

## LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUL

Eighth century painter Wu Daozi was asked by the Tang Emperor Xuanzong to paint a landscape to decorate a palace wall. The master hid his work behind a screen. Only the Emperor could see it. The Emperor admired the wonderful scene. He discovered forests, high mountains, waterfalls, clouds floating in the enormous sky, men on hilly paths and birds in flight. Then the painter asked the king respectfully to look in a cave at the foot of the mountain. He said a spirit lived there. The painter clapped his hands. The entrance to the cave opened. The painter remarked that the cave was very splendid from inside. He offered to show the way to His Majesty. The painter entered the cave, but the entrance closed behind him. The Emperor was astonished. Before he could move or speak a word, the painting had vanished from the wall. Not a sign of Wu Daozi's brush was left. The artist was never seen again. This was his last painting. Take another famous Chinese story about a painter. He would not draw the eye of a dragon he had painted. He feared that it would fly out of the painting. Such stories played an important part in China's traditional education. The books of Confucius and Zhuangzi are full of them. They helped the master to guide his disciple in the right direction. These stories reveal the spirit in which art was considered. The writer then compares these stories to an old story from his own country Flanders. He finds this story most representative of Western painting. In 15th century Antwerp, a skilled blacksmith named Quinten Metsys fell in love with a painter's daughter. The father of the girl would not accept a son-in-law in such a profession. One day Quinten went into the painter's studio secretly. He painted a fly on the master's latest painting. It was painted with delicate realism. The painter took it for

a real one. He tried to hit it away. Then he realised the matter. He took Quinten as an apprentice. Then Quinten married his beloved. He went on to become one of the most famous painters of his age. The above stories from China and Flanders illustrate what each form of art is trying to achieve. In Europe the aim is a perfect illusionistic likeness. In Asia the stress is on the essence of inner life and spirit. The Chinese Emperor gets a painting painted. He appreciates its outer appearance. The artist reveals to him the true meaning of his work. The emperor may rule over the region he has conquered but only the artist knows the way. The painting is gone but the artist has reached his goal. He is now beyond any material appearance. A western painting reproduces an actual view. The European painter wants the beholders to look at a particular landscape from a specific angle, i.e. exactly as he saw it. The Chinese painter does not choose a single viewpoint. His landscape is not a 'real' one. One can enter it from any point and travel in it in a leisurely movement. This is more true in the case of horizontal scroll. Here one slowly opens one section of the painting, then rolls it up and moves on to the other. This adds a dimension of time. It also requires the active participation of the viewer—a participation which is physical as well as mental. The European painter wants the viewer to borrow his eyes. The Chinese painter does not want him to do so. He wants the viewer to enter his mind. The landscape is an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space. This concept is expressed as 'shanshui' which literally means 'mountain-water'. Used together they represent the word 'Landscape'. The mountain is 'yang', while the water is 'yin'. The interaction of yin and yang is a fundamental notion of Daoism. There is a third essential element also—the middle void, where their interaction takes place. This can be compared with the yogic practice of pranayam breathe in,

retain, breathe out. The suspension of breath is the void where meditation occurs. The middle void is essential. Nothing can happen without it. Hence the white unpainted space is very important in Chinese landscape. Man finds a fundamental role in this space—between Heaven and Earth. He becomes the medium of communication between both poles of the universe. His presence is essential. He is the eye of the landscape. French painter Jean Dubuffet first created the concept of 'art brut' or 'raw art' in the 1940s. Then the art of the untrained visionary was of minority interest. The 'outsider art' has gradually become the fastest growing area of interest in international modern art. This particular type of work is the creation of those who have 'no right' to be artists, as they have received no formal training, yet they show talent and artistic insight. The work of 80 year old Nek Chand is India's biggest contribution to 'outsider art'. He has made a garden sculpted with stone and recycled material. It is known to the world today as the Rock Garden, at Chandigarh. The recently released 50th issue (spring 2005) of Raw Vision, a UK-based magazine pioneer in outsider art publication, features Nek Chand, and his Rock Garden sculpture 'Women by the waterfall' on its anniversary issue's cover. His art has been recognised as an outstanding testimony of the difference a single man can make when he lives his dream. The Swiss Commission for UNESCO will be honouring him by way of a five month interactive show of his works. Nek Chand says that walking through the garden and watching people enjoy his creation is the biggest reward for him.

**Q 1. Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.**

**Anecdote**

**Illusionistic likeness**

**Delicate realism**

**Conceptual space**

**Figurative painting**

**Answer:**

Anecdote: From the text, the meaning of anecdote can be inferred as a short account of a particular incident or event, especially of an interesting or exciting nature.

Delicate realism: It refers to the alluring quality of the art which makes it seem real. It is an interest in or concern for the actual or real as opposed to abstract.

Illusionistic likeness: It refers to an adjective of the technique of using pictorial methods in order to deceive the eye. The reference is to an illusion created by the semblance of something.

Figurative painting: A figurative painting refers to the metaphoric representation of a piece of art, through the eyes of the creator's imagination.

Conceptual space: It refers to relation with the abstract than the factual representation. This is the incalculable dimension of the understanding of concepts.

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**Understanding the Text**

**Q 1. (i) Contrast the Chinese view of art with the European view with examples.**

**(ii) Explain the concept of shanshui.**

**Answer:**

(i) The Chinese paintings are based on imaginative, inner or spiritual approach whereas the European paintings reproduce an actual view, of an external or real object. The paintings of Wu Daozi and other painters of Europe illustrate the difference.

(ii) Shanshui, meaning "mountain-water", refers to a style of Chinese painting that involves natural landscapes, the landscape which is an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space. It represents the two

complementary poles ('yin' and 'yang') reflecting the Daoist view of the universe.

**Q 2. (i) What do you understand by the terms 'outsider art' and 'art brut' or 'raw art'?**

**(ii) Who was the "untutored genius who created a paradise" and what is the nature of his contribution to art?**

**Answer:**

(i) 'Outsider art' refers to those artists who have no right to be artists as they have received no formal training yet show talent and artistic insight. 'Art brut' or 'raw art' are the works of art in their raw state as regards cultural and artistic influences.

(ii) The "untutored genius" who created "paradise" was Nek Chand, an 80-year-old creator-director who made the world famous rock garden at Chandigarh. His was an 'outsider art' in which he sculpted with stone and recycled materials. He used anything and everything from a tin to a sink to a broken down car to form an artistic piece. One of his famous creations are 'Women by the Waterfall'.

**Talking about the Text**

**Q 1. Discuss the following statements in groups of four.**

**1. "The Emperor may rule over the territory he has conquered, but only the artist knows the way within."**

**Answer:** This sentence explains the fact that even though an Emperor might rule an entire kingdom and have power over his conquered territory, only an artist would be able to go beyond any material appearance. He knows both the path and the method of the mysterious work of the universe. True meaning of his work can be seen only by means known to him, irrespective of how powerful an emperor is.

**2. "The landscape is an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space."**

**Answer:**

This phrase explains the Chinese art from where a Chinese painter wants you to enter his mind rather than borrow his eyes. This is a physical as well as a mental participation. It is a landscape created by the artist to travel up and down, and back again, through the viewer's eyes. The landscape is not 'real' and can be reached from any point.

## **Thinking about the Language**

**Q 1. Find out the correlates of Yin and Yang in other cultures.**

**Answer:**

The Indian culture lays stress on Nature and God. Nature is the 'yen' or female part

whereas God the creator, is the male part. This concept also known as 'Maya' or Brahma'

The combination of two creates the whole world, all its objects and also inhabitants.

**Q 2. What is the language spoken in Flanders?**

**Answer:**

'French' language spoken in Flanders which is a region in Belgium.

## **Working with Words**

**I. The following common words are used in more than one sense.**

**panel, studio, brush, essence, material**

**Examine the following sets of sentences to find out what the words, 'panel' and 'essence' mean in different contexts.**

**Q 1. (i) The masks from Bawa village in Mali look like long panels of decorated wood.**

**(ii) Judge H. Hobart Grooms told the jury panel he had heard the reports.**

**(iii) The panel is laying the groundwork for an international treaty.**

**(iv) The glass panels of the window were broken.**

**(v) Through the many round tables, workshops and panel discussions, a consensus was reached.**

**(vi) The sink in the hinged panel above the bunk drains into the head.**

**Answer:**

**1. Panel**

(i) boards of decorated wood

(ii) group of men selected to give unanimous verdict on a legal case.

(iii) group of experts.

(iv) window panes.

(v) group discussions.

(vi) a flat board fixed with a hinge.

**Q 2. (i) Their repetitive structure must have taught the people around the great composer the essence of music.**

**(ii) Part of the answer is in the proposition; but the essence is in the meaning.**

**(iii) The implications of these schools of thought are of practical essence for the teacher.**

**(iv) They had added vanilla essence to the pudding.**

**Answer:**

(i) the most important quality of something that makes it what it is.

(ii) the main part.

(iii) practical importance.

(iv) liquid taken from vanilla that contains its smell and taste in very strong form.

SHORT and LONG ANSWERS

### **SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

**Q.1. Which parts of the landscape, painted by Wu Daozi, did the Emperor admire and how long?**

**Ans.** The Emperor watched the painting for a long while. He admired the wonderful scene painted by Wu Daozi. He discovered forests, high mountains, waterfalls, clouds floating in the vast sky, men on hilly paths and birds in flight.

**Q.2. What did the painter (Wu Daozi) tell the Emperor about the cave?**

**Ans.** The painter told the Emperor that a spirit lived in the cave which was at the foot of the mountain. As he clapped his hands, the entrance to the cave opened. He told the Emperor that the inside of the cave was splendid and offered to show His Majesty the way.

**Q3. What happened to the painter as he entered the cave?**

**Ans.** As the painter entered the cave, the entrance to the cave closed behind him. The Emperor was surprised. Before he could

move or speak a word, the painting had disappeared from the wall. There was not even a brush mark left there. The artist (Wu Daozi) was never seen again in the world.

**Q4. Why, do you think, China's classical education included stories having deep spiritual significance?**

**Ans.** Stories having deep spiritual significance helped the master to guide his disciple in the right direction. The books of great men like Confucious and Zhuangzi are full of them. These stories narrate tales and reveal the spirit in which art was considered at that time.

**Q5. Why did the painter not draw the eye of the dragon he had painted? How far do you agree with him?**

**Ans.** The painter feared that if he drew the eye of the dragon he had painted, the picture would be complete and the dragon might come alive. Then it might fly out of the painting. Since the vision of the artist is spiritual, we agree with him.

**Q6. Why does Nathalie Trouveroy mention Quinten's trick?**

**Ans.** The writer mentions Quinten's trick to highlight the aim of art in Europe. The European painters try to achieve a perfect, illusionistic likeness. Quinten had painted a fly with such delicate realism that even the master took it for a real one.

**Q7. How does the Chinese story present the powers and limitations of Emperor and the painter?**

**Ans.** The Emperor may commission a painting and appreciate its outer appearance, but only the artist reveals to him the true meaning of his work. Secondly, the Emperor may rule over the region he has conquered, but only the artist knows the way within.

**Q8. "Let me show the way", said Wu Daozi. Explain how the author interprets the word 'way'.**

**Ans.** The word 'way' according to the author has two meanings, (i) path or the method, and (ii) the mysterious works of the universe.



The painter tells the king the path to the cave or the method to reach the cave. By entering the cave and disappearing from the world, he explains the mysterious works of the universe.

**Q9. Give three points of contrast between a classical Chinese landscape and a Western One.**

**Ans.** A Western landscape, reproduces an actual view whereas a classical Chinese landscape does not. The European painter wants the viewer to look at a particular landscape exactly as he saw it, from a specific angle, the Chinese painter does not choose a single viewpoint. The Chinese landscape is not real one like the western one, but an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space.

**Q10. What do you learn about Daoist view of the universe from this chapter?**

**Ans.** Daoism recognises two contrasting but complementary elements in the universe namely 'Yang' and 'Yin'. 'Yang' is active, masculine, stable, warm and dry whereas 'yin' is receptive, feminine, fluid, moist and cool. The interaction of 'Yang' and 'Yin' is a fundamental notion of Daoism.

**Q11. Which element is often overlooked? How is it essential?**

**Ans.** The Middle void is the third element which is often overlooked. This is essential because the interaction between 'Yang' and 'Yin' takes place there. Nothing can happen without the middle void. It is as important as the suspension of breath in 'pranayama'. Meditation occurs only in the void, when we retain breath.

**Q12. How does Nathalie Trouveroy define the role of Man?**

**Ans.** The writer assigns a fundamental role to Man. In the space between Heaven and Earth, he becomes the medium of communication between poles of the Universe. His presence is essential as he is "the eye of the landscape". He occupies an important position in the universe. He is not lost or oppressed by

the lofty peaks.

**Q13. How would you classify 'art' on the basis of your reading the chapter 'Landscape of the Soul'?**

**Ans.** We may classify art, i.e. paintings and sculpture broadly as 'mainstream' offerings and 'outsider art'. Whereas the former are products of trained artists, the latter are the works of those who have received no formal training, yet show talent and artistic insight. It is the art of the untrained visionary.

**Q14. 'How has the worth of Nek Chand's work been recognised abroad?**

**Ans.** Nek Chand's work is now recognised as India's biggest contribution to 'outsider art'. Rawvision, a UK-based magazine which is pioneer in outsider art publication has Nek Chand and his Rock Garden sculpture 'Women by the waterfall' on the cover of its 50th issue. UNESCO is organising a five month interactive show of his works.

**Q15. How has Nek Chand followed the notions of 'art brut' or 'raw art' in his works?**

**Ans.** The 'art brut' or 'raw art' are the works of art in their raw state as regards cultural and artistic influences. Anything and everything from a tin to sink to a broken down car could be material for a work of art. Nek Chand has sculpted a garden with stone and recycled material.

### **LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

**Q1. How does the Chinese view of art differ from The European view? Illustrate your answer with examples.**

**Ans.** A western figurative painting is meant to reproduce an actual view of the scene whereas a classical Chinese landscape is based on an imaginative, inner or spiritual approach. The Chinese art aims at achieving the essence of inner life and spirit while the European

form of art is trying to achieve a perfect illusionistic likeness. The European painter wants the viewer to borrow his eyes and look at a particular landscape exactly as he saw it, from a specific angle. On the other hand, the Chinese painter does not choose a single viewpoint. His landscape is not a real one. He does not want the viewer to borrow his eyes. He wants the beholder to enter his mind. One can enter a Chinese landscape from any point and move across leisurely and come back. The Chinese view of art also requires an active participation of the viewer. This participation is both physical and mental. The stories about the paintings of Wu Daozi and an old story from Flanders amply illustrate the difference.

**Q2. Explain the concept of Shanshui and the fundamental notions of Daoism.**

**Ans.** 'Shanshui' is a Chinese word. It literally means 'mountain-water'. The two elements used together represent the word 'landscape'. Mountain and water are two elements of an image. They also reflect the Daoist view of the universe. The mountain is 'Yang' whereas water is 'Yin'. The mountain rises vertically towards Heaven. Mountain is stable, warm and dry in the sun. Water is horizontal and rests on the Earth. Water is fluid, moist and cool. 'Yin' is the receptive and feminine aspect of universal energy. 'Yang' is its complementary part. 'Yang' is active and masculine. The interaction of 'Yin' and 'Yang' is a fundamental notion of Daoism. There is an essential third element also. It is the Middle Void where the interaction takes place. This Middle Void is essential. Nothing can happen without it. The concept of the Middle Void can be made clear by comparison to the yogic practice of pranayama. We breathe in, retain breath and breathe out. The suspension of breath is the Void where meditation occurs. Hence the white, unpainted

space has a special importance in Chinese landscape.

**Q3. Man is “the eye of the landscape” says Francois Cheng. Discuss this concept on the basis of reading ‘Landscape of the soul’.**

**Ans.** The role of man in this universe can be explained with the help of the Daoist view of the universe. Daoism recognises two contrasting but complementary elements in the universe. These are called ‘Yang’ and ‘Yin’. ‘Yang’ is active, masculine, stable, warm and dry whereas ‘yin’ is receptive, feminine, moist and cool. The interaction of ‘Yang’ and ‘Yin’ occurs in the Middle Void. Hence this Middle Void is essential as nothing can happen without it. The importance of man and his fundamental role in the universe can be explained in the light of Daoism. Man exists in the space between Heaven and Earth. He is the medium of communication between both poles of the universe, even if it is only suggested. He occupies an important position in the universe. He is not lost or oppressed by the lofty peaks. Man’s presence is essential as he is the most important feature or the ‘eye’ of the landscape. We cannot see without eye. Similarly the universe is incomplete without man.

**Q4. What do you understand by ‘outsider art’? Write a note on world wide recognition of Nek Chand’s contribution to outsider art.**

**Ans.** ‘Outsider art’ refers to the art of those who have no right to be artists as they have received no formal training, yet show talent and artistic insight. Sh. Nek Chand has won worldwide recognition for his unique contribution to outside art. Using stone and recycled material he has created many sculptures at Rock Garden, Chandigarh. Nek Chand’s work is now recognised as India’s biggest contribution to outside art. ‘Raw Vision’ a U.K. based magazine, a pioneer in outsider art publication has featured Nek Chand and his

Rock Garden sculpture 'Women by the Waterfall' on the title cover of its 50th issue (Spring 2005). His art has been acclaimed as "an outstanding testimony of the difference a single man can make when he lives his dream". The Swiss Commissioner for UNESCO has honoured him by organising a five month interactive show called. 'Realm of Nek Chand'. In short, Nek Chand has taken outsider art to dizzying heights and richly deserves the world wide acclaim.

#### PREVIOUS YEAR'S SHORT QUESTIONS

**Q. 1. Which part of the landscape painted by Wu Daozi, did the Emperor admire and how long?**

**Ans.** The Emperor watched the painting for a long time. He admired the wonderful scene painted by Wu Daozi. He discovered forests, high mountains, waterfalls, clouds floating in the vast sky, men on hilly paths and birds in flight.

**Q. 2. What happened when Wu Daozi clapped his hands?**

**Ans.** When the painter Wu Daozi clapped his hands the door of the cave opened. He entered the cave but its door closed after him. The painting vanished and nothing was heard of the painter thereafter.

**Q. 3. How does the Chinese story present the powers and limitations of Emperor and the painter?**

**Ans.** The Emperor may commission a painter and appreciate his painting's beauty, but only the artist reveals to him the true meaning of his work. Secondly, the Emperor may rule over the region he has conquered, but only the artist knows the way within.

**Q. 4. 'Let me show the way,' said Wu Daozi. Explain how the**

**author interprets the word 'way'.**

**Ans.** The word 'way' according to the author has two meanings:

(i) Path or the method and

(ii) the mysterious works of the universe. The painter tells the king the path to the cave or the method to reach the cave. By entering the cave and disappearing from the world he explains the mysterious works of the universe.

**Q. 5. What is the importance of man between Yang and Yin?**

**Ans.** Yang and Yin are the two complementary poles of the universe. Man is the conduit of communication between Heaven and Earth. His presence is essential. He is in Francois Cheng's wonderful expression, 'the eye of the landscape'.

**Q. 6. How would you classify 'art' on the basis of your reading the chapter 'Landscape of the soul'?**

**Ans.** We may classify art i.e., paintings and sculpture broadly as 'mainstream' offering 'outsider art'. Whereas the former are the products of trained artists, the latter are the works of those who have received no formal training, yet show talent and artistic insight. It is the art of the untrained visionary.

PREVIOUS YEAR'S LONG QUESTIONS

**Q. 1. Describe the wonderful tale about the Chinese painter Wu Daozi. What does the author mean by giving it?**

**Ans.** Wu Daozi was a famous painter of China of eighth century. His painting, 'landscape', was commissioned by the Tang Emperor Xuanzong to decorate the palace wall. Wu Daozi requested the Emperor to look at the cave in the painting in which lived a spirit.

The painter clapped his hands. The cave opened and the painter entered it. But its door closed behind him. The painting vanished from the wall. The artist was not seen thereafter nor any trace of his brush etc. By this the author means to say that Chinese classical painting can be entered from any point. It is actually the spiritual and conceptual space. The artist creates a path for the viewer's eye to enter the landscape. He doesn't want the onlooker to borrow his eyes as happens in the case of European painting.

**Q. 2. How does the Chinese view of art differ from the European view? Illustrate your answer with examples.**

**Ans.** A western figurative painting is meant to reproduce an actual view of the scene whereas a classical Chinese landscape is based on an imaginative, inner or spiritual approach. The Chinese art aims at achieving the essence of inner life and spirit while the European form of art is trying to achieve a perfect illusionistic liking. The European painter wants the viewer to borrow his eyes, and look at a particular exactly as he saw it, from a specific angle. On the other hand, the Chinese painter does not choose a single view point. His landscape is not a real one. He does not want the viewers to borrow his eyes. He wants the beholder to enter his mind. One can enter a Chinese landscape from any point and move across leisurely and come back. The Chinese view of art also requires an active participation of the viewer. This participation is both physical and mental. The stories about the paintings of Wu Daozi and an old story from Flanders amply illustrate the difference.

**Q. 3. Write a note on the concept of Shanshui as given in the 'Landscape of the Soul? Explain the concept of Shanshui and the fundamental yogic practice.**

**Ans.** Shanshui literally means 'mountain and water', which used together represents 'landscape'. These represent two complementary poles, reflecting the Daoist view of the universe. The 'mountain' is Yang which reaches vertically towards Heaven. It is stable, warm and dry in the sun. The 'water' is Yin, which is horizontal and rests on the earth. It is fluid, moist and cool. Yin is feminine and Yang is masculine. The interaction between the two is the fundamental notion of Daoism. The third element, called the 'Middle Void', is often overlooked. But, it is essential as there takes place their interaction. This can be compared with the Yogic practice of pranayama. Nothing can happen without this element. Man is the conduit of communication between Heaven and Earth. He is actually "the eye of the landscape".

**Q. 4. Which art does Nek Chand represent and how? How has he been honoured?**

**Ans.** Nek Chand, through his creation, the Rock Garden at Chandigarh, represents what is called outside art or outsider art'. This art is described as art of those who have 'no right' to be artists. This is because they have received no formal training, yet they show talent and artistic insight. It is similar to the concept of 'art brut' or raw art' originated by the French painter Jean Dubaffe in the 1940s. It is of those works that are in their raw state as regards cultural and artistic influences. Nek Chand has been honoured by the UK-based magazine titled 'Raw Vision.' This magazine is pioneer in 'Outsider Art' publications. It has featured Nek Chand and his Rock Garden sculpture, 'Women by the Waterfall' on its anniversary issue's cover.