



**HISTORY OF ART**

**CHINESE – JAPANESE**

**OCEANIC AND AUSTRALIAN**

**OLD AMERICA – AFRICAN**

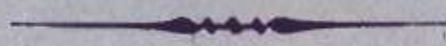
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**TECHNIQUE**

by

**PROFESSOR SILPA BHIRASRI**

**SILPAKORN UNIVERSITY**



**Published by the Faculty of Painting and Sculpture**

**1965**

**(First Edition)**

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## BIOGRAPHY

The late Professor Silpa Bhirasri (C. Feroci) was born in Florence, Italy and graduated from the Royal Academy of Art of Florence. He entered the Thai Government service (Fine Arts Department) in 1924. He has to his credit a multitude of outstanding works chiefly in bronze such as the statue of King Yodfah at the Memorial Bridge and that of King Vajiravudh at Lumbini Park. As Dean of the Faculty of Sculpture and Painting, Silpakorn University, he was the mainstay and livewire of art study in Thailand. Professor Bhirasri devoted himself for over thirty years to the study of Thai art and was universally acknowledged as an authority. He did much to introduce Thai art to the world by writing extensively and with an insight on the subject and by organizing a warmly received exhibition of Thai painting and sculpture in 1947. He also initiated the Bangkok annual art exhibitions. Professor Silpa Bhirasri was officially recognized as the founder of modern art in Thailand and was the first President of the National Committee of the International Association of Plastic Arts (IAPA) in 1954.

He died in Bangkok on May 14, 1962 at the age of seventy. In honour of his accomplishment and his service to Thai art he has been awarded the Knight Grand Cross (First Class) of the most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand, and the Dusdhi Mala Medal. The late Professor Silpa Bhirasri will always retain an honour place in the affection of his many students, and his friends in Thailand.

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# **CHINESE ART**

## CHINESE ART

The history of the art of China is traced from the second millennium before the Christian era preserving its characteristics till modern time.

Political and religious conflicts were responsible for the loss of almost all the artistic production.

Ethically united in the principles laid down by Confucius (K'ung Fu Tze, 551-478 B.C.) and fundamentally believing in Taoism of which Lao Tze, born in 604, established its spiritual doctrine, the Chinese people have preserved their racial peculiarities unchanged for thousands of years.

The most important remains of art are the sacrificial bronze-vessels of which the oldest belong to the second millennium. Technically these bronzes are perfect while artistically present a rustic flavor traceable also in certain forms of the classic period.

Ancestor-worshipping dwarfed the progress of China. Traditional ideas were so respected that also the emperor Shi-Huang-Ti, who attempted to break with the past by ordering the destruction of all classic books and art, failed in his enterprize. Shih Hwang Ti, 221-207 B.C., was a great emperor who started the building of the famous wall of China long 2400 kilometres, built to prevent the Mongolians to invade China.

Under The Han dynasty which followed, earlier and later 202 B.C. - 220 A.D. arts flourished. This dynasty had relations with India, Persia and Rome, thus foreign elements influenced Chinese art.

Buddhism was introduced into China since the first century A.D., but it was only under the rule of the Wei, and of Liang dynasties, respectively 386-535 and 502-557, that it had a profound spiritual ascendancy over the Chinese people.



After the fall of the Han dynasty, for three hundred years there were continuous wars, but art did not suffer from this chaotic period which is referred to as "heroic" on account to the many heroes who emerged in those conflicts. In what concern art the Chinese portrayed often heroes and sages instead of gods.

Buddhism in the 6th century had such a spiritual predominance that at that time existed more than 30,000 worshipping places.

Reaction came and almost all Buddhist art was demolished. Under the Sui dynasty, 581-618, a great number of Buddha images were made again, but emperor Wu-tsung in 845 ordered the destruction of everything belonging to the Buddhist religion.

Japan which had always a great veneration for Chinese art collected many sculptures made during the 7th and 8th century.

Under the T'ang dynasty, 618-906, art emerged in its classic production. Military and Politically the T'ang dynasty spreads its power down to the Caspian sea. During the Sung dynasties (northern 960-1126, southern 1127-1279) art followed its great period. Aesthetically China was at her zenith of expression.

Northern of China was occupied by the Tartars who established the Chin dynasty 1114-1234. These Tartars (Niu-Chih) were responsible for the destruction of the majority of masterpieces of art of the T'ang and Sung periods.

The philosopher Chu Hsi, 1130-1220, by amalgamating ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism gave origin to the Ch'en sect which had so much influence both in China and in Japan. As principle the Ch'en sect thought that knowledge and deliverance were obtained by the means of meditation and for such a purpose nothing better than to live amidst the enchanting Nature which could inspire spiritual conceptions, so much that mountains, sky and water were thought to be metaphysical manifestations of the WHOLE.

Because the insight vision attained by many followers of the Ch'en religion art became an intellectual and philosophical expression reaching even abstract forms.

Kublai Kan conquered all China and established the Yuan dynasty, 1271–1368, Under the Mongol rulers art started to be more decorative so much because the Mongol brought in China Tibetan influences. Theatre developed considerably.

Under the Chinese rulers of the Ming dynasty, 1368–1644, art became so exuberant in effects of colours and forms as to be compared with the baroque style of Europe. The greatest architectural enterprise of the Ming was the large tomb erected in Peking in memory of emperor T'ai-tsu founder of the Ming dynasty. The tumulus of the tomb has a diameter of 275 metres, a rectangular encloser in front of it 385 × 170 metres containing inside the ancestral Hall measuring 70 × 30 metres.

The Manchurian Ch'ing dynasty, 1644–1912, supported arts. In 1680 emperor K'ang-hsi established in his palace of Peking a great institute of arts which was also patronized by his two successive rulers. The production of this institute was exported largely to Europe and had a strong repercussion in the arts of France and Holland.

The palaces and temples still existing in China belongs to the Ming or Ch'ing period. Only few pagodas were built in earlier times.

## **PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

It is not possible to compare western with Chinese art the former treated Man as the principal subject, while other natural forms were secondary, the Chinese, lovers of Nature, thought that each of its form was equally worthy to represent in art. Accordingly to paint a bird, a man, or a mountain had the same appealing value: thus everything was depicted into its natural environment. Another great difference between the westerners



and the Chinese is that the former painted the subject as seen from a man's eye level, while the Chinese painted all scenes as seen from a bird's eye view and generally embracing a large area.

As we have said, for traditional respect towards the ancestors, also during the classic periods were repeated forms belonging to old work of art made in the second and first millennium B.C., but painting being free from tradition developed when the Chinese society was highly intellectually mature.

The oldest paintings are those of the 109 Buddhist caves of Tun Huan done from the 5th to the 13th century.

The classical paintings are those of the T'ang and Sung period. Afterwards this art started to decline till under the Ming dynasty it took a decorative character.

Emperors, nobility and intellectual class collected paintings but no sculpture because this was thought to serve only religious purposes.

Sculpture started with primitive statuettes in ivory and was followed by the famous bronze vessels. Afterwards and till the 3rd century A.D., sculptures representing lions and horses were placed on the tombs. The lions were inspired by Mesopotamian art reaching China from Persia. Some of these lions are vigorous and correspond to the Chinese temperament in representing fantastic animals with a decorative sense.

It was only under the influence of Buddhism that Chinese sculpture reached a very high spiritual expression. Indian Buddha images came from Gandhara but very soon the Chinese eliminated the foreign influence sculpturing statues eminently having Chinese Characteristics.

Because in general Chinese started their sculpture from cylindrical, oval or spherical masses so it differs considerably from the western conception.

The flowing character of the drapery noticeable in Chinese statuary was certainly influenced by painting as painting had been influenced by calligraphy. Indeed in respect to many sculptures we should say that instead of carving they represent engravings, particularly in respect to the folds of the drapery.

Accordingly, from the 4th to the 8th century there was a great Buddhist production of sculptures, afterwards became more and more decorative. During the 12th–13th centuries there was a spiritual revival due to the influence of the Ch'en sect and later on decorative effects dominated again.

Chinese Buddhist sculptures still remain in the caves among which the following are the most important:

Yun-Kan (Shansi) 5th century – Indian characteristics  
 Lung Men (Honan) 5th and 6th centuries, Indian characteristics

T'ieng Lung Shan (Shansi) 6th and 8th centuries,  
 Chinese characteristics

Minor caves: Tun-Huang in Kansu; T'o-shan in Shantung and Kung-hsien in Honan.

## ARCHITECTURE

On account to the continuous wars and to the perishable character of the wood no old architectural monument have reached our time. But from some Japanese temple imitating faithfully the classic Chinese architecture we may see how pure in lines and proportions it was in the T'ang period.

Of course, being Chinese architecture built in wood it cannot give that imposing effect as the temples of Egypt, Greece or India give.

In any way Chinese architecture must be seen on situs because it was planned according to the character of the ground, of water and of wind: this planning was called Feng-shui. A second reason that Chinese architecture must be seen in its real place because is polychromatic and as such must harmonize with the surrounding.

But architects were not free to do what they liked better. There were laws dictating the number of the bays for the palaces of the emperors, princes, mandarins and literary men, respectively 9,7,5 and 3. The colour of the tiles of the roof was also fixed; yellow being reserved for the emperors.

In general the Chinese building has only one story, but it may have many, each story having its roof as can be noticed in the Pagodas.

The various buildings of palaces and religious structures were linked one another by corridors, walled in one side and decorated with bas-reliefs in ceramic. The group of the imperial palaces and temples in Peking is a most beautiful creation of the Chinese architecture.

## **DECORATIVE ARTS**

Considering the real inner feeling of the Chinese people we may say they were eminently decorators. Painting was limited to a distinct class of poets and highly intellectual persons. Sculpture was not truly felt by the Chinese; great works of sculpture were made under the influence of Buddhism, a production that in a way was thought as the result of an imported religion and as such periodically destroyed. Also architecture was a noble expression, while ornamental and decorative arts represent the very universal feeling of the Chinese people.

Objects of common use, of personal embellishment, furniture, objects for aesthetic purpose such as those made in jade and ivory, lacquer works, textile, embossed and enameled metal.

jewels and all the imaginable works of the applied arts were executed with an astonishing skill and deep feeling. This art was enjoyed by the mass of the people irrespective to their social condition, it was an expression eminently Chinese and so vast that it has no comparison with the same production made by other peoples.

For a foreigner this art may sometime look too much detailed, too much profusion of the components elements of the composition, but nobody can deny its great artistic value.

Names of some famous painters:

8th century ...	<b>WU-TAO-TZU</b>	The Giotto of China who made many frescoes with Buddhist subjects.
	<b>WAN WEI</b>	Poetic painter, head of the monochrome-style.
	<b>HAN-KAN</b>	Horses' painter
9th century ...	<b>KUANG-HSIU</b>	Reacted against the Indian style and treated saints as real ascets.
10th century ...	<b>HSU-HSI</b>	Famous for flowers
	<b>TUNG YUANG</b>	
	<b>CHAO KAN</b>	
	<b>CHAO YEN</b>	
11th century ...	<b>WANG NING</b>	
	<b>WENG T'UNG</b>	
	<b>HSIAO YUNG</b>	
	<b>MI FEI</b>	
12th century ...	<b>LI-KUNG-LIN</b>	
	<b>HUI TSUNG</b>	The last emperor of the northern Sung dynasty, head of the academy of literature and painting.

**HSIAO CHAO**  
**LI TI**

13th century ... **LIANG KAT**  
**MA YUAN**  
**CH'FN YUNG**  
**MU CH'I**  
**HSIA KUEI**

14th century ... **NI-TSAN**  
**CHAO MEN FU**  
**WANG MENG**  
**WU WEI**  
**CH'EN HSIEN CHANG**  
**YEN HUI**

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# **JAPANESE ART**

## JAPANESE ART

From the remains of the neolithic age it is noticeable that the Japanese were related to the Korean of the stone period and both derived from Tungusic stock (one of the Mongolian people spread in Eastern Siberia) Elements from Indonesia were also part of the ingredients forming the Japanese race. The Ainu had no influence in the development of the Japanese culture.

Modern researches state that the period of the emperor Jumu starts from the Christian Era. The oldest objects found are bronze bells with engravings representing hunters. These bronze bells were made by an unknown people.

Of the first century A.D. there are tombs and clay figures. The tombs were tumuli and the clay figure were put around them as enclosing rail and indeed some of these cylinders with human figures have at the side holes suggesting a wooden rail was added. In most of the cases the figures represent warriors in less extent horses and birds.

The old religion of the Japanese was nature worshipping of which the main-spring was more appreciated than feared. Japan has always been polytheic, the central diety being the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, particularly worshipped by imperial family.

In the fourth century A.D. the unification of the Japanese was established and since that period they dominated southern Korea from where they received influences of the continental civilization, although old remains show Chinese influences since the first century of the Christian Era.

**ASUKA PERIOD 552-710** (The Asuka period is divided into EARLIER SUIKO PERIOD. HAKUBO period or later Suiko, and from 645 NARA or Early TEMPYO period. The art of Hakubo was inspired by that of The T'ang dynasty. (Hakubo refers to a kind of year system proper to Japan)

**BUDDHISM** In 552 the Korean sent to the emperor of Japan an image of Buddha, but after consultation the emperor Kimmei did not accept the new religion. A temple was built to enshrine the image. But after some time a pestilence broke and the Shinto priests attributed it to the image which was thrown into a river and the temple put on fire. In this time Shintoism had neither developed a moral nor a cosmic order. Idea after the death was not thought and therefore Buddhism came as revolution and revelation to the mind of the Japanese.

Although the first image had created such a bad reaction, the new religion spread fast and wide. In particular, Buddhism found its champion in prince Shotoku Taishi who since 593 had also power to influence official spheres in accepting Buddhism because the empress Suiko had charged him of the affairs of the state. This prince was a great savant and it was under him that the first history of Japan, the Kujiki was written.

The Pantheon of the early Buddhism was simple. The Shaka, historical Buddha, Yakushi, the healing Buddha, Miroku the future Buddha and Kwannon the most compassionate Boddhisattvas. Plus the four Guardian Kings of the four Quarters. To the last Shinto had to compromise with Buddhism and the Oracle of MIWA declared that Buddhist priests were the proper persons to perform rites.

The monasteries of Horyuji became centers of learning and Charity. Afterwards the temple of Horyuji became a veritable museums. Large image were done and although these statues were influenced by Chinese art, through Korea, nevertheless had a proper Japanese character. One of the great sculptor of this period was Tori Busshi who descended from a family of artists which had emigrated from Korea into Japan since 522. The large statue of Yakushi by Tori was set up in 607 in the golden Hall of Horyuji. Also of this artists, or of his school, there is the well known SHAKA TRIAD kept in Horyuji. From the first specimens we notice still the characteristics of the Chinese stone cut images.

To this period belongs the wooden statue of Kwannon in the YUMEDONO Hall of the Horyuji monastery, a masterpiece of the Suiko period. Also the beautiful, meditating statue of the Boddhisattva, or Miroku, or young Siddhartha as it may represent, belongs to the Suiko art.

The sculpture of the later period referred to as HAKUBO is characterized by a freedom of the bronze interpretation detaching from the stone prototypes. This art embodied the spirituality of the Suiko art with an approach to realism.

## PAINTING

The figures decorating the TACHIBANA shrine and the KONDO of Horyuji presents very much Indian influence which could have reached Japan through central Asia and Tun Huang caves.

## NARA 710-794

The selection of a permanent capital broke the custom of the Shinto to change capital each time an emperor died. Nara was chosen as the permanent place and embellished with many palaces and temples in order to compete with the capital of the T'ang dynasty. This period is also called TEMPYO because it was in this period that the great statue in bronze of the Buddha high 18 metres was executed from 729-748, destroyed by fire in 1180. In the meantime, the power of the priesthood grew so strong that in 794 the emperor had to shift the capital at KYOTO.

Since 770 Japan started to use wood-block prints, but both in China and in India this technique was known since the seventh century. Japan imitated the educational system of China, but while in China everyone could enter in state examination and become state officials, in Japan education was restricted to the aristocracy. Lacquer and clay sculpture developed in this period.

Through religious reforms of the sect KEGON or AVATAMSAKA the historic Buddha became the Universal ROSHANA. These reforms brought new freedom in art as the statue of

ROHORA (the son of Buddha) show in its simplicity and beautiful synthesis of the human forms and drapery. The Roshana Buddha in the temple of Toshodaiji is another splendid statue in lacquer.

Realism inspired portraiture as the beautiful statue of GANJIN, a Buddhist Chinese monk who settled in Japan. As consequence of the portraiture the art of the mask developed. In the TODAIJI temple there is an important collection of masks.

The largest lacquer statue, high 6 metres, is that of the thousand armed Kwannon in the Toshodaiji temple made in 759. In the later period of Nara, many wooden statues were produced but they lack the spirituality of the Suiko period. This can be seen by comparing the Eleven Headed Kwannon in lacquer with the SHO KWANNON in wood.

## **PAINTING**

Few paintings remain for the later Nara period. There is a scroll illustrating the past and present lives of the historical Buddha in manneristic style. More lively and far more Japanese is the KICHIJOTEN (Sri) from Yakushiji temple.

784-1185 HEYAN PERIOD Modern KYOTO also called Jogan period from the year period 859-876.

Early period 784-898. To escape from the power of the clergy the capital was shifted to Kyoto. In this period important religious sects were established giving vigor to new art expressions. The TENDAI sect was founded by SAICHO 767-822 (Dengyo Daishi) and the SHINGON sect was found by Kubai 774-835. KUBAI's sect was more important than that of Tendai. Both philosophers had been in China for many years. Their new doctrine blended Hindu, Buddhist Shinto and animistic ideas. They build monasteries in mountain to render the semi-magic rituals more impressive. Ferocious deities, whose benign intent seems concealed behind their terrific appearance, were the characteristic of this art. Two of these Deities are more important. Myoo and Red Fudo whose anger destroy the evil doers thus admonishing people to good lest to arise the anger of these terrible gods.



The Red Fudo of the temple of Myooin on the mountain of Koya and the Bodhisattva MURYORIKIKU are good examples of this art.

With the exception of the temple Toji (Kyoogokokuji) which is in the capital of Kyoto, the other temples of both sects were built in mountains. Famous are the KOYASAN, the JINGOJI at Takao and Kongobuji in mount Koya. The complicated philosophy was so intricate that only in the Kongokai painting there are four hundred and fourteen figures each drawn according to rules, colour and attitude, a thing impossible to express in sculpture. As standard the statues of this period were carved in wood from a single piece. They appear modelled with a large style but lack the spirituality of the Nara examples. Many Sutras were illustrated with figures whose line was in gold over a blue back-ground.

898-1185 FUJIWARA period or later Heyan period. This period was dominated by the imperial nobility and as such it was a great age of aesthetic refinement. Literature developed in a national sense and the book, The Tale of Genji, by Lady Murasaki written in 1020 describing the social life of the late 10th century is compiled in natural tongue instead of the more affected Chinese style and writing. To compose poems had become a social activity, but this intellectual expressions were limited to the aristocracy.

**AMIDA** (the Indian Amitabha) replaced the fierce gods. Through faith and by repeating the name of Amida one could obtain salvation. Some figure of the fierce gods were made also in this period, but they do not show the vitality of the earlier time. Wooden statues were done by joining-wood a thing which gave the artists more freedom in finding finer outlines and variety of masses. These figures were also painted in realistic way as it appear from the statue of prince SHOTOKU now in the Horyuji and which was made by ENKOI in 1069.

Joko is the most famous sculptor of this period, His works are still to be seen in the Phoenix Hall (HOODO) of the BYODOIN

temple at USI near Kyoto, built in 1052 by Yorimichi and which gives an exact idea of the grace and extreme beauty of the Fujiwara architecture. Especially of Joko is famous the statue of Amida embodying the eternal serenity of the Buddha.

## **PAINTING**

Painting also conveys well the aforementioned idea that through faith and by repeating the name of Amida one could obtain salvation. The Descent from Paradise of the Buddha Amida accompanied by twentyfour Buddhisattvas, by Tamenari, shows how spiritual was the painting of the Fujiwara period.

## **YAMATO-E (Japanese painting)**

From the 12th to the 13th century many Emakimonos, long horizontal scrolls, were made, but few have reached our time. Scrolls derived from China, but while in China either illustrated Sutras or represented ranges of mountains in the sense of space and time, the Japanese more than illustrating Sutras dealt with nature of man.

A second style of scroll would describe popular literature such as the legend of Mount Shigi.

A third type of scroll treated animal in a caricatural way like that in the Temple of Kozanji; this scroll is associated with the name of the abbot Toba Sojo 1053-1140, but it is not sure whether the abbot was its author. At any rate the drawing are a parody to the action of men through the means of animals caricatures. They are an invective to the monks of Mount HIEI, HIYOSHI or KASUGA for their unholy behaviour. In fact of them the emperor Shirakawa had to say that he could not control three things, the flood of the Kamo river, the fall of the dice and the monks of Mount Hiei.

**KAMAKURA** period 1185-1392, Minamoto no Yoritomo was named Shogun and with the leadership of the army he confined the emperor in his palace. Thus a military government rose based on feudal power and the co-existence of two capitals; the classical Kyoto