



Chang Ta-ch'ien: Lotuses on Gold Screen; ink on gold silk; 168×369cm (66×145in); 1975. Private collection

Louvre, Paris). He avoids drama; in a very simple composition the pious kneels beside the sick girl. There is the same feeling of stillness in his painting of the vision of *St Julienne* (Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham) where again the true subject is the communion of the soul with God. This quality of calm immobility links Champaigne more closely to Georges de la Tour (1593–1652) and Louis LeNain (c1593–1648) than to the visions and ecstasies of his Baroque contemporaries.

### Chang Ta-ch'ien 1899–1983

The Chinese painter Chang Ta-ch'ien was born in Nei-chang, Ssu-ch'uan Province. After varied studies as a precocious youth, he moved to Shanghai to study the painting and calligraphy of the great Chinese masters. Chang became so adept at a variety of styles and techniques that he took up forgery; his copies confounded the connoisseurs of his time, and to this day they continue to create attribution problems.

Since Chang spent much of his youth copying ancient works, his own early art was a rather conservative reflection of Ming and Ch'ing literati styles. In 1940 Chang led a group of artists to the Mogao Caves in Tun-huang, Kan-su Province, to

copy the Buddhist frescoes there. Exposure to this dazzling art brought about a turning point in Chang's own style, and he subsequently incorporated more decorative and colorful elements. A favorite theme became the lotus, which he depicted again and again during this period in works characterized by a stark, subtle elegance.

In the 1950s and '60s Chang traveled throughout the world, spending time in places as varied as Brazil, France, and California. Through his colorful personality and passion for Chinese traditions, he gained a reputation as an ambassador of Chinese art to the West.

Chang's style took on a radical new direction as a result of his exposure to Western art. He gained international renown for the nearly abstract renderings of landscapes he made late in his career, works in which he used a splashed-color technique that recalled the contemporaneous work of the American Abstract Expressionists.

### Chao Meng-fu 1254–1322

Chao Meng-fu was a traditionally educated Confucian scholar and the pupil of the eminent figure painter Ch'ien Hsuan. From his teacher he had learned the styles

of T'ang dynasty figure-painting, and the Northern Sung academic styles of landscape and bird-and-flower painting. Since he left Wu Hsing in 1286 to take up official posts in Peking, he has been traditionally referred to as "a traitor" for he had been a servant of the Mongol Yuan court. However, he was outstanding in his period as a painter and calligrapher and was much admired as an exponent of the classical styles; he was also revered as a great poet and scholar.

Unfortunately only fragments of his studies remain. These show he was a sincere, straightforward, and elegant draftsman with a strong instinct for the old masters. He seems to have deserved his imposing reputation as a scholar painter of taste and erudition and a stylist of the highest order.

Chao Meng-fu was a leader, with his teacher, of the movement that purposely turned its face towards the Old Masters and away from the sophisticated romanticism of the Hsia-Ma and Ch'an Schools. This was a period of reunification of China, though under foreign rule, and there was an acute awareness of former artistic standards. This led to a rejection of the Southern Sung courtly styles, and an attempt to reassess the old ideals. Chao Meng-fu as a traditional scholar official