Sakya Clan."

Story about the Birth of Sakyamuni

Story Corner



LADY OF GUO ON A SPRING OUTING

Painter: Zhang Xuan

Painting Year: the Tang Dynasty

Material: silk scroll

Dimension: vertical length of 51.8 centimeters and horizontal length of 148 centimeters

Collection Place: Liaoning Museum



Lady of Guo on a Spring Outing is a famous painting drawn by Zhang Xuan in the Tang Dynasty. It depicts that the Lady of Guo went for a spring outing with her relatives and attendants in the 11th year of the Tianbao Period in the Tang Dynasty (752), showing the luxurious lives of the Yang sisters. Lady of Guo was the third elder sister of Consort Yang. She was also accompanied by Lady of Qin.

There is no background in the picture but the brilliant spring sights could be sensed through the clothes and actions of people and the calm paces of horses. The figures in the picture are plump and graceful, reflecting the aesthetic taste that "plumpness was beauty" in the Tang Dynasty. The shapes of horses are plump and powerful. Their bodies are fat while their legs are thin, full of rhythmic feelings. The picture is rhythmically composed with density and sparseness, which looks irregular but natural. The lines are thin, delicate, mellow and fluent. Brilliant and elegant colors were applied, making the picture look graceful and vivid.

The original copy of the painting has been lost. This is the facsimile made in the Song Dynasty.

The Yang Family

During the Tianbao Period of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Xuanzong was very fond of Princess of Shou Yang Yuhuan. He took her into the imperial palace and gave her the title of "High-ranked Consort." Then he appointed Yang Guozhong, cousin of Yang Yuhuan, as the Prime Minister and gave him great power. Yang Yuhuan's three sisters were respectively titled as Lady of Han, Lady of Guo and Lady of Qin. They often walked into and out of the internal palace.

All members of the Yang family lived luxurious lives, thanks to Consort Yang Yuhuan. However, Emperor Xuanzong indulged himself in the sensual pleasures and ignored the national governance, which finally led to the breakout of the "An-Shi Rebellion."

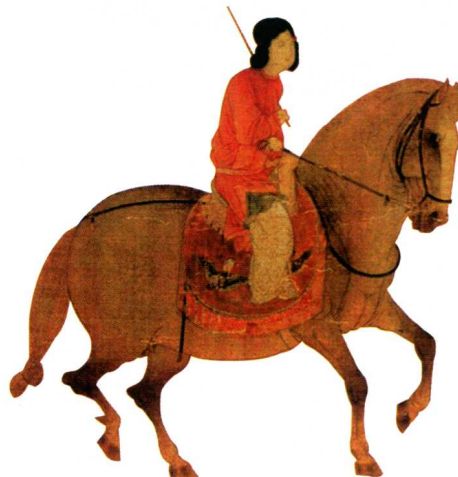
Celebrity Profile



Zhang Xuan

Art Master

He was a painter in the Tang Dynasty but his birth date and death date remain unknown. He came from Jingzhao (today's Xi'an, Shaanxi) and was known for painting noble women and children, as well as horses, palaces and gardens. He was especially good at painting beautiful ladies. The beauties drawn by Zhang Xuan were usually plump and wore luxury clothes. Their brows were usually thin and curved while their faces were usually full and round. He usually used bright red to decorate the earlobes of people.



The Maids

The buns and clothes of maids were apparently different from the noble ladies'. There were usually no red tassels below their horse necks and their saddles were smaller than the noble ladies'.

The elder babysitter rode a horse decorated with three flowers. She was carefully embracing the little girl sitting in the front part of the saddle. The girl was the young daughter of Lady of Guo.



This attendant was attentively watching over Lady of Guo's young daughter.



Brief Background

Iron-line Sketching

Iron-line Sketching refers to a way of painting figures in ancient China and was suitable for depicting solemn and stately images. Figures drawn by this method have lines which have even thickness and are full of power and flexibility like the iron lines.



The Attendants

Among all the attendants, the one taking the leading place might have a higher status, because his horse had a red tassel hung below its neck, as well as a big and luxurious saddle.

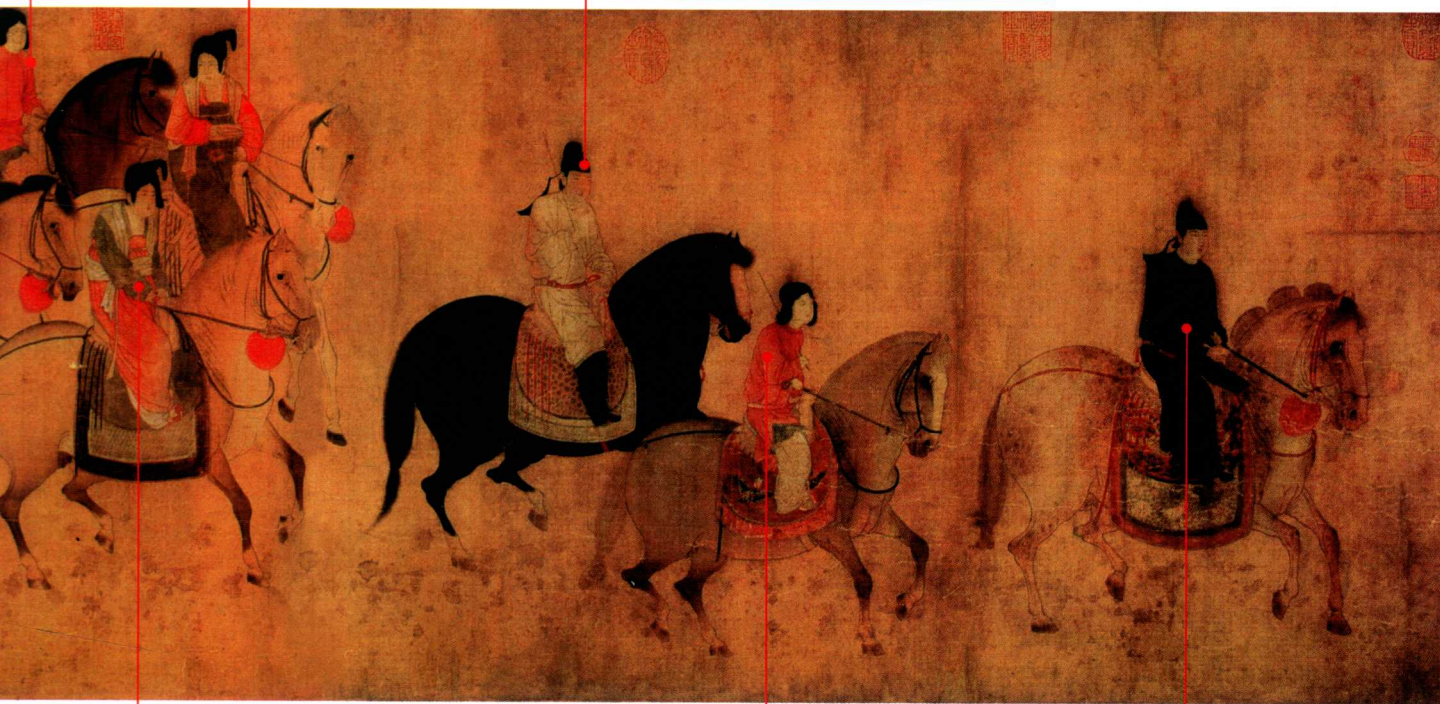
Lady of Guo and Lady of Qin

Lady of Guo was riding a horse and moving in a calm pace. Lady of Qin seemed to be speaking to her. People in the Tang Dynasty thought plump girls were beautiful. The women in the picture had typical images of females in the Tang Dynasty: Lady of Guo and Lady of Qin had high buns which drooped towards one side. They wore loose clothes of the Tang Dynasty. Red tassels were hung below the necks of their horses, which showed their noble status. People and horses in the picture were drawn through iron-line sketching. Thus the lines were thin but powerful, mellow but fluent, fully reflecting the brilliant colors and plump figures.

The maid in red raised her right hand high, seeming to swing the whip to urge the horse to run faster.

Lady of Qin took the rein with her left hand. The whip was hung on one of the figures of her right hand. Her head turned right and she was watching Lady of Guo.

The attendant in white rode a black good horse.



Lady of Guo wore a light-blue long gown with narrow sleeves. A white flowery scarf was placed on her shoulder. Her rouge skirt was decorated with gold-traced circular designs. She looked into the distance with a leisurely and happy expression.

A maid having two buns rode a mottled blue horse.

The attendant in front of team wore a light yellow horse, whose manes were cut into the shape of three flowers.

COURT LADIES ADORNING THEIR HAIR WITH FLOWERS

Painter: Zhou Fang

Painting Year: the Tang Dynasty

Material: silk scroll

Dimension: vertical length of 46 centimeters and horizontal length of 180 centimeters

Collection Place: Liaoning Museum



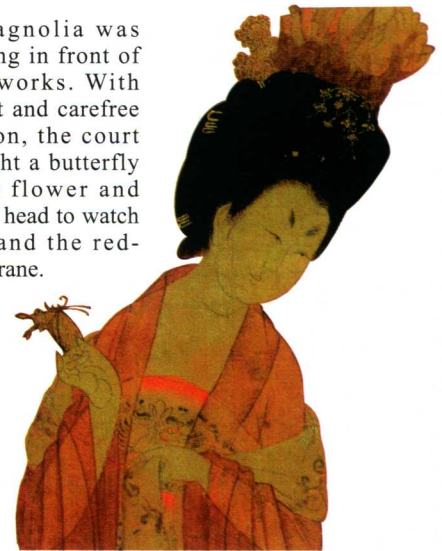
Court Ladies Adorning Their Hair with Flowers depicts the leisure and comfortable lives of noble ladies in the court of the Tang Dynasty. The picture is divided into four parts from right to left: "playing with dogs", "having a walk", "adorning hair with flowers" and "watching flowers." The whole picture displays a graceful and leisure circumstance. The colors of the picture are bright and rich while its lines are steady, thin and powerful. The decorations of the clothes are fine and delicate but not trivial. The figures in the pictures vary from each other in distance and size. They echo and correspond with each other. Because of the long age, the silk scroll has already become quite old. Thus the white powder applied on the faces, busts and hands of figures are more striking. The picture had delicate depiction of the special sense of reality of the yarn and flesh, showing the taste of nobles at that time. The trees, red-crowned cranes and dogs, which serve as the foils, also reflect the levels of the paintings of birds and flowers in the Tang Dynasty. The original copy of this artwork has been lost but this facsimile can also reflect the style of Zhou Fang's paintings of beauties.

Art Master

Zhou Fang

He was a painter in the Tang Dynasty, and his birth date and death date remain unknown. He came from Jingzhao (today's Xi'an, Shaanxi) and was good at painting portraits of nobles and religious frescos. He had outstanding achievements in painting beauties. Zhou Fang's paintings of beauties succeeded and developed the style of Zhang Xuan and had great influence over the later generations.

■ A magnolia was blossoming in front of the rockworks. With an elegant and carefree expression, the court lady caught a butterfly from the flower and turned her head to watch the dog and the red-crowned crane.



Brief Background

Silk Scroll

The tough silk is a kind of silk fabric. The Chinese painting drawn on the tough silk is called "silk scroll." The tough silk can be divided into raw silk and ripe silk. The water cannot go through the ripe silk but can penetrate the raw silk. Therefore the ripe silk is used to draw elaborate-style paintings while the raw silk is used for freehand brushwork.

The court lady held the butterfly between her fingers and turned her head to see the barking dog and the red-crowned crane running with unfolded wings.

The court lady standing at a distance crossed her hands in front her body and stood there quietly.

The court lady wearing a lotus-shaped hair clasp took a red flower in her right hand and took down the golden hairpin from her bun.





The Painting of Beauties

It is the painting of noble ladies and their lives in ancient China. It is also called "Painting of Court Ladies."

Zhou Fang Changed the Painting

In Zhenyuan Period of the Tang Dynasty (785-805), Emperor Dezong ordered Zhou Fang to draw a fresco of deities' portraits for the renewed Zhangjing Temple. When he began to draw the fresco, tens of thousands of people in the capital came to watch. They discussed about the fresco. Some of them praised the fresco while some of them criticized it. The monks in the temple who saw this scene worried that this might affect Zhou Fang's mood of drawing and wanted to stop the audience. However, Zhou Fang said: "It's all right. Let them say what they want to say."

Zhou Fang modestly listened to the audience's discussion and took all the right advices. He ceaselessly changed the design of the deities' portraits. After more than one month, no one could propose any opinions for Zhou Fang's work and every people applauded the excellence of the fresco.



■ The court lady holding a horsetail whisk stood sideways to play with the dog. Her posture was graceful and easy. The walking court lady on the left also called the dog. The two ladies corresponded with each other. They wore luxury and beautiful yarn clothes and had flowers adorn their high buns. They had high-raised brows and calm expressions. They also have plump bodies and thus look graceful and gorgeous.

■ This court lady picked up a flower with her right hand and was ready to put the flower into the most suitable part of her bun. She was preoccupied by watching and playing with the flower and seemed to forget everything around her.



The maid was holding a long-handled circular fan on which a peony was drawn. She lowered her brows and eyes and wore a silent expression.

The court lady lightly pulled her yarn clothes with her right hand. Her left hand reached out of her sleeve and waved at the dog beside her.



The court lady wearing purple yarn garments was holding a horsetail whisk and playing with a dog which was swaying its tail, sticking out its tongue and jumping forth and back.

EMPEROR MINGHUANG'S REFUGE IN SICHUAN

Painter: Li Zhaodao

Painting Year: the Tang Dynasty

Material: silk scroll

Dimension: vertical length of 55.9 centimeters and horizontal length of 81 centimeters

Collection Place: the National Palace Museum in Taipei



Emperor Minghuanh's Refuge in Sichuan is a blue and green landscape painting giving priority to the landscape but containing figures and stories. It depicts the scene that Emperor Minghuang of the Tang Dynasty (i.e. Emperor Xuanzong Li Longji) and his people took refuge in the lofty mountains and high ranges in the area of Shu (today's Sichuan). In the painting, the area of Shu was full of lofty and steep peaks which were surrounded by clouds. Green water flew across these mountains and the roads were quite rugged. The brilliant and exotic scenes made people feel that the characters in the painting were taking a sightseeing tour instead of seeking refuge.

This artwork has typical painting styles of the Tang Dynasty. The peaks, clouds and fogs, trees and flowers, and streams are sketched out with thin lines, which are regular and delicate. The colors of the picture are beautiful and imposing and they give priority to the stone green and stone blue, which are brilliant but not meretricious. Instead, the whole picture looks very elegant. The figures and horses vary in shapes, creating a vivid scene. The sizes of figures are small but were drawn in an extremely careful way.

Showcase Window



The Blue and Green Landscape Painting

It is a kind of landscape painting. The main part of this kind of painting consists of the natural landscapes. Painters usually sketch out the contours and frames of the landscapes with ink lines, based on which they applied the heavy and brilliant stone blue and stone green. These paintings are featured with regular and delicate styles, brilliant colors and magnificent circumstance.

■ A group of people and horses walked out the valley. The leader Emperor Xuanzong was riding a horse whose manes were cut into the shape of three flowers. His horse hesitated to step forward upon seeing the small bridge in front of it. The posture of the horse and Emperor Xuanzong was very vivid. Emperor Xuanzong was closely followed by a lot of servants and concubines. Some people just had half of their bodies shown out of the valley mouth, making people imagine that a lot of people were still progressing.



Li Zhaodao

Art Master

Li Zhaodao was a member of the royal family in the Tang Dynasty, who was famous for his paintings of landscape. His birth date and death date remain unknown. He succeeded and improved his father Li Sixun's methods of blue and green landscape painting. People called his father and him respectively "General Li Senior" and "General Li Junior." The blue and green landscape paintings of these two people had great influence upon the later generations.

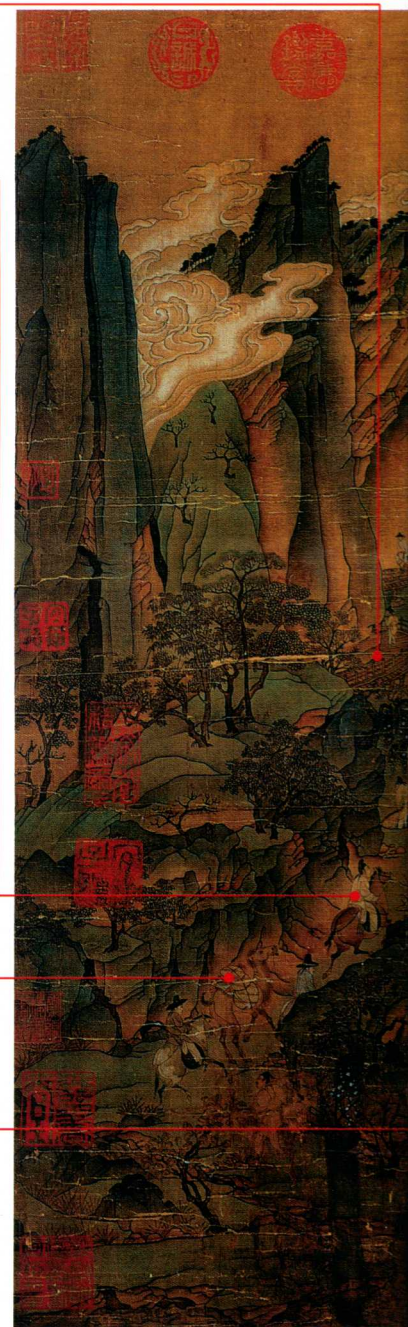
The plank road was unsafely built along the cliff halfway up the mountain.

The donkey was rolling on the ground after the luggage was removed from its back.

A group of people and horses were walking over the mountains. Above them some people were walking on the road that was suspended in the air. Below them were the deep pit and rapid streams. The topography was quite precipitous, reminding people of grand poet Li Bai's famous verse meaning that "walking on the roads of Shu is even harder than climbing up to the heaven."

A camel was walking while carrying a high pile of luggage.

A camel carrying things was crouching there and its owner was fiddling with the luggage.





An-Shi Rebellion



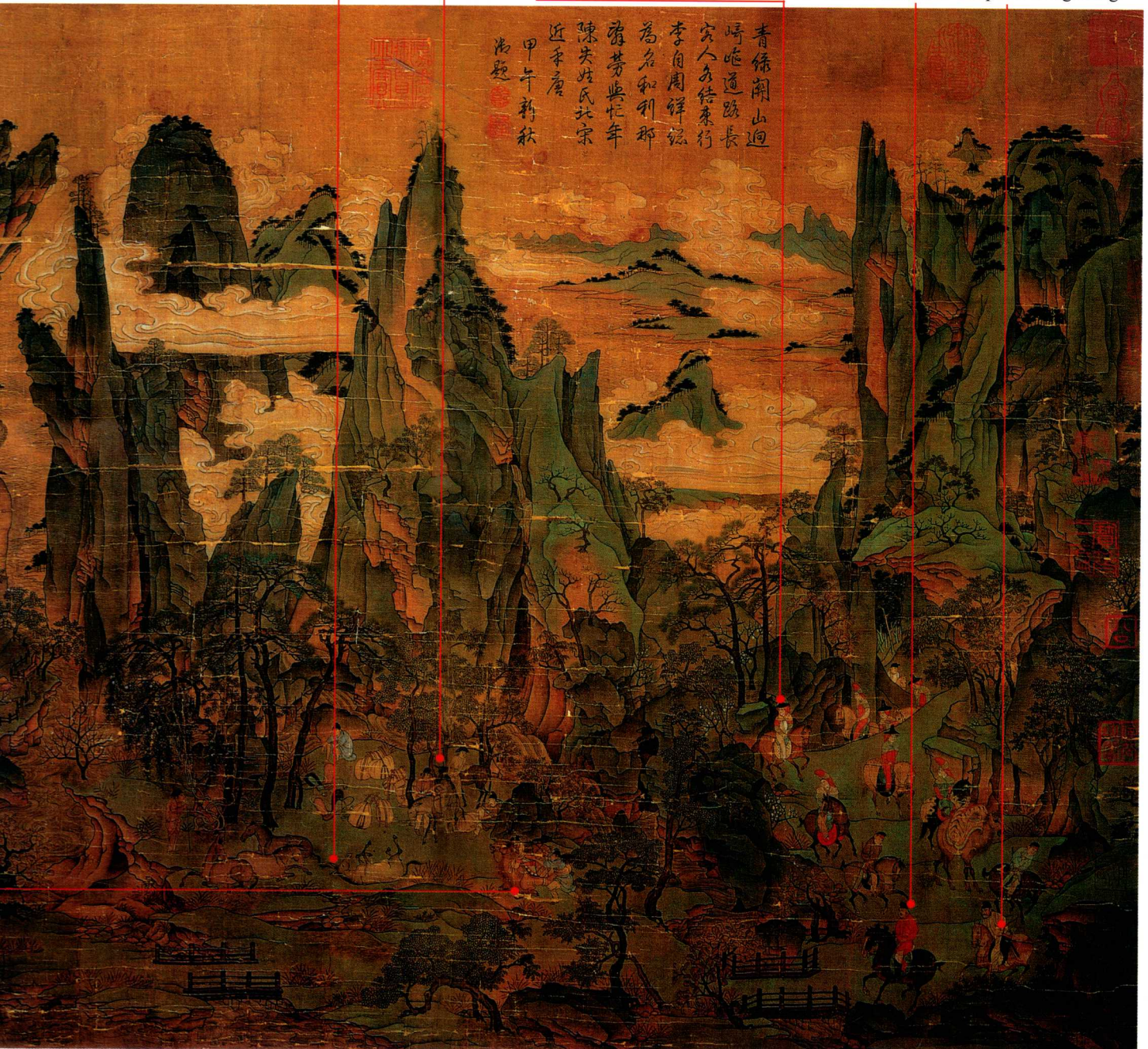
In the late period of his reign, Emperor Xuanzong doted on Consort Yang Yuhuan too much. He kept staying in the palace and indulged himself in wine, dancing and singing without attending to the state affairs. This caused many people's dissatisfaction and finally led to the rebellion of An Lushan and Shi Siming. In 756 AD, An Lushan led his army and seized the capital city Chang'an (today's Xi'an). Emperor Xuanzong had to hurriedly flee out of the city with Consort Yang to avoid the war. When they walked past a place named Maweipo (in today's west part of Xingping County, Shaanxi). All the soldiers following Emperor Xuanzong stopped moving forward and collectively asked Emperor Xuanzong to kill Consort Yang and her cousin Yang Guozhong. In the extremely urgent situation, Emperor Xuanzong had no way but to painfully give orders of killing the two people. After that the soldiers continued to move forward. After a long and difficult journey, they arrived in the area of Shu which was full of mountains and streams. One year later, Guo Ziyi, a general serving the Tang Dynasty, put down the rebellion of An Lushan and took back the place An seized. After that Emperor Xuanzong could come back to Chang'an.

An exhausted merchant team had removed the luggage and saddles from horses and donkeys and was taking a rest.

A concubine wearing a curtained hat.

Emperor Minghuang who wore a red gown and rode a red horse was about to pass the bridge but his horse was frightened and hesitated to move forward.

The guards holding bows and arrows were closely following behind Emperor Minghuang.



FIVE OXEN

Painter: Han Huang

Painting Year: the Tang Dynasty

Material: paper scroll

Dimension: vertical length of 20.8 centimeters and horizontal length of 139.8 centimeters

Collection Place: the Palace Museum in Beijing



The *Five Oxen*, painted in the Tang Dynasty, is one of the best ancient Chinese paintings of animals. It is also the earliest paper painting that has been passed down to today. In the picture the painter drew five oxen with

different postures. The five oxen were respectively, from right to left, lowering the head to eat grass, raising the head, showing the face, turning the head and wearing a bridle. These oxen had different tempers, as well as simple and lovely expressions, filling the picture with rural flavors.

The five oxen share accurate and vivid shapes. The lines are simple, unsophisticated, steady and full of changes. The colors of the picture are light and elegant, giving the furs a sense of reality, and showing the figures and undulation of the bodies.



General Knowledge

"Paper Scroll" and "Rice Paper"

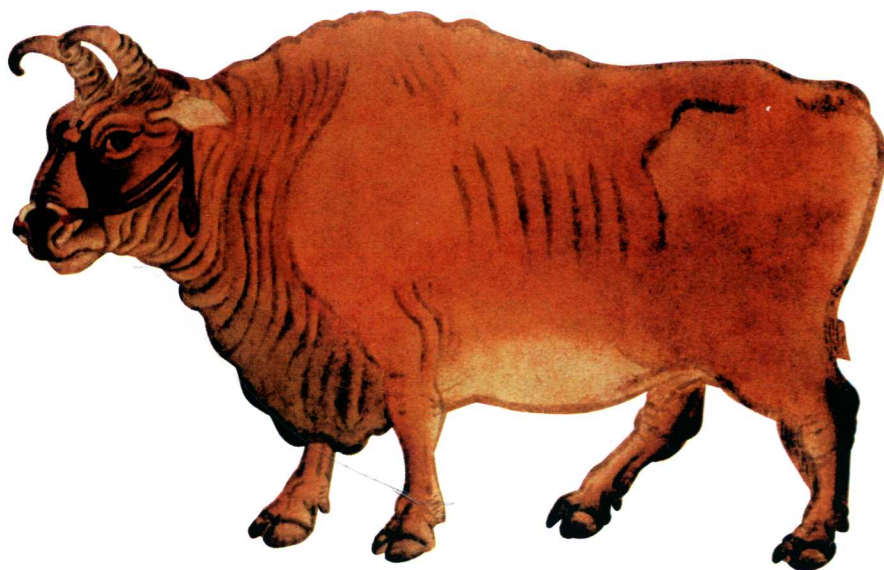
The Chinese painting drawn on the paper is called "paper scroll." There are many kinds of paper used for the Chinese painting. The paper used for Chinese calligraphy and painting is commonly called "rice paper." The rice paper is divided into "ripe rice paper" and "raw rice paper." The elaborate-style painting needs the ripe rice paper while the freehand brushwork needs the raw rice paper.

Art Master

Han Huang (723-787)

He was a famous painter in the Tang Dynasty. He came from Chang'an (today's Xi'an, Shaanxi). He once served the court as the Prime Minister and was titled as the Duke of Jin. He was good at calligraphy and painting and particularly specialized in the creation of paintings of rural custom, oxen and sheep.

■ Different from the other four oxen, this ox wore a bridle. The other oxen were enjoying themselves while this one seemed a bit unhappy. Painting animals is actually the same with painting people and it contains the emotions and ideas of people. Here the painter implied the unfair treatment in the world.



The ox turned its head and stuck out its tongue while walking forward slowly, as if it heard the call of the herder. This ox bore an extremely graceful posture.

This mooing ox was standing facing the audience.

The ox had a red bridle tied on its head. It seemed to be trying to get rid of the fetters. With its eyes showing a bit of anger, the ox seemed to hesitate to move forward or stop.

