

Tang and Song Dynasties: Apogee of Chinese Culture

Great Age of Achievement in Literature and Art

- enriched by Buddhist and Daoist images and themes;
- Chinese poetry and painting reach pinnacle of their creativity
- porcelain emerges as highest form of Chinese ceramics
- Sculpture flourishes under influence of styles imported from India and Central Asia

The Importance of Poetry

- Celebrated beauty of nature
- The changes of seasons
- Joys of friendship and drink
- Sorrow at the brevity of life, old age and parting; separation an important theme;

Love poems existed but not as intense as western or sensual as Indian;

Characteristics of Chinese Poetry

- Four or eight line poems with 5 or 7 words in each line;
- Chinese grammar does not rely on case or gender and makes no distinction between verb tenses;
- Cryptic and ambiguous;

- Li Bo

A free spirit, nature, revelry and melancholy;

“Drinking Alone in Moonlight”

- Du Fu

A sober Confucian, historical issues, ethical themes, concern with social injustice, plight of the unfortunate;

Majority of the Chinese Population

- acquire knowledge of Chinese history, Confucian moralisms and Buddhist scripture from stories, plays and songs passed down by storytellers;
- Fairs: popular entertainment comedians, musicians, boxers, wrestlers, acrobats, puppets and marionettes, shadow plays and storytellers;

Painting Reaches Its Apogee in China During the Song and Yuan Dynasties

- found inspiration in Daoist and Buddhist sources;
- Buddhist wall paintings in caves at Dunhuang;





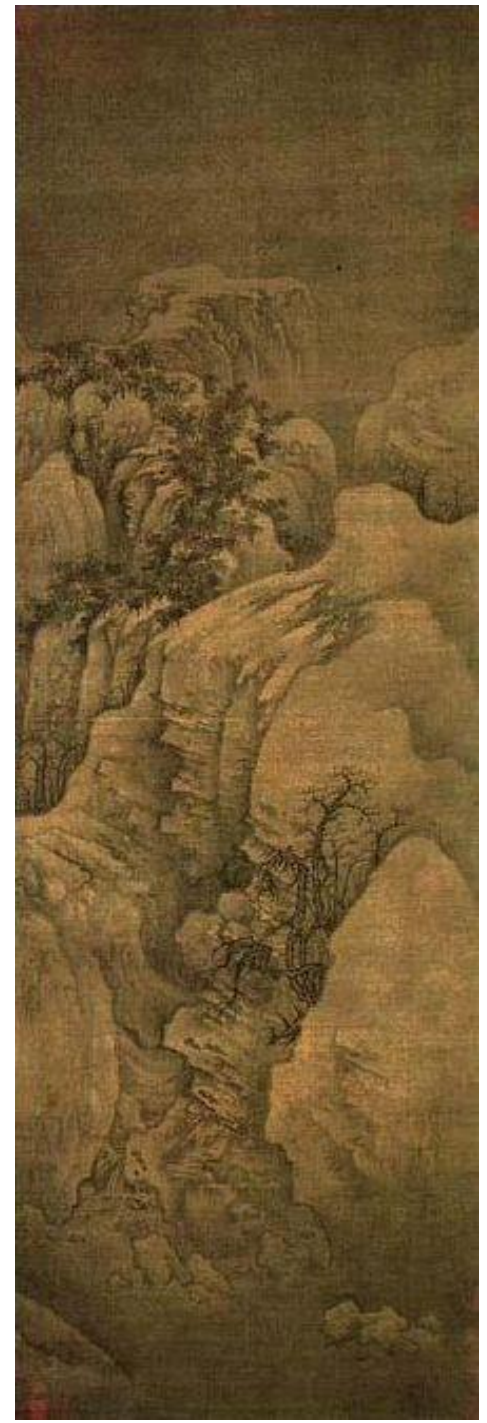


Daoism's Influence



- greater influence than Buddhism
- artists went to mountains to write or paint and find the Dao(Way) in nature;
- painting as a means of realizing the Dao;
- Emphasis on nature in traditional Chinese painting;
- Daoist search for balance between earth and water, hard and soft, yang and yin;

Chinese Paintings



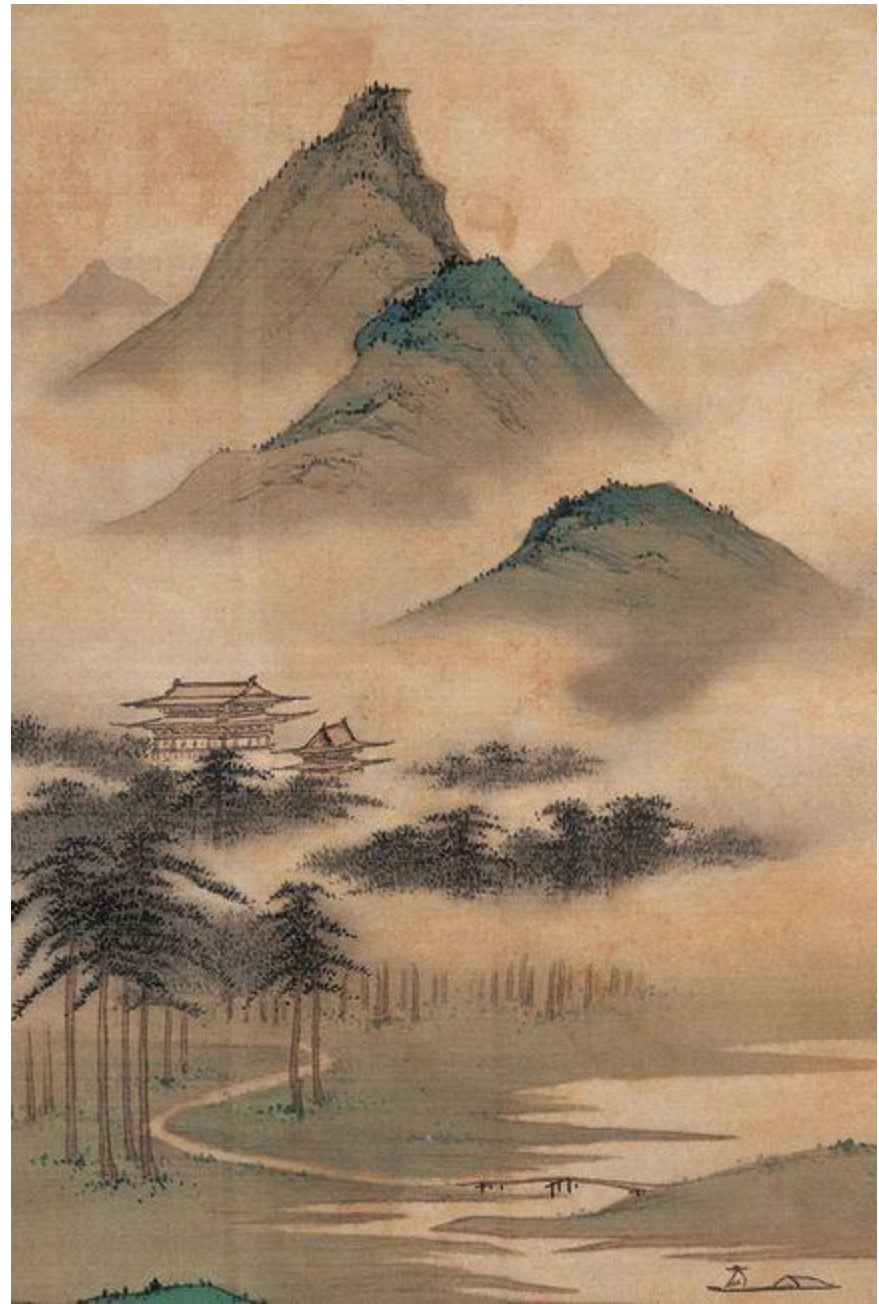


- sought to represent the totality of nature
- rather than depict the actual shape of a specific mountain, they tried to portray the idea of a mountain
- empty spaces left in paintings to signify the Daoist belief that one cannot know the whole truth;
- tendency to portray human beings as insignificant in the midst of nature;
- people represented as tiny figures, insignificant against nature

Black and White

- 10th century: undertook challenge of capturing the essence of the landscape I washes of black ink on white silk;
- Emphasis on brush stroke
- Gravity of mood
- Dominated by mountains





- Paintings displayed on long scrolls of silk or paper attached to a wooden cylindrical at the bottom;
- Unfolded slowly from water to village to hills to mountains to sky

Porcelain

