“Yon mountain, vast as Behemoth,  
Seems but a veil of silver breath,  
And soundless as a flitting moth,  
And gentle as the face of death,

“Stands this stern world of rock and tree,  
Lost in some hushed sidereal dream,—  
The only living thing a bird,  
The only moving thing a stream.”

The landscape paintings of the Southern Sung school are not limited to the large hanging scrolls which, although they are suspect in matters of date and attribution, reflect the thought and principles of the Ch’an philosophers insofar as those philosophers chose to express in visual terms their calm and quiet contemplation of the hills and valleys about them. In the Ch’an world man is not only at peace with nature, he is part of it and knows his place. Mountains and streams, trees and winds and man himself are parts, and harmonious parts, of the same life stream. (Only recently has the scientific West discovered that minerals share with plants and animals the thing called life, this simple idea that the Chinese seem to take as a matter of course.)

While the same attitude of mind is expressed in the different sizes and shapes of Ch’an paintings—the hanging scrolls, the horizontal scrolls, and the album leaves—the visual impressions made by each form are so different that each, if we choose, may be considered separately.

Certainly the horizontal scrolls in Chinese painting are a special thing, with no good parallel in the West however we may catch at the faint likeness to panoramas and the like. These scrolls can run to any length, and it is notable that in the Ming and Ch’ing periods they grew longer and longer and were sometimes praised for sheer length much as the endurance of a taxi dancer or an aviator is praised and headlined in our day. There may be a use for endurance for twentieth-century man. If he can stay in the air in a plane week after week over a given air field it may be that later he can fly
round and round the globe for sheer pleasure or to drop the latest bomb if his government thinks it a good idea; but the stars which stay in the firmament year after year with no apparent effort at all and the arctic terns which twice a year wing back and forth between the poles as a matter of course must smile if they think of it.

The length of a scroll may well impress us, but sheer length of itself should not be considered a virtue. What is more striking and more important is that in these scrolls the painters have managed to convey to those who look at them a sense of intimacy with the landscapes represented. Of course the painters were intimate with these landscapes. Although the scenes often bear the names of actual places and often have recognizable features of the places whose names they bear, they are essentially the painters’ own poetic fantasy of such places, part memory, part dream. And, just as dreams sometimes seem at the moment of waking more nearly perfect than reality, these paintings often have the quality of a dream brought clearly into the waking mind and set down on silk or paper.

One means by which the painters convey their intimacy with their subjects is to invite, to entice, the spectator into entering and becoming for a time part of the picture. The spectator must himself unroll and roll these horizontal scrolls, an action which immediately calls the muscles of his eyes into play. Hypnotists use this trick of calling eye muscles into play, but Chinese painters are more subtle, their purpose being not to knock the victim out but to lull him gently into projecting himself into the scene set for him. The trick works too.

More obvious but equally successful is the trick by which the painters influence us once they have lured us into their pictures. Again and again in these landscape scrolls a road or path appears at the beginning, and we are almost bound to follow it. These roads direct the attention of the spectator and instruct his vision. Now and again he must walk in the foreground, viewing the plains and distant hills; he is led on to the hills themselves, crosses bridges, climbs mountains, rests at high-placed temples; occasionally he may choose between the path and a boat, and often he is led completely out of sight behind a cliff or hill only to emerge again farther along. This is a pretty trick indeed. So sure is he who follows the road that he is familiar with the landscape that he accepts the valleys and gorges which are not

\[\text{Detail from a horizontal landscape scroll. Ink on silk. Sung style. Attributed to Kuo Hsi. This scene, like those on the following pages, is presented facing an adjoining portion of the scroll.}\]
shown in the painting and is likely to offer to take camera shots on his next trip to any who doubt him. Just as you yourself, having descended a twisting mountain path and looked back from the plain from which only an occasional glimpse of the path may be seen, remember clearly pleasant vistas which you no longer see, so in these Chinese paintings you are equally sure of scenes which actually you never saw at all.

This horizontal form of painting, while immediately attractive to Western eyes, gives Western writers trouble. For one thing, our ordinary accounts of what a composition is or should be are difficult to apply to these scrolls which, if you choose to cut them into sections, are likely to present well-nigh perfect compositions wherever you cut them. The hanging scrolls and the album leaves can be subjected to Western rules of composition. The horizontal scrolls cannot. In them there is a concept of representation new to the West. The concept is simple enough really. It is representation which appears continuously, not in disconnected episodes. The painter of a horizontal scroll had in his mind a scheme for his painting of a river scene or a range of hills. Having his plan in mind, he started to work at the right end of his length of paper or silk. His first ten inches or so would already have been a complete picture if he had stopped, but he had no intention of stopping; he continued, and as he continued his mountain range or river gorge his picture grew as a vine grows, and finally the picture was done. After the event it may be seen that in his entire scroll there is a composition or a plan that we can measure by our accustomed terms.

Westerners are accustomed to having a picture confined neatly in rectangles or circles. We have as yet no terms for the composition that does not stay confined to circle or rectangle but moves from scene to scene much as a drop of blood pulses through its complexity of veins.
and arteries or as water follows its course from rill to brook, from brook to stream, from stream to river, from river to the sea. Here is something the Chinese have in their painting which Westerners do not have. The West has no handy word or phrase for this. "Movement" is part of it, but not enough. "Changing" is not enough.

The element in Chinese horizontal scrolls which does not appear in Western painting appears in Western music and Western poetry. But Westerners are so fond of pigeonholes that they firmly insist on different sets of principles for different arts; they view with distaste any analogy between painting and music, are somewhat shamefaced when they are forced to make such analogies. Painting is for the eyes, music is for the ears; they must not be confused. Unlike as they are, appealing to different senses, the West does recognize that there is sometimes likeness between music and poetry, recognizes it half heartedly when it speaks of tone poems (though even the tone poems are frowned upon by musical purists), but we have no term for this likeness. Confronted with a pictorial scroll that makes exactly the same demand as a tone poem, we like it but have no term to apply to it.

In Philosophy 10 Dr. H. S. Langfeld explained to his classes the concept of empathy, *Einfühlung*, or "feeling into." Empathy means that when a spectator is introduced to a painting there is a brief moment, before he consciously begins to think, when unconsciously he almost identifies himself with the picture. The reaction differs from person to person of course. The concept is an easy one for the witty and frivolous to make game of. Just what, may say
The scenes on this and the opposite page are identical in subject matter with the painting in Kansas City attributed to Hsia Kuei, a detail of which is reproduced on pages 200 and 201.
Details from a Yuan dynasty version of a famous landscape by Hsia Kuei. Ink on silk. A xiv-century work attributed to Sheng Mou
your wit, have I to do with a still life of a cabbage? If you inform him that, aside from his probable experience of seeing a cabbage and eating a cabbage, in a reposeful moment he has undoubtedly felt like a cabbage (a very agreeable feeling too), he may admit it but will yawn. If you put before him Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase he is likely to break into open rebellion. But the Nude Descending a Staircase has long ceased to be a clown show, and much has been written about the element it introduced into Western art. In this series of fractured rectangles the artist has tried to convey not only the movement of one human being descending a staircase but also a concept of the experience of descending stairs. Has done it and kept it strictly in his frame with a basic composition familiar to the Western eye. He has expressed it in violent and strident terms, but now the general public accepts and understands his principle.

It is just this element of continuous movement which, although new and startling in occidental painting, Westerners have always accepted as a matter of course in music and poetry. We accept the forms of music and poetry without question. We know perfectly well when we go to Carnegie Hall to hear Beethoven's Eroica that the performance is going to take approximately forty-five minutes. We do not expect to swallow Milton's Paradise Lost in one quick gulp. In such things we accept the fact that it takes time to listen or to read. But, having always expected to take in a picture at one quick glimpse, we squirm and wriggle at Chinese horizontal scrolls which in this respect make a similar demand upon us.

While we have no one word or phrase for this element, this common denominator of poetry and music and Chinese horizontal scroll painting, we can clearly see its essential character. We can understand it is a thing that moves as time moves (that is the heart of the matter), but it is time caught and captured as
it moves through space and measured in terms imposed upon it by the human mind—in sensory terms, visual, auditory. In music time moves measured and bespangled with starry sounds—bell and flute and violin. In the horizontal scrolls it moves defined in continuous visual sequence. In poetry it moves subject to both ear and eye: to ear when spoken, to eye when read. In all these there is also the indelible element of the human mind stirring with immortal longings to be seen, to be heard, to be understood.

The idea of making a painting behave like a poem or a piece of music may be new and alien to us in the West and take a deal of explaining, but it seems to have been such a natural development in the East from very early times that the Chinese have never seen anything puzzling about it at all. After all, the Chinese wrote poetry on similar scrolls, why not paint pictures on them? And so they did from quite early times. We have accounts of landscape scrolls as early as the fourth century. There was as lately as 1927 in the Imperial Palace Collection in Peking a horizontal landscape scroll, labeled T’ang, which may appear again. From the Sung dynasty we have not only accounts of many painters who preferred monochrome but surviving paintings which bear their names and are certainly reflections of their work. It is clear that this category of painting was known in the T’ang dynasty (the Japanese include in their national treasure a hanging painting of a waterfall attributed to the great Wang Wei himself) and developed with prodigious variety in the Sung dynasty.

The distinctions and divisions made by Chinese writers centuries after the period of these painters have interest, but surely all this monochrome landscape painting can be considered...
part of one movement. Technically the Chinese call Ma Yuan, Hsia Kuei, and Kuo Hsi court painters, but for Western purposes Fennelosa was essentially right to include them with the Southern Sung painters. Better perhaps to call the pictures in this category Sung monochrome landscape painting. Whichever, it is all part of the same thing—a school of landscape painting so beautiful and powerful that after a thousand years its influence is still strong in both Chinese and Japanese painting.

Lovely as many of the surviving Ch’ an paintings are, the young and avid scholar, aware that behind them must have been something more noble and more perfectly expressed, is apt to forget the qualities they have and, for want of a group of examples accepted as first rate, condemn them all as secondary works of art. It is true that the most generous, the most optimistic, the most tolerant admirer of Chinese painting would be hard put to it to name ten large hanging scrolls of first quality which are generally acknowledged to be actually of the Sung period and even if of the Sung period to be of the best. In this matter opinions and taste differ. Some admire most the hanging landscape scroll in the Boston Museum once called Hsia Kuei and now primly called style of Hsia Kuei, with any number of people ready to call it a Ming copy. This is a large, squarish picture, the subject of which is a massive hill, its lower levels hidden by mist, with a promontory, a group of wind-blown trees, a fisherman’s net, and the fisherman himself following a path through the trees. This above all other of the larger landscapes is the best example of what East and West claim for the Ch’an school—a statement profound and simple of the majesty of the immortal hills and the relation of man to them. Thus the painter saw them, thus he set them down; this, he says in effect, is the way it is between man and wind and mountains, and that is one thing that the Ch’an landscapists gently repeat and repeat and repeat.

As for the horizontal scrolls, so dour and grim are contemporary scholars that they will
In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
not allow a single one of them to be original, and most of them will not allow them to be even of the period. Though experts may quarrel as to exact date and attribution, from the scrolls that survive, even if we cannot prove they are by Hsia Kuei or Ma Yuan, we can get a very clear idea not only of particular subjects but of the school as a whole. Consider and view when you can such scrolls as the Boston Tung Yuan, the Kansas City Hsia Kuei and Hsu Tao-ning, Freer's Kuo Hsi and Ma Yuan, Toledo's Kuo Hsi snowscape, the Chinese Government's Hsia Kuei, and the Metropolitan's Wen T'ung, Kuo Hsi, and Yuan dynasty version of a Hsia Kuei landscape. If you will look at these you will get a very good idea of Sung landscape scroll painting of the Ch'an school.

Don’t quarrel. Enjoy what we have. Once I traveled with a formidable lady. She found the Japan Inland Sea a little like Bar Harbor, but it did not smell so pleasantly; she surveyed the lion-colored shores of Shantung and compared them to their detriment to the Greek Islands; when beside the train the crenelated walls of Peking burst upon us she remembered the walls of Constantinople. No Ch'an philosopher she. Hawthorne was always finding fault with places; Ruskin was inclined to carp. How silly. Why must your traveler confronted with Pike's Peak immediately disparage it for not being Mount Everest? Why look for trouble, why find fault with these beautiful Chinese scrolls?

Do not ask for a master painting. Those attributed to Ma Yuan, to be sure, have peaks that tower like stalagmites; those attributed to Hsia Kuei have mountains domed; those attributed to Fan K’uan have receding rocky masses. But all these particular things may appear in one painting to which it attached any handy name.

The play of rushing stream and mountain gorge that is most often repeated refers again and again to the Thousand Miles of the Yangtse by Hsia Kuei. The most famous version of this picture is the Imperial version which is catalogued in the Chinese Government Collection. Some claim this to be original. The really cynical, pointing out the possibility of substitution, insist that it is as late as the eighteenth century. Do not argue the point. Take this and the other scrolls we know and enjoy the composition; observe the title; observe the mild complacency of a painter who states he will set down a thousand miles in a very few feet—not only says but does.

There is so much difference of opinion regarding the authenticity of Chinese landscape scrolls that in the captions in every instance the attributions have been given without discussion of the pro's and con's.

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