

Revision Notes
Chapter – 6
Landscape of the Soul

The writer contrasts Chinese art with European art by using two stories. The Tang Emperor Xuanzong commissioned the painter Wu Daozi to decorate a palace wall. When it was done the Emperor admired the scene.

The painter drew the Emperor's attention to a cave and when he clapped his hands the entrance of the cave opened. The painter entered but before Emperor could move the entrance closed and the painting vanished, along with the artist. In another story, a painter wouldn't draw the eye of a dragon he had painted for fear it would fly out of the painting.

The writer then cites a story representative of Western painting in which a master blacksmith Quinten Metsys fell in love with a painter's daughter. To be accepted as a son-in-law Quinten painted a fly on the painter's latest panel. When the painter tried to swat it away he realised the truth - Quinten was taken on as an apprentice and married his beloved.

These stories reveal what each form tries to achieve. The Europeans want a perfect illusionistic likeness while in Asia it is the essence of inner life and spirit. In the Chinese story only the artist knows the way within and he reaches his goal beyond material appearance.

Unlike a Western figurative painting a classical Chinese landscape does not reproduce an actual view and one can enter it from any point and travel in it. It requires the active participation of the viewer both physically and mentally. Man becomes a conduit of communication or 'the eye of the landscape.'

THE VOICE OF THE RAIN

The chapter opens with a question asked by the poet to the falling shower of rain, 'and who art thou?' One more voice is there that the voice of the rain which answers the poet. And it's strange to tell that the poem gives an answer-it was in the voice of the rain. The poet understood it but could not repeat as he did not know how to speak it. So she translated it.

Then he tells that it rises upward out of the land and the bottomless sea. She later descends to earth to wash the dryness of land, atomies and dust-layers of the globe. Thus it makes a complete cycle of how rain clouds rise up and descend to wash down and beautify her birth place.

The water cycle in science also gives us the similar view how water evaporates, rises up, forms clouds, roams about condenses and then rains making earth clean and green. The eternal rain bends down as drop from the clouds. It washes the droughts, tiny particles and layers of the dust of the globe it washes and gives life to the hidden, in germinated seeds in dust. It blossoms life and greenery all around, the rain, very strange it sounds, gives back life to its own origin. The rain beautifies the land and makes the seas pure.

The rain tells a lot about her in the poem. It even reveals, 'I am the poem of the Earth'. The rain is the gift of heaven. She has been personified as she has told everything to everyone about herself.

The rain gives a new lease of life to the earth. The rain makes the seeds sprout in the form of saplings. Rain makes the earth pure and beautifies it. Actually it is the voice or the song of the earth. The earth finds its expressions only through the showers of the rain. The poet is of the view that there is a close similarity between the rain and the music. Both the rain and the music always share certain features. He explains that just as a song takes birth from the heart of a poet and after pleasing the listener goes back to the place of its origin i.e. heart of the poet, the cyclic movement of the earth goes on in the same manner.

The title of the poem is very appropriate, just and logical. The cycle of rain is a natural

phenomenon. Actually the rain rises out of the earth and the bottomless sea in the form of water vapours. In the sky they take the shape of the rain. The light and soft music of the falling rains actually the song of the earth itself. After wandering from the earth to the sky, it comes back to the place of its origin.