

on the camel's back, and the merchant, all share the same curvilinear shape, and no interacting force lines, or "cross voices," have been created. The painting has no life—it is "dead."

Void and Substance

Many paintings of the Southern Song period are characterized by a profound lyrical quality, a "poetry realm." Often, the artist will highlight the painting's theme by emphasizing the foreground elements, leaving a large expanse of the area unpainted—but not empty. The painter is using the void to create space. In Mao I's "Swallows and willow trees," the void on the left side of the painting is filled with substance by the single swallow depicted there, and very simple compositional means have been employed to create *qi* and *shi* [SEE Figure 13 and inside back cover]. Imagine how lifeless the composition would be, if this single swallow were absent!

Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



FIGURE 13. Mao I, "Swallows and willow trees," Song Dynasty.

Chronology of China's Dynasties

Shang Dynasty
1766-1066 B.C.

Zhou Dynasty
(including 'Spring and Autumn' and 'Warring States' periods)
1066-221 B.C.

Qin Dynasty
221-206 B.C.

Han Dynasty
206 B.C.-A.D. 220

Northern and Southern Dynasties
A.D. 220-580

Sui Dynasty
A.D. 581-618

Tang Dynasty
A.D. 618-907

Five Dynasties
(including 'Ten Kingdoms' period)
A.D. 907-979

Song Dynasty
A.D. 960-1279

Yuan Dynasty
(Mongol occupation)
A.D. 1279-1368

Ming Dynasty
A.D. 1368-1644

Qing Dynasty
(Manchu occupation)
A.D. 1644-1911