



MYRIAD POINTS OF VIEW

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MYRIAD POINTS OF VIEW

NEW RESEARCH ON MING AND QING PAINTINGS IN THE
ROY AND MARILYN PAPP COLLECTION

Edited by Claudia Brown

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To Roy and Marilyn Papp
in commemoration of their inaugural gift of paintings
to
Phoenix Art Museum
and the establishment
of
The Marilyn and Roy Papp Chinese Painting Program
at
Arizona State University

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Preface

Roy and Marilyn Papp have built a world-class collection of Chinese paintings from the past five hundred years, and they have found delight in sharing these treasures. Exhibitions from their collection have been shown in New York, Chicago, Paris, Berlin, and Hamburg, and paintings from their collection have been featured in exhibitions held in New York, Denver, Honolulu, and Hong Kong. It is especially fitting that Arizona State University conferred honorary doctorates on both Marilyn and Roy, as their generosity has extended to many university art museums across the country.

They formed the collection over the past two decades, ultimately selecting about two hundred works representing the highest artistic expression of China's Ming and Qing dynasties. From the start of their collecting, Marilyn and Roy Papp chose to involve scholars at Arizona State University and at Phoenix Art Museum. Thus, since at least 1984, art historians at both institutions have conducted research relating to paintings in the collection, with several resulting publications and exhibitions.

Marilyn Papp, whose BA degree was in art history, and Roy Papp, who served as United States Director of the Asian Development Bank, both turned their interest to China in the 1970s and 1980s. In collecting Chinese painting, they were advised by Arizona State University art history professor Ju-hsi Chou, and by Phoenix Art Museum curator Claudia Brown, who later joined ASU's faculty. Another ASU art historian, the late Donald Rabiner, also provided advice and encouragement. All three contributed to the process of publishing the collection as it grew. As a result, three major traveling exhibitions and many smaller exhibitions from the Papp Collection were organized. Two professors of graphic design at ASU, Thomas Detrie and Mookesh Patel, designed the handsome series of catalogs that accompanied the exhibitions.

In this volume a new group of scholars looks at the Papp paintings. One paper comes from a symposium jointly organized by ASU and Phoenix Art Museum in 1994. Another was inspired when an exhibition from the Papp Collection was shown in Paris in 1999. Scholars visiting or newly arrived in Arizona have contributed, as have current

Ph.D. students in the History and Theory of Art program of the School of Art, Herberger College of Fine Arts, Arizona State University.

To insure that the collection remains a vital resource to both Phoenix Art Museum and ASU, Roy and Marilyn Papp are working with both institutions to establish a program of support for visiting scholars and graduate students wishing to conduct research relating to paintings in the Papp Collection. Given the quality of the Papp collection it is vitally important that the paintings continue to inform our understanding of the art of the Ming and Qing dynasties and its vibrant contribution to our global culture.

*J. Robert Wills, Dean
The Katherine K. Herberger College of Fine Arts
Arizona State University*

Collecting Chinese Art

Collecting Chinese paintings has been a real joy for us. We began to like Chinese painting when we lived in Manila and traveled a great deal in Asia. Since we have been in Phoenix, we have learned so much. Learning has been a major source of pleasure for us. We have had excellent teachers and advisors in Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou and, with them, have had a lot of fun collecting.

When we came to Phoenix in 1977, Marilyn joined the docent program at Phoenix Art Museum. Soon she started studying Chinese art in classes taught by Claudia Brown at the Museum. Roy became active in the Museum development program and was agreeable to Marilyn's suggestion that we buy a couple of Chinese paintings for our home. We were surprised to learn that you could only display them for a couple of months a year; the two paintings would have to be replaced every few months. Thus we began collecting Chinese art.

More than anything else, we enjoy sharing our collection. Everywhere the paintings have been shown, we have seen them in new ways and have seen the appreciation of others for them. Therefore, it gives us great pleasure to think of them as part of Phoenix Art Museum. We are also working out a plan to ensure their perpetual availability to students and faculty at Arizona State University. In this way, the collection will remain "alive" and useful.

We can never thank Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou enough for giving us the opportunity for such a rewarding endeavor. We also thank Jim Ballinger, Janet Baker, and the Museum staff for their wonderful support.

Roy and Marilyn Papp

Catalog

*of the inaugural gift from the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection to
Phoenix Art Museum*

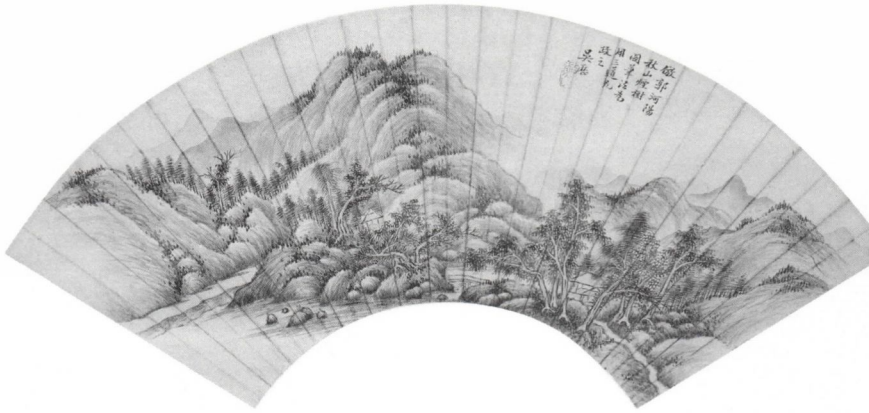
These paintings, including hanging scrolls, handscrolls, and albums, constitute an important group of works reflecting the elite traditions of Chinese art embraced by Manchu emperors and top officials of the Qing dynasty court during the eighteenth century. Many of the works represent the “orthodox” ink landscape painting tradition especially admired by the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662-1722) and his grandson the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736-1795), and practiced by officials as well as members of the imperial household. One of the albums in the group was painted for Qianlong by the Manchu prince Hongwu. Other works in the group represent the revival and refinement of classical modes of painting flowers, birds and animals, or subjects from history or mythology including grand palace scenes, conceived for private patrons in the thriving cities of the Qing empire.

Photos by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

1

Wang Hui (1632-1717)
*Landscape in the Manner of
Zhao Lingrang*, dated 1713.
Hanging scroll, ink and
color on paper, 141 x 39 cm.
Published and exhibited:
Heritage of the Brush, catalog
number 19.
2005.135





2

Wu Li (1632-1718)

Misty Trees in Autumn

Mountains after Guo Xi. Fan,

ink on paper, mounted as a
hanging scroll, 17 x 50.8 cm.

Published and exhibited:
Scent of Ink, catalog number
18; *Le Parfum de l'encre*,
catalog number 20.

2005.136



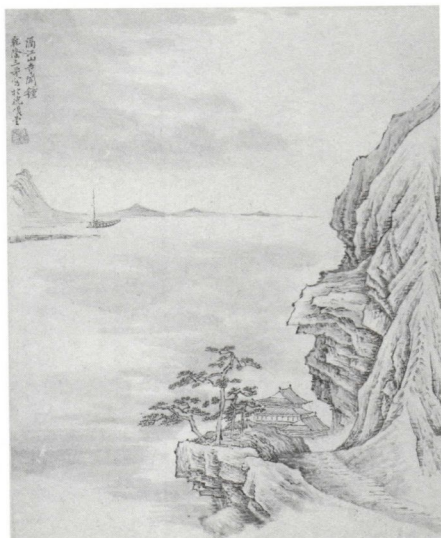
3

Shangguan Zhou (1665-circa 1750)

Landscapes, dated 1738. Album of 12 leaves, ink and color on paper, each leaf 34.5 x 28.5 cm. Published and exhibited: *Scent of Ink*, catalog number 23; *Le Parfum de l'encre*, catalog number 25.

2005.132.A-L







4

Shen Quan (1682-circa 1760)

Flowers, Birds and Animals, dated 1740. Album of 12 leaves, ink and color on silk, each leaf 20.6 x 31 cm. Published and exhibited: *Journeys on Paper and Silk*, catalog number 35; published: *Kakaido Journal* (Autumn, 1997), number 26. 2005.133.A-L





5

Yuan Jiang (active circa
1680-1725)
The Dawning of Spring, dated
1722. Hanging Scroll, ink and
color on silk, 104.1 x 160 cm.
Published and exhibited:
Journeys on Paper and Silk,
catalog number 28.
2005.138

6

Gu Fang
(active circa 1690-1720)
A Pair of Landscapes, dated
1692. Hanging scrolls, ink
and color on silk; scroll A:
94 x 33.6 cm; scroll B: 94
x 33.3 cm. Published and
exhibited: *Journeys on Paper
and Silk*, catalog number 33.
2005.125.A-B.



林間道雅公賦慰情真，子經年古樹陰。
鎮日清吟將畫法，墨歡笑誌平生三十年未意。
披圖百處橫 陸華道人題

奎堂把卷書淫客，天帽
揮成興自讓多，少門前
桃李樹伊誰，磊砢比來松
才任何愛，實知心氣鬱，盡
損髮梳，更有風流，扣雲
雲飛浩氣，散清陰，白
波着，峰連沈冥，秀石蒙
管帶，草甚刺，共南宮
添故事，不須，眼淚，漫著，控
留題金石，紛離子，誰難烟
雲花，滿紙，汗知，此日，半香
亭，草草，香是，前身，越
承旨，松陰，多佳，句題，畫
景，庵，字，伯，臣

松陰山房

南宮畫堂長，丹青清濁，屬去餘，閣外，重刊，微
道林，洲，脫身，修，吳，瑞，娟，着，裝，松，標，亭，子，絕
深，溪，隱，綠，清，山，數，上有，東，武，冠，老，嶺，雲，秀，異
有，一，世，鐘，龍，筆，千，騎，在，若，其，牙，牙，則，伏，降，亦
西，懸，一，日，雲，龍，筆，千，騎，在，若，其，牙，牙，則，伏，降，亦
家在，堆，山，之，西，千，松，萬，松，與，雲，齊
披圖，快然，有，兩，面，似，我，山，松下，溪
何，宮，著，月，溪，頭，坐，忘，年，松，陰
聽，鳥，味 吾，得，探，畫，陰

此畫乃伯臣所畫，其意蓋在松陰山房，故題此畫。伯臣之畫，其意蓋在松陰山房，故題此畫。伯臣之畫，其意蓋在松陰山房，故題此畫。

蘇東坡 仁桂和松陰山房
一月年，泰山與子同雅好，共
上必書畫，必月或畫，畫則妙手至今佳話說南宮
畫堂亦不中，和松陰山房字伯臣



鼓騎，才平化，二舍
畫此古妙無窮，孫劉
再筆，五堂，聚得，景
忘，古，有，介，公，公，公，公
傳，題，則，成，名，吳，松，庫
仙，之，藥，和，風，雲，聲，歡
泰，三，清，可，得，得，樂，一
乾隆，辛，酉，曾，款，此，畫
一，紙，為，此，山，松，陰，山
別，以，文，和，人，及，外，友
以，畫，畫，畫，畫，畫，畫，畫
此，畫，乃，伯，臣，所，畫，其，意，蓋，在，松，陰，山，房，故，題，此，畫。

7
Dong Bangda
(1682-circa 1760)
A Pavilion under Pine Trees,
dated 1751. Hanging scroll,
ink on paper; painting: 54.6
x 30.5 cm; large surrounding
colophons: 123.2 x 54.2
cm; small colophon above
painting: 27 x 30.5 cm.
Published and exhibited:
Journeys on Paper and Silk,
catalog number 36; Judith
Smith, editor, *Tradition
and Transformation: Studies
in Chinese Art in Honor of
Chu-tsing Li*, Lawrence,
KS: Spencer Museum of Art,
The University
of Kansas, in association
with The University of
Washington Press, 2005,
figure 1, page 309.
2005.124

東山初上長安道
 落葉人秋霜物遠
 寒由重到
 臨波不獨便
 黃栌開
 畫清
 佛未祥
 雲煙錦
 牙裝
 玉葉
 前待
 未
 丹沾
 相陰
 詩沉
 瑣院
 畫
 竹間
 分何
 老人
 談
 便羅
 子
 裁紙
 索山
 水盡
 千巖
 萬
 壑小
 遊仙
 碧梧
 翠竹
 宜清
 月潮
 翻墨
 瀟瀟
 滿
 清
 陰亭
 子
 允
 疎
 奇
 伊
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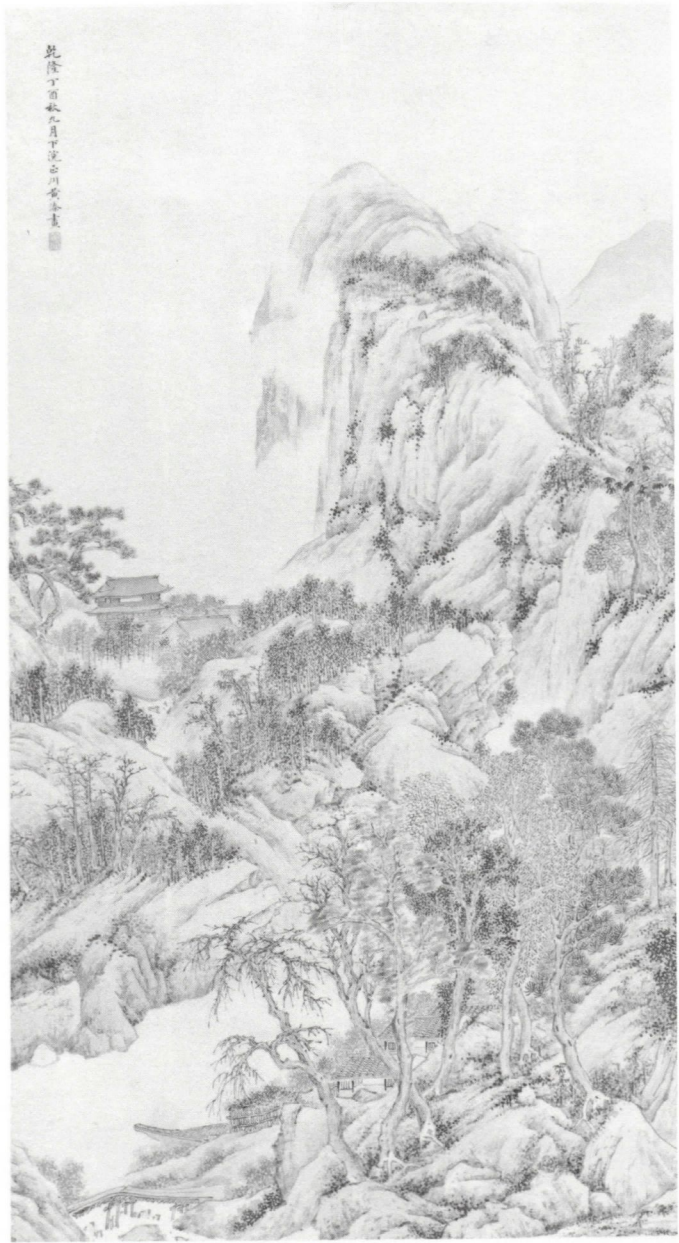


8

Yuan Yao

(active circa 1720-1780)

Autumn Harvest in a Mountain Village, dated 1752. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 144.9 x 72.3 cm. Published and exhibited: *The Elegant Brush: Chinese Painting Under the Qianlong Emperor, 1735-1795*, catalog number 39; *Heritage of the Brush*, catalog number 29; published: Harada Kinjiro, *The Pageant of Chinese Painting*, Tokyo, 1936, 340. 2005.139



9

Huang Zhen

(active circa 1732-1777)

Landscape, dated 1777.

Hanging scroll, ink and
light color on paper, 132.6

x 71.6 cm. Published and

exhibited: *Heritage of the*

Brush, catalog number

30; published: Suzuki Kei

and others, *Comprehensive*

Illustrated Catalog of Chinese

Paintings, Tokyo, 1982-1983,

JP14-158.

2005.128



10

Chen Ji

(active mid-18th century)

Listening to the Flute.

Hanging scroll, ink and
color on paper, 160.3 x

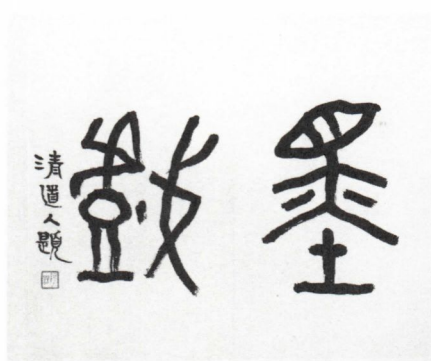
73 cm. Published and

exhibited: *Journeys on Paper
and Silk*, catalog number 37.

2005.123

11
Guan Xining (1712-1785)
Remembrance of Su Dongpo,
dated 1775. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on paper,
134 x 29.7 cm. Published
and exhibited: *Scent of
Ink*, catalog number 27; *Le
Parfum de l'encre*, catalog
number 29.
2005.126





12

Wang Chen (1720-1797)

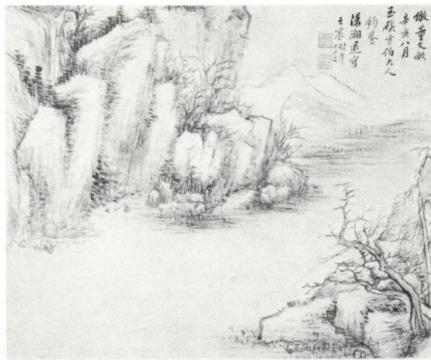
Landscapes: Ink Play, dated 1791. Album of 8 leaves and frontispiece, ink

on paper, each leaf 24.2 x 29.8 cm. Frontispiece by Li Ruiqing (1867-1920).

Published and exhibited: *The Elegant Brush: Chinese Painting Under the Qianlong*

Emperor, 1735-1795, catalog number 19; *Heritage of the Brush*, catalog number 31.

2005.134.A-H





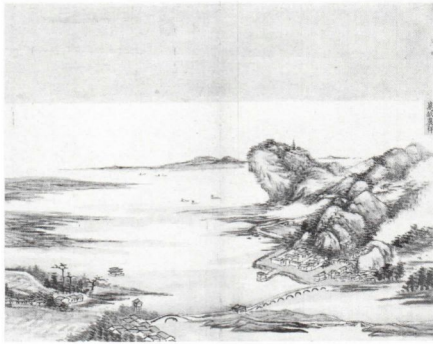
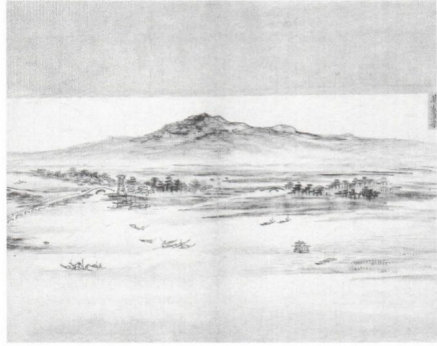
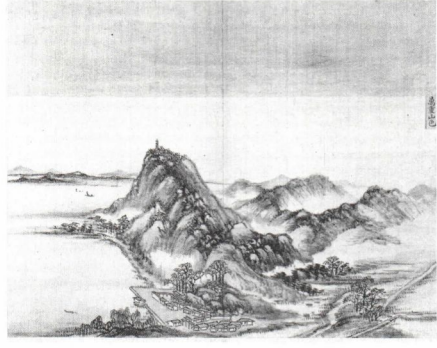
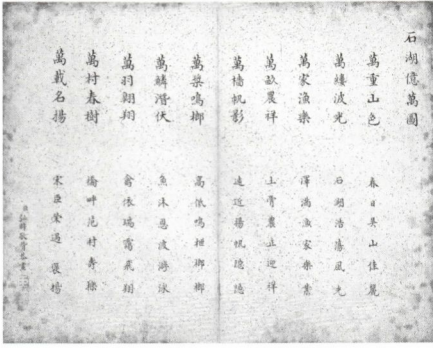
13

Yongrong (1744-1790)

Two Landscapes: Landscape in the Style of Meihua Daoren (Wu Zhen) and Limpid Dawn in Rivers and Hills. Handscroll, two sections, ink on paper and ink and color on paper, 24.7 x 153.7 cm and 24.4 x 153.2 cm. Published and exhibited: *Scent of Ink*, catalog number 31; *Le Parfum de l'encre*, catalog number 33.

2005.137



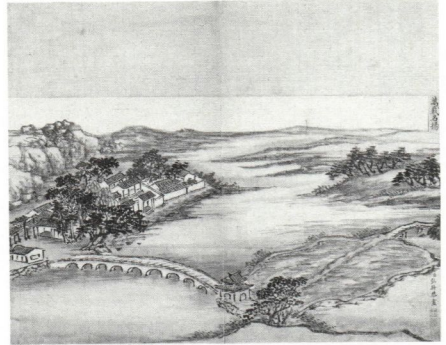
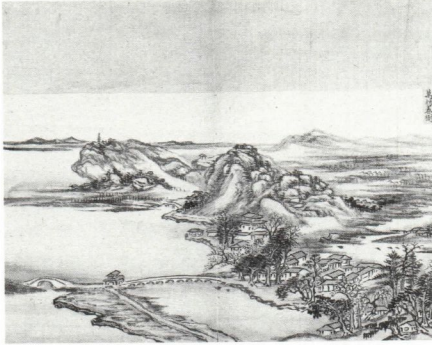
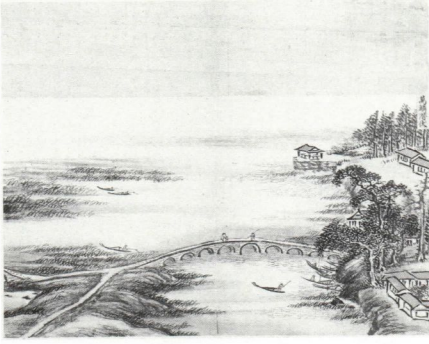


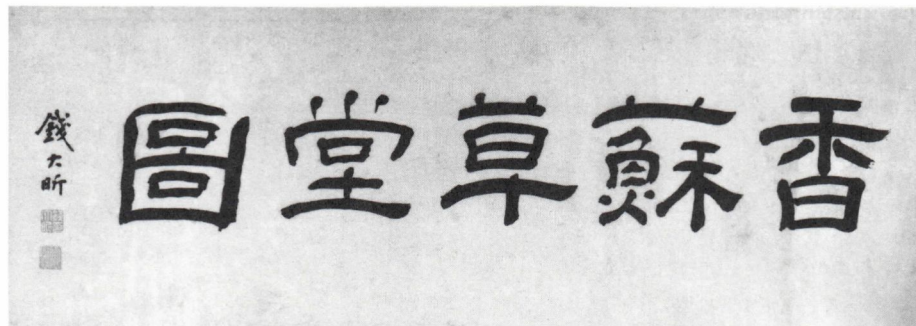
14

Hongwu (died 1811)

The Myriad Delights of Lake Shi. Album of 10 leaves and title page, ink and color on silk, each leaf 23 x 29.2 cm. Published and exhibited: *Scent of Ink*, catalog number 36; *Le Parfum de l'encre*, catalog number 38; leaf H published: Claudia Brown, "Painting and the Qing Court, 1736-1850" in Judith Smith, editor, *Tradition and Transformation: Studies in Chinese Art in Honor of Chu-tsing Li*, Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, in association with The University of Washington Press, 2005, figure 3, page 311.

2005.1267





15

Qian Weiqiao (1739-1806)

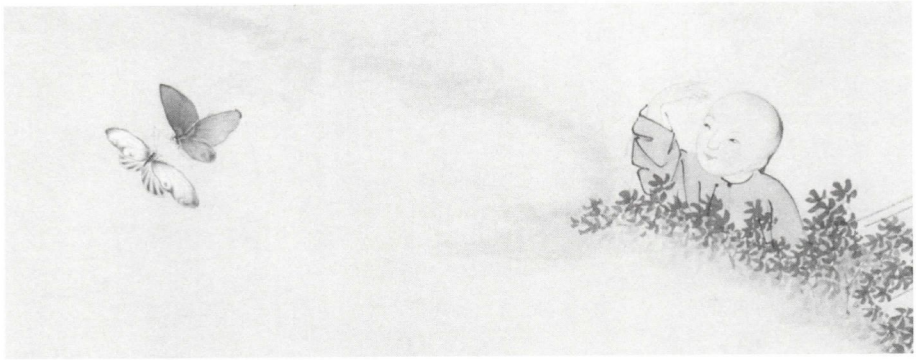
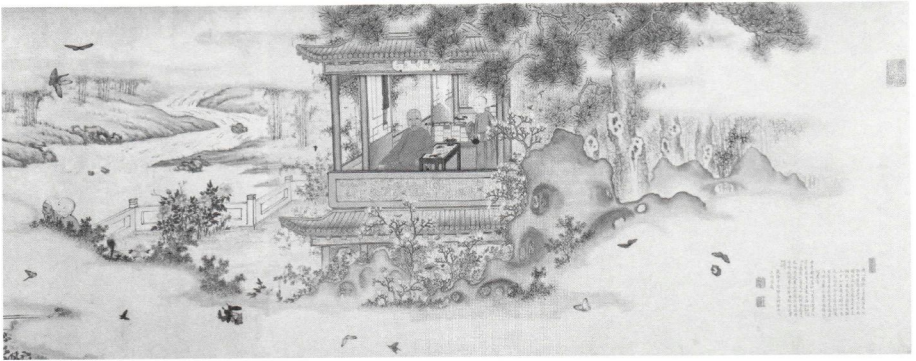
Landscape: The Xiangsu Thatched Hut, dated 1788. Handscroll, ink on paper, 26.7 x 109.3 cm. Frontispiece by Qian Daxin (1728-1804). Published and exhibited: *Heritage of the Brush*, catalog number 32.

2005.131

16

Qian Feng (1740-1795)
Ten Thousand Pines, dated
 1782. Hanging scroll, ink
 on paper, 109.2 x 34.3 cm.
 Published and exhibited:
*The Elegant Brush: Chinese
 Painting Under the Qianlong
 Emperor, 1735-1795*, catalog
 number 33; *Heritage of the
 Brush*, catalog number 34;
 published: Osvald Sirén,
*Chinese Painting: Leading
 Masters and Principles*, New
 York, 1956-1958, VII, 308.
 2005.130





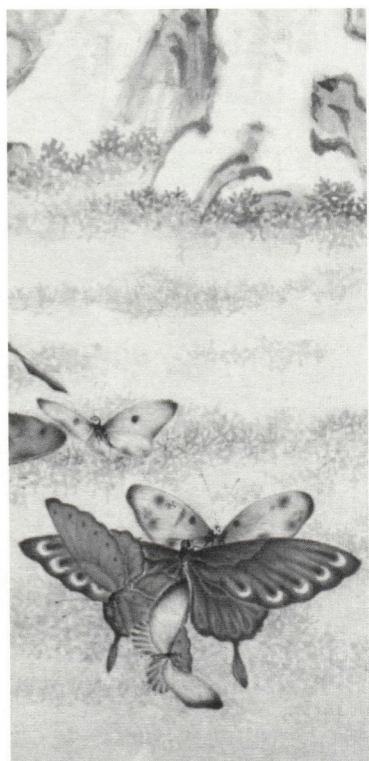
17

Pan Xuefeng

(active 18th century) *Dreaming in the Xiaoxin Pavilion*, dated 1794. Opening section and details. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 47.3 x 333.7 cm.

Published and exhibited: *Journeys on Paper and Silk*, catalog number 39.

2005.129



EXHIBITIONS FROM THE ROY AND
MARILYN PAPP COLLECTION

*Heritage of the Brush: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection
of Chinese Painting, co-curated by Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou*

Phoenix Art Museum
March 18 - May 7, 1989

Block Gallery, Northwestern University
March 8 - April 22, 1990

Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University
September 28 - November 24, 1991

Spencer Museum, University of Kansas
October 25 - December 27, 1992

Columbus Museum of Art
April 18 - June 20, 1993

Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin
January 29 - March 20, 1994

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento
October - December 1997

Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia
January 31 - March 28, 1999

Fleming Museum of Art, University of Vermont
October 3 - December 10, 2000

*Scent of Ink: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese
Painting, co-curated by Claudia Brown,
Ju-hsi Chou, and Kathryn Blake*

Phoenix Art Museum
September 2 - October 9, 1994

The Chrysler Museum
November 13, 1994 - January 8, 1995

Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Berlin
September 9 - November 11, 1995

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg
December 15, 1995 - February 18, 1996

China Institute, New York
February 4 - June 10, 1998

Musée Cernuschi, Paris
September 23 - December 30, 1999

*Journeys on Paper and Silk: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of
Chinese Painting, co-curated by Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou*

Phoenix Art Museum
February 28 - April 19, 1998

EXHIBITIONS WHICH INCLUDED SEVERAL
PAPP COLLECTION PAINTINGS

The Elegant Brush: Chinese Painting Under the Qianlong Emperor, 1735-1795,
co-curated by Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou

Phoenix Art Museum
August 25 - October 6, 1985

Santa Barbara Museum of Art
February 8 - March 23, 1986

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
May 13 - August 13, 1986

Hong Kong Museum of Art
October 17 - November 30, 1986

Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire, 1796-1911,
co-curated by Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou

Phoenix Art Museum
August 22 - October 4, 1992

Denver Art Museum
November 7, 1992 - January 3, 1993

Honolulu Academy of Arts
March 17 - April 19, 1993

Hong Kong Museum of Art
May - July, 1993

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Marsha Weidner, editor, *Perspectives on the Heritage of the Brush*, papers presented at a symposium on *The Heritage of the Brush: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting*, Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, 1997.

Antoine Gournay, editor, *Le Parfum de l'encre: Peintures chinoises de la collection Roy et Marilyn Papp*, Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 1999.

Claudia Brown and Donald Rabiner, "Heritage of the Brush: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting," *Orientalism*, September 1991, pages 76-82.

Ju-hsi Chou, "Chain of Causation: Fang Shishu's *The Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains after Zhao Mengfu and Dong Qichang*," in Judith Smith, editor, *Tradition and Transformation: Studies in Chinese Art in Honor of Chu-tsing Li*, Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, in association with The University of Washington Press, 2005, pages 281-303.

Claudia Brown, "Painting and the Qing Court: Scholar-Artists, 1736-1850," in Judith Smith, editor, *Tradition and Transformation: Studies in Chinese Art in Honor of Chu-tsing Li*, Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, in conjunction with the University of Washington Press, 2005, pages 305-321.

Romanization of Chinese characters in *Phaebus* 9 adheres to the *pinyin* system, with the following exceptions:

Terms and names in titles of publications using different systems of romanization;

Self-chosen names of modern Chinese scholars in the West, familiar through previous publications, for example Wen Fong (not Fang Wen);

Place names outside of mainland China, the usage of which is accepted internationally, for example Hong Kong (not Xianggang) and Taipei (not Taibei).

The Daoist Symbolism of Immortality in Shen Zhou's *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon at Bamboo Villa*

CHUN-YI LEE

The Ming artist Shen Zhou (1427-1509), regarded as the founder of Wumen Huapai (the Wu School of Painting) and one of the most important poet-painters in Chinese art history, executed several paintings related to the occasion of a literary gathering held at his Youzhu Zhuang (Bamboo Villa) in Changzhou (today's Suzhou, Jiangsu Province) on the eve of the Mid-Autumn Festival. The most famous one is a handscroll, entitled *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon* in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (figure 1), which has been illustrated in a number of books on Chinese art and is discussed at length by Richard Edwards in his *The Field of Stones: A Study of the Art of Shen Chou* of 1962.¹ In addition to the Boston scroll, two similar paintings are in Chinese collections, one previously in the Beijing Palace Museum and one in the Tianjin Art Museum.²

There is another handscroll of the same theme attributed to Shen Zhou, entitled *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon at Bamboo Villa*, which was purchased in 1996 in New York by the collectors Roy and Marilyn Papp in Phoenix.³ The handscroll includes a short painting depicting the memorable gathering at the Mid-Autumn Festival (figure 2) and a long poem composed and inscribed by the artist to give a supplementary commemoration of the event (figure 3). Although some scholarly research has been published by Howard Rogers in the *Kaikodo Journal* of 1996 and by Ju-hsi Chou in the exhibition catalog *Journeys on Paper and Silk: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* of 1998, the Papp scroll is still little-known to the field of Chinese art.⁴ The aim of this article is to examine the handscroll, focusing on the Daoist symbolism of the painting which reveals the artist's fervent quest for immortality. By employing a method synthesizing icono-



Figure 1. Shen Zhou (1427-1509), *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon*, dated 1489.
Handscroll, ink and colors on paper, painting: 30.5 x 134.5 cm.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Special Chinese and Japanese Fund, 15.898.

graphic analysis and literary examination, the interpretation of this extraordinary work gives a new dimension to the art and life of the Ming master.

The painting in the Papp scroll is of modest dimensions, measuring 29.2 cm in height by 91.8 cm in width. In the middle of the composition, three gentlemen are seated inside the Pingan Ting (Pavilion of Peace), a simple thatched structure located on a gentle slope within Shen Zhou's estate. They are watching the full moon on the upper left, celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival. There are small stands of bamboo rising stylishly on the right and beyond the pavilion flows a mild river, over which a wooden bridge connects the terrace to an unknown land covered by trees and rocks on the left. Despite the festive celebration of the Mid-Autumn moon, the scene is dominated by feelings of sadness, gloominess, and emptiness, reflected in the poem colophon:

In my youth, I saw the Mid-Autumn moon,
As no different from any other moon.
In old age, I grew fond of it.
Loving the moon means also to love the fine
autumn feast.

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How many more Mid-Autumn feasts can an old man enjoy?
In truth, time flows on and cannot be detained.
We know men come and go but not the moon.
The old moon shines on newcomers with
indifference.

If there is wine in the pot then let us be merry;
And never refuse when the cup comes to you.
[Tonight] the moon is full and the friends are reunited.
When we part, the moon will also wane.
As my eyes have seen fewer old friends,
Throwing caution aside, I'd dally long under the moonlight.
I shall sing aloud Li Bai's *Asking the Moon*.
But my white hair startles me, robbing me of my youth.
If youth and white hair cannot be paired,
May my surging spirit drink up the ocean of wine
and the moon (reflected in it).
This old man has lived for sixty years of life!
Can I ask the Mid-Autumn [moon] to lend me forty more?⁵

Shen Zhou's recognition of mortality is expressed in the poem and it changes the painting from a depiction of a happy reunion of friends enjoying the Mid-Autumn moon to a melancholic scene dealing with the issues of death – both the loss of departed friends and the transience of his own life.



Figure 2. Shen Zhou, *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon at Bamboo Villa*, dated 1486. Handscroll, ink on paper, painting: 29.2 x 91.8 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

In the last lines of the poem, Shen Zhou indicates that he was about sixty when the memorable Mid-Autumn gathering was held at his estate in Changzhou.⁶ The age of Shen Zhou in this case provides us with grounds for discussing his attitude towards life and death because as people enter their twilight years, their sense of physical mortality usually becomes much stronger. Death is a main theme in Western art but it is seldom represented in Chinese painting, especially in the *wenren hua* (literati painting). However, this theme is central in Chinese poetry. As a poet-painter, Shen Zhou wrote many poems about his concern for mortality in his later years. For instance, he lamented the death of the Emperor Hongzhi (reigned 1488-1505) in a poem: “Being a weak man eighty years of age, my death is imminent. Getting the news, hardly can I bear my pain....”⁷ Shen Zhou also inscribed on a portrait of himself at the age of eighty: “These eighty years have been



totally unproductive! Yet is death now only next door to me.” Added to this poem is an inscription saying: “Life and death are a dream, [my body in] the world is like dust.”⁸

Facing the transience of physical life and the inevitability of death, Shen Zhou, like most human beings, desperately yearned for health and longevity. His wishes for long life are evident in one of his four seasons poems: “The mutability of things stir my thoughts now and again. Eagerly I intend to follow the immortals. Worrying in advance about the degeneration of my body, I envy the southern mountain, whose greenness looks forever young.”⁹ In order to keep the body healthy and preserve its harmonious functions, Shen Zhou regularly practiced *jingzuo* (quiet sitting), especially at midnight. In his *Night Sitting* of 1492, now in the National Palace Museum in Taipei (figure 4), he recorded the experience of attaining a state of outward quiescence and inward repose through quiet sitting and meditation under the moonlight. The long inscription on the painting notes:

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Figure 3. Shen Zhou, *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon at Bamboo Villa*, dated 1486. Handscroll, ink on paper, calligraphy: 29.2 x 1006.5 cm.

The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

On a cold night sleep is very sweet. I woke in the middle of the night, my mind clear and untroubled, and as I was unable to go to sleep again, I put on my clothes and sat facing my flickering lamp.... How great is the strength to be gained sitting in the night. Thus, cleansing the mind, waiting alone through the long watches by the light of a candle becomes the basis of an inner peace and of an understanding of things. This, surely, will I attain.¹⁰

Shen Zhou's practice of *jingzuo* at midnight intended not only to purify his mind but, most importantly, to strengthen his body to extend his life span. He wrote in his *Night Sitting in Hot Autumn*: "Streams of stars are falling on the horizon, and the night is passing away. I sit long enough, that my mind is detached from human affairs. In fear of aging as reflected in mirrors, I try to find ways to escape...."¹¹ This idea of health practice springs from Daoist concepts of *yangsheng* (longevity techniques) that direct the practitioner to meditate and regulate the *qi* (vital energy) of the body at the hour of *zi* (11 pm to 1 am).¹² In the Daoist text *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* (Explanation of the Five Talismans of Numinous Treasure), it says: "The taking in of the essence of the moon is done to nourish one's kidney-root, that gray hair can be turned black. It is good for one to meditate at midnight...."¹³ The quest for prolongation of life remained Shen Zhou's main reason for practicing *jingzuo*, as shown in his *Night Sitting in Early Autumn*:

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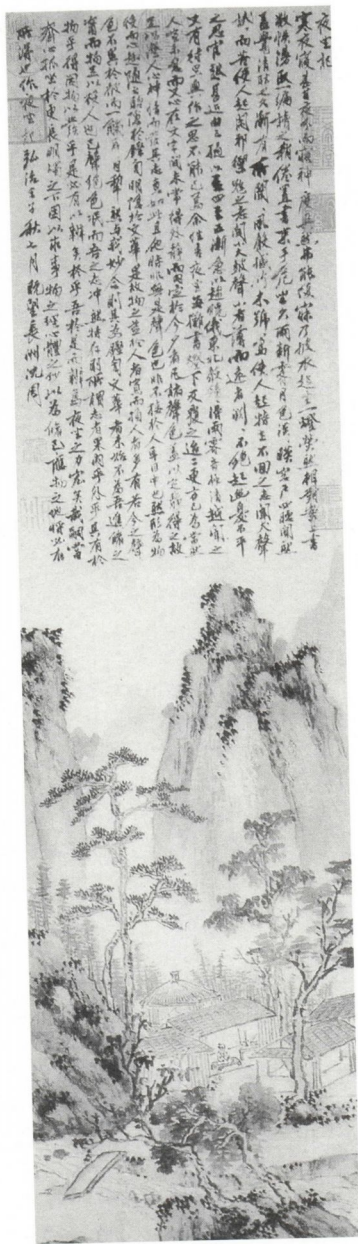


Figure 4. Shen Zhou, *Night Sitting*, dated 1492. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 84.8 x 21.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

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The white hair is falling like leaves, I scratch my head in panic.
All earthly things are no different from me, and anyhow the
universe is full of life.
Which house isn't under the moonlight; which tree doesn't
make the autumn sound?
How thankful I am to the pure land, the crane is singing in my
courtyard.¹⁴

In playful landscape paintings and poems, the crane remains one of Shen Zhou's favorite motifs, charged with beautiful suggestions about his desire for long life. Once he wrote for a *daoshi* (Daoist priest):

Green pine is a wooden friend, and white crane an immortal
courser.
These two have pure hearts, you can rely on their issues of
longevity.
The one who grows pines and rides cranes, treating life like little
games.
Longing for their brilliance, I sit and breathe the *qi* of heaven
and earth.¹⁵

Not only did Shen Zhou practice *jingzuo* and do Daoist breathing exercises, he also befriended Daoist priests and visited their temples frequently. One of the priests, named Fang Zhiqing (died 1495) was his life-long friend. Shen Zhou shows an excessive admiration for his free and unfettered lifestyle in some poems, like the lines he composed in 1475: "Joyfully he follows the immortals, traveling along the east of the river.... He persuaded me to pursue the ultimate Dao, whose abstruseness and silence are in tune to Heaven. I intend to learn but acknowledge its intricacy, and my decrepit face turns red without cause...."¹⁶ Although Shen Zhou could hardly free his mind from earthly concerns, in particular family responsibilities, to follow his friend to become a priest, he nonetheless eagerly searched for a transcendental life and considered himself a *daoren* (Daoist adept). He wrote in one of his poems: "Being a Daoist adept, my thought is as pure as water when I wake up. Leaning against a tall pine tree, I leisurely count the homebound cranes."¹⁷ Shen Zhou sometimes even had a wild dream of becoming a Daoist immortal roaming in sylphdom on a divine crane, which is indicated in a poem inscribed on a painting:

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“Being an immortal on the crane in my previous incarnation, I was punished to live on earth for a thousand years....”¹⁸

On a small painting in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (figure 5), Shen Zhou depicts himself as a recluse scholar, accompanied by a crane on his boat and welcomed by a pine tree in the foreground. According to Michael Sullivan, the artist seemed to travel home after visiting the land of the immortals.¹⁹ The crane, as an archetypal emblem of Daoist immortality, is best described in the *Xianghe jing* (Text on the Physiognomy of the Crane) of the Tang Dynasty:

It is a *yang* bird yet roams in the *yin* world. It goes through various stages of transformation and takes one thousand and six hundred years to complete its final transformation. Its white feathered body indicates the bird’s pure and clean nature. The red crown on its head indicates that its calling reaches heaven. Its longevity is immeasurable....They are the senior leader of birds and vehicle for the immortals.²⁰

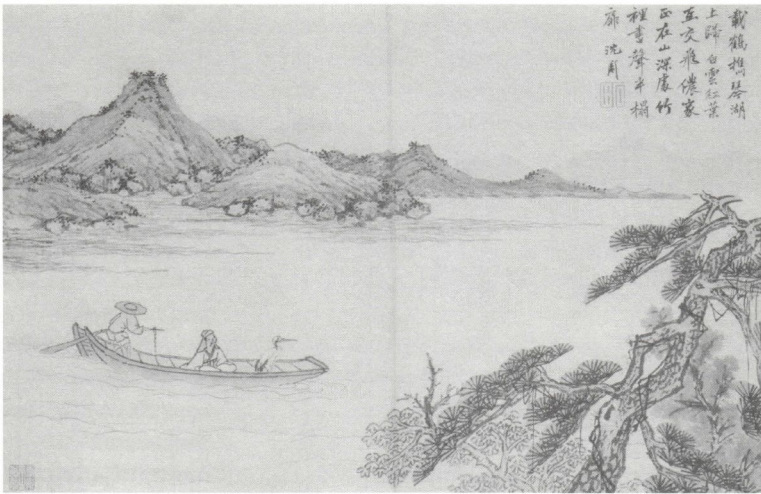


Figure 5. Shen Zhou, *Scholar and Crane Returning Home*. Album leaf (one of six) mounted as a handscroll, ink on paper, 38.7 x 60.2 cm.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

Purchase: Nelson Trust, 46-51/3. Photo by Robert Newcombe.

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As Richard Edwards has pointed out, the crane is to be seen again and again in Shen Zhou's paintings. In the Mid-Autumn handscroll in Boston, as well as in the Tianjin one, this "immortal guest" was invited to join the memorable literary gathering in the artist's Youzhu Zhuang.²¹ The crane's appearances in domestic scenes are commonplace in Ming literati paintings, like those created by the Women painters from Changzhou, because the auspicious bird had its wintering grounds in the Jiangsu area and had been raised and trained as a favorite pet among scholars since ancient times.²² Its association with Daoist immortality concepts is of great importance in understanding Shen Zhou's art; however, this aspect has attracted little scholarly discussion in the past. As Edward H. Schafer has observed, most westerners, until recently, have regarded Daoism as superstition due to the influence of the Qing rulers' revulsion against the native religion.²³ The major role of Daoist thought in Shen Zhou's artistic creation, which offers a source of imaginative themes, an ideal of transcendental spirit, and a religious salvation of human mortality, is elucidated here for the first time.

Like the Boston and the Tianjin scrolls, *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon at Bamboo Villa* in the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection in Phoenix is closely attached to Daoist immortality concepts. At the end of the colophon in the Papp scroll, Shen Zhou signed as "Baishi Weng" (White Stone Old Man), an assumed name he started to use at fifty-eight.²⁴ This name, both literally and metaphorically related to his famous sobriquet Shitian (field of stones), is distinctly inspired by the Daoist immortal Baishi Sheng (Master White Stone), who decocted white stones and used them as food for the sake of longevity.²⁵ In the *Taishang lingbao wufu xu*, an incantation recites:

The white stones, hard and rocky, are rolling on and on,
The gushing spring, bubbling and pervasive, becomes a thick
juice.
Drink it and attain long life –
Longevity forever longer!²⁶

On an album leaf now in the University Art Museum of Berkeley, the Daoist preoccupation with the magical and medical properties of stones is demonstrated by Zhu Chang (circa 1620-1680), a scholar-painter active in the Suzhou region in the early Qing Dynasty. A quatrain was written on the painting:

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A lofty gentleman sits among the boulders;
Wind in the pines blows on nature's pipes.
The cinnabar [pill] finished, heaven and earth expand;
Decocting stones, he nourishes his longevity.²⁷

Although Shen Zhou might not have followed the very dietetic regimen, he was sufficiently infatuated by this Daoist idea that at least four of his leisure seals were inscribed "Zhushi Ting" which literally means "Decocting Stones Pavilion."²⁸ The hidden import of the names Baishi Weng and Shitian is also suggested in his *Rhyme of Decocting Stones*: "See how the ground phosphate rock from Taishan can be drunk, the cinnabar pellet from Fuling can be eaten.... If the Daoist priest instructs me about the secret practices, I will cultivate the field of stones for him."²⁹

Shen Zhou's vehement desire for prolongation of life is substantiated in the case of the Papp scroll by the identification of one special motif. The object in the central figure's right hand, in spite of its almost imperceptible size and shape, is of paramount importance in deciphering the painting (figure 6). Howard Rogers has suggested that the motif is

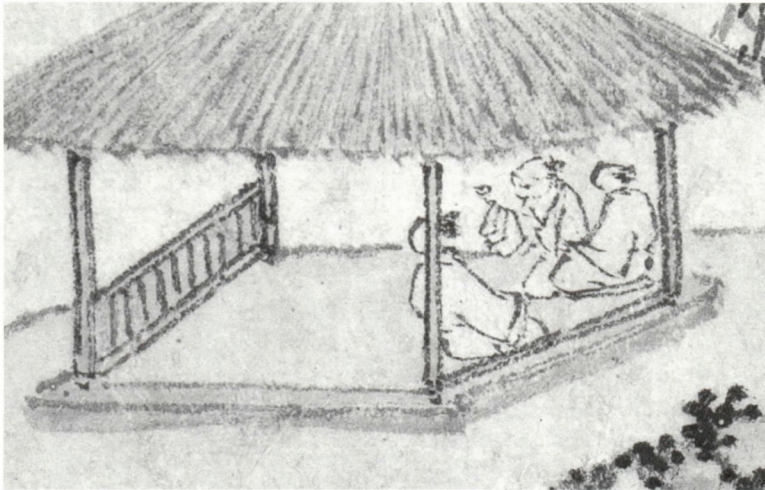


Figure 6. Detail of figure 2.

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a wine cup for toasting the full moon, probably with the literary reference to Shen Zhou's colophon.³⁰ This assumption, however, becomes dubious upon closer examination of the image, whose outline in fact has a grass-like plant form. It is also unlikely that the central figure is holding a cup in salute to the moon without the active participation of his two partners. In light of Shen Zhou's Daoist inclination and his preoccupation with longevity, a new interpretation of the motif is presented here. As a replacement for the crane in many of the artist's paintings, Shen Zhou pictured himself in the Papp scroll as the central figure holding in his right hand a potent *lingzhi*. Evidence for the new interpretation of this symbolic motif is examined below.

In contrast to the two profile faces of the anonymous men directed to the Mid-Autumn moon, the head of the central figure, with a sketchy depiction of eyes and nose, appears distracted from the lovely night scenery and turns outwards to give a subtle glance at the viewer. This frontal pose with a potential eye-engagement establishes a virtually continuous space as well as a psychic intercourse between the sitter and the beholder. The rendering of the frontal figure in pictorial art, according to Meyer Shapiro, is parallel to the grammatical form of the first person, the role of "I" in speech with its complementary "you." It is therefore appropriate for such figures to be symbols or carriers of a specific message.³¹ In the case of the Papp scroll, Shen Zhou ingeniously poses himself as a frontal figure with his head slightly turned, suggesting an eye-engagement with the viewer so as to draw our attention to the symbolism of the *lingzhi* in his right hand and to communicate some sense of his personal situation.

The *lingzhi*, known by the scientific name *Ganoderma lucidum*, is a woody fungus deep brown in color with a lacquer-like sheen that grows at the roots of trees in temperate zones (figure 7). This marvelous plant has been a symbol of happy omen for thousands of years in China, bespeaking good fortune, great health, longevity, and even immortality.³² According to the *Soushen ji* (In Search of the Supernatural) of the Eastern Jin period, the legendary Pengzu lived to be seven hundred years old by consuming the cinnamon *lingzhi*.³³ The idea of the supernatural fungus with miraculous potency was first recorded in the *Li ji* (The Book of Rites) of the late Zhou or early Han periods, in which *zhi* is listed as a ritual food of emperors.³⁴ In the *Shi ji* (Records of the Grand Historian) of the Western Han period, Sima Qian (circa 145-circa 90 BCE) noted the appearance of an auspicious fungoid plant

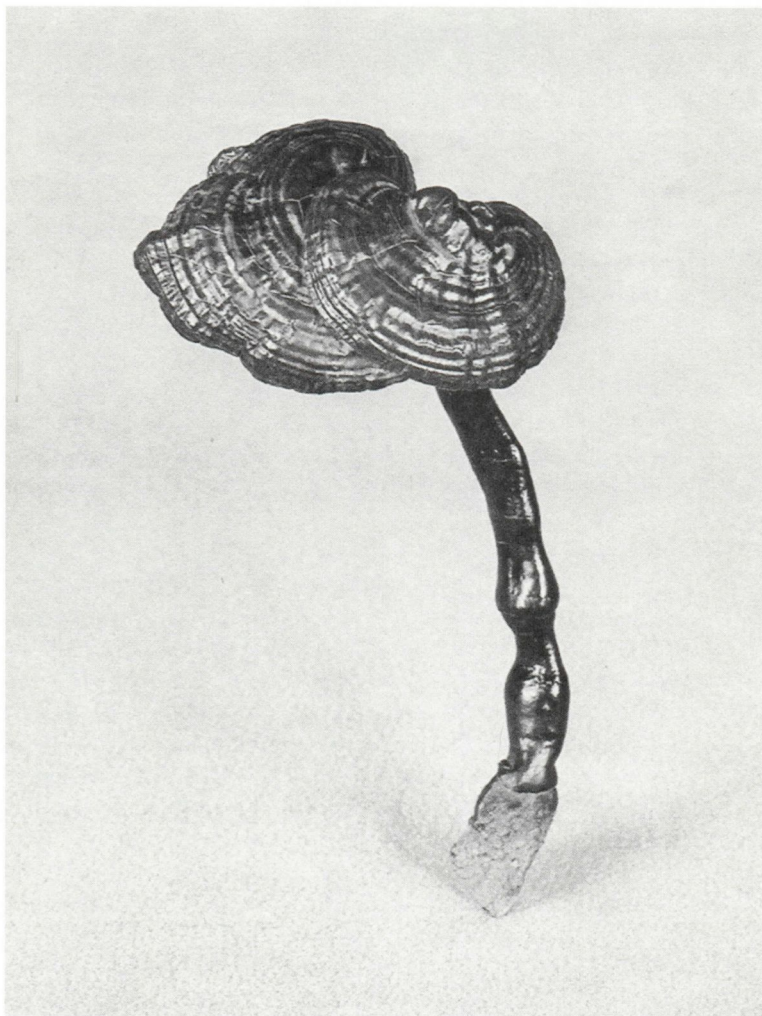


Figure 7. A twin-leaved *lingzhi*. Source: R. Gordon Wasson. *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972, plate 14.

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with nine stalks and leaves in an inner pavilion of the Ganquan Gong (Palace of Sweet Springs), which was identified with the magic plant *zhi* by the Emperor Wu.³⁵ The Eastern Han historian Ban Gu (32-92) recorded the emperor's ode for the occasion and he himself wrote a poem about this mystic fungus by using the term *lingzhi*:

Lingzhi grows with the settling dew,
The sign of the three virtues, happy omen's picture fulfilled.
It prolongs lives and glorifies the capital.
It accompanies the Emperor on high, image of the Sky!
Image of the sun and the moon, it throws out bursts of light!³⁶

For the magical powers of the fungus, the *Shennong bencao jing* (Shennong's Materia Medica) of the Han Dynasty lists six kinds of *lingzhi* among the *shangyao* (superior drugs) that have the effects of making the body lighter, preventing old age, and attaining immortality.³⁷

Both Shihuangdi (The First Emperor of the Qin, reigned 221-209 BCE) of the Qin Dynasty and the Emperor Wu are said to have sent their necromancers to the Eastern Sea to search for the mystic fungus. Although none of the expeditions proved fruitful, the idea of the divine plant of immortality still fascinated many Chinese people in ancient times. It was the Daoists who captured this *lingzhi* concept and exploited it in their writings with whimsical imaginations. From the Daoist source *Shizhou ji* (Notes on Ten Continents) attributed to Dongfang Shuo, the magic fungus not only prolongs life but also revives the dead.³⁸ In another Daoist text *Baopuzi* (The Master Who Embraces Simplicity) of the Eastern Jin period, Ge Hong (283-343) provides a detailed description of various kinds of *lingzhi*, including types identified as rock, wood, herb, flesh, and very small, whose ingestion in powdered form confers longevity and deathlessness to varying degrees.³⁹ The *Taishang lingbao zhicao pin* (The Classification of the Supreme Numinous Treasure Fungi), an even more comprehensive collection of 127 varieties of *lingzhi* with annotations and illustrations, was published as part of the *Zhengtong daoze* (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Reign) in 1445, and it became a popular catalog of the divine plant of immortality.⁴⁰ By the Ming Dynasty, the beliefs in the miraculous potency of the magic fungus had been so deeply embedded in Chinese culture that the *lingzhi* became a cliché in contemporary writings and conversation.

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Figure 8. Shen Zhou, *Lingzhi, Orchids, and Magnolia*, dated 1478. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 135.1 x 55.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

Shen Zhou, who fervently pursued longevity through cultivation of life, was also mesmerized by the immortality concept of *lingzhi*. He once recorded the discovery of the flesh *lingzhi* in his time:

On a cloudy day in the winter of *yihai* year, the mountain was under construction. At the Leying Pond, an object was dug out of the ground which looked like a baby's ruddy arm. After the object was thrown away, an expert said that it was a sacred flesh *lingzhi* which could extend human life indefinitely. What a pity!⁴¹

Shen Zhou's keen interest in the magic plant is also expressed in his poetry and painting. He wrote in a poem: "Look at the herbs in front of the courtyard, how lively they are! I taste the *lingzhi* on the rock, it's full of fragrance. Embracing the Dao, I wish to live as long as the sky and earth."⁴² In Shen Zhou's *Lingzhi, Orchids, and Magnolia* in the National Palace Museum (figure 8), the three auspicious plants

grow on a slope, with a Taihu shi situated in between. Together they convey the artist's wish for long life. As an attribute that allies Shen Zhou with Daoist immortality, the stone is always paired with *lingzhi* in his painting. They form a rebus for "*shiling*" which signifies a "long life like the stone" since the first syllable of the word *lingzhi* is homophonous with "age."

The *lingzhi*, a symbol of happy augury, has been endlessly represented in various art forms in China, from painting to carving, from porcelain to embroidery, and from bronze mirrors to furniture. One of the earliest examples of *lingzhi* in the history of Chinese pictorial art is a first-century woven silk excavated in Noin-ula in 1924-1925. The repeated design of the paradisiacal motif in the textile includes a pair of jagged crags surmounted by two downward-peering birds, a feathery plant derived from the Mesopotamian "Tree of Life," and a clumsy "poached-egg" form which is identified with the *lingzhi* by some scholars.⁴³ This magic fungus, rendered in a configuration of nine stalks attached by flattened leaves, probably relates to the account of the divine plant found in the Emperor Wu's palace. The so-called "*zhi jiujiing*" (*lingzhi* with nine stalks) was a popular theme among artists in traditional China, as embodied in the design of a Ming ink-cake made by Cheng Junfang (1573-after 1619), which is in the collection of the Tokugawa Art Museum.⁴⁴

The iconography of *lingzhi* in association with the Daoist cult of longevity can be traced back to the Han Dynasty when the belief in immortality was popularized. On an Eastern-Han stone coffer found in Chengdu, two half-naked figures, assumed to be immortals with little wings on their arms, are rowdily playing *liubo*, a popular board game during the Han period. Behind them on the right is the divine plant *lingzhi*, cultivated as food for the immortals.⁴⁵ For the Daoists, *lingzhi* is an elixir of immortality and it can be found in the legendary Isles of the Blest or in the sacred mountains. Ge Hong describes in his *Baopuzi*: "These are all mountains which have gods of their own. Sometimes earth genii are to be found there too. Magic fungi and herbs grow here. They are good places in which to sit out war and catastrophe, not merely to prepare medicines."⁴⁶ Fascinated by the idea of the magic fungus, many Chinese painters have created fantastic pictures of the Daoist adept gathering *lingzhi* in the mountains, such as Shen Zhou's *The Bottle-Gourd Immortal* in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (figure 9). The artist's inscription on the painting is:



Figure 9. Shen Zhou, *Bottle-Gourd Immortal*, dated 1501. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 59.7 x 26.7 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: Nelson Trust, 47-69.

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This carefree immortal makes his home on
Penglai Isle and Fanghu Mountain;
Thatch-headed, hair a mess, a jolly face is always his.
You see how he is endowed with understanding so broad and
content;
It is the bottle gourd—there he preserves his vitality pristine!⁴⁷

A hanging scroll of the Liao Dynasty, found in a Buddhist pagoda in Shangxi province in 1974, also shows an herb immortal in search of the magic fungus, holding one like a prize between the thumb and forefinger. The figure, walking bare-foot down a hillside with a whole set of equipment—pickax, double gourd, dragon-head staff, wicker backpack, and straw hat—is probably the Daoist immortal Magu (Hemp Lady).⁴⁸ Her identity can be attested by a Yuan painting in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in which Magu, with her typical topknot, is also dressed in a jacket of leaves and a rawhide cape while the *lingzhi* is placed inside her basket.⁴⁹

According to some Daoist sources, Magu brewed a special wine from *lingzhi* for Xiwangmu in celebration of the anniversary of her birth.⁵⁰ It was therefore customary to present a portrait of the immortal to an old woman as a birthday gift in traditional China. Shen Zhou made a composition of this kind in 1482.⁵¹ On the painting, now in the Tianjin Art Museum, the artist's uncle Shen Zhen (1400-after 1482) inscribed the lines: "Madame Lu is eighty this year. With a ruddy complexion, her body is still strong.... Holding the banquet by the Yao Lake and singing overnight, Ma Gu should be invited as guest of honor." In fact Shen Zhou did many poems and paintings to celebrate the birthdays of his friends, using images of *lingzhi*, white stone, crane, bamboo, or pine to express good wishes for longevity. He composed a poem entitled *Purple Lingzhi and White Stone for Han Hu's Birthday*: "The hard land knows the nature of stones, and the auspicious sky believes the efficacy of *lingzhi*...."⁵² In a painting dedicated to Zhu Qi in the Zhejiang Art Museum collection, Shen Zhou even transformed himself into a crane, presenting a *lingzhi* as a birthday gift to his friend seated under the pine trees.⁵³

The symbolism of a crane holding in its beak a *lingzhi* is full of literary allusions. For instance, the *Shizhou ji* recounts that during the Qin Dynasty some mystic birds appeared carrying *lingzhi* in their bills. When the magic fungus was dropped on the faces of the dead, they

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sprang again to life.⁵⁴ The Daoists' interest in the visual representation of these auspicious symbols is manifested on a nineteenth-century *daopao* (Daoist priest's robe). Woven in the red silk ground of the robe, the large roundel design contains the motif of a crane with *lingzhi* and sprigs of bamboo in its beak.⁵⁵ The *lingzhi*, crane, and bamboo appear again in a hanging scroll by Shen Zhou in the National Palace Museum in Taipei (figure 10). It was executed in honor of the doctor Zhu Puan's birthday. Among all the symbols of longevity represented in the painting, the sitter seems to be most interested in the *lingzhi* at which he looks attentively.

The rendering of Zhu Puan, who is leaning at leisure on a mat, reminds us of the figure in *The Land of Immortals* in the Cleveland Museum of Art by Chen Ruyan (circa 1331-before 1371), the grandfather of Shen Zhou's first teacher Chen Kuan (1397-1473).⁵⁶ This Yuan painting exemplifies the Daoist paradise ideal in an archetypical blue-and-green, or *jinbi* (gold and verditer) style.⁵⁷ Several formally attired figures of benign appearance disport themselves against a background of shadowy mountains amidst fantastic rocks and picturesque pines, teasing the pet cranes, gathering the magic *lingzhi*, herding the sacred deer, or riding a crane-like courser. Chen Ruyan's work should not have been unfamiliar to Shen Zhou since both his son Chen Ji (1370-1434) and his grandson were teachers for the Shen family, and this painting, though presented to a military officer as a birthday gift, was later in the collection of Chen Kuan.⁵⁸ As Chu-ting Li has suggested, Shen Zhou's *Lofty Mount Lu*, executed in 1467 in celebration of Chen Kuan's seventieth birthday, is a work influenced by both Wang Meng (1310-1385) and Chen Ruyan.⁵⁹

Unlike the painting by Chen Ruyan, in which *lingzhi* grow sporadically in the land of immortals, Shen Zhou's *Fields of the Fungus of Longevity* (figure 11), a handscroll in the Palace Museum in Beijing, gives a different picture of this magic fungus. He reinterprets the legendary fields of *lingzhi* on the Mount Kunlun as a contemporary rural farm where the divine plant of immortality is cultivated as if it were an ordinary grain.⁶⁰ The way Shen Zhou sketches the outlines of the *lingzhi*, especially the sprouting ones in this work, is identical to that in his raised right hand in the *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon at Bamboo Villa*. The image of a scholar holding a fungus like a prize, as represented in the Papp scroll and in a painting by another Ming artist Chen Hongshou (1598-1652) (figure 12), is a distinctive visual representation

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Figure 10. Shen Zhou. *Lingzhi and Crane*. Undated, detail.
Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk. 175.5 x 89.9 cm.
National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

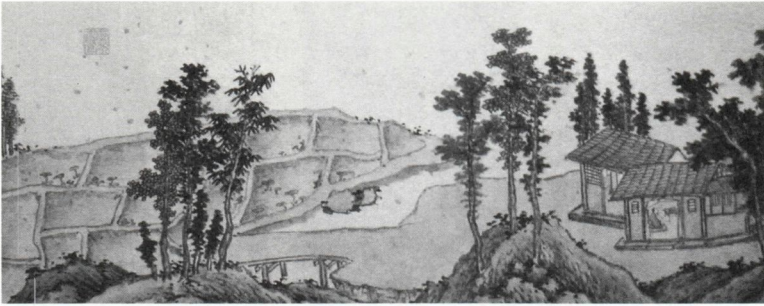


Figure 11. Shen Zhou, *Fields of the Fungus of Longevity*, dated 1493, detail.
 Handscroll, ink and colors on paper, painting: 31.5 x 156 cm.
 The Palace Museum, Beijing.

of the quest for immortality that derives from the iconographic tradition of the herb gatherer, as pictured in the Liao painting of Magu.

There is little doubt that the so-called *caizhi tu* (picture of gathering *lingzhi*) had been a popular theme among Chinese painters by the tenth century. According to the *Xuanhe huapu* (Xuanhe painting catalog), the Southern Tang painter Gu Deqian (active circa 960-circa 975) did two figure paintings of the *lingzhi* gatherer.⁶¹ Although these works do not survive, the iconography of the theme is well-preserved in the *Sancai tuhui* (Tripartite Picture Assembly), a Ming encyclopedia of arts and crafts that Wang Qi (1565-1514) compiled from older illustrated books, in which *caizhi tu* is listed as one of the most common themes in painting. Another illustration in the same book also portrays the Daoist immortal Leiyin Weng (Old Man Leiyin) finding a *lingzhi* with the help of the *sika* deer (figure 13).⁶²

The elegant, if not feminine, way Leiyin Weng holds the *lingzhi*, pinching the stalk lightly between his thumb and forefinger, is a gesture of profound iconographic significance.⁶³ This is the way women or Buddhist figures present their floral attributes, as shown in the *Goddess Offering Flowers* by the Song painter Liu Songnian (circa 1150-after 1225) now in the National Palace Museum in Taipei.⁶⁴ Painters like Wu Wei (1459-1508) of the early Ming period, however, preferred a more manly and solemn approach to the representation of the *lingzhi*-holder. In his *Herb Immortal* (figure 14), also in the National Palace Museum collection, the figure draws back his arm near his chest and grips the

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Figure 12. Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1598-1652). *Sage Contemplating Lingzhi*, undated. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 103 x 48.5 cm. Weng Wan-go Collection, New Hampshire. Photo courtesy of the collector.

magic fungus with both fingers while gazing ahead in contemplation. This gesture is often seen in the depiction of Daoist immortals or Buddhist deities holding the *ruyi* (as you wish) scepter. Another painting by Wu Wei in the same museum, entitled *Immortal of the Northern Sea*, shows that a *lingzhi*-shaped *ruyi* scepter is carried in a closed-form gesture by the Daoist legendary figure Ruo Shi of the Qin Dynasty.⁶⁵ Shen Zhou shows his great interest in Wu Wei's painting and its Daoist subject by inscribing a poem on it: "Do you know the immortal of the Northern Sea? He rides on the sacred tortoise and eats clams.... Holding his breath by the Daoist longevity technique, the immortal has passed nine thousand years...."

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The scepter, originally used as a *tanbing* (discussion stick) by orators or monks, became associated with *lingzhi* and its Daoist longevity symbolism after the Tang Dynasty.⁶⁶ Most of the Ming and Qing *ruyi* scepters were carved in the standard shape of *lingzhi* and were believed to have magical powers to grant wishes. The similarity of their shapes sometimes makes it difficult to identify these two motifs in later Chinese painting. In a portrait of Qianlong (reigned 1735-1796) (figure 15), the Qing emperor is dressed like a Daoist priest, and the object in his right hand can either be a *ruyi* scepter or a *lingzhi*.⁶⁷ *Ruyi* scepters were treasured by Chinese *wenren* as auspicious playthings during the Ming and Qing periods. In scholars' studios, they were frequently placed in *ping* (vases) on *an* (tables), which make the rebus for *pingan ruyi*, symbolizing peace and fulfilled wishes.⁶⁸



Figure 13. Illustration of Leiyin Weng from *Sancai tuhui*, 1715. Woodblock-printed book, ink on paper, 20.8 x 13.2 cm. Source: John A. Goodall. *Heaven and Earth: Album Leaves from a Ming Encyclopedia*. Boulder: Shambhala, 1979. 161.

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For the formal resemblance between *ruyi* scepter and *lingzhi*, the rendering of the magic plant in a vase undoubtedly suggests the same symbolic meaning, like that depicted in an anonymous painting in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.⁶⁹ The long inscription about Daoist longevity on this Ming painting attests to the symbolism of *lingzhi* in the vase. Another obvious case is a handscroll on the Daoist theme of longevity by Xie Shichen (1487-circa 1560) of the Ming Dynasty now in the Museum Rietberg in Zurich. The Ming painter, who is said to have followed the idea of Shen Zhou, creates a wonderland with reference to an ancient poem entitled *Qi Ao* (Banks of the River Qi). On the terrace by the river, a *sika* deer is presenting a *lingzhi* to a seated scholar, who places a vase of magic fungi on the table to exhibit his wishes for peace and long life.⁷⁰

In *Watching the Mid-Autumn Moon at Bamboo Villa* in the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection, Shen Zhou might have played on the same rebus by placing the figures in the Pingan Ting and posing himself as



Figure 14. Wu Wei
(1459-1508), *Herb Immortal*.
Hanging scroll, ink
on silk, 58.3 x 26.6 cm.
National Palace Museum,
Taipei, Taiwan, Republic
of China.

Figure 15. Attributed to Lang Shining. *Hongli, the Future Qianlong Emperor, Gathering Fungus*, dated 1734. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 204 x 133 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



a *lingzhi*-holder.⁷¹ Metaphorically allied to the blessing *pingan ruyi* and typologically associated with the pictures of the Daoist immortal, the Papp scroll is by no means an improvisation but, rather, a well-thought-out work, rich in content, deep in emotion, and specific in time. Shen Zhou leaves out the more obvious emblems in this personal creation and invests the “snapshot” of the specific Mid-Autumn gathering with the hidden Daoist symbolism, whose subtlety and understatement are in perfect conformity with the Chinese *wenren hua* ideal. Veiled behind a simple and lucid composition, the intriguing symbol of *lingzhi* is of prime importance in the Papp scroll. Like the famous discussion of a man tipping his hat in its iconological context by Erwin Panofsky,⁷² the identification of the central figure holding a *lingzhi* leads to the interpretative level of intrinsic meaning, revealing not only the artist’s attitude towards life and death but also the *Weltanschauung* of Chinese *wenren* in the Ming Dynasty—a passionate desire for immortality.

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Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Chinese sources are my own.

1. For the discussions of the Boston scroll in English publications, see Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Paintings in American Collections*, volume 5 (Paris and Brussels: G. van Oest, 1928), 86, plate 164; Hugo Munsterberg, *A Short History of Chinese Art* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 177, plate 47; Richard Edwards and Tseng Hsien-chi, "Shen Chou at the Boston Museum," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 8 (1954): 31-45, plate 1; James Cahill, *Chinese Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1960), 128-129, plate 66; Richard Edwards, *The Field of Stones: A Study of the Art of Shen Chou* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1962), 26-31, plate 14.
2. The Beijing scroll was formerly in the Palace Museum collection and its present whereabouts is unknown. It is listed in *Zhongguo gudai shuhua jianding zu*, editor, *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu*, volume 1 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1986), 7, plate 1/012. The Tianjin scroll, whose authenticity is doubted, is listed in Tianjin Art Museum, *Tianjinshi Yishu Bowuguan Canhua Ji*, volume 2 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1963), 13-18.
3. According to the New York dealer and scholar, Howard Rogers, the Papp scroll was previously owned by a Chinese collector in Beijing.
4. Howard Rogers, "Shen Chou (1427-1509)," *Kaikodo Journal* 6 (1996): 18-21, 209-210; Ju-hsi Chou, *Journeys on Paper and Silk: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1998), 18-21. Despite these publications, many new books on Shen Zhou still have not included this handscroll.
5. Translation from Ju-hsi Chou, with a change of wording in the title of the handscroll from "enjoying" to "watching." *Journeys on Paper and Silk*, 20.
6. A discussion on the phrase "Laofu laoji liushi nian" in the poem, which indicates the age of Shen Zhou when the literary gathering was held, is offered by Ju-hsi Chou, *Journeys on Paper and Silk*, 18.
7. Shen Zhou, *Shitian Shixuan* (1781; reprint, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1987), 624.
8. Quoted from Richard Vinograd with changes, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits 1600-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 28-29.
9. Shen Zhou, *Shitian Xiansheng Ji* (1615; reprint, Taipei: Guoli Zhongyang Tushuguan, 1968), 214.
10. Translation from Edwards, *The Field of Stones*, 57.
11. Shen, *Shitian Shixuan*, 567.

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12. For a discussion of Daoist meditation practices and breathing exercises in the Ming Dynasty, see Liu Ts'un-yan, "Taoist Self-Cultivation in Ming Thought," in *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, Wm. Theodore de Bary, editor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 293-297.
13. Translation from Liu, "Taoist Self-Cultivation," 294.
14. Shen, *Shitian Shixuan*, 567.
15. Shen Zhou, *Shitian Gao* (1506; reprint, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1987), 520.
16. Shen, *Shitian Xiansheng Ji*, 199-200.
17. Shen Zhou, *Shitian Xiansheng Shichao* (1644; reprint, Tainan: Zhuangyan Wenhua, 1997), 116.
18. Shen, *Shitian Shixuan*, 689.
19. Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China* (revised edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 195.
20. Translation from Song Houmei, "Images of the Crane in Chinese Painting," *Oriental Art* 44.3 (1998), 14.
21. Edwards, *The Field of Stones*, 23-25.
22. Edward H. Schafer, "The Crane of Mao Shan," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies: In Honour of R. A. Stein*, volume 2, Michael Strickmann, editor (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983), 379.
23. Edward H. Schafer, *Mirages on the Sea of Time: The Taoist Poetry of Ts'ao T'ang* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 2-3.
24. Jiang Zhao-shen, *Wen Zhengming yu Suzhou huatan* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1977), 21.
25. Lionel Giles, translator, *A Gallery of Chinese Immortals* (London: John Murray, 1948), 7-8, 18.
26. Translation from Livia Kohn, editor, *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology* (Albany: State University of New York, 1993), 149.
27. Translation from Scarlett Jang, "Zhu Chang and an Unidentified Master," in *Shadows of Mt. Huang: Chinese Painting and Printing of the Anhui School*, James Cahill, editor (Berkeley: University Art Museum, Berkeley, 1981), 89. The quatrain clearly indicates the painting's relation to Daoist alchemy. However, Scarlett Jang believes that the stove is used to heat wine or tea-water and the poem is irrelevant to the picture.
28. For these four leisure seals, see Victoria Contag and Wang Chi-chien, *Seals of Chinese Painters and Collectors of the Ming and Ching Periods* (1940; revised, with an introduction by James Cahill, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1966), 167, 659; Zhuang Yan and others, *Jin Tang yilai shuhuaijia jianshangjia kuanyin pu*, volume 2 (Hong Kong: Yiwen Chubanshe, 1991), 133.

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29. Shen, *Shitian Shixuan*, 725.
30. Rogers, "Shen Chou," 18.
31. Meyer Shapiro also points out that in many pictures of the frontal figure the head is turned slightly, which is exactly the case of the central figure in the Phoenix scroll. *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), 38-39.
32. The origin of the symbolism of *lingzhi* is uncertain. Michael Sullivan regards it as indigenous to China while R. Gordon Wasson believes that the fungal symbolism came from India and was a literary reflection of soma. Michael Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), 178-180; R. Gordon Wasson, *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 80-81.
33. For the tales about Pengzu, see Kenneth J. DeWoskin and J. I. Crump, Jr., translators, *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 2-3.
34. Wasson, *Soma*, 82.
35. Burton Watson, translator, *Record of the Grand Historian of China*, volume 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 63.
36. Translation from Wasson, *Soma*, 89.
37. Sun Xingyan and Sun Fengyi, editors, *Shennong ben cao jing* (1891; reprint, Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua Shuju, 1976), 23.
38. Kohn, *The Taoist Experience*, 49.
39. James R. Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, Religion in the China of AD 320: The Nei P'ien of Ko Hung (Pao-p'u Tzu)* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1966), 179-185.
40. *Zhengtong Daozang*, volume 57 (1444-1445; reprint, Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chubanshe, 1988), 543-575.
41. Shen Zhou, *Shitianweng Kezuo Xinwen* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1995), 165.
42. Shen, *Shitian Xiansheng Ji*, 483.
43. Both William Willetts and Michael Sullivan accept the identification of the *lingzhi*, and Gordon Wasson even suggests that the bird in the textile is the crane. William Willetts, *Chinese Art*, volume 1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), 290-292; Michael Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China*, 52-54; and Wasson, *Soma*, 89-92.
44. See *Kogoku: Old Carbon Ink-sticks in the Togugawa Art Museum* (Kyoto: Shidosha, 1991), plate 245.
45. Michael Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China*, 68, plate 86.
46. Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, Religion in the China of AD 320*, 94.

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47. Translation from Marc F. Wilson, *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collection of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), 190.
48. See Susan Nelson, "Revisiting the Eastern Fence: Tao Qian's Chrysanthemums," *The Art Bulletin* 133.3 (2001): 448.
49. A brief account of this painting is given by Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons: 1000 Years of Chinese Painting* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1997), 232.
50. Cheng Yin, editor, *Zhongguo shenxian huaxiang ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1996), 261.
51. Shan Guoqiang, editor, *Shen zhou jingping ji* (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe), plate 9.
52. Shen, *Shitian Shixuan*, 643.
53. See Shan, *Shen Zhou jingping ji*, plate 50.
54. Kohn, *The Taoist Experience*, 49.
55. Stephen Little, *Daoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 198, plate 51.
56. See Wai-kam Ho, Sherman E. Lee, Laurence Sickman and Marc F. Wilson, *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, 139-140, plate 114.
57. The *qinglu* or *jinbi* style that Chen Ruyan applied in his *Land of the Immortals* was originally developed by Li Sixun (651-716) and his son in the Tang Dynasty. This painting style became specifically devoted to the representation of Daoist paradise scenes and the very minerals of pigments were ingredients cherished by the alchemists. See Claudia Brown, "Ch'en Ju-yen and Late Yuan Painting in Suchou" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1985), 145-150.
58. Chen Ji was the teacher of Shen Zhou's father and uncle, and the painting *Land of the Immortals* was given to Pan Yuanming (died 1382), a military chief under whom Chen Ruyan served. See Brown, "Ch'en Ju-yen and Late Yuan Painting in Suchou," 78-79, 184, 237.
59. Chu-tsing Li, "Shen Zhou zaonian de fazhan," in *Wumen huapai yanjiu*, Gugong Bowuyuan, editor (Beijing: Zijincheng Chubanshe, 1993), 201-202.
60. For the legendary fields of *lingzhi* fungus, see William F. Meyers, *Chinese Reader's Manual* (1874; reprint, Shanghai: American Presbyterian Press, 1910), 116-117.
61. *Xuanhe huapu* (1120; reprint, Taipei: Shijie Shuju, 1962), 130.
62. Cheng, *Zhongguo shenxian huaxiang ji*, 112.
63. The gesture of holding flowers or *lingzhi* and its symbolic meanings in Chinese pictorial art is explored by Susan E. Nelson in her two articles.

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- "Tao Yuanming's Sashes: Or, the Gendering of Immortality," *Ars Orientalis* 29 (1999): 15-27; "Revisiting the Eastern Fence," 447-449.
64. *Zhongguo chuanshi renwuhua*, volume 1 (Beijing: Beijing Shudian, 2004), 88.
65. *Masterpieces of Chinese Figure Painting in the National Palace Museum* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1973), 148-149, plate 35.
66. See Stephen Little, *Spirit Stones of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1999), 85.
67. Richard Vinograd identifies the motif as *lingzhi*; however, it looks like a *ruyi* scepter as well. *Boundaries of the Self*, 71.
68. The rebus *pingan ruyi* has been discussed by several scholars. Edouard Chavannes, *The 5 Happinesses: Symbolism in Chinese Popular Art*, Elaine Spaulding Atwood, translator (New York & Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1973), 19; Fang Jing Pei and others, *Treasures of the Chinese Scholar* (New York & Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1997), 137.
69. Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington DC: Freer Gallery of Art, 1973), 161.
70. For a discussion of Xie Shichen's handscroll, see Chu-tsing Li. *A Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines: Chinese Paintings in the Charles A. Drenowatz Collection* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1974), 19-22.
71. In many of Shen Zhou's poems, he wrote about his Youzhu Zhuang. Since none of his poems mentions the existence of the Pingan Ting, the structure in the Papp scroll is probably fabricated by the artist to play on the rebus *Pingan ruyi*.
72. On the iconological level of interpretation, Erwin Panofsky illustrates that the man who tips his hat is re-enacting a gesture dating from the Middle Ages, when a knight in armor would remove his helmet to signify peaceful intentions. *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 3-4.

Wu Shi'en's *Liang
Hong and Meng Guang:*
A Misreading

XIAOPING LIN

For all our days are passed away in thy wrath:
we spend our years as a tale *that is told*.

Psalm 90:19

In the early sixteenth century, the Zhe school master Wu Wei (1459-1508) still seemed to dominate the scene of Ming painting. His large-scale landscapes with figures in particular served as models for his famous disciples such as Zhang Lu and Jiang Song. Among Wu Wei's followers, however, Wu Shi'en (active circa 1500) emerged as a rather obscure figure. There is little information about his life and few of his paintings have survived. Perhaps it was Richard Barnhart who, in a catalog of Ming painting, first brought to light this mysterious Ming painter. In Barnhart's words, Wu Shi'en "set out to faithfully imitate Wu Wei, and he did so with such success that his paintings even today are sometimes confused with those of his master."¹ Given this account, a hanging scroll titled *Liang Hong and Meng Guang* by Wu Shi'en (figure 1) from the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection merits our attention. It is a winter landscape with large human figures; its style is typical of Wu Wei, especially for its blocky forms and rough, vigorous brushwork. Ju-hsi Chou, in the second catalog of the Papp Collection, has given a fine analysis of this painting.² Following these two previous studies, I offer my reading of Wu Shi'en's *Liang Hong and Meng Guang* in this paper, comparing this Wu Shi'en picture with Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar* (figure 2), a tenth-century masterpiece in the Palace Museum, Beijing, which has been thoroughly analyzed by Howard Rogers in his provocative essay on Dong Yuan.³ Through such a comparison I hope to uncover the meanings of Wu Shi'en's painting.

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Figure 1. Wu Shi'en (active circa 1500), *Liang Hong and Meng Guang*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 142.1 x 81.2 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.



Figure 2. Wei Xian, *A Noble Scholar*, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 134.6 x 52.7 cm. Five Dynasties (907-960), The Palace Museum, Beijing.

In the Wu Shi'en picture, a massive, snowy mountain cliff rises against the dark sky on the left, overlooking a river that flows to the right. At the lower left, under a tall and twisted wintry tree, stands a thatched hut; through its open door we see a man seated at a table and a woman approaching him from the left. Beyond the river, two woodcutters loom out of the middle ground, on a mountain trail. In contrast to a similar snow landscape by Zhang Lu, in which a tiny woodcutter vanishes into the background, here in Wu Shi'en we see a pair of huge, advancing woodcutters. Considering the balanced composition of most of later Zhe landscapes modeled on Wu Wei, Wu Shi'en's middle ground figures are surprisingly out of scale. According to Chou's examination, this is because the Wu Shi'en picture "has been extensively trimmed, which alters the nature of the composition and pushes the scene closer to the viewer than intended."⁴ Even so, the woodcutter couple seems to me still irritatingly out of proportion. In my view, the woodcutters appear to rival the man and the woman in the lower left foreground; I will return to this point later. It is necessary to examine the puzzling narrative content of the Wu Shi'en picture.

As for the man and woman in the lower left corner of Wu Shi'en's picture, Chou has identified them as Liang Hong and Meng Guang of Eastern Han (25-221). As the woman is presenting a big food container (probably a rice bowl) to the man, it indicates the so-called "raising the tray to the level of the eyebrows," a celebrated episode from the couple's life. To my knowledge, the scene is not depicted in any other Zhe school painting, but it is surely a very popular theme in classical literature and art. Since Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar* is another known example of the same subject, I will compare the two paintings of Wei Xian and Wu Shi'en. In doing so, I will consult the original text which is a biography of Liang Hong from the *History of Later Han (Houhan shu)*, a book written by Fan Ye (398-445) in the fifth century; it is the text upon which the two paintings are supposedly based.

In the past centuries, the tale of Liang Hong and Meng Guang has been interpreted as a fine example of "mutual respect" between man and woman, a rare but admirable relationship in ancient Chinese society. In classical literature, whenever the names of Liang Hong and Meng Guang are mentioned, the former alludes to a man of moral integrity, the latter to a caring wife. However, if we read the original text, we will find the relationship of the husband and wife more complicated than imagined. How would Wei Xian and Wu Shi'en have read

the original text in order to paint their pictures? Or, did they tell the same story in their paintings?

If we look at the image of Liang Hong as depicted by the two artists, we see a major difference at once. Professor Chou has already pointed out that in the Wu Shi'en picture, "Contrary to known facts about Liang Hong, he is portrayed as a young man seated at the table," whereas in the Wei Xian painting Liang Hong appears as an older and bearded scholar. Then a question should be raised: which Liang Hong is faithful to the original text? And why? To answer the question, I would like to select some "known facts" from the biography of Liang Hong and see how Wei Xian and Wu Shi'en communicate those "facts" to the viewer.

In the text written by Fan Ye, there is no mention of Liang Hong's physical appearance, so it was up to Wei Xian and Wu Shi'en to portray Liang Hong however they wished. As for his wife Meng Guang, however, there is a detailed account of her physical appearance which reads, "She is fat, ugly and dark; and so strong that she can lift a stone mortar."⁵ Apparently, we don't see anything like that in Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar*. In the Wu Shi'en picture the lady Meng Guang does have the air of a muscular female who seems strong enough to "lift a stone mortar," which is disposed to her lower right, together with a pestle. I will come back to these two important narrative motifs later. But Wu Shi'en also avoided representing those unpleasant aspects of Meng Guang's appearance, such as fatness, ugliness, and darkness. In any case, both Wei Xian and Wu Shi'en, to use Harold Bloom's terms,⁶ "misread" the original text and yet created a different Meng Guang that appeals to the viewer anyway. I would like to continue to explore such "misreading" by the two artists.

In Wei Xian's hands, Meng Guang is a delicate lady in elegant dress, her hair tied up in a very fashionable manner. Certainly Wei Xian has idealized this respectful woman, and the information unfavorable to her is denied to the viewer. But, if we consult the text again, we realize that this beautifully dressed lady is the person Liang Hong would reject. According to Fan Ye's narrative, Liang Hong declined several marriage proposals by well-to-do families in his hometown, yet he took Meng Guang as wife. However, seven days after their marriage, Liang Hong refused to speak to his wife. Meng Guang was worried and asked why. Liang Hong said to her, "I wished to marry a woman in plain cloth, so I could live a secluded life with her in deep mountains. Today you

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wear beautiful silk and make-up, which is not what I desired.”⁷ Meng Guang replied: “It is just a test of your will. I do have plain cloth ready for a secluded life.”⁸ In the narrative Meng Guang had prepared two sets of wedding dresses. Then she changed her hair style and put on plain cloth and Liang Hong was pleased. The notion presented in this somewhat comical episode is very simple: a woman’s virtue is opposed to ornament and beauty. In this sense the elegant Meng Guang found in Wei Xian’s *A Noble Scholar* is a “misreading.” Wei Xian’s intention seems to me what Norman Bryson calls “the balancing of messages,” meaning ugliness is not necessarily linked with virtue.

Contrary to Wei Xian, Wu Shi’en seems to have committed himself to the text of Fan Ye’s narrative. As we have seen, Meng Guang in his painting is a stout masculine female, not the Wei Xian lady that is delicately fragile. Most interesting, her masculinity is echoed by another female figure, that is, one of the two woodcutters looming out of the middle ground, who is very easily mistaken for a male figure. In the catalog entry Chou says of this couple, “As is typical in Zhe School painting which often buttresses its narrative content by doubling the message, another older couple is seen walking on the bridge at a distance.”⁹ In my view, “doubling the message” is crucial to Wu Shi’en, as compared with Wei Xian’s “balancing messages.” This phenomenon of “doubling the message” also occurs in Western painting. For instance, in a picture entitled *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander* by the French Court artist Charles Le Brun, the standing figure of Alexander, with a male companion behind him, is, in Norman Bryson’s words, “a double-take” which “acts as a lure to reading.”¹⁰

The masculinity of Meng Guang in the Wu Shi’en is augmented by the female woodcutter, a figure that is not found in Chinese literature and painting about Liang Hong and Meng Guang. Through this image the viewer is reassured of the message: Meng Guang is as strong as a man; this is what she’s really like in the tale. Although Wu Shi’en is quite faithful to the text in representing Meng Guang’s true character, the woodcutter couple has no textual reference at all in Fan Ye’s biography. It is simply added by the Ming artist to enhance the original message. Now we see by means of “balancing messages” and “doubling the message,” Wei Xian and Wu Shi’en both have created a different Meng Guang: in Wei Xian, she is a lady of adornment and delicacy, whereas in Wu Shi’en, she is a woman of plainness and strength. And we are reminded by the text that it is the latter that Liang Hong would choose to marry.

By consulting the original text we have discovered that Meng Guang does not appear to be the same person in the pictures of Wei Xian and Wu Shi'en. Now I would like to return to the male figure of Liang Hong. As mentioned earlier, there is no textual reference to his physical appearance in Fan Ye's narrative. In other words, there is no textual control of the image. That is why we see in the Wei Xian picture a Liang Hong as a bearded scholar and in the Wu Shi'en as a young man. Besides such age differences, we also see changes in Liang Hong's relationship to Meng Guang. Wei Xian's Liang Hong is absorbed in his writing; he simply ignores his humble wife who is on her knees lifting the food tray. In the Wu Shi'en painting, however, Liang Hong turns his head toward Meng Guang, but his face seems graven with anger and his gaze is intense. This is only my impression which is probably due to some damage in that area of the silk, a "misreading." To me, this Liang Hong is not only a young man, but an embittered young man. His intense gaze seems to be directed at his wife for some unknown reason. Unlike oblivious Liang Hong in Wei Xian, the Wu Shi'en man extends his left arm to Meng Guang as if to accept her offer, but his facial expression does not show any gratification. His gesture is more like giving an instruction than accepting an offer. In any event, there arises a tension between the couple in the Wu Shi'en picture.

If we turn again to the text, we read a passage that describes this significant moment from the couple's life. "When Liang Hong returned home, his wife prepared food. In front of Liang Hong she did not dare to look up at him, but raised the food tray to the level of her eyebrows."¹¹ This fearful Meng Guang implies something in their relationship that goes far beyond "mutual respect." Here I need to select some more "known facts" from Fan Ye's narrative. After their marriage—or after Meng Guang changed her hair style and dress—for a while Liang Hong did not practice what he lectured to his wife, a secluded life in deep mountains. Meng Guang was not satisfied, because she chose to marry him exactly for that noble practice. Then the idealistic Meng Guang urged her husband to keep his word. Liang Hong agreed and the couple went to remote mountains to become farmers. Later, one day Liang Hong passed the Han capital, Luoyang, and wrote a poem criticizing the emperor for building those luxurious imperial palaces. In his view, it was just an immense waste of human labor. The emperor was irritated and he ordered Liang Hong arrested. A most wanted man in the country, Liang Hong changed his name and the couple fled

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to the mountains in Shandong province. Soon after, they moved to Suzhou where Liang Hong was hired by a rich man to husk rice daily. It was at this moment in the couple's life that Meng Guang started performing her self-invented moral ritual everyday. I would guess or "misread" that at this moment she might have felt guilty confronting her husband, because it was she who had put the man in this situation. I should mention here that husking rice was a light sentence to male and female criminals in the Han period. Compared to the Ming penalty of flogging or caning, husking rice is more a humiliation than a punishment, but an unhappy situation. This may explain why Meng Guang "did not dare to look up at" her husband while serving dinner. In the Wu Shi'en picture, this distressful human condition is signified by two narrative motifs mentioned earlier, the stone pestle and mortar displayed through the open door.

However, these two motifs are banished from the Wei Xian painting, so the information about the ill fate of Liang Hong is denied the viewer, as is Meng Guang's homely appearance. What we see in Wei Xian is a moral drama played out by the two actors in fine costume. Moreover, the architecture enhances this dramatic effect: the pavilion appears much more like part of an imperial palace or religious temple, a well-built stage upon which the couple puts on their show. It is a ceremonial and moral space rather than a habitable one. Again, what concerns Wei Xian here is "balancing messages." A life in exile may be miserable, but its pain can be relieved by a display of "mutual respect." The absence of the stone pestle and mortar, signs of punishment, serves Wei Xian's purpose very well. But the question remains: Why did Wu Shi'en choose the other way around?

To answer this question, we must find out how the Ming people would read the story of Liang Hong and Meng Guang. Qiang Shi (active 1522-1566), a Ming scholar contemporary with Wu Shi'en, offers his reading of the Han parable in a poem titled *In Praise of Liang Hong*. The poem begins with the following two lines: "Boluan (Liang Hong's fancy name) is a wise man in ancient times, and he is positioned between a pestle and a mortar."¹² This is exactly what we see in the Wu Shi'en picture. Just like Qiang Shi, Wu Shi'en defines the position of this "wise man" in society as "between a pestle and a mortar," a moral space that is quite punitive. And this rather punitive moral space is nothing but a typical situation that confronted Ming intellectuals. Here I will not cite those well-known examples of Ming harsh

treatment of scholars; there is ample evidence for that cruelty even in official Ming accounts. Instead I would like to show one portrait of a Ming emperor who might have been a weak one in Ming history. But, when we look at his imperial yellow robe, we see one symbol on the lower portion of the robe, double axes hanging from above (figure 3). Probably this symbol stands for justice or law. In the West, the symbol is the scale, as we can see, for example, in *Imperial Portrait of Napoleon* by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867).¹³ From this very "naive" comparison, I feel a Ming ruler seemed more concerned with corporal punishment than with legal procedures.

Qiang Shi's poem goes on to repeat the whole story and ends with these two lines: "Eventually he was buried beside a martyr's grave, and his lofty character is hard to emulate."¹⁴ The martyr is Yao Li, a political assassin whose grave was located west of Suzhou. What strikes me most in Qiang Shi's poem is a strong sense of moral space. In other words, Qiang Shi's reading emphasizes one major factor in the Han parable, Liang Hong's true position as a "wise man" or "noble scholar" in society. In Qiang Shi's eyes, it is apparently perplexing; while alive Liang Hong is plunged into the grudging space between a pestle and a mortar; after his death he is honored to side with an assassin who murdered a bad ruler. Therefore in Qiang Shi's mind, Liang Hong is a person who challenged authorities and so was fiendishly chastised, but he was also much praised by those who identified with him. This is a strong "misreading" by a Ming scholar that has little to do with the classical rhetoric of "mutual respect" persuaded by the Han parable.

To me, this "misreading" by Qiang Shi also forcefully demonstrates what his contemporary Zhe artist Wu Shi'en has tried to convey to the viewer through his imagery. The embittered young man with that intense gaze fits very well into this context of Ming discourse, a discourse by those who resented the government's injustice and severity. In the Wu Shi'en picture Liang Hong appears very gloomy, no matter how hard his loyal wife Meng Guang has tried to offer comfort. The shabby clothes they wear indicates impoverishment and desperation; there is nothing ceremonial or rhetorical as in Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar*. I should point out here that in the Wu Shi'en picture there is no tray or *an* at all, the most important ritual object in Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar*. If we read the only inscription by Song emperor Huizong on the Wei Xian picture, we learn that the great patron of Chinese painting simply inquired into the relevance of the food tray or *an*. Conceivably this may

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Figure 3. *Portrait of the Hongzhi Emperor*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 209.8 x 115 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

be a reason that Wei Xian's work was endorsed by the ruling power so easily. But Wu Shi'en eliminated the food tray despite the traditional iconography, therefore granting relief from the classical rhetoric of "mutual respect," so much exalted by scholars in the past centuries. The couple in his painting merely tries to survive the wretched life by whatever technique available. As Fan Ye's narrative tells us, it was only after the rich man saw the daily moral play staged by Meng Guang that he released Liang Hong from the weary duty of husking rice, and the couple was allowed to move into better living quarters in the rich man's residential complex,¹⁵ rewarding Meng Guang's pathetic efforts. After that, Liang Hong was able to begin writing his academic books as we see in Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar* but not in Wu Shi'en's *Liang Hong and Meng Guang*, in which on the rude table there are only two small empty bowls, dreary things that suggest resignation. The denial of a happy ending in the Wu Shi'en painting corresponds well to the sullen tone of Qiang Shi's poem. In Qiang Shi's poem a "misreading" of the Han parable leaves no room for such a happy ending.

I would like to continue this essay by asking a question; who is the true hero of the story narrated by Wu Shi'en? As I have discussed earlier, the male and female woodcutters are disproportionately large and they serve as doubles for Liang Hong and Meng Guang. In the Wu Shi'en picture, the two couples appear socially identical, all wearing shabby and baggy clothes, signs of privation and despair; the "wise man" Liang Hong and his virtuous wife Meng Guang are as lowly as the woodcutters in society. In this respect Wu Shi'en's imagery is a reversal of everything that Wei Xian idealized in his *A Noble Scholar*. To me, this blended and transposed imagery of hermit and woodcutter is a clue to grasp the meanings of the Wu Shi'en picture.

As we can see in the painting, the moral space occupied by Liang Hong and Meng Guang is invaded by the woodcutters who even overshadow the exemplary Han couple. In my view, this shared moral space is strictly a Ming phenomenon. As we can determine from Ming poetry, among Ming scholars there was a tendency to rank woodcutter with hermit in the sense that they reside in the same moral space. One such Ming poem states: "The woodcutter certainly resides in mountains, the hermit too dwells in mountains. Who says they have a different career? They all live on woods and streams."¹⁶ This penchant is also evident in a hanging scroll by the Ming artist Wang E, in which a scholar-traveler meets a woodcutter in snowy mountains (figure 4). Another poem

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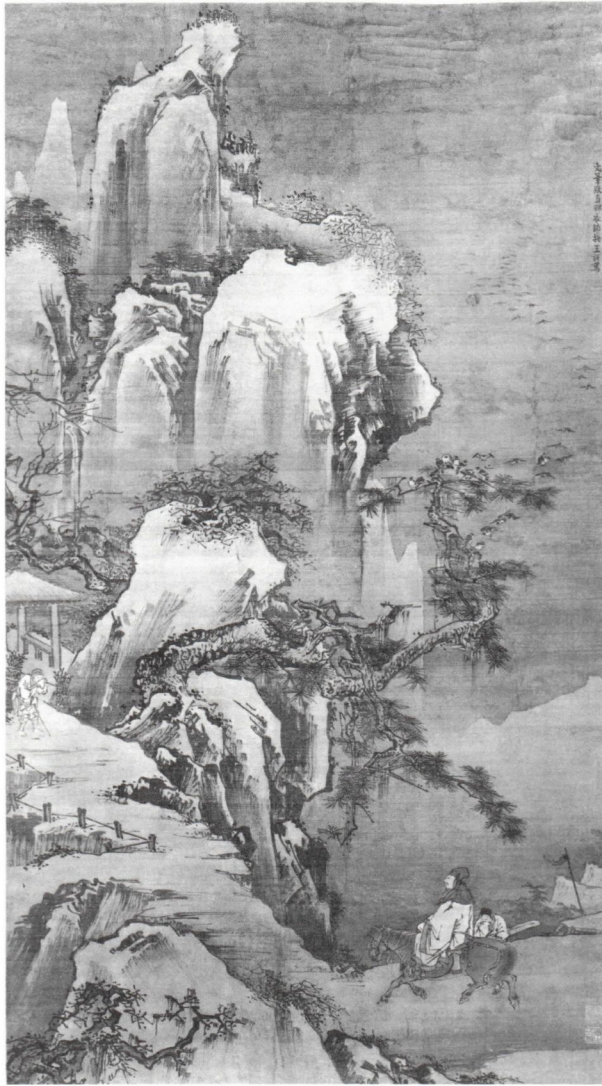


Figure 4. Wang E (circa 1488-1521), *Winter in the Mountains*. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 183 x 104 cm. Princeton University Art Museum, Gift of DuBois Schanck Morris, Class of 1893 (1947-74). Photo courtesy Trustees of Princeton University.

even goes so far to suggest that when a person of high rank lost his fortune, everything would go wrong, and "the woodcutter and fisherman would come to contend for dinner."¹⁷ Is this the actual situation represented in Wu Shi'en's *Liang Hong and Meng Guang*? If so, the true hero or real subject must be the dual hegemony of woodcutter and hermit, not the latter alone. From the point of view of semiotics, this phenomenon is what Michel Foucault calls "the binary organization of the sign" in which "the signifying idea becomes double."¹⁸ By blending woodcutter into the imagery of hermit, Ming scholars, including the brilliant Zhe artist Wu Shi'en, also tone down the classical rhetoric of "noble scholar." In other words, the "noble scholar" in Wu Shi'en has become as "degraded" as the woodcutter in terms of deprivation.

Another Ming poem, written by the Ming artist Guo Xu (1456-after 1526), is entitled *Inscribing a Picture of Woodcutters in Snow*. In the poem the woodcutter's situation is sadly graphic, describing two bunches of firewood worth only ten cents, with the snow deep and the mud slippery, and the blue mountains emaciated. It is interesting to imagine that if we cut off (or "deconstruct") the lower portion of the Wu Shi'en hanging scroll, the painting seems still intact compositionally (figure 5), and it can be called *Woodcutters in Snow*. This may be a reason we always feel somehow uneasy with Wu Shi'en's visual design regarding the massive scale of the two woodcutters in the background.

In any event, such a pitiful situation of "woodcutter in snow" is in turn shared by the Han hermit Liang Hong and his wife Meng Guang. Both the noble scholar and woodcutter are "marginalized" in society by dwelling in the same forlorn and "emaciated" mountains. In this way they are kept out of sight of the ruling powers and alienated from an indifferent urban community. On the other hand, however, this solitary moral space was a situation vehemently desired by those who must have feared for their lives under the murderous Ming regime. Seen in this light, Wu Shi'en's *Liang Hong and Meng Guang* is a strong "misreading" of Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar*, but a "misreading" that makes the former a masterpiece of Ming discourse.

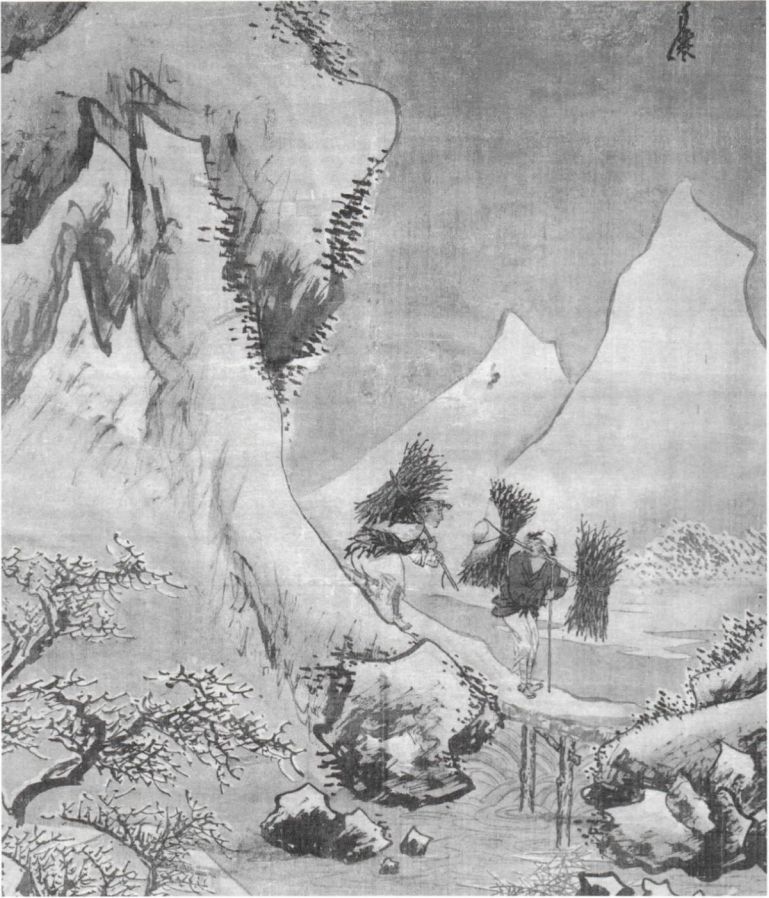


Figure 5. Wu Shi'en, *Liang Hong and Meng Guang*
(deconstructed), detail of figure 1.

Postscript: The Belated Imagery of Liang Hong and Meng Guang

Undoubtedly Wei Xian's *A Noble Scholar* made a great impact on Chinese paintings of the same or similar subjects (man and wife), but it is intriguing to see how Chinese artists of later times portrayed the imagery of man and woman by breaking away from his masterpiece. One fine example is Ren Xun's portrayal of a couple celebrating their wedding anniversary (figure 6). In it the wife is holding a wine cup



Figure 6. Ren Xun, *Raising the Tray to the Level of the Eyebrows*, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. The Shanghai Museum, Shanghai.
Source: *Yiyuan Duoying* 53 (1992), p. 12.

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instead of the ceremonial food tray in Wei Xian's picture and facing up to her husband instead of shying away as in Fan Ye's narrative. The husband in Ren Xun's painting is one of the loveliest male figures in Chinese portraiture; he seems to have just returned from the field carrying a hoe and his frolicsome gesture—he appears to be dancing around in front of his wife—shows his excitement in seeing his beloved at home after a long day's work. Such tender affection between man and woman cannot be felt in the works of Wei Xian and Wu Shi'en. As I have noted, both Wei Xian's unconcerned Liang Hong and Wu Shi'en's reproachful one still imply male superiority. In his book *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits* Richard Vinograd touches on the issue of Chinese portraits "grounded in family relationships" in Ren Bonian's work.¹⁹ He points out that Ren Bonian painted separate portraits of the painter Hu Gongshou and his wife,²⁰ and that in the latter "her demeanor differs markedly from the image of her husband as disconsolate beggar" because "the disposition of her figure conveys something of a potential turbulence or allure that is only hinted at in her aloof, cool stare."²¹ Another example cited by Vinograd that "reveals something of the potential expressive range in woman's portraits" is the *Portrait of Wang Yuyan Painting Orchids* (figure 7) by Pan Gongshou (1741-1794), in which "the presentation and demeanor [of Wang Yuyan] are entirely consistent with images of male scholars and painters in garden settings, down to a certain stiffness and formality."²² Wang Yuyan appears with her husband in another portrait, a hanging scroll entitled *Wang Yicheng Reading in His Study*, probably also by Pan Gongshou (figure 8). On this scroll there is a lengthy inscription written by Wang Wenzhi, the grandfather of Wang Yuyan; in it he approves of his granddaughter's marriage by saying that she married a young scholar "as virtuous and brilliant as Liang Hong."²³ Therefore, in this painting the couple can be regarded as the belated imagery of Liang Hong and Meng Guang, very familiar to us as we have encountered them in Fan Ye's tale as well as in Wei Xian's and Wu Shi'en's pictorial works.

However, the belated Liang Hong and Meng Guang (that is, Wang Yuyan and her husband Wang Yicheng from the Qing dynasty) not only emerge as real people in Qing costume, but also demonstrate a new relationship between man and woman in Chinese art. Wang Yuyan, to her grandfather a blessed Meng Guang, does not perform that daily ritual of "raising the tray to the level of the eyebrow" to show respect for Wang Yicheng, who was as "virtuous and brilliant as Liang



Figure 7. Pan Gongshou (1741-1794), *Portrait of Wang Yuyan Painting Orchids*, detail, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 8. Pan Gongshou (1741-1794), *Wang Yicheng Reading in His Study*.
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. The Palace Museum, Beijing. Source:
Dangdai Meishujia (Modern Artists), spring 1985, 48-51.

Hong" in her grandfather's judgment. On the contrary, with serenity and warmth, unlike the aloof and cold wife of Hu Gongshou in Ren Bonian, she is unfolding with her right hand a handscroll on the table. Seated erect, Wang Yicheng joins his wife attentively in such artistic activity; according to Wang Wenzhi's inscription, his granddaughter was a talented painter. In some ways there is still the "stiffness and formality" often found in Chinese portraits of this type, but the woman's status has drastically changed from a submissive position to



Figure 9. Gai Qi (1773-1328), *Madame Wei Shuo Practicing Calligraphy*, album leaf, ink and color on paper, 25 x 17.4 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

that of independence. In Wang Yuyan's case, we saw her identity as an artist in the *Portrait of Wang Yuyan Painting Orchids*. Judging from Wang Wenzhi's inscription, his grandson-in-law Wang Yicheng could have been a Confucian scholar and a merchant at the same time, a career very typical of the gentry class from the Anhui region where the young man lived.²⁴ Although the title *Wang Yicheng Reading in his Study* may accentuate the importance of the male sitter, the female one, Wang Yuyan, is actually treated as her husband's equal, unlike the more servile Meng Guang in Wei Xian's and Wu Shi'en's paintings.

Wang Yicheng Reading in his Study is a passionate sequel to Wei Xian's and Wu Shi'en's visual narratives of Liang Hong and Meng Guang if we consider their pictures, to borrow Linda Seidel's words, as "poetic fiction" about a man and a woman.²⁵ The young man and woman merely share the same interest in scholarly activities without intimidating or patronizing each other, and in Pan Gongshou's *Wang Yuyan Painting Orchids*, another ardent sequel, the same young woman appears as a gifted artist in her own right with no reference whatsoever to her husband. It may be worth mentioning that in the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection there is an exquisite and delightful album by Gai Qi (1773-1828) depicting "virtuous women." In one leaf of the album a goddess-like lady (figure 9) poses as an artist in almost the same way as in *Wang Yuyan Painting Orchids*. The connection between the two pictures and the two Qing artists needs to be further investigated. The origin of that particular hand gesture of Wang Yuyan, that is, the female artist with her right hand holding a brush in mid-air and her left grasping the paper on the table, is yet to be traced in male scholars' and painters' portraits. This hand gesture might as well be assigned to woman only in Qing portraiture, as evidenced by Pan Gongshou's and Gai Qi's heartfelt portrayals of a lady painter.

Notes

1. Richard Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1993), 241.
2. Ju-hsi Chou, *Scent of Ink: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1994), 20.
3. Howard Rogers, "Tung Yuan [Dong Yuan] Chronicle," in *Kaikodo Journal*, Hong Kong, 1999, 68-69.
4. Chou, *Scent of Ink*, 20.
5. Zheng Tianting, editor, *Hou Hanshu xuan* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980), 244.
6. Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University, 1975), 3-6.
7. Zheng Tianting, *Hou Hanshu xuan*, 244.
8. Zheng Tianting, *Hou Hanshu xuan*, 244-245.
9. Chou, *Scent of Ink*, 20.
10. See Norman Bryson, *Word and Image* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 52-53.
11. Zheng Tianting, *Hou Hanshu xuan*, 246.
12. Zhu Yizun, *Mingshi zong* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1993), volume 2, 1142.
13. See a reproduction in Bryson, *Word and Image*, 248.
14. Zhu, *Mingshi zong*, 1142.
15. Zheng Tianting, *Hou Hanshu xuan*, 246.
16. *Quan Ming shi*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1990), volume 1, 384.
17. *Quan Ming shi*, volume 2, 318.
18. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 64.
19. Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 150.
20. Vinograd, *Boundaries*, 148.
21. Vinograd, *Boundaries*, 147.
22. Vinograd, *Boundaries*, 97.
23. See Xiaoping Lin, my essay in Chinese, titled "Wang Wenzhi and the Painting *Wang Yicheng Reading in his Study*," *Modern Artists*, Spring 1985, 48-51. The scroll is in The Palace Museum, Beijing.
24. Xiaoping Lin, 50.
25. Linda Seidel, *Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait: Stories of an Icon* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 172.

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From the Profound to the Mundane: Depictions of Lohans in Late Ming China

JANET BAKER

Introduction

As Buddhism slowly integrated itself into the fabric of Chinese society, it was altered and modified by native traditions in ways that made it more accessible to Chinese beliefs and customs. The enduring impact of Central Asian and Indian themes, styles, and aesthetics has seldom been acknowledged by Chinese artists and critics in recent centuries, but was more clearly evident among the works of Chinese artists of the Tang, Song, Liao, and Jin dynasties. By careful examination of earlier works of Buddhist art, it can be discerned how strongly later Chinese artists were influenced by foreign art styles as well as the depiction of foreigners themselves in Chinese painting and sculpture. Even the changing prevalence of different schools of Buddhist thought directly affected the choice of subject matter, such as personages and events, and the methods of representation chosen. Ultimately, at the same time, some native Chinese sensibilities rooted in Confucianism and Daoism were also integrated into the images created by Chinese Buddhist artists.

Buddhist scriptures and artistic canons brought by monks from India and Central Asia represented sacred truth in words and images to Chinese devotees. Particularly in the representation of Sakyamuni Buddha, drastic alterations of such sacred canons or writings would have meant a violation of their spiritual power. According to tradition, Sakyamuni Buddha was endowed with thirty-two major and eighty minor signs, such as elongated earlobes, webbed feet and hands, and a protuberance on his cranium that had characterized the ancient Indian concept of a *chakravartin* or universal monarch. However, not all of these marks of excellence were consistently followed by artists and theologians. By the Gupta period in India (AD 320-600),

inconsistencies account for the variety of differences evident among images from specific regions and periods, reflecting ethnic differences and aesthetic norms and ideals of human beauty.¹ In addition, artists could express the divinity and universality of the Buddha by creating images that mirrored humankind's endless physical variety, rather than a single race or ethnic group. Thus, soon after the introduction of Mahayana Buddhism to China, a type of image that was iconographically orthodox yet visually acceptable to Chinese worshippers was in widespread use in Buddhist caves in northwest China.²

Buddhist writings and representations also included a wide range of other personages ranging from disciples to laypersons and even animals, all of whom were not confined by such canonical restrictions. These characters lent a genre quality to much of Buddhist art and writings, allowing painters and sculptors new themes and topics for inspiration and innovation. Since these images depicted unenlightened beings, they were thus represented in ways that indicate ethnic specificity as part of their historical identity. Such images reveal the interest in and presence of foreigners in China during periods of political expansion and social tolerance. It was these non-sacred personalities who were most readily chosen for adaptation to meet the demands of native Chinese sensibilities and morals, providing links between the foreign Buddhist religion and the older, more native Chinese Daoist and Confucian schools of thought.

Beyond concerns of form and style are also the questions of content and expression. Buddhism infused Chinese art with a rich pantheon of deities, stories, and emotions which hitherto had not been portrayed by Chinese artists and which lay outside the pre-existing canon of subjects. Among the Confucian concepts which had molded the form and content of pre-Tang Chinese art is that of *li*, variously defined as propriety, good manners, or respect, the external exemplification of eternal principles which regulate and refine human emotions.³ Many of the restrained and dignified styles seen in pre-Buddhist Chinese art come from this concept of *li*. Violent emotions, grotesqueness, or sensuality were seldom portrayed. Yet, Indian Buddhist art introduced such qualities that were exploited and modified by Buddhist artists in China, then passed on to court and even literati artists.

FROM THE PROFOUND TO THE MUNDANE

The Evolution of Lohan Depiction in China

One of the earliest depictions of an individual disciple of the Buddha is that of Kashyapa, a Hindu teacher and ascetic who witnessed the Buddha's victory over the powerful snake king that resided in the fire temple, thereby immediately becoming the Buddha's follower. He is often depicted in Buddhist sculptural groups in the caves of Dunhuang, along with Sakyamuni Buddha, Ananda, and a pair of Bodhisattvas. By the eighth century, life-sized sculptural portrayals of Kashyapa can be found in the Dunhuang caves, as exemplified by the one in cave 45.⁴ Shown as an introspective philosopher, he is depicted as engaged in thought, alert and self-confident. The sculpting of the head reveals a clear understanding of bone structure and musculature, evidencing the sculptor's close study of actual physical anatomy. His deep-set eyes and prudent smile, his furrowed brow and stubbled chin call to mind the great monks who lived during that era, such as Faxian and Dharmaraksha.⁵

The artistic legacy of the Tang Dynasty continued to influence Buddhist art for several centuries, culminating in an era of technical and artistic excellence during the Liao period (907-1125). A set of life-size ceramic lohans, originally found in the Xiling Mountains in Yizhou, Hebei province, was dispersed into several museum collections in the US and Europe during the 1930s. While debate continues as to when these pieces were made and how many constituted the original set, current studies led to the conclusion that these were probably produced in the area around Yizhou by Chinese artisans captured during the period from 989 to 1125, when the Liao held power in that region.⁶ Of the seven surviving figures in this set, it is the one in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City which is perhaps the most skillfully executed (figure 1). His throat is full and open, his nostrils flare, even his robe falls loose and open in sweeping curves. The finely modeled features are most arresting; the eyebrows' expressive reverse curves are echoed by those of the full lips and large ears, and again in the curves of the robes falling over the right arm. The curves become a unifying element in the composition of the figure, creating a taut energy. Rather than modeling the figure directly from life, the artist seems to have introduced elements of abstraction, creating a figure that is perfectly balanced and a face that is elegant and idealized. It has become an embodiment of the ideal of all monks—the combination of inner strength and spiritual concentration with outward physical

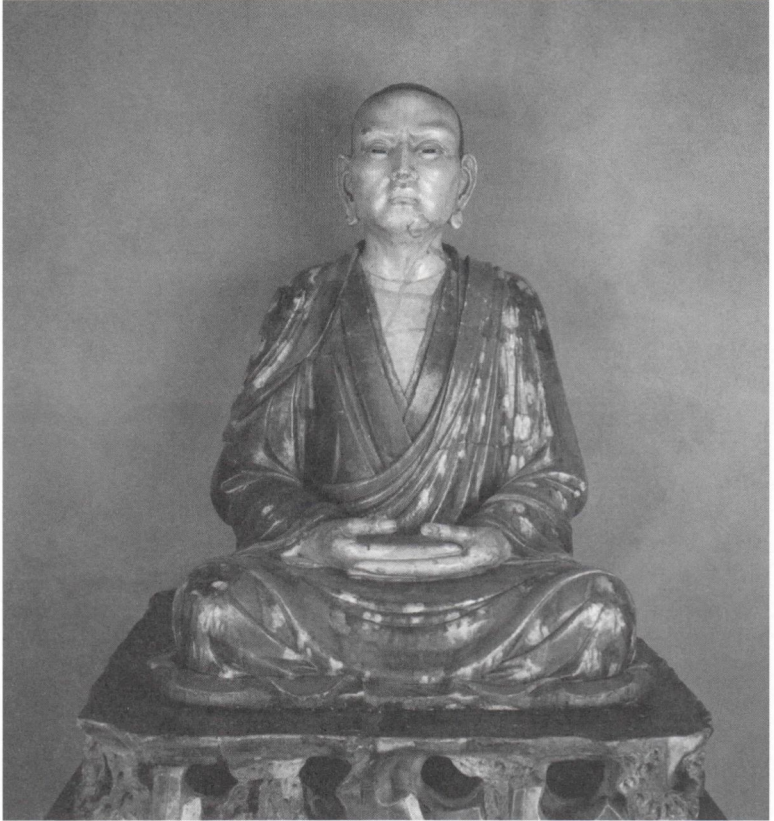


Figure 1. *Lohan*, Liao dynasty (907-1125). Earthenware with three-color lead glaze, height 101.6 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: Nelson Trust, 34-6. Photo by E. G. Schempf.

beauty and grace, the features of the face and distinctly Chinese, yet not specifically individualized. It is an image meant to inspire the personal quest for enlightenment to all who see it.

The sense of profound realization evident in the Yizhou image strongly suggests that it is meant to represent a lohan. According to Buddhist legend, when the Buddha preached his sermon in the Deer Park at Sarnath, there were five ascetics who grasped the truth of his doctrine and became his first disciples. During the Buddha's lifetime,

they and other followers who reached a high level of spiritual enlightenment became known as lohans, a term meaning “worthy ones” or “perfected saints.” This term refers specifically to a disciple who has realized his own Buddha-nature through unflagging devotion and practice. The lohans became a focus of cultic activity, with certain individuals or groups of lohans receiving special attention, especially the Ten Great Disciples, the Sixteen (or Eighteen) Lohans, and the Five Hundred Lohans.

The evolution of lohan depiction in China follows a roughly parallel chronology to the rise of Chan Buddhism. Starting with the Indian monk Bodhidharma’s arrival in China in AD 520, the emphasis of Chan Buddhism was always on meditative discipline through concentration and controlled breathing. Chan concepts of wordlessness, inaction, communion with nature, personal insight and effort are all very in tune with Chinese Daoism and its reverence for individualistic sages and mystics. In the seventh century, the *Record of the Abiding of the Dharma Spoken by the Great Lohan Nandimitra* (*Da A Luohan Nandimiduoluo suo shuo fazhuji*) was first translated into Chinese. In this sutra, the protection of the Buddhist law was entrusted by the Buddha to sixteen great lohans, whose transcendental powers and mountainous abodes are described in the sutra in great detail. They are said to be endowed with insight into their former lives and those of others, into future conditions, and into present sufferings through which temptation and passion may be overcome. However, it is their “six kinds of transcendent knowledge” that constitute a close affinity with Daoist immortals, including the capacity to see, hear, or do anything at any time and anywhere. The extraordinary rise in popularity of the lohan cult during the ninth and tenth centuries most likely had to do with their mystique as omnipotent immortals.⁷

In pictorial representations of the Tang and Song Dynasties, there seems to be a considerable variation in the emphasis between lohans as supernatural beings and as ordinary monks. Nevertheless, the dominant model for several centuries to come was undoubtedly that of the monk poet and painter Guanxiu (832-912).⁸ Though his recorded set of lohan paintings at a temple in Zhejiang province is no longer extant, close copies survive in a set of Qing dynasty rubbings from stone engravings in Zhejiang province (figure 2). The lohans are portrayed with grotesque yet expressive faces, lost in meditation or sutra recitation. The depiction of the Third Worthy One, the Lohan



Figure 2. *Pindola-bharadvaja*, from a set of sixteen lohans after Guanxiu (832-912), Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Ink rubbing from an engraved stone, ink on paper, 118 x 50.8 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Tiffany Blake, 1942.6.

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Pindola, is relatively noble and handsome in comparison with the degree of exaggeration seen in others in the set. A comparison of this Pindola image with the Kashyapa sculpture found in Dunhuang cave 45 reveals striking similarities in the balance sought between physical grotesqueness and spiritual determination.

By about the mid-tenth century the austere and iconic depictions of lohans gave way to the integration of landscape settings, paralleling the rise in importance of landscape painting in general. This was combined with a trend toward the anecdotal and the fantastic, such as the portrayal of lohans engaged in miraculous acts, including flying through the air or moving mountains. Bands of demons and hungry ghosts were often added to the scenes to increase the sense of theatricality.

Two basic styles of lohan painting prevailed during the Song and Yuan periods. The first was large, colorful paintings produced by professional artists for the lohan halls of Buddhist temples. The second style, called *baimiao*, is usually seen in smaller formats, such as handscrolls and albums, and is based on fine ink outlines without color. *Baimiao* paintings were usually produced by monk-painters and lay followers, and had strong associations with Chan Buddhist ideas and practices. The leader of the *baimiao* school of painting was undisputedly Li Gonglin (circa 1041-1106). While no reliable evidence exists for his having produced paintings of lohans, his name became firmly associated with lohan painting in both the colored and *baimiao* styles.

These two traditions of lohan painting were perpetuated throughout the first two centuries of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). It was during this period that a new theme emerged in the repertoire of lohan painting, that of the sixteen or eighteen lohan miraculously crossing the sea. One source for this theme is likely to have been an episode in popular fiction about the Daoist eight immortals. In response to the growing cult of the lohans, popular Daoism also expanded its roster of heroic figures with supernatural powers. By the mid-Ming period, the identities of the Eight Immortals had been established. The literary work by Wu Yuantai (circa 1522-1566), *Record of Travels to the East (Dongyouji)*, includes the episode of the Daoist Immortals crossing the sea. This lively theme was quickly adopted by Buddhist painters of lohans in the sixteenth century, notably Wang Wen (1497-1576), Qiu Ying (1490s-circa 1552) and You Qiu (active 1540-1590).⁹

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Figure 3. You Qiu (active 1540-1590), *Lohans Crossing the Sea*, dated 1587.
Opening section and details. Handscroll, ink on paper, 31.2 x 724 cm.
The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of
Phoenix Art Museum.

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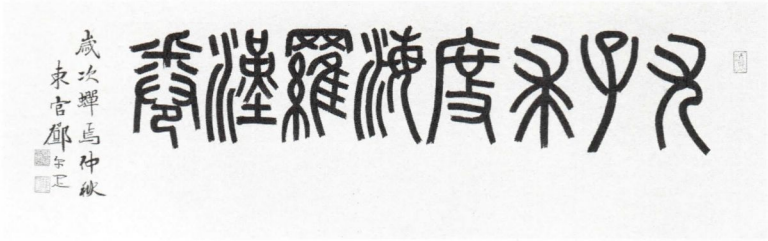


Figure 4. Deng Erya (1883-1954). Frontispiece to the handscroll in figure 3, ink on paper. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

Three Examples of late Ming Lohan Painting

In the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection is a handscroll of the *Lohans Crossing the Sea* painted by You Qiu (figure 3). Rendered in ink on paper, the scroll is dated 1587 and bears an inscription and seal of the artist. Additionally, there is a frontispiece in seal script by Deng Erya (1883-1954) and three collectors' seals on the painting (figure 4).¹⁰ The scroll opens with an image of the Buddhist guardian Weituo and a pair of gnarled-looking porters who bear the lohans' luggage on their backs, a motley assortment of scrolls, books, umbrella, gourd, scepter, incense burner, and other religious paraphernalia—some Buddhist, others Daoist or even Confucian. The first lohan rides across the waves on a *qilin* while clutching a sutra in his hand. The subsequent seventeen lohans traverse the sea in manners no less extraordinary, riding an assortment of land and water animals, including bovine, porcine, and porpoise-like creatures, big cats (leopard, tiger, and fantastic lion), and an elephant. A dragon and a magical dam arise from the waves while a crane, emblem of immortality and the mount of immortals, flies overhead.

The lohans' destination is the palace of the Dragon King, who emerges clad in a scaly cape and wielding a jade tablet. He is flanked by a flag bearer and a messenger on horseback as well as another pair of luggage porters bearing more symbolic objects—coral, peacock feathers, rhinoceros horns, and a miniature pagoda. The composition closes with a group of four beautiful maidens standing by the gate to the Dragon King's palace.

The Dragon King is a Chinese interpretation of the Indian *naga* or

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serpent kings who appear in numerous Buddhist stories and images. A scriptural source for this theme is the *Ocean Dragon King Sutra* (*Hailong wang jing*) in which the Dragon King was so delighted by Sakyamuni Buddha's sermon that he invited the Buddha to a banquet that he attended accompanied by lohans and bodhisattvas. In much earlier Buddhist folklore, *nagas* served to protect the Buddha from evil. Yet the other beasts shown in the scroll, such as the *qilin*, tiger, and crane, as well as many of the symbolic objects, such as coral, peacock feathers, rhinoceros horn, fly whisk, and sword, are not specifically Buddhist but instead draw upon Daoist and popular religious sources. This reinforces the Daoist origins to the theme of crossing the sea that has its roots in the tales of the Daoist immortals, as mentioned previously.¹¹

The playful and even humorous treatment of the lohans in the Papp Collection scroll is contrasted by a more serious interpretation found in the scroll painted by one of You Qiu's contemporaries, Ding Yunpeng (1547-circa 1628).¹² Painted in gold on indigo paper (figure 5), this work portrays the eighteen lohans in more conventional activities, such as meditation, mending, conducting esoteric rituals, or reading sutras. The composition seems to be drawn from works portraying Chinese scholars in garden landscape settings pursuing literary and artistic activities. Yet the materials used for this scroll—indigo paper and gold pigment—have long been associated with Buddhist images and sutra illustration. Fine outlines and meticulous detail testify to the high artistic quality of the scroll, which bears Ding's signature. Ding Yunpeng was well-known for his eccentric paintings of lohans in the tradition of Guanxiu. Yet the lack of a strict pictorial canon for the lohans gave Chinese painters the opportunity to create personal interpretations of these foreign disciples.

Another late Ming artist who painted many Buddhist subjects was Wu Bin (active 1583-1626), whose scroll of the sixteen lohans seems to strike a balance between the caricature-like rendition in You Qiu's work and the literati-like portrayal in Ding Yunpeng's work. In a scroll dated 1591 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (figure 6), the figures of the lohans, joined here by Budai and Bodhidharma, have a charming eccentricity. Their faces are bizarrely wrinkled, yet their poses and garments have a fluid grace in their use of "iron-wire" line, enhanced by delicate colors.¹³

MYRIAD POINTS OF VIEW

Late Ming Buddhism and the Revival of Lohan Painting

The underlying reasons for this renaissance of lohan painting and its diverse manifestations during the late sixteenth century center around the remarkable renaissance in Buddhism during the Wan-li era (1573-1620). After a long period of moribund decline, the Wan-li era saw a complete revitalization, particularly in the intellectual and spiritual accomplishments of the monastic class. Three tendencies can be discerned in Buddhist literature of this period: extreme individualism, doctrinal syncretism, and an interest in and contact with the



Figure 5. Ding Yunpeng (1547-circa 1628), *The Eighteen Lohans*, section. Handscroll, ink colors and gold on indigo blue paper, 32.4 x 337.5 cm. Honolulu Academy of Arts, Gift of Mrs. C. M. Cooke, 1927. HAA 804.

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secular world. These were personified by the “Three Eminent Monks of the Wan-li era,” whose public ministries and legendary personalities were a testament to their eccentric individualism: Zipo Daguean (1544-1604), Yunqi Zhuhong (1535-1615), and Hanshan Deqing (1546-1623). They were proponents of an amalgamation of the various sects of Buddhism as well as Daoism and Confucianism.

This syncretism took the form of the movement known as the “Three Religions” or the “Three Teachings” (*sanjiao heyi*). The philosophical basis of late Ming Buddhism was an emphasis placed





Figure 6. Wu Bin (active 1583-1626), *The Sixteen Lohans*, dated 1591, section. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 32.4 x 414.33 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1986.266.4.

on activity (*yong*) rather than on meditation. This approach often took political or secular manifestations. For example, one of the “Three Eminent Monks,” Zhuhong, was an advocate of “non-killing” and the release of life. Beyond simply reiterating accepted doctrine, Zhuhong created an ethical system with an attached scale of merits which allowed devotees to measure their spiritual progress. Another of the three monks, Deqing, was driven by a vision of the great monks of the past who had associated with prominent literati. Deqing was able to identify a famous monk of the Yuan period who had accomplished exactly that by moving in the highest of social circles and he adopted him as a personal model. The third monk, Daguan, actually died in prison as a result of his participation in a controversy that swirled around an imperial succession. The lives of all three monks illustrate an active involvement in society and its affairs and an effort to bring the principles of Buddhism to the world around them.

The popularity of the doctrine of the “Three Religions” as one faith is the best example of syncretism in the Wan-li period revival of Buddhism. Artists such as Ding Yunpeng and You Qiu were certainly aware of it, and it is likely that they supported it. This extends so far as to include an inscription by the monk Daguan on one of Ding Yunpeng’s paintings, written in 1594. This inscription refers to the failure of the Wan-li Emperor to appear at important sacrificial ceremonies following the death and disgrace of his Chief Grand Secretary. The Emperor’s lapses caused increased factionalism in the court, leading to a purge. This in turn led to Daguan’s demise. By 1596, Wan-li’s neglect of the affairs of state became complete.

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Conclusion

From this brief summary of these three monks' endeavors, it is apparent that none of them was content to sit and meditate in his monastery. They brought Buddhism to the world and often became enmeshed in its affairs. While this involvement with the gentry was an approach to spreading the faith, it also served to solve some of the doctrinal problems that faced Buddhism in the late Ming Dynasty.

This revival of Buddhism in the late Ming period can be described as in part a religious phenomenon reflecting the insecurities of rapid social change and political decay, and in part a moral revival in the face of an unprecedented disintegration of the traditional fabric of personal ethics and social mores. The prevalent sects—Pure Land and Chan—emphasized transcendence and enlightenment, the very themes expressed by many of the subjects chosen for late Ming Buddhist painting. Lohans could be seen as representatives of the ideal of enlightenment in earthly life, yet also as ordinary mortals who dealt with the trials and events of everyday earthly life. The depiction of lohans in various guises and activities served as a parallel to the lives of contemporary monks such as Dagan, Zhuhong, and Deqing. At times the lohans seem to inhabit a fantasy world, as depicted in the Papp scroll of the lohans crossing the sea. Yet other examples, such as Ding Yunpeng's scroll of lohans engaged in ordinary activities, would have served as exemplary models of the faith to monks and even to Confucian gentlemen who sought to resolve the discrepancies of the "Three Teachings" during a period of great syncretism in late Ming China.

Notes

1. Pratapaditya Pal, "The Buddha Image in India," *Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984, 144-153.
2. A good example of an early (N. Liang) Buddha figure is found in cave 272, Dunhuang. See *Dunhuang Mogaoku*, I (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1981), plate 7.
3. Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), 53-54.
4. The figure of Kasyapa on the north side of the west wall niche, cave 45, Dunhuang. See *Dunhuang Mogaoku*, III (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1987), plate 128.
5. Janet Baker, "Foreigners in Early Chinese Buddhist Art: Disciples, Lohans and Barbarian Rulers," *The Flowering of a Foreign Faith: New Studies in Chinese Buddhist Art*, Mumbai: Marg, 1998, 68-87.
6. Marilyn Leidig Gridley, *Chinese Buddhist Sculpture under the Liao*, (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1993), 121.
7. Richard K. Kent, "Depictions of the Guardians of the Law: Lohan Painting in China," *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850-1850*, University of Kansas, 1994, 183-212.
8. Marsha Weidner and others, *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850-1850*, University of Kansas, 1994, 262-264.
9. Janet Baker, "Foreigners in Early Chinese Buddhist Art," 68-87.
10. Phoenix Art Museum, *Heritage of the Brush: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting*, Phoenix Art Museum, 1989, 30.
11. Richard K. Kent, "Depictions," 193-199.
12. Marsha Weidner, *Latter Days of the Law*, 366-371.
13. Marsha Weidner, *Latter Days of the Law*, 374-377.

Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival
by Fang Xun (1736-1799):
Commemorative Painting
or Private Souvenir?

ANNE KERLAN-STEPHENS

The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection is very precious for the study of late Chinese painting.¹ For eighteenth-century art, as Claudia Brown has stated,² it allows us to go beyond the two traditional points of interest for art historians, Imperial Court painting and the Yangzhou school, to delve into what was actually the mainstream of the time, Orthodox painting.³ Such is the case with the painting *Tianzhong Jiejing Tu: Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* (figure 1) by Fang Xun (1736-1799), a painting that richly rewards attention.

Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival is a short handscroll that bears no date, signature, or seals of its author. Its attribution is made clear thanks to two inscriptions.⁴ The first, on the painting itself, was written in 1880 by the painter Zhang Xiong (1803-1886) for the owner of the time, an unknown prefect (*taishou*). The other, earlier inscription follows the painting and was written in 1811 by Fang Xun's oldest son, Fang Tinghu, who became *juven* in 1808⁵ and later was a district magistrate in the Beijing area. This inscription is the more important as it provides an approximate date of composition and theme, as we shall see. Nevertheless, the Zhang Xiong inscription is noteworthy in that it proves Fang Xun was still a name in the art market at the end of the nineteenth century.

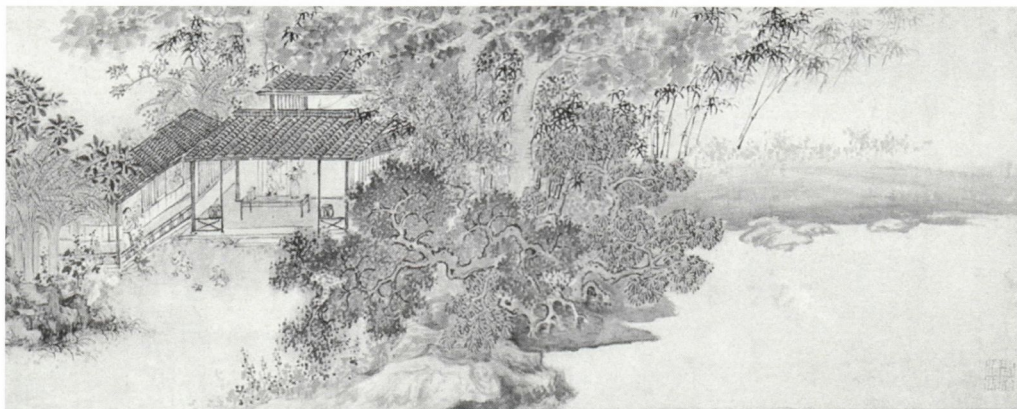
The scroll depicts an estate garden, neither walled nor gated, but well-protected by large parasol trees,⁶ the *wutong* which gave their name to the place, the Tonghua Guan (The Flowering Paulownia Studio). Unscrolling it, one first sees a riverbank with bamboo, shrubs, and *wutong* trees that hide the main buildings tucked in the background. Inside the entrance hall, one finds a low table, set with flowers, and two stools, and on the wall a hanging scroll that can be identified as



Figure 1. Fang Xun (1736-1799), *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival after Wen Jia*. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 22.4 x 116.9 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

the portrait of Zhong Kui, the conqueror of ghosts associated with the *duanwu* festival. In the hallway on the left side, a woman stands holding a baby in her arms, looking at two children at play with a pet in the front courtyard. Leaving this peaceful scene, one follows a narrow trail between a Taihu rock, a banana tree, and a loquat tree to a pavilion situated under a willow tree by the river. Inside, four men socialize while a servant presents them with drinks. The painting then leaves the garden to close with an open view of the river disappearing in the distance. The riverbanks are empty, except for one small, red winding bridge that leads the eye to the background, far away from the garden.

The painting is finely done. The view is taken from a distance, but each part is painted with many details that bring it to life. The *duanwu* festival is evoked in several ways: the touches of red that animate the painting recall the red silk thread carried by children that day, the plants by the river look like the sweet flag (*changpu*) used during the festival to repel pestilence, and the flowering vegetation (the garden hollyhock) reminds us that this festival takes place when nature is in full bloom. Finally, the composition sets in subtle opposition the main buildings and the pavilion. These two parts of the estate are well-separated by the vegetation, but nevertheless connect and become



complementary, with one placed at the background with a broad, open space in front and the other in the foreground with emptiness behind.

The painting, according to Fang Tinghu, was executed in 1782 or 1783 when Fang Xun was a painter in residence at the Tonghua Guan, an estate that his main patron, the scholar Jin Deyu (1750-1800), built in Tongxiang, next to Hangzhou. Fang Tinghu tells us that the scroll describes this same Tonghua Guan and a gathering attended by Jin and three of his friends, Zhu Fang'ai (1721-1786), Zhao Huaiyu (1747-1823), and Bao Tingbo (1728-1814). Interestingly, the painter did not include himself in the scene. There are four seals on the painting but, unfortunately, apart from the seals of Zhang Xiong and Fang Tinghu, the other two cannot be identified.⁸ The seals do not belong to Fang Xun or to any of the four men mentioned by Fang Tinghu, nor did any of them add an inscription.

This absence of seals, signature, and inscriptions makes this work a small mystery, even if the attribution to Fang Xun is clear. It is entirely logical to assume that the painting was commissioned by Jin Deyu to commemorate the gathering. If so, how can we explain the silence of the participants who did not add the usual inscriptions? One answer could be that the painting was either not finished or is a draft version, but considering the care Fang Xun put into the composition and coloring, this is difficult to accept. Another explanation could be that it did not please Jin, or any of the other participants, and was therefore set aside. A third option is that Jin chose not to observe the formalities associated with commemorative painting. Perhaps because

the subject was so private, it seemed unnecessary to inscribe it.⁹ I will examine this third hypothesis before considering a fourth possibility, one that takes into account Fang Xun's life and personality.

A commemorative painting?

Commemorative paintings were common among scholars, who used them in a variety of ways: to mark literary gatherings, depict someone's estate, or symbolically portray friends or associates. Because they served an implicitly social purpose, commemorative paintings were usually followed by inscriptions from the friends, clients, or painter connected to the subject. In the case of *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* this is not so. Moreover, the painting is not very "social" in tone. Just the contrary, it is modest, indeed, intimate. The viewer feels he is penetrating a private space, at a moment when the inhabitants, family and friends, are not aware of his presence. If this painting is, in fact, a commemorative work, we need to understand the choice of this private tone along with the absence of inscriptions. Perhaps an explanation can be found in the state of mind of the men depicted here, all of whom were representative figures of the Hangzhou elite. Three were scholars and the fourth was from an old merchant family, but none would ever complete a full career as a high-ranking official. Jin Deyu, appointed Secretary of the Fengtian Bureau in the Ministry of Justice, left office to settle at Tongxiang¹⁰ while Zhao Huaiyu renounced a promising career when his father died and later became director of the Academy Wenzheng in Jiangsu province.¹¹ Zhu Fang'ai, a poet and *prunus* flowers painter, received imperial honors in his youth¹² but chose not to pursue an official career. As for Bao Tingbo, he was never himself a merchant; the wealth of his family allowed him to become a man of letters and, more precisely, a famous bibliophile.¹³ The destinies of Jin Deyu and Bao Tingbo are highly symbolic of the development of the eighteenth-century Chinese elite: whereas Jin Deyu, a member of the old gentry, died poor after squandering his fortune to maintain his standard of living, the new, well-integrated merchant elite typified by Bao Tingbo was climbing the ladder of success.

This circle of friends was, it seems, rather traditional in its social composition and representative of the intellectual climate of the Jiangnan area. They shared a passion for books and belonged to a network of bibliophiles very active in the Hangzhou area, an important

案浙江每屆臘月
用紅牋書前人偶句之佳者
粘于門屏名曰春聯其時有書而化質之者
星莊漫錄曰東坡在黃州除夕訪王文甫見其家
方治桃符書一聯于其上云門大要容五馬入堂
深每曉見百男歡芝蓋春聯之由來也



Figure 2.1. Woodblock print based on drawings by Fang Xun, from Jin Deyu, editor, *Peace and Joy in the Realm*, 1780, reprinted 1788. 15.5 x 11 cm. Album of 100 pictures. Source: Shanghai Library.

案硤川志曰硤石東山有久竹器具最工雅士嘉興
 縣志曰竹有十二種黃心柶竹為篋器最良湖州
 府志曰生竹柔韌可為器具餘如
 金華東陽之毛竹紹興剡溪之
 紫竹鄉人耕作之
 暇採作器具
 器高于閭閻不獨
 杭嘉諸處為然
 也



Figure 2.2. Woodblock print based on drawings by Fang Xun, from Jin Deyu, editor, *Peace and Joy in the Realm*, 1780, reprinted 1788. 15.5 x 11 cm. Album of 100 pictures. Source: Shanghai Library.

center for bibliophiles at that time.¹⁴ This passion coincided with an interest in philology,¹⁵ and the *jinshi* movement, the study of bronze and stone inscriptions.¹⁶ The involvement of these men in the cultural and intellectual life of the Qianlong (reigned 1736-1796) era is exemplified by a common project they worked on, probably at the moment the painting was done. Zhao Huaiyu, with the assistance of Jin Deyu and Bao Tingbo, printed in 1784 in Hangzhou the *Siku Quanshu Jianming Mulu*, an abridged version¹⁷ of the imperial encyclopedia catalog made under the supervision of Ji Yun (1724-1805). This non-official edition obviously targeted the men of letters of the Jiangnan area.

The relationship the men in Jin Deyu's circle had with imperial power seems ambivalent. As members of the elite of their region, they were necessarily in contact with the Emperor. For instance, in 1780 during the imperial inspection, the four men contributed to the publication of a book that Jin Deyu offered to the throne, the *Taiping Huanle Tu* (*Peace and Joy in the Realm*) (figure 2). The folio described, in 100 pictures composed by Fang Xun, the peaceful and happy life of the people of Zhejiang.¹⁸ Such an act of allegiance was not rare; it was in fact sometimes inevitable and can reflect a wide range of attitudes toward the Emperor, from one of obligation (an elite like Jin Deyu was compelled, like his elders did before him,¹⁹ to offer something to Qianlong), to a strategy for advancement in the official curriculum,²⁰ to even a precautionary measure. This last was not at all unreasonable considering the dangers of politics. To our four subjects, the tragedy of the Zhu family was a close example of what could happen to those serving the Empire. One of Zhu Fang'ai's older brothers, Zhu Ying, was imprisoned in Sichuan for thirty-seven years due to a fault committed by a brother while on post in this province.²¹ This caused the ruin of his family, including the death of his eldest son, Zhu Hongyou (died around 1783), who was also Jin Deyu's cousin.

Such events likely made the four friends' relationship with imperial power problematic: how to maintain the contact required of economic and intellectual elites without running afoul of often fickle imperial justice? Their response seems to have been to withdraw into purely intellectual activities, which gave sufficient opportunity to honor imperial authority without making one too vulnerable to political dangers. If this is indeed the spirit they adopted, it matches well the painting's intimate tone of withdrawal to a very private space.



Figure 3. Fang Xun, *The Library under the Parasol Tree*. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 109.5 x 32.7 cm. Honolulu Academy of Arts.

But is this withdrawal sufficient to explain the absence of seals or inscriptions? It certainly did not mean these men were uninterested in socializing or commemorating social events. Jin Deyu's poem anthology, the *Tonghua Guan Shichao* (*Poems from the Flowering Paulownia Studio*) and Zhu Fang'ai's anthology, *Chunqiao Caotang Shiji* (*Collection of the Poetry from the Thatched Cottage of Chunqiao*),²² are full of poetic games played during informal meetings. For instance, one finds in the *Chunqiao Caotang Shiji* the evocation of a gathering in 1783 at the same Tonghua Guan. It cannot be the one depicted in the painting, because it happened in springtime. However, it gives a good idea of the atmosphere at the Tonghua Guan, where informality and poetic games were common: "In the year *guimao*, at springtime, there was a friendly gathering at the Tonghua Guan, among reeds and grass at the moonlight. Our host served us some bamboo roots. Because we were composing poems about green bamboo with half of their skin, I improvised one with the rhyme *ban* (half)."²³

Fang Xun himself was often present and did some commemorative paintings in other circumstances. This is the case for the *Yinghua Shuwu Tu* (*The Library of Bright Flowers*), painted in 1795 during a literary gathering.²⁴ The few objects depicted are books and scrolls. Another interesting painting in the same genre is the *Tongyin Shuwu Tu* (*The Library under the Parasol Tree*) (figure 3). The depiction of the place, specifically of the vegetation, bears some close similarities with *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival*. But here again, the focus is more on the building where the books are kept and on its owner. In comparison, in *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival*, the focus is on the family life, well-protected by the Zhong Kui, as it should be that day (figure 4).²⁵ The few objects depicted, the postures of the figures, playing or at ease, evoke more a day of rest in a protected place (figure 5). Compared to a commemorative painting like the *Yinghua Shuwu Tu*, our painting shares neither the tone, nor the inscriptions, nor the focus and so does not seem to answer the prerequisites of this genre.

Of course, one can say that the composition of *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* reflects the wish of the participants to be perceived as men who prefer the simplicity of a secluded life in a rural retreat to honors and glory, an aspiration entirely in keeping with traditional literati values. It could mean that our men valued the space of the family and close friends because it was the only one that remained free from social and political obligations. However, we would be right



Figure 4. Fang Xun, *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival*. Detail.

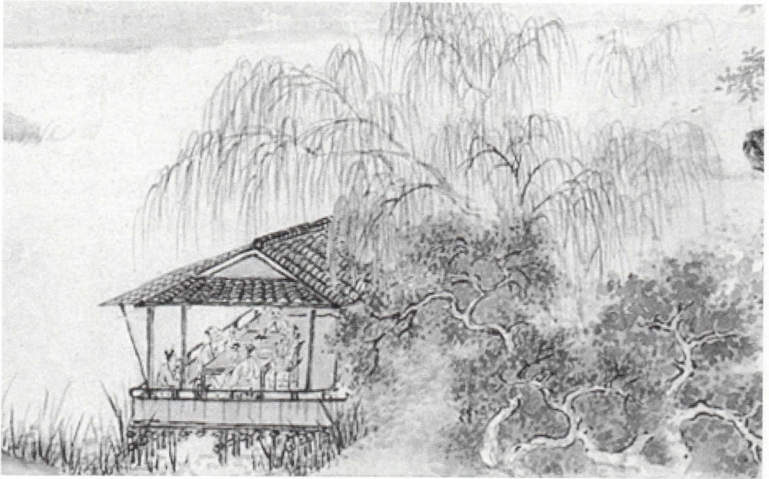


Figure 5. Fang Xun, *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival*. Detail.

to ask why, as private as it was, this painting did not even bear the inscriptions of men described as close friends. Were they so reluctant to play the literary game? This also touches on the issue of the purpose of a painting, specifically a painting made at a patron's request. What does a painting become if it stays in a private circle? If it is not seen by others? It becomes a private souvenir, like a family photograph kept inside the familial sphere of Jin Deyu. We cannot exclude this possibility but, as we saw, it would then be very different in nature from a commemorative painting. It would unveil a care for privacy rarely seen to such a degree among literati patrons.

A biography of the painter

Thus far, we have assumed that *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* was made at Jin Deyu's request. But this assumption, as believable as it is, does not provide an entirely satisfying answer to the problem posed by the painting. We need to examine another hypothesis, and to do so we need first to understand better who was the painter, not only because he created the work but also because the painting depicts a place where he lived and men he was familiar with. The painting provides insight into Fang Xun's life.

His life was somehow typical of that of a professional literati painter of that time. Born in 1736, he died in 1799²⁶ and stayed most of his life in the Jiangnan area, chiefly in the prefecture of Jiaying, between lake Taihu and Hangzhou, in the district of Shimen where he was born, and the bordering district of Tongxiang, the location of the Tonghua Guan. It is in this "suburban" milieu, rather than in the populous Hangzhou, that our painter developed his career.

The choice, if it was one, to work and live in a suburban area rather than the city, where the art market was certainly larger, is indicative of a man described as gentle and humble. Illness and a physical disability²⁷ are said to have prevented him from engaging in an official career. Instead, he relied on painting to make a living.²⁸ Fang Xun was, like his father, a commoner (*buyi*) but with a good classical education that made him a literatus. His father, Fang Mei (1714-1762), was a free-spirited man, good at poetry, calligraphy, and painting but unable to provide his sons²⁹ with a permanent home.³⁰ But he taught Fang Xun painting and soon the young boy, no older than fifteen,³¹ started to support the family with his work as a professional painter. Fang Xun is considered to be a very pious son who helped his father alive or dead,³²



Figure 6. Fang Xun and Qian Zai (1708-1793), *Bamboo and Rocks*, dated 1785. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 162.5 x 42.8 cm. Source: Christie's New York, *Classical Chinese Paintings*, 1 June 1994 (sale 7908), lot 223. Copyright of Christie's Images Ltd., 1994.

but the father must have been an extravagant person because when he died, Fang Xun found himself in a difficult situation. This is when, it seems, the Jin family began to help him. Fang Xun may have been introduced to the Jin's through Zhu Fang'ai, a mutual friend. Jin's mother, a fervent Buddhist, asked Fang to come and copy sutras. Soon, Jin Deyu himself began supporting Fang Xun, who became a painter in residence at the Tonghua Guan.³³ From that time on, his career was connected with the destiny of Jin Deyu and the Tonghua Guan became a second home for him.

At the Tonghua Guan, Fang Xun developed a career typical for a painter in residence, copying for his patron the paintings in his collection,³⁴ or executing works at his demand as when Jin Deyu, fond of a strange stone in a friend's collection, tried to exchange it for a painting by Fang Xun.³⁵ He would also participate at poetic gatherings or travel with his patron, providing both poems and paintings. *Taishan Jiyou Tu* (*Records of Travels to Mount Tai*), executed in 1783, in the same year as the Papp Collection painting, might be one example.³⁶

Was Fang Xun's situation as a painter in residence the best available to him? It is a difficult question to answer. "Protected" by his patron, Fang Xun developed a chosen clientele, avoiding the vulgar merchants who asked for erotic paintings,³⁷ working for scholars and officials, sometimes even working with them, like in the painting made in collaboration with Qian Zai (1708-1793) *Zhushi Tu* (*Bamboo and Rocks*) (figure 6). But when we compare his career with that of his peer, Xi Gang (1746-1803), a very independent and difficult personality, one can say that the latter became more famous. Xi also may have found more opportunity to develop his own style. In fact, some anecdotes, as we shall see, show that Jin Deyu was a jealous patron who may have not only controlled access to his protégé but also supervised, for good or bad, his artistic development. More positively, it seems that Fang Xun attained a stable economic situation, unlike Xi Gang who died in poverty. In fact, some anecdotes and one inscription on a painting lead us to think that Fang Xun's paintings were quite valuable during his lifetime and even after his death. The inscription written in 1818 by Dai Guangzeng on *Mo Songren Shese Huahui Juan* (*Flowers After Song Masters*) (figure 7) tells us that Dai bought a Fang Xun painting for fourteen pieces of foreign silver (*fanyin*).³⁸

According to Fang Tinghu's inscription, in the 1780s Fang Xun stayed at the Tonghua Guan. Later in his life, he moved into his own



Figure 7: Fang Xun, *Flowers after Song Masters*, dated 1781. Handscroll, ink and colors on paper, 29.5 x 551.3 cm. Shanghai Museum.

home in the vicinity, staying close to his patron.³⁹ The fame he acquired a few years before his death can be seen from two events. First, his treatise on painting, the *Shanijingju Hualun* was published around 1798 in the *Zhibuzu Zhai Congshu*, the collection of Bao Tingbo. At that time, Fang Xun was living in Hangzhou, either because he followed his patron there or was “invited” by Ruan Yuan (1764-1849), then Director of Education for Zhejiang. In Hangzhou, Fang Xun met important men of letters within the circle of Ruan Yuan, like the poets Chen Hongshou (1768-1822) and Chen Wenjie (1771-1883), or Guo Lin (1767-1831).⁴⁰ But Jiang Baolin, in his good biography of Fang Xun, gives a negative account of the meeting with Ruan Yuan, which would have occurred in 1798. He states that Fang Xun went reluctantly and against his own will to Hangzhou and spent a year with Ruan. Ruan Yuan talks very little about Fang Xun; the two did not seem to have gotten along well.⁴¹ If Jin Deyu was a paternalistic patron, Ruan Yuan seems to have been an authoritative one who wanted to have at his disposal all the famous names of the Hangzhou area. When Fang, an old man by this time, returned home after his time with Ruan, he fell sick and died. At his



death, he was well-respected as an artist in the Zhejiang milieu.

Built up during a lifetime spent around collectors, Fang Xun possessed a rich visual culture. He had access, for instance, to the collection of Xiang Yuanbian (1525-1590), that Jin Deyu partly bought,⁴² and to the collection of Gao Shiqi (1645-1704), that was transmitted to one of his relatives, Zhu Hongyou, the nephew of Zhu Fang'ai.⁴³ Although Fang Xun can be defined as an orthodox painter, his interest was not selective and the concern he expresses in his treatise for a professional mastery of his art leads him to study painters who do not belong to the Southern school. His approach to painting, in general, was more historical than ideological, which makes the *Shanjingju Hualun* a re-freshing treatise.

A rich visual culture was necessary for a professional painter who, in fact, had to answer to a broad demand. Fang Xun was most famous as a painter of flowers (figure 8), a genre very fashionable at that time, but he also painted landscapes, portraits, and popular themes, on paper or silk, in ink or colors. The diversity of his techniques and subjects reflects the variety of the demand and also his own professionalism. But despite his versatility, Fang Xun has a characteristic style. First, he belongs to the orthodox tradition, as is most clear when looking



Figure 8. Fang Xun, *Flowers of the Four Seasons*. Set of four hanging scrolls, each 149.2 x 38.8 cm. Source: Sotheby's New York, *Fine Chinese Paintings*, 21 March 1995 (sale 6677), lot 57.

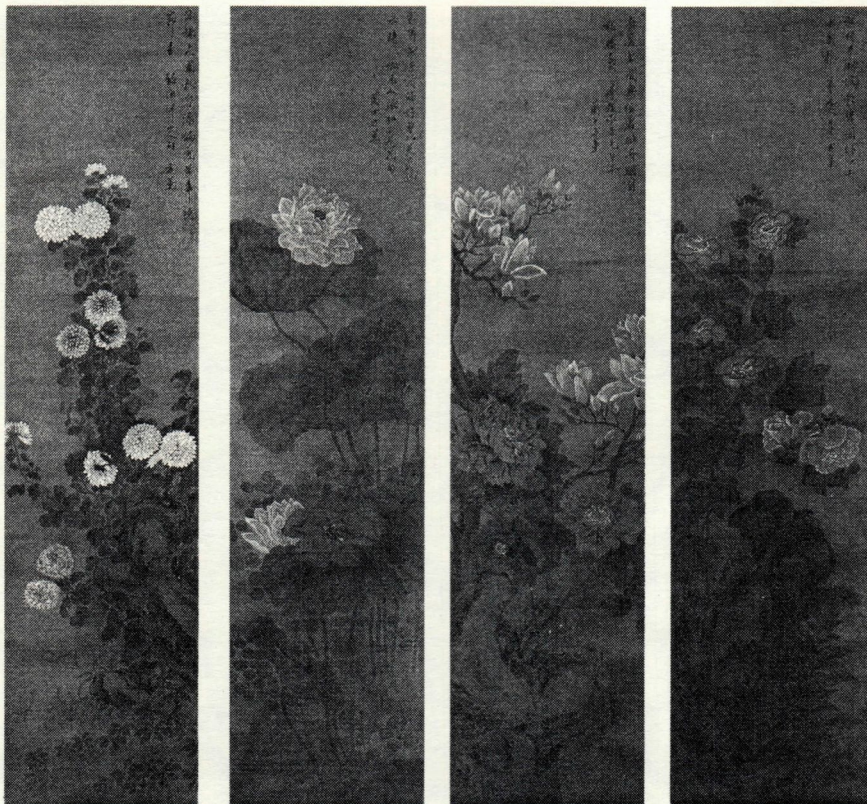
at his landscape painting. In these works, the “imitation after ancient masters” (*fang*) is fundamental, as we see in this landscape after Wang Meng *Fang Wang Meng Shanshui Tu* (figure 9) that uses the classical formula of the genre. But the view is not monumental. The artist displays an attention to detail that brings to the entire image warmth and familiarity, even if it sacrifices something in terms of cosmic rhythm. This care for detail is the second aspect of Fang Xun’s work, illustrated in his paintings of flowers, where the artist is at his best. In his handscroll of flowers after Song masters (figure 7), he manages to give life and movement without losing a sense of detail. Fang Xun seemed capable of precision as well as freedom in his brushwork, developing a style of his own with time.

The Papp painting is unique among Fang Xun’s work during the period. It seems, indeed, much more personal. In the depiction of the

Erratum

Page 132, figure 8.

Myriad Points of View: New Research on Ming and Qing Dynasty Paintings in the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection, Phœbus 9, Arizona State University, 2006.



Fang Xun, *Flowers of the Four Seasons*. Set of four hanging scrolls, ink and color on silk, each 149.2 x 38.8.

Editor's note: Regrettably, this printing of *Phœbus 9* perpetuated a mistake in Sotheby's New York, *Fine Chinese Paintings*, 21 March 1995 (sale 6677). In that catalog, lots 57, 61 and 62 were interpolated with the result that three sets of four hanging scrolls by the artists Fang Xun (1736–1799), Ren Xiong (1820–1857) and Sha Fu (1831–1906) were incorrectly published. The correct images of paintings by Fang Xun are shown above. The set mistakenly reproduced on page 132 of *Phœbus 9* should be captioned:

Sha Fu, *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*. Set of four hanging scrolls, ink and color on paper, each 132.7 x 37.5 cm.



Figure 9. Fang Xun, *Landscape after Wang Meng*, dated 1788. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 131.5 x 52.7 cm. Source: Christie's New York, *Classical Chinese Paintings*, 1 June 1994 (sale 7908), lot 198. Copyright of Christie's Images Ltd., 1994.

garden setting and the figures, in the use of light colors, the work is full of simplicity and delicacy, a delicacy one finds ten years later in the *Yinghua Shuwu Tu*. But *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* is infused with a nostalgia that comes from this delicacy itself, combined with a depiction of daily details that gives it considerable charm. It is interesting to note that both paintings are, according to their title or inscription, made after two masters of the Wu school, Wen Jia (1501-1583) and Qian Gu (1508-1578). Of course, Fang's two paintings are much more casual in their treatment of the theme than would be an ethereal rendition by a Ming master. But the attention paid to the depiction of figures and the garden setting, the ink washes and minute coloring given preference to powerful mountain structures, owes something to the Wu artists.

A personal souvenir

The personal tone of the *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* suits well, if it is the case, the private nature of the painting requested by Jin Deyu. It also suits well Fang Xun himself, who was described as a well-behaved, modest man. Perhaps this explains his absence from his own paintings. This absence might also shed light on the relationship of painter and patron. Many texts, including poems by Jin Deyu,⁴⁴ present Jin's relationship with Fang as a friendly one. But the two men were in reality far from being social equals. In fact, Fang Xun was in Jin's debt, as the inscription written by Dai Guangzeng on the flower handscroll presented earlier suggests: "Everytime somebody wanted a painting by Fang Xun, he had first to ask for Eyan's [Jin Deyu] permission. It is because when he was young, Fang Xun supported himself with the Jin's help. This is why he would only follow Eyan's orders." This aspect of the relationship is confirmed by Jiang Baolin who tells us that Jin Deyu would refuse on Fang Xun's behalf certain commands made of Fang.⁴⁵ In short, Jin Deyu exercised control over Fang Xun's production. By becoming a painter in residence, Fang Xun may have traded freedom for security.

From this point of view, perhaps Fang Xun does not represent himself in *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* because he does not really belong to the world of his patron. His status at the Tonghua Guan was perhaps an ambiguous one; he could not be represented simply as a servant, nor could he be painted at the table with Jin Deyu's friends. He is nowhere, neither in the familial sphere nor in the friendly one. Given this, he may have found a way to appear through, rather than in,

his painting. The Zhong Kui, hanging in the entrance hall, was a type of painting that Fang Xun actually executed⁴⁶ and could therefore be the only tangible presence of the artist in this image. But beyond this visual evocation of himself, one can feel Fang's presence in the way he depicts a place where, it needs to be noted, he actually lived. This fact suggests another hypothesis, one that would explain the personal tone, the private treatment, and the absence of seals or signatures on the painting. It could be that *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* was indeed conceived as a personal souvenir, not for the patron but for the artist himself, not commissioned but freely executed.

For Fang Xun, the Tonghua Guan was not only a garden for gatherings; it was, after his father's death and maybe for several years, his home, maybe the first he ever knew considering his father's life. We can imagine that, while living at the Tonghua Guan or even long after, the painter took up his brush to depict a place very important in his life, offering a personal vision that focuses on both the familial sphere and the circle of friends that included men important to his life and career. But he also presents the place with the distance appropriate to the painter-in-residence he was. This mixing of closeness and distance captures well the vision presented by the painting as well as Fang Xun's status in the milieu in which he worked. After completion, Fang Xun would have kept the painting for himself. He would not have needed to sign or inscribe something made for his own use. One can imagine his son finding it, devoid of any inscription more than ten years after Fang's death, and giving it his own interpretation.

The circumstances surrounding the creation of the *Glimpses of the Duanwu Festival* will stay a mystery to us because of the lack of documents. Both main hypotheses have their interest, and they both point toward the use of painting as a private souvenir, a type of personal photograph, separate from ceremonial, social functions. In both cases also, the absence of the figure of Fang Xun expresses his status, the status of a painter-in-residence, not entirely part of the world he was depicting. This absence is compensated for by the delicacy of the emotions that appear under his brush. In the end, it is through his art that the painter manifests his presence and, maybe appropriately, through an image, manifests the place. As Fang himself said in one of his poems, written long after he left the estate, "I long lived at the Tonghua Guan. In its courtyard, on its flowers, rocks and bamboo, everywhere, I left the trace of my brush...."⁴⁷

Notes

1. I would like to thank William Stephens, my husband, for his close reading of the article, as well as Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens.
2. In her article "The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting" in Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *The Scent of Ink* (Phoenix, 1994).
3. My understanding and interest in the Orthodox school of painting owes much to the illuminating analysis of Ju-hsi Chou. See Ju-hsi Chou, "In Defense of Qing Orthodoxy" in Richard Barnhart, James Cahill and others, *The Jade Studio, Masterpieces of Ming and Qing Calligraphy from the Wong Nan-p'ing Collection* (New Haven, 1994).
4. See appendix I for a translation of the inscriptions. I wish to thank Olivier and Atsuko Venture for their help in the reading of the first inscription.
5. See Geng Weihu, Pan Wenlu and Pan Rongjing, *Jiaqing Shimen Xianzhi* (1821 edition), *juan* 16, 24.
6. I would like to thank Georges Métaillé who helped me to identify, where possible, the plants in this painting. It is in fact interesting to see how, in the same image, Fang Xun depicts very precisely some plants (the loquat tree is a good example) and is much less precise in depicting other plants. See appendix II for the list of the identifiable plants.
7. See also Ju-hsi Chou's description of the painting in Brown and Chou, *Scent of Ink*, 104-105.
8. The first one at the beginning of the scroll on the painting reads "Chun chao qing wan?" Under his inscription is the seal of Zhang Xiong. Lower down, after the painting, there is a seal that reads "Tieyun shending jinshi shuhua." The last seal is Fang Tinghu's, under his inscription.
9. This is the hypothesis suggested by Ju-hsi Chou in his study of the painting for the catalog, Brown and Chou, *Scent of Ink*, 106.
10. For Jin Deyu's biography, see Yan Chen *Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi* (1887 edition), *juan* 15, 19-20.
11. See Arthur W. Hummel, editor, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period, I* (Washington DC, 1943-1944), 71-72 for his biography.
12. His biography is also given in the *Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi*, *juan* 15, 20. He was received by the emperor in 1762.
13. See Bao Tingbo's biography in Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period, II*, 612-613. According to Nancy Lee Swann, "Seven Intimate Library Owners" in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 1936, volume 1, 386, Bao Tingbo dedicated himself entirely to book collecting in the 1750s.

14. Jin Deyu is quoted as one of the bibliophiles in the preface by Zhu Wencao of Bao's *Zhibuzhu Zhai Congshu*. See also Nancy Lee Swann, "Seven Intimate Library Owners," 381.
15. Jin Deyu worked on many historical sources. He was called "the Historian's assistant." See *Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi*, *juan 15*, 20.
16. Zhang Yanchang (1738-1814) describes a bronze he saw at the Tonghua Guan in his *Jinshi qi* (Shanghai Library edition without date), *juan 2*, 20.
17. The list of the 3450 titles of the Mulu was presented to the throne in 1782. For the history of this edition, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period, I*, under Ji Yun (Chi Yun), 120-123. See also Robert Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries, Scholars and the State in the Late Chien-lung Era* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), chapter 3.
18. Jin Deyu was the donor of the album, which he gave together with some rare books. Zhao Huaiyu and Zhu Fang'ai added inscriptions to the pictures, and Bao Tingbo wrote the title. See the preface of the *Taiping Huanle Tu* (1888 edition, Shanghai Library).
19. Bao Tingbo gave to the throne 623 books from his library, responding to the call of the Emperor in 1773 at the launch of the *Siku Quanshu* encyclopedia project. The *Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi* says that Zhu Fang'ai offered paintings he did to the Emperor during the 1762 Southern Tour Inspection.
20. According to the *Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi*, Jin Deyu received some silks from the emperor, but the *Tongxiang Xianzhi* seems also to connect this gift with the appointment of Jin Deyu in Beijing. However, 1780 is quite late for such a start in the career of Jin Deyu. Jiang Baoling in *Molin Jinhua* (1840) reprinted in *Qingdai Zhuanji Congkan* (Taipei, 1985), volume 73, 131-132, says that Fang Xun prepared the book at Jin Deyu's mother's request. (References to this volume will subsequently be abbreviated QZC.)
21. See *Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi*, *juan 15*, 26, under Zhu Ying.
22. These two collections were published together in 1800. I found a copy of the edition in the Shanghai Library.
23. See *Chunqiao Caotang Shiji*, *juan 8*, 16. This inscription invites us to reconsider the identity of some of the figures depicted because it mentions the presence of Zhu Hongyou at the gathering in springtime 1783. One of the participants of the *duanwu* festival gathering could also have been Zhu Hongyou, instead of Bao Tingbo or Zhao Huaiyu.
24. Fang Xun: *Yinghua Shuwu Tu* (*The Library of Bright Flowers*), 1795. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper; 125.6 x 33.2 cm., Palace Museum, Beijing. See a reproduction of this painting in Gugong bowuyuan canghuaaji, editor,

- Zhongguo lidai huihua*, volume VIII (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1991) 61. There is also, in the Shanghai Museum, a painting called *Elegant Gathering (Yaji tu)* which bears inscriptions but is not signed or dated. See a small reproduction of this painting in *Zhongguo Gudai Shuhua Tumu* (Beijing, 1989-2001), volume 5, number 1-4780. Another painting by Fang Xun, also in the Shanghai Museum, signed and dated from 1798, can be considered a commemorative painting: the *Zhang Shiqi Xiaoxiang Tu (Portrait of Zhang Shiqi)*, which bears numerous inscriptions. For a reproduction see Anne Kerlan-Stephens, "Traduction et commentaire d'un texte sur la peinture chinoise : Fang Xun et son *Shanjingju hualun* (Propos de l'Ermitage de la Montagne tranquille)," III, Ph.D dissertation: Université Paris 7-Denis Diderot, 2000, 132. We are very thankful to the Shanghai Museum which gave us the unpublished reproductions of Fang Xun paintings.
25. As is well-known, the *duanwu* festival is a day that is considered to be ominous. The Zhong Kui, sweet flag, and other protective devices were stamped on the door of the house. It looks as if the inhabitants of the Tonghua Guan Garden are, in fact, protected against any attack from pestilence.
 26. In Brown and Chou, *Scent of Ink*, 104, the date given for Fang Xun's death is 1801. There was, in fact, a painting attributed by Osvald Sirén to Fang Xun in *Chinese Painting, Leading Masters and Principles* (London and New York, 1958-59) volume VII, 329, and dated 1801. But several textual sources, including an inscription on a painting by Fang Xun (see figure 7), and the preface of Jin Deyu's *Tonghua Guan Shichao* (1800), all mention the death of Fang Xun in 1799. For this question see Anne Kerlan-Stephens, "Traduction et commentaire d'un texte sur la peinture chinoise: Fang Xun et son *Shanjingju hualun*," I, 38.
 27. He probably had a foot problem. See *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 131-132) and Guo Lin, *Lingfen Guan Shihua*, *juan 4*, 4-6.
 28. See Guo Lin, *Lingfen Guan Shihua*, *juan 4*, 4-6.
 29. Some texts invite us to think that Fang Xun was the eldest son of the family. See *Tonghua Guan Shichao*, *juan 2*, 15.
 30. See *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 60) for Fang Mei's life.
 31. There is an inscription by Jin Deyu on a painting Fang Xun did when he was twelve years old. See *Tonghua Guan Shichao*, *juan 2*, 8a. The *Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi*, *juan 15*, 13, says that at the age of fifteen Fang Xun was already traveling with his father, meeting men of letters, and gaining respect for his painting.
 32. Fang Xun is said to have spent all his earnings for the burial of his deceased

- father. It is also said that he continued to help his mother-in-law after her husband's death. See *Jiaqing Shimen Xianzhi* (1821), *juan* 16, 24.
33. See *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 131-132). An inscription on a painting by Fang Xun also says that Fang Xun was saved (from poverty) by the Jin family when he was young. The postscript of the *Shanjingju Hualun*, in Yu Anlan, editor, *Hualun Congkan* (Reprint Taipei 1984), volume 2, 465, dated from 1797, mentioned that at that time Fang Xun was at the Jin's residence.
34. See *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 131-132) and Yu Jiao, *Duhua Xianping* (in *Mengguang Zazhu*, 1828 edition, *juan* 5), 20.
35. See Guo Lin, *Lingfen Guan Zazhu Xubian*, *juan* 3, 7.
36. For the poems, see the numerous poetic games reported in the *Tonghua Guan Shichao*. According to *Duhua Xianping*, 20, Fang Xun traveled with Jin Deyu and Zhao Huaiyu to Mount Taibai in Shanxi. For the painting, which appeared recently at auction, see *Sotheby's Fine Chinese Paintings*, New York, May 30, 1990, lot 122.
37. *Duhua Xianping*, 20.
38. *Fanyin* or *yinyuan* is foreign money of all sorts but in 1818 it most likely was the Spanish *real* coming from Mexican and Peruvian mints. Among them, the coins of the Spanish King Charles IV (1788-1808) were the most common. In Zhejiang and Fujian, in 1818, one of these coins would be worth 936 mace (*qian*). Fang Xun's painting was then sold for 13,104 cash of official coin. An anecdote in *Duhua Xianping*, 20, also says that a merchant offered Fang Xun several hundred *taels* (*liang*) for an erotic painting that Fang Xun refused to do. *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 131-132) says that people were offering several thousand gold pieces for a painting by Fang Xun. It is difficult to know if these amounts are real or if they are just put in the text for emphatic, laudatory reasons.
39. *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 131-132).
40. See Guo Lin, *Lingfen Guan Shihua*, *juan* 9, 4-6, who evokes the gatherings with Ruan Yuan, Jin Deyu, Fang Xun, Chen Hongshou, and Chen Wenjie: "We were offering each other poetry and drinks with a totally free and relaxed spirit."
41. See Ruan Yuan, *Dingxiang Ting Bitan*, *juan* 1, 50-51, in which Ruan Yuan presents Fang Xun and gives some of his poems. By comparison, Ruan Yuan talks much more about Xi Gang in the same text.
42. *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 131-132).
43. See the *Shanjingju Hualun* in Yu Anlan, editor, *Hualun Congkan* (Reprint Taipei 1984, volume 2, 460-466) in which Fang Xun describes some of the paintings he saw.

44. *Tonghua Guan Shichao*, *juan 1*, 11. Jin Deyu evokes in ten poems his “dear friends.” He then writes a poem about Bao Tingbo followed by one about Fang Xun.
45. *Molin Jinhua* (QZC, volume 73, 131-132).
46. There is a Zhong Kui painting by Fang Xun in the Shanghai Museum. It bears no date or inscription but is signed by Fang Xun. The signature “Shimen Fang Xun jing hua” (Fang Xun from Shimen respectfully painted it) may indicate that the painting was done at somebody’s request.
47. *Shanjingju yigao* (manuscript from the Shanghai Library), 20.

Appendix I: Transcription and translation of the inscriptions on the painting.

A.

此圖為石門
 方蘭坻先生
 所繪天中小景
 未經題款在
 香生太守偶
 意得之攜示
 雖無款識一
 賞而知為先
 生真蹟無終(?)
 宜(?)寶之
 光緒庚辰冬十月六日
 駕湖後學
 張太子祥
 氏審宗 (or空) 因
 記者年七十八

This painting was made by master Fang Landi of Shimen; it represents a small scene of the Tianzhong festival. [The author] never inscribed or signed it. The *taishou* (prefect) Xiangsheng happened to acquire it and brought it to show it to me. Even if it bears no signature, as soon as I had a look, I knew it was an authentic work of the master. We must treasure it for ever (?).

In the sixth day of the tenth month of winter of the year *kengchen* (1880), under Guangxu, the disciple Yuanhu, Zhang Xiong Zixiang, at the request of the honorable Shen, wrote this, at the age of 78 years.

One seal: Zhang Xiong.

GLIMPSES OF THE DUANWU FESTIVAL BY FANG XUN

B. (Translation from Ju-hsi Chou, in *Scent of Ink*, 105, except for the last sentence).

The scroll's length is not more than five [Chinese] feet. The subject concerns the Duanwu Festival, with essential details intact. I, Hu, carefully examined the scroll, and felt that this scroll must have been painted in either 1782 or 1783. At the time, my late father was residing in the Tonghua Guan (Flowering Paulownia Studio), [at the estate of] the venerable Jin [Deyu]. On that occasion, elders like Zhu Fang'ai, Zhao Huaiyu, and Bao Tingbo were present. Consequently, given the circumstances, [my late father] depicted the scene on this scroll to record the festive spirit of that day. In that, he was but following in the footsteps of the *Elegant Gathering at the Western Garden* of the past. In the eighth day of the last decade of the first lunar month of the year *xinwei* (1811), under Jiaqing, I, Hu, respectfully [wrote] this note.

Appendix II: List of the plants identified in the painting (from right to left).

Bamboo

Firmiana simplex (L.) W.F. Wight. Parasol tree, *wutong* *Myrica rubra* (Lour.)

Sieb. et Zucc. Chinese bayberry, Chinese waxmyrtle, *yangmei*.

Nerium indicum Mill. Sweetscented oleander, *jiazhuta*

Althaea rosea (L.) Cavan. Garden hollyhock, *shukui*

Eriobotrya japonica (Thunb.) Lindl. Loquat tree, *pipa*

Musa sp. Banana tree, *xiangjiao*

Cymbidium sp. Orchids

Salix sp. Willow

Acorus calamus L. Sweet flag, *changpu*

MYRIAD POINTS OF VIEW

Pleasure and Pain

MARION S. LEE

In the Papp Collection, there are four pictorial works, in different formats, that depict women (*shinü hua*, *meiren hua*)¹ painted by three notable artists: Fei Danxu (Xiaolou 1801/02-1850), Gai Qi (Yuhu waishi 1773-1828), and Gu Luo (Ximei, 1763-after 1837).² Artistic conventions of representation, together with titles, allusive poetic inscriptions, and individual identifying names mark all the portrayed figures as historical literary or artistic subjects, religious or mythological beings, fictional characters, or elite women. Women are portrayed as visualized subjects drawn from text: poetry, *chuanqi* stories, drama, or vernacular fiction. The sixty-year span, which brackets the reign periods of Jiaqing (Emperor Renzong reigned 1796-1820) and Daoguang (Emperor Xuanzong reigned 1821-50), marks a high point in the development of the genre with respect to its popularity and significance.³ Together, images of women signal the “rupturing [of] the limited thematic scope of women of aristocracy” that characterizes earlier figuration in especially Tang and Song dynasties, as Shan Guoqiang observes.⁴ On the one hand, from the sixteenth century forward, depictions of women reflect the pervasive influence of printed books, frequently with illustrations, that include works of fiction in different genres.⁵ On the other, pictorial images facilitate the “construction of typological forms of women from different societal segments,” thereby making visible a range of feminine subject-positions.⁶

Ambiguity Through Naming

Providing names to depicted figures and titles to paintings, verbal inscriptions function as guides to “interpretive discourse.”⁷ They help to both narrow the scope of interpretative possibilities and broaden the anticipatory horizon of interpretation. Whether attached to a painting at the time of production or recorded later in a colophon or catalog, a title can turn a relatively simple image into one of ambiguous reference and enhanced depth. Shifts in meaning emerge from the interplay of visual representation and verbal identification of human subjects. For instance, a personal viewing experience may encode an image by

a collector or critic in a given title or commentary.⁸ Or a feminine audience may retroactively direct or shape female images through later cartouches. I shall consider these aspects as I focus on the long handscroll by Fei Danxu, entitled *One Hundred Beauties* (figure 1).⁹

Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou have provided in their catalogs the following description of the painting.¹⁰ The handscroll, which carries two seals of Fei Danxu, measures seven hundred and ninety-three centimeters, or more than twenty-six feet long, and thirty-two and half centimeters, or about a foot high. It portrays women attired in elaborate robes. With attendants, they are engaged in leisure and cultural activities: picking flowers, chasing butterflies, feeding deer, brewing tea, doing embroidery, playing *touhu* and *weiqi*, tuning a *qin*, reading, looking at the self in the mirror, painting, and viewing a dance performance. The space for these activities is appropriately luxurious. It flows around decoratively carved balustrades and low walls that are interspersed by standing screens. The area is dotted by screens, large platform-dais, tables, stools, rocks, trees, and potted plants, and, toward the end of the scroll, a tent-like pavilion.

Done in “outline ink drawing” (*baimiao*), the brushwork is consistently steady and strong. That an earlier painting lies behind this execution is indicated by the seal *Xiaolou moben*, “Xiaolou’s traced copy.” Strikingly similar figural motifs are found among a set of twelve earlier “draft sketches” (*huagao*) that bear Fei’s seals and signature.¹¹ The two extant executions of female figures reveal both the artist’s practice of copying old paintings and the appeal of those faithful copies to collectors.

The handscroll is also linked to other images that portray stories and themes about women in palace settings, and which, in the words of Craig Clunas, carry an “erotic charge.”¹² They depict a physical intermingling with subjects of all genders that is contrary to the prescribed praxis of gender separation in most societies in the imperial era. An egregious example of this appears in a segment of the handscroll *In the Palace* (*Gongzhong tu*, an early twelfth-century, or later, copy of a work by Zhou Wenju, active circa 940-975), now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.¹³ Among the court ladies, attendants, and one girl, there is a young man shown in a kneeling position with his thighs wrapped tightly round the left bent leg of the court lady of generous proportions who is sprawled on the floor intimately next

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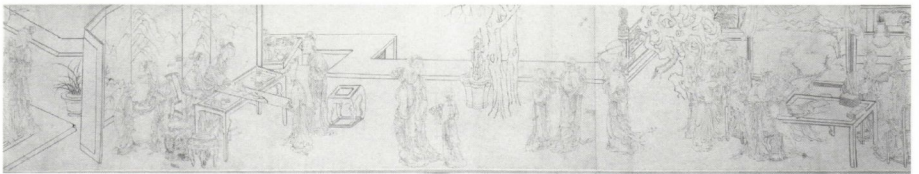


Figure 1. Fei Danxu (1802-50), *One Hundred Beauties*. Handscroll, ink on paper, 32.5 x 793 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

to him.¹⁴ The couple is a visual emblem of transgression and excess which are iterated in textual descriptions of debauched practices at the courts from Western Han dynasty forward, and which provoke in the beholders moral indignation, lustful response, or flights of fantasy.

Inherent in paintings on this theme is the ideal spectator, configured as an emperor and, by extension, all dominant masculine or masculinized subjects. Scopophilia, or the desire to obtain sexual stimulation by looking, is among the component instincts of sexuality (sexual drive) and, in Freud's psychoanalytic theorization, it is associated with the "instinct for knowledge."¹⁵ The desire to control is linked to a young (male) child's compulsion to see and understand the concealed bodily parts including genitalia. Although the instinct in individuals is modified later by other factors in the constitution of the ego, it continues as the basis of erotic looking for masculine pleasure.

The Act of Beholding

In the case of the Papp handscroll, the naturalized spectator is joined and perhaps displaced, temporarily, by a female viewer, the well-known modern painter Li Zuyun, usually referred to as Li Qiujun (1899-1973).¹⁶ Her presence is inscribed in the following passage, found as the opening commentary to the painting (figure 2):

My oldest brother Zuhan recently obtained in Suzhou the *Hundred Beautiful Women* handscroll [*Baimei ren tujuan*], painted by Mr. Xiaolo [Fei Danxu]. Elegantly beautiful, the figures flow easily. Their presence seems to sparkle; tops and skirts flutter as if moving. They are unseen in the world.

He [Zuhan] conceded them to be my fine companions in Ouxiang guan. When the mounting was done in the second month of *jisi* year [11th March - 9th April 1929], it came to me for inscription of the frontispiece.

With such beautiful attraction before me, I couldn't but feel ashamed of my ugly form. My oldest brother often kept my inaptness hidden away, so as not to let the village woman ride the same chariot with Xishi,¹⁷ thereby causing turmoil and panic throughout the state.

*Qiujun, the Woman Li Qiu*¹⁸

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The passage includes an encomium of the painting. The designated title *Hundred Beautiful Women* alludes to the influential book *New Songs on the Hundred Beauties with Illustrations and Biographies* (*Baimei xinyong tuchuan*), which was printed in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁹ It comprises a hundred drawings of historical, religious, or mythological subjects that are accompanied by individual biographical accounts of different lengths, and an elaborate apparatus of commentarial writing.²⁰ The prefaces, individual or collective poems (*jiyong*), and colophons were composed by, in addition to the compiler Yan Xiyuan, officials, poets and painters of both genders, and professional literati. The most well-known among them is Yuan Mei (1716-1798, *jinshi* 1730). The artist of the illustrations is Wang Hui (Bochi), whom Yan refers to as a painter who had worked in the inner court of Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736-1795).

Li Qiujun's passage, which touches on familial relationships and her personal response to the handscroll, contains a tightly packed ambiguity. Zuhan, her oldest brother, was an artist and successful businessman.²¹ Qiujun warmly acknowledges Zuhan for his gift of the handscroll and overall brotherly care. In addition, the passage articulates a gesture of self-deprecation. The "ugly form" (*xinghui*)²² connected to the metaphor for beauty, "jade mountain" (*yushan*)²³ in the penultimate line, indicates simultaneous humilities for Qiujun's supposed lack of artistic accomplishment (calligraphic skill) and her physical appearance.

This response of Qiujun injects a real human form into the idealized world of the painting. If we follow Lacan, the moment when a

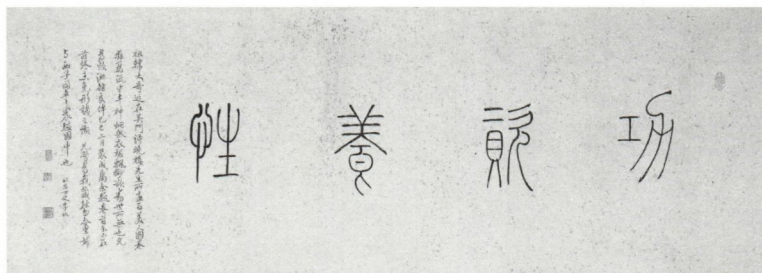


Figure 2. Li Qiujun (1899-1973), frontispiece to the handscroll in figure 1. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

young child recognizes her/his own image in the mirror is critical for the constitution of the ego. The reflected self is more complete than the simple I. The mis-recognition projects the body outside of itself and the alienated subject, introjected in return as an ego ideal, then engages in preparation for identification with others. The mirror stage is the primordial matrix for the making of the self in the realm of the imaginary, according to Lacan's theorization.²⁴ Homologous to a reflection in the mirror, the women portrayed in the handscroll symbolize an imaginary moment of self-identification for Qiujun. The image that unfurls with the long handscroll then seeks to define such identity in both the represented object and the introjected subject of Qiujun. At the level of narration, the conventional content of the handscroll is a constituent, a refraction, of Qiujun's own story with its colorful turns and pathos that were partially imposed by historical circumstance. She was from an affluent Ningbo family that had relocated in Shanghai, socially well-connected through the influence of native-place associations.²⁵ Qiujun's family situation freed her from the need to seek a livelihood, although she sold paintings and took in women students.

From a relatively young age through art and art-related activities, Qiujun began to be known as an active painter, curator, and donor.²⁶ In 1929, when the passage above was inscribed, she both exhibited in and helped organize the First National Exhibition of Art held in Shanghai under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.²⁷ Like some women painters in the early Republican period, Qiujun led an unconventional personal life.²⁸ She was never married. In middle age, she became fascinated by the art of Zhang Daqian (Zhang Zhengchuan, 1899-1983) and the two had a close personal relationship. Her feeling for Zhang remained unrequited and he is rumored to have continued to honor her, in spite of the belief that he had rejected a marriage proposal by Qiujun's family. Qiujun lived for the rest of her life with her brother Zuhun before committing suicide in the second half of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

The consideration of Li Qiujun's imprint, as viewer/collector of the handscroll, also leads us to the significance of the act of beholding and of painting—the two linked roles are connoted by the embedded depiction of three figures in the middle segment of the painting. One woman is looking at herself in the mirror. Watching her closely is another woman on her right, who is in the position usually occupied by a male, according to naturalized expectation. Toward the other end

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of the same section is the painter standing in front of a six-fold screen, decorated with a landscape of mountain ranges. She is painting a sprig of flowers on a hanging scroll placed on the table; the performative gesture configures her to be homologous to the painter of the handscroll.

The trope of a male painting a beauty seated before him, or beholding a finished portrait, is a familiar one. Narrated in historical stories, works of fiction, and paintings, its importance is embedded in the common double-edged assumption. Beautiful women are rare, in the words of Yuan Mei, as “the perfect Jade of Mr. He and the Sword of Kunwu.”²⁹ These women “must rely on persons capable of recognizing culture (*wenshi*) to make them manifest to the world,”³⁰ because they are dangerous unless contained by male culture. Such danger is merely a projection of male desire and fantasy. Within this expressed desire, unharnessed beauty would lead to the destruction and ruin of men who are incapable of controlling desire through culture and ethics. They include rulers and, by extension, the nation. In literary and pictorial representations, such beauties are marked by their physical presence, by their conspicuous absence, or by the substituted effigy portraits.

Portraits of Iconic Beauties

A famous example is found in the stories of Wang Qiang, usually referred to as Zhaojun, who became the feminine icon that defined the relationships between China and its northern subject states.³¹ Emperor Yuandi of Former Han (reigned 48-33 BCE) “gave her” in marriage to Huhanyue, the Khan of the Xiongnu in 33 BCE. Her biographical data are recorded in the dynastic histories of the Former and Latter Han Dynasty.³² Zhaojun is described in the latter to have voluntarily assented to the union, having been a neglected palace woman for many years. When Yuandi met her prior to her departure, he wanted to keep her but did not do so. In the later *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* (*Xijing zaji*, fifth or sixth century CE), Zhaojun’s story had evolved into a different one. The circumstance that led her to the union with the Khan was contingent on her portrait. Yuandi had commissioned portraits of the numerous palace women who frequently paid large bribes to the court painters. Wang Zhaojun refused to do so and did not receive an audience with the emperor until just before her departure. Yuandi reluctantly kept his promise to the Khan and bade her farewell.

As a result, after a full investigation, all the court painters were executed. Among them was a portraitist of great skill, Mao Yanshou.

The court painter's role was expanded and re-figured to be the central villain in the *Yuan zaju* play by Ma Zhiyuan (circa 1260-circa 1325), *Autumn over the Palaces of Han* (*Hangong qiu*). Mao Yanshou was instrumental in organizing a search for virgins to fill Yuandi's palaces, albeit for selfish motives; "I'll have the Emperor see less of his Confucian ministers and indulge more in women and sex. Only then will my favored position be secure."³³ In the drama, Zhaojun's background was downgraded from a good family to a modest farming family in Chengdu, Sichuan, that could not afford to bribe the painter. Rather than reject her outright, the official/painter decided to "add some blemishes" below Zhaojun's eyes in her portrait so "she will suffer all her life" in the "cold palace," as a feminine subject out of favor with the emperor. Ten years after her arrival in the palaces, the two met when her lute playing (*pipa*) attracted Yuandi's attention.

Zhaojun was made the imperial consort and, at her request, Yuandi granted favors to her family. The emperor ordered Mao Yanshou arrested and beheaded but the latter had already escaped. He had taken an unblemished portrait of Zhaojun that he presented later to Huhanyue. The Khan then demanded the imperial consort in a marriage alliance, with the threat otherwise of a military invasion. Zhaojun persuaded Yuandi to sacrifice his love for the integral well-being of the state and she accepted the arrangement in gratitude for imperial kindness and favor. Her portrait in the Han palaces was involved in their reunion in Yuandi's dream, following his viewing of it. "We have not held court for a hundred days. Confronted now with this desolate nighttime scene, I am overcome by vexation. I will hang up her portrait to relieve my gloomy thoughts a little."³⁴ At the time, Zhaojun was already deceased. She had jumped into the Black Dragon River (*Heilong jiang*) between the Han state and the northern borders, after she had exchanged Han clothes for those of the Xiongnu and poured the libation of wine as farewell to Yuandi and the Han state.³⁵

In his earlier farewell speech sung while sharing a drink with Zhaojun, Yuandi asked rhetorically: "Today Zhaojun goes beyond the border. When will she, like Su Wu, return to her native land?"³⁶ Wang Zhaojun's subjectivity set her apart from the famous Western Han male general who had lived among the Xiongnu for nineteen years before returning as a patriotic hero. As the feminine icon that embodied the

“liminal space” between the Han and the northern periphery (with regard to shifting territorial claims and ethnic differences), Zhaojun defined her identity when she committed ritual suicide. It was about her refusal to cross the border, that is, be “stained” by the Khan, and her heroism against the Xiongnu.³⁷ Her death was instrumental to national well-being and helped to reinstate the hierarchical relationship of “uncle and nephew” between the Han state and the Xiongnu.³⁸ Huhanyue returned Mao Yanshou “to the Han court for punishment!”

According to one suggestion, one segment of the long handscroll *Spring Morning in the Han Palaces* (*Hangong chunxiao*), by Qiu Ying (1494-1552), depicts Mao Yanshou’s performative act of painting the portrait of Zhaojun.³⁹ A corresponding moment is depicted in the Papp folding-fan by Gu Luo on another famous personage, *Painting A Portrait of Yang Consort* (*Yang Fei xiezhao tu*) (figure 3). Yang Precious Consort (Yang Guifei, Yang Yuhuan 719-756) was the consort of Emperor Xuanzong (reigned 712-755), and her death by strangling beneath the slopes of Mawei to the west of Xian helped restore peace to the state. The “waves of unrest” observed in the “rocks and trees” on the painted fan,⁴⁰ which are rendered by Gu Luo in agitated brushwork with white highlights, mark the specter of upheaval and turmoil caused putatively by Yang Guifei’s presence at the court. She was the foil of Wang Zhaojun in the sense that her behavior and relationship with Xuanzong were defined by moral transgression. Yang Guifei had been the secondary wife of



Figure 3. Gu Luo (1763-after 1837), *Painting a Portrait of Yang (Precious) Consort*. Folding fan, ink and color on paper, 18 x 57.1 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

Prince Shou, the eighteenth son of Xuanzong, before her elevation to imperial consort.⁴¹ Her family members were granted high positions at the court and government bureaucracies; her brother Yang Guozhong was reviled in his tenure as the prime minister before his execution just prior to that of his sister. Yang Guifei had also carried on an amour with the treacherous An Lushan, of Turkic ethnicity and her adopted son.

The female historical figure is the subject of numerous works of fiction that include Bai Juyi's (772-846) famous *Song of Everlasting Sorrow* (*Changhen ge*).⁴² The evocative description of the love affair between Yang Guifei and Xuanzong and its tragic end was the basis of the story written by Bai's close friend Chen Hong (*jinshi* 805) that is collected in the large encyclopedic compilation *Extensive Records of the Reign of Supreme Stability* (976-983 *Taiping guangji*).⁴³ Yang Guifei was reviled further because of her implication in the senile Xuanzong's fascination with and fervent belief in the Taoist arts. Such an un-Confucian fetish on the part of Xuanzong was thought by some historians to be one of the major causes of the collapse of the ruling order in his reign.

A leaf in the Papp album, painted by Gai Qi and dated in accordance with 1799, also portrays Yang Guifei (figure 4). The title "Conversion to Daoism of the Jade Realized One" (*Yuzhen rudao*)⁴⁴ and the accompanying quatrain with seven-character lines, that describes the painted subject's Daoist practice, was composed by the woman poet-calligrapher Cao Zhenxiu (Moqin 1762-after 1822).⁴⁵ Yang Guifei's temporary stay in a Taoist nunnery was a ploy by Xuanzong to "purify" her from her status as wife of Prince Shou and to make her his own imperial consort. In the storyline of the *Song of Everlasting Sorrow* and the *chuanqi* story, a Taoist practitioner summons the soul of the deceased Guifei. She reappears to pledge her love to Xuanzong by returning half of the gifts given her earlier by the doting emperor, a part of a golden hairpin and a leaf from the cover of an inlaid box. She also promises to be reunited with him on the seventh day of the seventh month, when magpies fly up to heaven and form a bridge so that the Cowherd (Altai) and the Weaver (Vega) can cross the milky way and be reunited. In the later *zaju* play, *Autumn Nights of the Lustrous Emperor of Tang: Rain on the Wutong Tree* (*Minghuang qiuye wutong yu*) by Bai Pu (1227-1306), the viewing by Xuanzong of the effigy portrait of Yang Guifei precedes their brief reunion in his dream that is broken by the sound of raindrops on the wutong tree. This episode is an allusion



Figure 4. Cao Zhenxiu (1762-after 1822) and Gai Qi (1773-1829),
Conversion of Yang (Precious) Consort to Daoism. Leaf from
Album of Famous Women, dated 1799. Album of 16 leaves, ink on paper,
 paintings: 25 x 17.4 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig
 Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

to the earlier occasion on the seventh day of the seventh month when the two pledged everlasting love under a wutong tree in the Palace Of Eternal Life.⁴⁶

In the two plays, the deceased Wang Zhaojun and Yang Guifei appear to the respective grief-stricken male beholders as painted images. Feelings of loss and grief that are shared by Yuandi and Xuanzong are temporarily assuaged in their manifest dreams (figure 5). A more complex line of development, which centers on the portrait of the female protagonist, structures the well-known *chuanqi* play *The Peony Pavilion and Return of the Soul* (*Mudan ting huanhun ji*) by Tang Xianzu (1550-1617).⁴⁷ The protagonist Du Liniang (Bridal Du), sixteen years of age, painted the self-portrait before she died of love-sickness. Entombed with her body, it was later found by Liu Mengmei (Willow Dreaming of Apricot), her dream-lover. After their passionate affair, Liu was instrumental in Du Liniang's resurrection. Richard Vinograd

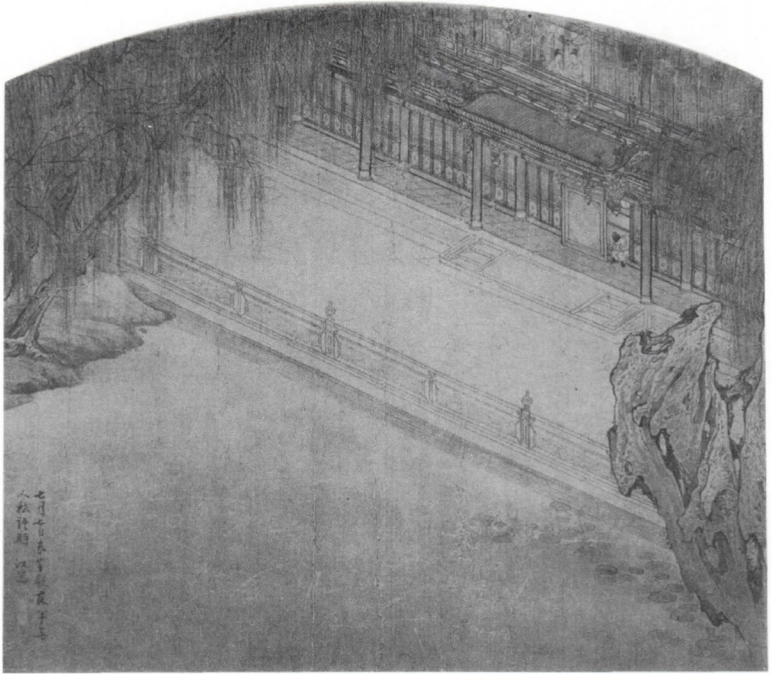


Figure 5. Yuan Jiang (active circa 1680-1740), *The Everlasting Sorrow*. Framed panel, ink and color on silk, 36 x 41.1 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.



Detail of Figure 5.

comments that the concerned “portrait is a self-image that tries to fix an already lost moment, impossible to recapture, of sexual awakening in a dream.”⁴⁸

In a recent literary study, Tina Lu suggests another line of enquiry for the drama, one that is built around the issue of human identity, as an alternative to the conventional one centered on passion and desire (*qing*).⁴⁹ According to Lu, the self-portrait, which is an idealized rendering of the painter’s dream image, is one of four “versions” of Du Liniang. The others are the girl before death, the ghost, and the resurrected girl. This interpretative strategy considers the protagonist as being without a “unitary identity.” The schism between selves, as explained in Lu’s schema, figures in Du Liniang’s artistic act of self-fashioning and self-determination at the intersection of life and death. Her portrait, the “central artifact” of the play, is a bodiless identity. In some ways, it parallels Wang Zhaojun’s ritual suicide in *Autumn over the Palaces of Han*. Her suicide at the exact boundary that separates Han from Xiongnu defines her identity as more than a marginal subject; she disappears as a distinct physical identity, creating a symbol of valor that denies her body and its subjugated standing in either male world, Chinese or barbarian.

Epilogue

These stories bring life to the consideration of the act of beholding and of painting by obliquely calling into the present the configuration of female representation and its relationship to identity and politics. The motif posits a gendered reader, just as it posits a female subject, but complicates that image by evoking pain, in terms both of the painful memories and feelings of loss that preoccupied Yuandi and Xuanzong on viewing the effigy portraits of Wang Zhaojun and Yang Guifei, and of feelings of grief and tormenting pain “felt” by the women in their dying moments. It was also at these moments of self-abnegation that they reveal their own subjectivity, Zhaojun and Du Liniang through self-determination, and Guifei, the iconic dangerous beauty contained by strangling. Pain and disappearance define the subjectivity of these women. But in the stories, their death is usually glossed over, or quickly “acted out” (by Zhaojun in *Autumn Over the Palaces of Han*), their psychological pain repressed (with the exception of Du Liniang in the *Peony Pavilion*), and great physical suffering unarticulated. The silent treatment given to bodily pain “felt” by the women is revealing

and indicative of its nature, according to the literary scholar Elaine Scarry in her study on pain.⁵⁰ Severe physical pain is directly expressed only by "the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned." Pain's "resistance to language" is almost universal, observed across systems of language in different cultures. In order for physical pain to be diagnosed for medical treatment, or "shared" with others in empathy, it has to be represented metaphorically in words, thereby externalized and "objectified."

When the pictures of these female subjects are viewed together with their literary representations, the images take on rich narrative content. At the perceptual level, the visual portrayals of these women, however, are quite conventional in that they elicit the scopophilic pleasure of a naturalized masculine viewer. In the circumstance, however, emanating from the pictorial representations are both masculine pleasure at the perceptual level and pain at the narrative level "felt" momentarily by the female subjects. "Pleasure" inheres in the images and "pain" remains invisible to the eye, merely gestured toward by the narrative subtext. Circulation of the images serves multiple audiences, and any particular reading is contingent on the critical reception of the beholder, on his or her strategy for reading, and personal context in which to place the stories about female subjects.

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Notes

1. I thank Yun-chiu Mei and Stephen West for discussions in the preparation of the paper.

See Shan Guoqiang, "Gudai shinü hua suotan" (Desultory Remarks on Ancient Genteel Women), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan*, 1981:2, 44-45, for the etymology of the terms. In contemporary usage, semantic differences among such terms as *shinü*, *meiren*, and *meinü hua* are elided, and they are usually translated as "beauties," "beautiful women." For a methodological critique of the study of paintings of women, see Wu Hung, "Beyond Stereotypes: The Twelve Beauties in Qing Court Art and the 'Dream of the Red Chamber,'" *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chiang, editors (Stanford, 1997), 306-365.

2. The four paintings of women in the Papp Collection are the long handscroll *One Hundred Beauties* by Fei Danxu, the album of *Famous Women* that comprises sixteen pairs of rectangular leaves (each with poetic inscription and illustration) by Cao Zhenxiu and Gai Qi, the folding fan entitled *Painting a Portrait of Yang (Precious) Consort*, and the hanging scroll that portrays *Lin Daiyu Burying Fallen Blossoms*. Both the fan and the hanging scroll were painted by Gu Luo.

The Fei Danxu handscroll, the painted fan by Gu Luo, and the pair of leaves that portray Yang Guifei from the album are reproduced in figures 1-4. The entire album is reproduced in Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Journeys on Paper and Silk: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* (Phoenix, 1998), 136-146. *Lin Daiyu* is reproduced in color in Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire 1796-1911* (Phoenix, 1992), number 32. For additional information on the *Lin Daiyu* and its painter Gu Luo, see Ju-hsi Chou's discussion in Brown and Chou, *Journeys*, 150-153. For the important understanding of these paintings by Fei Danxu and Gu Luo as images that anticipated practices of the "Shanghai School" painters, see Claudia Brown, "Precursors of Shanghai School Painting," *Studies on Shanghai School Painting (Haipai huihua yanjiu wenji)* (Shanghai, 2001), 932-952.

3. He Yanzhe, "Jiaqing Daoguang shiqi de shinü hua" (Paintings of Genteel Women in the Reigns of Jiaqing and Daoguang), *Meishi yanjiu* 63 (1991:3), 51-56; Nie Chongzheng, "The Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)" in *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven, 1997), Yang Xin, Richard Barnhart, and others, 290-291.

MYRIAD POINTS OF VIEW

4. Shan, "Gudai," 47.
5. Shan Guoqiang has indicated that paintings of women from the sixteenth century forward are characterized by the imbrication of "literary nature" (*wenxue xing*) (Shan, "Gudai," 46-48). For the significance of prints in the Ming dynasty, see Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, 1997), 29-41. Jonathan Hay discusses the influence of printed books with illustrations on the practices of painters in the first half of nineteenth century in "Painters and Publishing in Late Nineteenth-century Shanghai," *Art at the Close of China's Empire*, Ju-hsi Chou, editor, *Phoebus* volume 8, 145-149.
6. Shan, "Gudai," 47.
7. John Fisher, "Entitling," *Critical Inquiry*, 21 (1984), 292; see also Hin-cheung Lovell, "A Question of Choice, A Matter of Rendition," *Renditions*, 6 (Spring 1976), 63-69, for the importance of translation to the understanding of painting titles.
8. For a persuasive explanation of the experiential effect of viewing with respect to the scholar-amateur mode of paintings from the early fourteenth century forward, see Richard Vinograd, "Private Art and Public Knowledge in Later Chinese Painting," *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation*, Suzanne Kuchler and Walter Melion, editors (Washington, DC, 1991), 176-245.
9. Fei Danxu was from Huzhou by the southern shores of Lake Tai in northern Zhejiang province. From the late 1820s forward, he was a close associate, at different times, of three influential figures, Tang Yifen (1778-1853), the talented, well-connected military official, Wang Yuansun (1794-1836) whose family in Hangzhou was famous for its library *Zhenji tang*, and Jiang Guangxu (1813-1860) in Haining nearby with his notable publishing house *Bixia zhai*. Fei's other friends included such painters as Zhang Xiong (1803-1886) and Gu Luo (who was a native of Hangzhou) as well as a number of educated professionals. The latter were engaged in tasks of collecting, editing, and publishing epigraphical studies, commentaries to Confucian classics, compilations on local interests, and contemporary literary anthologies. Fei's oeuvre comprises poetry, calligraphy, and paintings. He was noted for his male portraits, images of women, and the illustrations in a popular morality book. For an informative monograph on the artist, see Huang Yongquan, *Fei Danxu*, *Zhongguo huajia congshu* series (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1962). For published sources on Fei, see Chou, "Fei Danxu," Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Scent of Ink: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* (Phoenix, 1994), 132-133.

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10. Brown, "One Hundred Beauties," Brown and Chou, *Transcending Turmoil*, 94-95; Chou, "Fei Danxu," Brown and Chou, *Scent of Ink*, 132-141.
11. Xiang Yuan, "Fei Danxu de meiren hua" (*Fei Danxu's Pictures of Beautiful Women*), *Yishujia* number 99 (1983:8), 200-211. The reference is cited in Brown and Chou, *Scent of Ink*, 132.
12. Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality*, 153. In his discussion of erotic images in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Clunas points out that a number of critics in the sixteenth and seventeenth century shared the belief that "spring pictures" (*chunhua*) had emerged among practices at the courts of the Han (206 BCE-211 CE). A well-known poetic work, albeit post-Han in date, that narrates desire is the *Rhapsody on the Luo Goddess (Luoshen fu)* by Cao Zhi (192-232). (For a recent translation, see *Wen Xuan*, or *Selections of Refined Literature by Xiao Tong*, translated with annotations by David Knechtges, volume 3, Princeton, 1996, 355-365.)
 For discussion that yokes poetry to the iconography of palace women, see Ellen Laing, "Chinese Palace-Style Poetry and the Depiction of a Palace Beauty," *Art Bulletin* LXXII: 2 June 1990, 284-296.
13. Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy 8th-14th Century* (New York, 1992), plate 5 on pages 34 and 35. The reproduced segment with three others extant make up a copy of the original painting by Zhou Wenju that is referred to in later descriptions as *In the Palace*, or *Spring Morning at the Tang Palace (Tanggong chunxiao tu)*. The three other segments are in the Villa I Tatti (Bernard Berenson collection), the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Fogg Art Museum.
 For various discussions on both the differences among the four segments and of the reconstructed order of the original scroll, see Fong, *Beyond Representation*, 34-39; Laurence Roberts, and others, *The Bernard Berenson Collection of Oriental Art at Villa I Tatti* (New York, 1991), 27-31; Wai-kam Ho, "Danyan jushi Zhang Cheng kaolüe binglun 'Mo Zhou Wenju Gongzhong tujuan' bahou zhi 'Jun Sima yin' ji qita weiyin" (Examining the Identity of Danyan Recluse Zhang Cheng with Discussion of the "Adjutant Seal" and other Fake Seals Posterior to the Colophon of the *Copy of Zhou Wenju's In the Palace Handscroll*) *Shanghai bowuguan jikan* 4 (1987), 35-50.
14. The male figure has been identified as the "youthful Southern Tang ruler Li Yu" who is viewing a painting. (Fong, *Beyond Representation*, 67, note 31.)
15. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, translated and revised by James Strachey with a new introduction by Steven Marcus (New York, 1975), 60-72.
16. In "The Changing Face of Narrative in Early Chinese Painting: Three

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Milestones from the Metropolitan Museum," *Orientalism* 28/11 (December 1997), 20-26, Maxwell Hearn provides what may be considered the normalized reading of a painting that depicts court women and their attendants in a palace setting. Entitled *Palace Banquet (Qiqiao tu)*, the large hanging scroll, which is attributed to the tenth century, presents in a bird's eye view of the private chamber and its surroundings in an inner palace. Hearn's suggested narrative, that is built on the assumed absence of the imaginary emperor, conceives the viewer to be a voyeur. The scene is identified as the celebration of the seventh day of the seventh month, the same festival that is highlighted in the stories and plays of Yang Guifei and Xuanzong.

17. Xishi is surnamed Shi, also known as Yiguang. As an icon of female beauty, her historical existence remains doubtful although her name is recorded in such early compilations as the *Guanzi* and *Mozhi*. The reliability of the standard account in *Wuyue chunqiu* (circa 40 CE) about her role as instrumental in the defeat by the Yue state by Wu is questioned by Zeng Yongyi in "Xishi gushi zhini" (Doubting the Record of the Xishi Story), *Zhongguo gudian wenxue yanjiu congkan, xiaoshuo zhi bu 1*, Ke Qingming and Lin Mingde, editors (Taipei: Juliu tushu, 1977).
18. The passage, inscribed on the frontispiece (*yinshou*), is preceded by four large characters that Li Qiujun wrote in the seal script "*gong huo(?) yang xing*," whose overall meaning remains to be determined.
19. Zheng Zhenduo has indicated that the *New Songs on the Hundred Beauties* was first printed in 1755 (Zheng Zhenduo, *A Selected Collection of Chinese Ancient Woodblock Prints, Zhongguo gudai mukehua xuanji*, volume VI, reprint edition, Beijing, 1985, for the reproduction of one of the illustrations, and Zheng's comment is on page 83 in volume IX). The edition I have used is a replica of the woodblock-reprinted edition, published by Zhongguo shudian in 1998 in Beijing. It includes a preface by the compiler Yan Xiyuan dated in correspondence with 1787, a 1790 preface by Yuan Mei, and a third 1792 prefatory essay by Yan that precedes the collective poems. These dated essays would suggest the edition was printed in 1792, or shortly after. If the compilation was first printed in 1755 and reprinted in later times, as Zheng Zhenduo suggests, we could reasonably assume the later edition(s) contain additional commentarial material.

New Songs on the Hundred Beauties had counterparts among the later illustrated books that include Li Yaomeng, *Pictures of A Hundred Butterflies (Li Yaomeng baidie tu)*. Printed in 1827, the compilation could be the source of butterfly designs that populated women's robes, screens, and decorative

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panels in the nineteenth century (See the reproduction of an illustration in Zheng, *A Selected Collection*, VII). *Five Hundred Famous Worthies of Wu with Illustrations, Biographies, and Encomia* (*Wujun wubai mingxian tu zhuanzan*) was compiled by Gu Yuan, and printed probably in 1825 (Zheng, *A Selected Collection*, volume VII).

Jonathan Hay indicates *New Songs on the Hundred Beauties* and the contemporaneous *Poems to Famous Elegant Beauties of History* (*Lidai mingyuan shici*, printed in 1773) informed the later *One Hundred Commented Pictures of Beautiful Ladies* (*Xinzheng baimei tushuo*, 1887), which was compiled by Qiu Shouyan. The later compilation was, by turn, the probable model for some of the drawings by Wu Jiayou (Youru ?-1893), who was the notable illustrator of newspaper pictorials in late nineteenth-century Shanghai. (Jonathan Hay, "Painters and Publishing," 148). Images from Wu's two series that are entitled *Pictures of A Hundred Beauties* (*Baimei tu*) and *The Hundred Gorgeous Women of Shanghai* (*Haishang baiyan tu*) were published in issues of the *Pavilion of Flying Shadows Pictorial Newspaper* (*Feiying ge huabao*) from 1890 forward. The two series are reprinted in the *Pictorial Treasury of Wu Youru*, *Wu Youru huabao*, reprint edition, Shanghai, 1983, volume I.

20. In *New Songs on the Hundred Beauties*, the commentarial writing consists of several sections: eight prefaces, a collection of song lyrics (*ci*) on some of the hundred beauties, a long poem with a hundred rhyming lines of five characters on the hundred beauties, a hundred quatrains with seven-character lines also on the beauties, and Yan's 1792 preface to poems that also refers to the illustrator Wang Hui. The prefatory material precedes the main content, illustrations, and the biographical accounts of the hundred beauties. The main body is followed by the elaborate postface apparatus that comprises Yan's preface to the collective poems, the poems, and four colophons.

Among writers of the commentarial material is Shi Jirong (*jinshi* 1771), an official at the courts of Qianlong and Jiaqing (*Daqing jifu xianzhe zhuan* compiled by Xu Shichang in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, Zhou Junfu, editor, Taipei, 1985, volume 198, 424-426). Others include Xiong Lian, a famous woman poet (*Qingdai guige shiren zhenglüe* compiled by Shi Shuyi in Zhou, *Qingdai zhuanji*, volume 25, 361-363), and the (male) painter Guan Tao.

21. Dated in accordance with 22 March 1929, Li Zuhan's colophon begins with praise for Fei Danxu, whose artistic achievement surpassed his antecedent Gai Qi. The passage ends with these lines, "In the silence of night, I trimmed the light before unrolling and looking at it [*One Hundred Beauties*] again and again.... Preoccupied by miscellaneous chaotic matters,

I have not been able to benefit from making tracing and freehand copies of paintings. When will I succeed in learning to paint? For the moment, I could only hold the scroll and heave a long sigh."

22. *Xinghui* translates to "physical form that is ugly." An example of its usage is in a passage in the *Jinshu*, compiled in the early seventh century. Wei Jie who served at the Western Jin court and who was one of the grandsons of Wei Guan was extraordinarily good-looking. Jie's uncle, Wang Ji, who was quite handsome himself, commented that whenever he saw the young Jie: "With Zhuru (Wei Jie) by my side, I feel ugly (*jue wo xinghui*)."
Jinshu by Fang Xuanling, and others, reprint edition, Beijing, 1967, volume 4, 1067.
23. Pei Kai (237-291) was a close friend of Wang Rong (234-305), one of the *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove*. Pei was well-known for his pleasing appearance. People in his own time used to say: "Seeing Pei Shuze (Pei Kai) is like being next to the Jade Mountain that casts a light, as reflection, on us." (Fang, *Jinshu*, 1048)
24. Jacques Lacan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience," *Ecrits: A Selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan (London, 1977), 1-7.
25. For an account of Li Qiujun's life, see Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance: The Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, 11:1 (spring, 1999), 12-15.
26. Li Qiujun was also active in the organizations and associations of artists. She was among the six founders of the *Chinese Women Calligraphy and Painting Society* (*Zhongguo nüzi shuhua hui*), established in Shanghai in 1934. (The other five were Gu Qingyao 1901-1978, Chen Xiaocui 1907-1968, Feng Wenfeng 1900-1971, Gu Fei, and Yang Xuejiu.) In the same year, the Association organized its first exhibition, which showed for sale paintings and calligraphy done by its members. The event was held at the influential Ningbo Club. Qiujun was involved in other organizations, such as the influential *Chinese Painter Association*. Andrews and Shen, "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance," 6-11.
27. For another perspective on the importance of the First National Exhibition of Art, with respect to the art of Xu Beihong, see David Der-wei Wang, "In the Name of the Real," *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions*, Maxwell Hearn and Judith Smith, editors (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 29-59.
28. For brief biographical information on Li Qiujun's contemporaries (Feng Wenfeng, Wu Qingxia born 1910, and Yang Xuejiu), see Andrews and Shen,

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"Traditionalism as a Modern Stance," 8-9 and 15-20.

29. Mr. He's Jade (*Heshi zhi bi*) was a unique piece of jade, and it is the subject of a few historical stories. The one recorded in *Han Fei zi* is about the importance of perspicacious persons to people of talent and rare beauty. Bian He was a loyal subject in the Chu state. He presented the special but unpolished jade to two successive rulers, Liwang and Wuwang. Neither believed him and, as punishment, they amputated both of his legs. At the succession of Wenwang, Bian He left the capital for the mountains with his jade. A court official asked him the reason for his lament; he replied, like the priceless jade that was mistaken for a worthless stone, he, as the virtuous subject, had the reputation of being untrustworthy and deceitful. The verbal exchange was reported to Wenwang who had the jade polished and named it Mr. He's Jade.

The blades of the swords from Kunwu (*Kunwu jian*), which is in Hami county in Xinjiang, were unusually sharp. Zhou Muwang used a Kunwu sword that had been presented to him to cut iron as effortlessly as if it were mud.

30. Yuan Mei, the first Preface in *New Songs on the Hundred Beauties*, Xu (Preface), 1-2.
31. Two studies have informed my account of the stories of Wang Zhaojun: Daphne P. Lei, "Wang Zhaojun on the Border: Gender and Intercultural Conflicts in Premodern Chinese Drama," *Asian Theatre Journal* 13:2 (Fall, 1996), 229-237; the introduction to and translation of Ma Zhiyuan's "A Lone Goose in the Autumn over the Palaces of Han," Stephen West and Wilt Idema, *Twenty-five Chinese Dramas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).
32. *History of the (Former) Han Dynasty (Hanshu, 206 BCE-8 BC)* was compiled in the first century of this era, and the *History of the Latter Han Dynasty (Hou Hanshu, 25-220)* in the fourth century. For citations to Zhaojun in both historiographical compilations, see Lei, "Wang Zhaojun," 230-231.
33. West and Idema, *Twenty-five*, "A Lone Goose," the beginning Wedge.
34. West and Idema, *Twenty-five*, "A Lone Goose," Act Four.
35. For a typified representation of Zhaojun depicted at the border between China and the Steppes, see the 1843 hanging scroll by Fei Danxu in the Palace Museum in Beijing. Zhaojun is shown in a Chinese robe beneath an unusual fur headdress, standing beside her spirited horse. Holding her *pipa* wrapped under a loose cover, she is turning her head to the left. Wild geese are flying high above toward the same direction. Zhaojun's colorful costume and cheerful facial expression posit a striking contrast with the

- somber dark background covered by patches of gray wash. (*Chinese Art Comprehensive Selections, Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 11, Shanghai 1988, number 133, 49.)
36. West and Idema, *Twenty-five*, "A Lone Goose," Act Three. According to *Hou Hanshu*, after Khan Huhanyue's death, Zhaojun petitioned the Han court for permission to return to China, but the request was denied. (Lei, "Wang Zhaojun," 231.)
 37. Lei, "Wang Zhaojun," 233-234.
 38. West and Idema, *Twenty-five*, "A Lone Goose," Act Three, and the introduction to the play.
 39. For a suggested reading of the pictorial segment, which putatively portrays Zhaojun seated across from Mao Yangshou, made in the context of the narration of Wang Zhaojun in *Xijing zazi* and *Hangong qiu*, see Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 15-16.
Spring Morning in the Han Palaces is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. For a good reproduction of the discussed section, see Wen Fong, James Watt, and others, *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York and Taipei, 1996), 400-401, plate 203. The entire handscroll is reproduced in black and white in Liu Fangru, and others, *Glimpses into the Hidden Quarters: Paintings of Women from the Middle Kingdom (Shinü hua zhi mei)* (reprint edition, Taipei, 1987), 70-71.
 40. Chou, "Painting a Portrait of Yang Guifei," Brown and Chou, *Journeys*, 154.
 41. The introduction to and translation of the "Autumn Nights of the Lustrous Emperor of Tang: Rain on the Wutong Tree," West and Idema, *Twenty-five*.
 42. Li Fang, and others, *Taiping guangji* (reprint edition, Beijing, 1961), X, 3998-4000; a recent translation of *Changhen ge* is in *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*, edited and translated by Stephen Owen (New York, 1996), 442-447.
 43. Chen Hong's *Changhen ge chuan* is in Li Fang, *Taiping guangji*, 4000-4001, and a translation in Owen, *Changhen ge*, 448-452.
 44. During her "purification" stay at the Supreme Realized Palace (Taizhen gong), Yang Guifei was given the Daoist name, the Supreme Realized One (Taizhen). Her abode in the underworld is the Garden of the Jade Consort, the Supreme Realized One (Yufei Taizhen yuan). Yuzhen is probably the abbreviation of Yang Guifei's two given names, Yufei and Taizhen.
 45. Cao Zhenxiu was a notable poet and calligrapher from a family known for accomplishment in the arts. She was the oldest of three daughters of Cao Rui, who was living in Suzhou after retirement from the Warden's Office in

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the capital. Cao Zhenxiu was the wife of Wang Jisun (1735-1797), a teacher and writer and a close friend of Gai Qi in Huating.

Cao Zhenxiu's quatrain poems, composed to be illustrated (*tihua shi*), signal overall a predilection for the quotidian and a feeling of intimacy toward female subjects. For an account of Cao Zhenxiu and her family, see *Molin jinhua* compiled by Jiang Baoling and Jiang Chaisheng (1852) (Shanghai: Shaoye shanfang, 1925), *juan 2*, volume 1, 6b. For the translation of Cao Zhenxiu's quatrain, the state of the partial preservation of the album, a brief account of Gai Qi's Uighur ancestry, and his relationship with Wang Jisun, see Chou, "Gai Qi," Brown and Chou, *Journeys*, 136-146.

46. West and Idema, *Twenty-five, "Autumn Nights," Acts Four and One*.
47. *The Peony Pavilion (Mudan ting)*, Tang Xianzhu, translated by Cyril Birch (Bloomington, 1980.)
48. Vinograd, *Boundaries*, 16.
49. Tina Lu, *Persons, Roles, and Minds: Identity in Peony Pavilion and Peach Blossom Fan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 28-62.
50. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1-59 and 161-181.

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From Narrative to Transformed Narrative: Visualizations of the Heavenly Maiden and the Maiden Magu

CHEN LIU

Scholars have noted that in traditional Chinese studies of painting, there is no category to designate narrative painting.¹ When further examining the field of Chinese painting, it has been found that to give a clear definition or boundary of Chinese narrative paintings is very difficult. In fact, whatever definition we are using to categorize Chinese narrative paintings, we can always find that there are some paintings sitting at the margin of the definition. In other words, it is very hard to tell whether or not these paintings belong to narrative paintings according to any standard definition.² In this paper, I will examine a pair of case studies, that I refer to as transformed narrative paintings.

My discussion will focus on two cases: visualizations of the Heavenly Maiden and the Maiden Magu.³ Two leaves in an album titled *Famous Women* by the Qing painter Gai Qi (1773-1829) in the Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection on loan to the Phoenix Art Museum will be discussed as representative examples (figures 1 and 2). The existence of these transformed narrative paintings shows the complexity of categorizing Chinese narrative paintings; there do exist some paintings that cannot be strictly classified as narrative paintings, but they may originate from and have close relationships to narrative paintings, and the boundary between them and the latter is vague.

In the following section of this paper, paintings on the Buddhist theme known as the *Tiannu sanhua* (the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers) will be examined first. It will be seen that this theme comes from the recorded story of Vimalakirti's discussion with the Manjusri Bodhisattva (Wenshu pusa). There are some early narrative paintings depicting this story with Tiannu as a character in them. However, later



Figure 1. Gai Qi (1773-1829), *The Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*. Leaf from *Album of Famous Women*, dated 1799. Album of 16 leaves of painting, 18 leaves of calligraphy, ink on paper, 25 x 17.4 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.



Figure 2. Gai Qi, *Maiden Magu Selling Wine*. Leaf from *Album of Famous Women*, dated 1799. Ink on paper, 25 x 17.4 cm. The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection. Photo by Craig Smith, courtesy of Phoenix Art Museum.

on more and more paintings only depict the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers instead of the whole scene, so that *Tiannu sanhua* became an independent theme, which deviated from its original meaning and became a symbol of luck and happiness. Since paintings on this theme only depict a single character of the original story, they can no longer be classified as narrative paintings although they have strong relationships to the story. In fact, since *Tiannu sanhua* was depicted independently so often, few people know or care about the origin of it.

Similar situations exist in the Daoist theme *Magu xianshou* (Maiden Magu offering gifts for longevity), which will be analyzed in the second section of this paper. Although it sounds like a narrative topic, there are no actual paintings depicting Magu's presenting a toast for some specific person. Most paintings on this topic are depictions of Magu herself, at most with a servant girl beside her. I would argue that instead of being a character who acts in a story, Magu became a symbol for longevity. Thus, paintings about *Magu xianshou* do not belong to narrative paintings as defined by Julia Murray. They can be viewed as transformed narrative paintings instead.

From my discussion of these two cases, a clear notion of the relation of narrative painting to transformed narrative painting can be seen. In other words, I would suggest that there are many Chinese paintings that have some relationship to stories for this or that reason although they are not narrative paintings. They can be regarded as transformed narrative paintings as I propose in this paper.

Visualizations of the Heavenly Maiden

In the *Album of Famous Women* by Gai Qi in the Collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp, there is a leaf titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers* as seen in figure 1.⁴ In this painting, a beautiful woman is depicted scattering flowers. Her floating ribbon indicates that she is flying in the air. Some other paintings with the same title illustrate similar scenes. However, returning to the origin of the theme Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers, we can see that the leaf titled *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers* is only a scene from the story of Manjusri Bodhisattva visiting Vimalakirti. There are actually some early paintings depicting the whole story, and it is not until very late that Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers is excerpted from the original story and forms an independent topic.

The original story of Manjusri Bodhisattva visiting Vimalakirti is recorded in the *Vimalakirti Sutra* (*Weimojie jing*).⁵ The sutra basically shows the difference between Mahayana Buddhism and Hinayana Buddhism. The representative of the former, Vimalakirti, pretends to be sick at home. Buddha thus sends Manjusri Bodhisattva to visit him. Vimalakirti takes the opportunity to explain the Law of Mahayana Buddhism. During the discussion, the Heavenly Maiden at Vimalakirti's home is revealed.⁶ She scatters a basket of flowers, which symbolize secular life, into the sky. The flowers fall on everyone's body. When reaching the bodies of the Bodhisattvas, the flowers slide and fall on the ground.⁷ In comparison, the flowers stick to the bodies of the disciples although they try hard to get rid of them.

At that moment, by talking to one of Manjusri Bodhisattva's disciples, Shariputra (Shelifu), the Heavenly Maiden shows that the most important thing is the purity of one's mind. She explains that when you disregard the secular life (symbolized by the flowers), or are not obsessed with the secular life, secular issues will become something divine. On the contrary, the more the disciples are afraid that the flowers could damage the purity of their spirits, the more easily the flowers stick to them. If their spirits are pure, nothing can hurt their purity.

The English translation by Burton Watson is quoted in the following:

At that time there was a heavenly being, a goddess, in Vimalakirti's room who, seeing these great men and hearing them expound the Law, proceeded to make herself visible and, taking heavenly flowers, scattered them over the bodhisattvas and major disciples. When the flowers touched the bodhisattvas, they all fell to the floor at once, but when they touched the major disciples, they stuck to them and did not fall off. The disciples all tried to shake off the flowers through their supernatural powers, but they could not do so.

At that time the goddess said to Shariputra, "Why try to brush off the flowers?"

"Such flowers are not in accordance with the Law," he replied. "That's why I try to brush them off."

The goddess said, "Don't say these flowers are not in accordance



Figure 3. Anonymous, Southern Song Dynasty. *Vimalakirti Demonstrating the Law of Mahayana Buddhism*. Handscroll, ink on paper, 34.6 x 207.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

with the Law. Why? Because the flowers make no such distinctions. You in your thinking have made up these distinctions, that's all. If one who has left the household life to follow the Buddha's Law makes such distinctions, that is not in accordance with the Law. One must be without distinctions to be in accordance with the Law. Look at the bodhisattvas—the flowers do not stick to them because they have already cut off all thought of distinctions. Just as evil spirits are able to take advantage of a person who is beset by fear, so because you disciples are fearful of the cycle of birth and death, the senses of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch are able to take advantage of you. But once a person has done away with fear, then the five desires that arise from these senses will not be able to get at him. So long as one has not done away with all such entanglements, the flowers will stick to him. But they will not stick to someone who has eliminated them all.”⁸

An outstanding visualization of this story is a painting by an anonymous Song painter now in the Palace Museum, Beijing (figure 3).⁹ In the painting, Vimalakirti is sitting on a day bed facing Manjusri Bodhisattva who is sitting on his special chair, *xumizuo*. Around them are their attendants and disciples. In the center of the painting are the Heavenly Maiden and one of Manjusri Bodhisattva's disciples, Shariputra. Between the two, a tower-shaped censer stands in the foreground, indicating the division of the two groups.



Another simpler visualization of the story is the Ming painter Li Ling's painting now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, as well (figure 4). Here one can see that only the three main characters of the story, Vimalakirti, Manjusri Bodhisattva and the Heavenly Maiden, are represented. Unlike figure 1, this painting does not show the scene of the two groups in a balanced way. Instead, the painter raised the status of the Heavenly Maiden so that her important position in the discussion is emphasized.

Paintings like figure 3 and figure 4 are usually titled *Vimalakirti Demonstrating the Law of the Mahayana Buddhism (Weimo yanjiao)* in which the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers is an approach that Vimalakirti uses to display his opinions, just as recorded in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*.¹⁰ However, another kind of visualization of the story tends to emphasize the status of the Heavenly Maiden, the title of which is usually the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*. Nevertheless, the paintings still depict the other characters of the story instead of just the Heavenly Maiden as in the *Album of Famous Women* in the Phoenix Art Museum. Two paintings of the Song Dynasty are representative ones of this type. One is an album leaf by the court painter Liu Songnian now in the Palace Museum, Taipei.¹¹ In the painting, Manjusri Bodhisattva is represented in the right part of the painting, surrounded by three attendants. To his left is his disciple who faces the Heavenly Maiden. The emphasis on the Heavenly Maiden is achieved by the application of the color red on her robe. In fact, this painting is sometimes titled the *Heavenly Maiden Offering Flowers (Tiannu xianhua tu)*. It is probably the absence of Vimalakirti that makes the scene look like the Heavenly Maiden is offering flowers to the Bodhisattva.¹² The other is a hanging scroll titled *Vimalakirti and the Heavenly Maiden* now in the Shofukuji



Figure 4. Li Ling
(1558-after 1636),
*Vimalakirti Demonstrating
the Law of Mahayana
Buddhism*, dated 1635.
Hanging scroll, ink on
paper, 141.7 x 59 cm.
Palace Museum, Beijing.

Temple, Fukuoka, Japan.¹³ Similar to Liu Songnian's painting, here the Heavenly Maiden is depicted along with only one of the two other major characters of the discussion. But this time she is standing beside Vimalakirti instead of Manjusri Bodhisattva.

Later on, it seems that people became more and more interested in the theme of the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers instead of the whole story, Vimalakirti demonstrating the Law of the Mahayana Buddhism. The Qing painter Yu Ji (1738-1823 AD) painted a hanging scroll titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*.¹⁴ In the painting, the Vimalakirti story is not represented at all. The Heavenly Maiden is shown flying in the sky while scattering flowers. In fact, if the title were not written in the upper right corner, the viewer could easily read it as any nymph. The leaf titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers* in the *Album of Famous Women* in the Collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp is also an obvious example of this type of painting (figure 1).¹⁵

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Not only paintings but also popular art show a fondness for a separated and isolated image of the Heavenly Maiden.¹⁶ One example is a woodblock print also titled the *Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*.¹⁷ In it, the artist even added a little girl beside the Heavenly Maiden. The scene is totally changed from a part of the Vimalakirti story into a propitious picture.

From the seven paintings discussed above, we can see how an integrated visualization of Vimalakirti's story with the Heavenly Maiden in it changes into an isolated image of the Heavenly Maiden herself. Figure 3 and 4 are undoubtedly narrative paintings in which a story is represented. Figure 5 and the painting in the Shofukuji Temple in Japan can also be counted as narrative paintings since they have shown relatively obvious relations to a story. In comparison, the figure by Yu Ji and figure 1 cannot be regarded as narrative paintings because their scenes do not suggest obvious relations to a story. However, the titles on or beside the paintings indicate their relation to the story.¹⁸ Moreover, similar scenes with the same title became a certain popular theme to be painted. I would like to suggest these paintings be categorized as transformed narrative paintings.

Figure 5. Chen Hongshou (1598-1652), *The Maiden Magu*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 172.5 x 95.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Visualizations of Maiden Magu

Unlike the Heavenly Maiden who is a Buddhist figure, Maiden Magu is a Daoist figure. The earliest record on Magu is in the *Shenxian zhuan* (*Traditions of Divine Transcendents*) by Ge Hong of the Jin Dynasty (217-420 AD). In a chapter called *Magu zhuan* (A Chapter on Magu), she appears when invited by another immortal, Wang Yuan, to visit a common person whose name is Cai Jing. Magu is said to be a beautiful young immortal, who lived for millions of years. She is described to have fingernails like birds' claws. As presents for Cai Jing, Maiden Magu turns some raw rice into pearls while Wang Yuan gives his family some heavenly wine to drink. When it turns out that the wine is not enough, Wang asks someone to buy some wine from an old woman in Yuhang. The English translation of part of the chapter by Robert Company follows:

Maid Ma declared: "Since I entered your service, I have seen the Eastern Sea turn to mulberry fields three times. As one proceeded across to Penglai, the water came only up to one's waist. I wonder whether it will turn to dry land once again." Wang answered with a sigh, "Oh, the sages all say that the Eastern Sea will once again become blowing dust."

Maid Ma wanted to meet Cai Jing's mother, wife, and other [female] members of the family. Now, at this time, Cai's younger brother's wife had given birth to a child only a few days earlier. As soon as Maid Ma saw the young woman, she said, "Whew! Stop there for a moment and don't come any closer!" Then she asked that a small amount of uncooked rice be brought to her. When she got the rice, she threw it on the floor, saying that she did so in order to dispel the unclean influences. When everyone looked down, the rice grains had all changed to pearls. Wang chuckled, "It's simply because the Maid is young and I'm old that I no longer enjoy these sorts of [monkeylike] transformation tricks anymore."

Wang Yuan then announced to Cai Jing's family, "I wish to present you all with a gift of fine liquor. This liquor has just been produced by the celestial kitchens. Its flavor is quite strong, so it is unfit for drinking by ordinary people; in fact, in some cases it has been known to burn people's intestines. You should mix it with water, and you should not regard this as inappropriate." With that, he added a *dou* of water to a *sheng* of liquor, stirred it, and

presented it to the members of Cai Jing's family. On drinking little more than a *sheng* of it each, they were all intoxicated. After a little while, the liquor was all gone. Wang dispatched attendants, saying, "There's not enough. Go get some more." He gave them a thousand in cash, instructing them to buy liquor from a certain old woman in Yuhang. In a short while, the attendants returned, saying, "We have secured one oilcloth bag's worth, about five *dou* of liquor." They also relayed a message from the old woman in Yuhang: "I fear that this earthly liquor is not fit to be drunk by such eminences."

Maid Ma's fingernails resembled bird claws. When Cai Jing noticed them, he thought to himself, "My back itches. Wouldn't it be great if I could get her to scratch my back with those nails?" Now, Wang Yuan knew what Cai was saying in his heart, so he ordered him bound and whipped, chiding, "Maid Ma is a divine personage. How dare you think that her nails could scratch your back!" The whip lashing Cai's back was the only thing visible; no one was seen wielding it. Wang added, "My whippings are not given without cause."¹⁹

A sentence uttered by Magu in this book showing her longevity became very famous. This sentence, as quoted above, reads, "Maid Ma declared: 'Since I entered your service, I have seen the Eastern Sea turn to mulberry fields three times (*Jiedai yilai, yijian donghai sanwei sangtian*).'" It was so well-known that it was transformed into an idiom as *Canghai sangtian* (literally, seas and mulberry fields, meaning a long period of time). Magu is therefore regarded as a symbol of longevity.

Later on, different short stories on Magu appeared in books such as *Yiyuan (Fantastic Garden)* by Liu Jingshu (circa 390-470) of the Southern Dynasties (420-589 AD) and later in the *Liexian quanzhuan (A Complete Memorial of Daoist Immortals)* first published in the Wanli period (1573-1620) of the Ming Dynasty. All these stories depicted Magu as an immortal, but no one described her offering presents to anyone. Oral folklore may be the major link between the long-lived Magu and her offering presents for someone's longevity. Folklore tells that once on the third day of the third lunar month, which is the birthday of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu), Magu makes wine from *lingzhi* (fungus) for her as a present. This may be the most direct source for the *Magu xianshou* theme.

Although the stories are various, paintings about Magu are almost all related to only one thing, longevity, instead of telling the above stories. Magu is always depicted alone (or at most with a servant girl) with her gifts. The attributes of Maiden Magu are usually peaches or wine. Titles of these paintings are either the *Maiden Magu* or *Magu xianshou* (Maiden Magu offering gifts for longevity). A representative example of the former is a painting by Chen Hongshou (1598-1652) of the Ming Dynasty (figure 5). Examples of the latter are two paintings by two Qing Dynasty painters, Ren Xiong and Ren Xun, respectively.²⁰ Although the titles are different, in all the three paintings Magu is depicted standing by a servant girl with such longevity symbols as peaches, wine, and rock.

Although the three paintings above already seem to be repeated, numerous paintings on Magu's theme look almost the same.²¹ However, a unique painting of Magu titled the *Maiden Magu Selling Wine* (*Magu maijiu*) is in the *Album of Famous Women* by Gai Qi in the collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp (figure 2). It is different from most other paintings on Magu's theme in that Magu is "selling" the wine instead of offering it as a gift to someone. Apparently, the painting and the corresponding poem are based on the story of Magu in Ge Hong's *Magu zhuan*. The poem reads, "In Penglai her duty was to harvest mulberry. Scattering rice in the air, her bird-like claws reached far. Her cunning gone, she turned into an old woman. All she could do was to sell wine in Yuhang."²²

In fact, it seems that in this album leaf, the original story in Ge Hong's book is transformed; Maiden Magu is just a bystander when Wang Yuan asks a servant to buy wine from an old woman in Yuhang. Inexplicably, in the painting and poem, Magu turns out to be the old woman selling wine in Yuhang. As Ju-hsi Chou wrote in the catalog, "For reasons still unknown, Cao Zhenxiu's poem seems to equate Magu with the old woman of Yuhang."²³ This is another kind of transformation.

In a word, Maiden Magu, in the records, is only an immortal who has lived a long time. Later, she is regarded as a goddess of longevity although she does not actually have this title.²⁴ Her own longevity is transformed into bringing other people longevity. Correspondingly, paintings of Magu offering gifts symbolize good wishes of longevity, instead of telling an actual story.

Conclusion

As discussed above, the Heavenly Maiden scattering flowers is an excerpt from a Buddhist story on Vimalakirti, isolated and turned into a certain theme. Maiden Magu offering gifts for longevity is a mixture of folklore and a recorded immortal. Visualizations of Magu are transformed from the original story into something else: either becoming a goddess of longevity who can bring long-lived gifts for people, or being mixed with someone else in a story. In any case, we can see that they have some roots in the original story. However, they no longer depict a story and no longer are strict narrative paintings. Instead, they have been transformed into emblems.

In a word, judging from the scenes, some paintings on the Heavenly Maiden and Maiden Magu cannot be counted as narrative paintings because of the lack of specific characters in action and in a specific time and space. However, more or less, these paintings have something to do with a story, part of a story like that of the Heavenly Maiden, or a changed edition of a story like that of the Maiden Magu. I suggest that they can be classified as transformed narrative painting.²⁵

MYRIAD POINTS OF VIEW

Notes

1. Julia Murray, "What Is 'Chinese Narrative Illustration?'" *Art Bulletin*, volume 80, number 4, December 1998, 602-615. Murray states that traditional Chinese paintings were categorized by subject matter so that narrative paintings were actually classified under headings of figure paintings. Definitions of Chinese narrative illustration have been given in the same article, too. Murray has done a series of researches in the field of Chinese narrative painting. For further readings, see Julia Murray, "Buddhism and Early Narrative Illustration in China," *Archives of Asian Art*, volume 48, 1995, 17-31; Julia Murray, "The Ladies' Classic of Filial Piety and Song Textual Illustration: Problems of Reconstruction and Artistic Context," *Ars Orientalis*, volume 18, 1988, 95-129; Julia Murray, *Ma Hezhi and the Illustration of the Book of Odes* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Julia K. Murray, *Representations of Hariti, the Mother of Demons, and the Theme of "Raising the Alms-bowl" in Chinese Painting* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1982).
2. In fact, how to define "Chinese narrative" in the study of literature is still an unsolved problem. See Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Andrew H. Plaks, editor, *Zhongguo xushixue (Chinese narrative)* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996); Andrew H. Plaks, editor, *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); Robert E. Scholes, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Wolf Werner, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London: New York: Routledge, 2005).
3. There are paintings on other themes that can be categorized as transformed narrative painting that I plan to study more comprehensively.
4. The album includes sixteen leaves of painting and eighteen leaves of calligraphy.
5. Chang Ping and Shunhe Yang. *Fojiao huazang, Jingbu: Weimojie jing, zhong (Illustrated Buddhist Sutras: Vimalakirti Sutra, the middle volume)* (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1998, 254-280).
6. The origin of the Heavenly Maiden is vague in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. It is uncertain if this Heavenly Maiden lives in Vimalakirti's home, like a disciple or servant girl, or not.
7. In the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, although just the Manjusri Bodhisattva is specified, here the Bodhisattvas are referred to as plural.

8. Burton Watson, translated from the Chinese version by Kumarajiva, *The Vimalakirti Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 86-87.
9. There is a similar version of this painting titled *Vimalakirti and the One Doctrine* (*Weimo bu'er tu*) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art by the Yuan painter Wang Zhenpeng (fourteenth century). According to the postscript on the painting, Wang painted this handscroll based on the one by the Jin (1115-1234) painter Ma Yunqing. Because of this relationship and the similarity between Wang's painting and the one in the Palace Museum, Beijing, the scholar Jin Weinuo thinks that the latter is the one by Ma Yunqing. But recently, Xu Zhongling questions this hypothesis with some careful comparisons between the two paintings. See Xu Zhongling, "Weimo yanjiaotu jiqi xianguan wenti taolun," *Palace Museum Journal*, number 4, 2004, 120-129.
10. Besides the paintings of Vimalakirti discussed in this paper, there are wall paintings on this theme in Dunhuang. See Nayi, "Fojiao meishu zhong de weimojie ticaishi du," *Palace Museum Journal*, number 4, 2004, 96-109.
11. Liu Songnian, *The Heavenly Maiden Scattering Flowers*, Song Dynasty, album, ink and color on silk, Palace Museum, Taipei. See Hua Liu and Tao Jin, editors, *Zhongguo renwuhua guanji*, I (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 2001).
12. It is also possible that this album leaf is part of a painting on the theme of Vimalakirti demonstrating the law of the Mahayana Buddhism.
13. See Hua Lui and Tao Jin, editors, *Zhongguo renwuhua guanji*, volume 1 (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 2001).
14. See *Zhongguo gudai shuhua jiangdingzu*, editor, *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu*, volume 17 (Beijing: Wen wu ch ban she, 1997).
15. Yu Ji and Gai Qi are two contemporary Qing painters both famous for their paintings of women. In fact, Gai Qi once painted a hanging scroll titled *Yuanji's Poems* right after he saw a painting of the same title by Yu Ji. Thus, it is not unexpected to find both their paintings on the Heavenly Maiden.
16. Popular art of the Qing Dynasty was always related to prosperity. Such a social trend may be the reason that the Heavenly Maiden is excerpted from the original story and becomes a separate theme about good luck and happiness.
17. Published on-line at <http://www.wfsq.gov.cn/nianhua/mb1.htm>.
18. As for the painting by Yu Ji, the title is written in the upper right corner of the painting as part of the inscription. As for the album leaf by Gai Qi, the title is written to the left of the painting as the title of the corresponding poem.

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19. Robert Ford Company, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 261-263.
20. Ren Xiong (1820-1857), *Fang Cui Chen Magu xianshou* (The Image of Magu after Cui Chen), Palace Museum, Beijing, and Ren Xun (1835-1893), *Magu Toasting for Longevity*, Changshu City Cultural Relics Committee Collection. It is well-known that Ren Xun was very interested in Chen Hongshou's painting skills, techniques, and styles. From the two paintings here on the same theme, we can also tell the relationship between the two painters. He Baoyin, editor, *Hai shang si Ren jing pin: Gugong bo wu yuan cang Ren Xiong, Ren Xun, Ren Yi, Ren Yu hu hua xuan ji*, Shijiazhuang shi: Hebei mei sha chubanshe (Xianggang: Yazhou yi shu chubanshe, 1992); Zhongguo meishu guanji bianji weiyuanhui. *Zhongguo meishu guanji, Huihua bian II, Qing dai hui hua* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988).
21. Again, the frequent depictions of the Magu theme not only reflect the commercialization of art in the last decades of the Qing Dynasty but also the social emphasis on prosperity.
22. This English translation is from Ju-hsi Chou, *Journeys on Paper and Silk: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1998), 138.
23. Chou, *Journeys*, 138.
24. In the Daoist system, only the Immortal Elder of the South Pole (Nanji xianweng) is titled the God of Longevity.
25. This paper is the first step of my study of the complexity of Chinese narrative painting.

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

Glossary of Chinese Names and Terms

<i>an</i>	案
Anhui	安徽
Bai Pu	白樸
<i>Baimei ren tujian</i>	百美人圖卷
<i>Baimei xinyong tuzhuan</i>	百美新詠圖傳
<i>baimiao</i>	白描
Baishi Sheng	白石生
Baishi Weng	白石翁
Ban Gu	班固
Bao Tingbo	鮑廷博
Baopuzi	抱樸子
Bo Juyi (Bai Juyi)	白居易
Boluan	伯鸞
Cai Jing	蔡經
<i>caizhi tu</i>	採芝圖
Cao Moqin	曹墨琴
Cao Zhenxiu	曹貞修
Changhen ge	長恨歌
<i>changpu</i>	菖蒲
Changzhou	長洲
Chen Hong	陳鴻
Chen Hongshou	陳洪綬, 陳鴻壽
Chen Ji	陳繼
Chen Kuan	陳寬
Chen Ruyan	陳汝言
Chen Wenjie	陳文傑
Chen	陳
Cheng Junfang	程君房
Chengdu	成都
<i>chuanqi</i>	傳奇

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

<i>Chun chao qing wan</i>	春潮清禎
<i>Chunqiao Caotang Shiji</i>	春橋草堂詩集
<i>Da A Luohan Nantimiduoluo suo shuo fazhuji</i>	大阿羅漢南提蜜多羅所說法住記
Daguan	達觀
Dai Guangzeng	戴光曾
<i>daopao</i>	道袍
<i>daoren</i>	道人
<i>daoshi</i>	道士
Deng Erya	鄧爾雅
Deqing	德清
Ding Yunpeng	丁雲鵬
<i>Dingxiang Ting Bitan</i>	定香亭筆談
Dong Yuan	董源
<i>Dongyouji</i>	東遊記
Du Liniang	杜麗娘
<i>Duhua Xianping</i>	讀畫閑評
Dunhuang	敦煌
Fan Ye	範擘
<i>fang</i>	仿
Fang Mei	方霖
Fang Tinghu	方廷瑚
<i>Fang Wen Wenshui Tianzhong Jiejing Tu</i>	仿文文水天中節景圖
Fang Xun	方熏
Fang Zhiqing	方志清
<i>fanyin</i>	番銀
Faxian	法顯
Fei Danxu	費丹旭
Fei Xiaolou	費曉樓
Gai Qi	改琦
Ganquan Gong	甘泉宮
Gao Shiqi	高士奇
Ge Hong	葛洪
Geng Weihu	耿維祜
<i>Gongzhong tu</i>	宮中圖

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

Gu Deqian	顧德謙
Gu Luo	顧洛
Gu Ximei	顧西梅
<i>Guangxu Tongxiang Xianzhi</i>	光緒桐鄉縣誌
Guanxiu	貫休
Guo Lin	郭麐
Guo Xu	郭詡
<i>Hailong wang jing</i>	海龍王經
<i>Hangong qiu</i>	漢宮秋
<i>Hangong chunxiao tu</i>	漢宮春曉圖
Hangzhou	杭州
Hanshan Deqing	憨山德清
Hebei	河北
<i>Heshi zhibi</i>	和氏之璧
Hongzhi	弘治
<i>Houhan shu</i>	後漢書
Hu Gongshou	胡公壽
<i>huagao</i>	畫稿
<i>Hualun Congkan</i>	畫論叢刊
Huizong	徽宗
Ji Yun	紀昀
Jiang Baoling	蔣寶齡
Jiang Song	蔣嵩
Jiangsu	江蘇
<i>Jiaqing Shimen Xianzhi</i>	嘉慶石門縣誌
<i>jiawu er yue</i>	甲午二月
Jiaxing	嘉興
<i>jiazhutao</i>	夾竹桃
Jin Deyu	金德輿
<i>jinbi</i>	金碧
<i>jingzuo</i>	靜坐
<i>Jinshi qi</i>	金石契
<i>jinshi xue</i>	金石學
<i>jiyong</i>	集詠

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

Jizhou	冀州
Kunwu zhijian	崑吾之劍
<i>lan</i>	蘭
Leiyin Weng	雷隱翁
<i>li</i>	禮
Li Bai	李白
Li Gonglin	李公麟
<i>Li ji</i>	禮記
Li Qiujun	李秋君
Li Zuhan	李祖韓
Li Zuyun	李祖雲
Liang Hong	梁鴻
<i>liang</i>	兩
<i>Liexian quanzhuan</i>	列仙全傳
<i>Lin Ni Zan Zhensong Jieshi Tu</i>	臨倪瓚貞松介石圖
<i>Lingfen Guan Shihua</i>	靈芬館詩話
<i>Lingfen Guan Zazhu Xubian</i>	靈芬館雜著續編
<i>lingzhi</i>	靈芝
Liu Jingshu	劉敬叔
Liu Mengmei	柳夢梅
Liu Songnian	劉松年
<i>liu</i>	柳
<i>liubo</i>	六博
Lohan	羅漢
Ma Zhiyuan	馬致遠
Magu	麻姑
<i>Magu maijiu</i>	麻姑賣酒
<i>Magu xianshou</i>	麻姑獻壽
<i>Magu zhuan</i>	麻姑傳
Magu	麻姑
Mao Yanzhou	毛延壽
Mawei po	馬嵬坡
<i>meiren hua</i>	美人畫
Meng Guang	孟光

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

<i>Mengguang Zazhu</i>	夢廣雜著
<i>Minghuang qiuye wutong yu</i>	明皇秋夜梧桐雨
<i>Mo Songren Shese Huahui Juan</i>	摹宋人設色花卉卷
<i>Molin Jinhua</i>	墨林今話
<i>Mudan ting huanhun ji</i>	牡丹亭還魂記
Nanji xianweng	南極仙翁
Ouxiang guan	歐湘館
Pan Gongshou	潘公壽
Pan Rongjing	潘蓉鏡
Pan Wenlu	潘文輅
Penglai	蓬萊
Pengzu	彭祖
<i>ping</i>	瓶
<i>ping'an ruyi</i>	平安如意
Ping'an Ting	平安亭
<i>pipa</i>	琵琶
<i>pipa</i>	枇杷
<i>qi</i>	氣
<i>Qi Ao</i>	淇澳
Qian Gu	錢穀
Qian Zai	錢載
<i>Qian</i>	錢
Qianlong	乾隆
<i>Qianlong sishiqi nian shi yue</i>	乾隆四十七年十月
<i>qilin</i>	麒麟
Qiu Ying	仇英
Ren Bonian (Ren Yi)	任伯年(任頤)
Ren Xun	任薰
Ruan Yuan	阮元
Ruo Shi	若士
<i>ruyi</i>	如意
<i>Sancai tuhui</i>	三才圖繪
<i>sanjiao heyi</i>	三教合一
<i>shangyao</i>	上藥

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

<i>Shanjingju Hualun</i>	山靜居畫論
<i>Shanjingju yigao</i>	山靜居遺稿
<i>Shanshui Tu</i>	山水圖
Shelifu	舍利弗
Shen Zhen	沈貞
Shen Zhou	沈周
Shengfu Temple	聖福寺
<i>Shennong bencao jing</i>	神農本草經
<i>Shenxian zhuan</i>	神仙傳
<i>Shi ji</i>	史記
Shihuangdi	始皇帝
<i>shilling</i>	石齡
Shimen	石門
<i>shinu hua</i>	仕女畫
Shitian	石田
<i>Shizhou ji</i>	十洲記
Shoujun	壽君
<i>shukui</i>	蜀葵
<i>Siku Quanshu Jianming Mulu</i>	四庫全書簡明日錄
Sima Qian	司馬遷
<i>Soushen ji</i>	搜神記
Su Wu	蘇武
Suzhou	蘇州
Taihu shi	太湖石
Taihu	太湖
<i>Taiping guangji</i>	太平廣記
<i>Taiping Huanle Tu</i>	太平歡樂圖
<i>Taishan Jiyou Tu</i>	泰山紀遊圖
<i>Taishang lingbao wufu xu</i>	太上靈寶五符序
<i>Taishang lingbao zhicao pin</i>	太上靈寶芝草品
<i>taishou</i>	太守
<i>tanbing</i>	談柄
Tang Xianzu	湯顯祖
Tiannu	天女

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

<i>Tiannu sanhua</i>	天女散花
Tiannu xianhua	天女獻花
<i>Tieyun shending jinshi shuhua</i>	鐵雲審定金石書畫
<i>Tonghua Guan Shichao</i>	桐華館詩鈔
Tonghua Guan	桐華館
Tongxiang	桐鄉
Wang Bochi	王鉢池
Wang E	王諤
Wang Hui	王翮
Wang Meng	王蒙
Wang Qi	王圻
Wang Qiang	王嬭
Wang Wen	王問
Wang Wenzhi	王文治
Wang Yicheng	汪諧誠
Wang Yuan	王遠
Wang Yuyan	王玉嚙
Wang Zhaojun	王昭君
Wanli	萬歷
Wei Xian	衛賢
<i>Weimo yanjiao</i>	維摩演教
<i>Weimojie jing</i>	維摩詰經
Weituo	韋陀
Wen Jia	文嘉
<i>wenren</i>	文人
<i>wenren hua</i>	文人畫
<i>wenshi</i>	文士
Wenshu pusa	文殊菩薩
Wenzheng	文正
Wu Bin	吳彬
Wu Shi'en	吳世恩
Wu Wei	吳偉
Wu Yuantai	吳元泰
Wumen Huapai	吳門畫派

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

<i>wutong</i>	梧桐
Xi Gang	奚岡
Xiang Yuanbian	項元汴
<i>Xianghe jing</i>	相鶴經
<i>xiangjiao</i>	香蕉
Xie Shichen	謝時臣
<i>Xijing zaji</i>	西京雜記
Xiling	西靈
<i>xinghui</i>	形穢
Xiwangmu	西王母
<i>Xuanhe huapu</i>	宣和畫譜
xumizuo	須弥座
<i>Yaji tu</i>	雅集圖
Yan Chen	嚴辰
Yan Xiyuan	顏希源
<i>Yang Fei xiezhao tu</i>	楊妃寫照圖
Yang Guozhong	楊國忠
Yang Yuhuan	楊玉環
<i>Yangmei</i>	楊梅
<i>yangsheng</i>	養生
Yao Li	要離
<i>yihai</i>	乙亥
<i>Yinghua Shuwu Tu</i>	映花書屋圖
<i>yinyuan</i>	銀元
<i>Yiyuan</i>	異苑
<i>yong</i>	用
You Qiu	尤求
Youzhu Zhuang	有竹莊
Yu Anlan	于安瀾
Yu Jiao	俞蛟
Yuan Mei	袁枚
Yuhang	余杭
Yuhu waishi	玉壺外史
Yunqi Zhuhong	雲栖祿宏

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

<i>yushan</i>	玉山
<i>Yuzhen rudao</i>	玉真人道
<i>zaju</i>	雜劇
Zhang Daqian	張大千
Zhang Lu	張路
<i>Zhang Shiqi Xiaoxiang Tu</i>	張士傑肖像圖
Zhang Xiong	張熊
Zhang Yanchang	張燕昌
Zhao Huaiyu	趙懷玉
Zhejiang	浙江
<i>Zhengtong daozaang</i>	正統道藏
<i>zhi</i>	芝
<i>zhi jiujiing</i>	芝九莖
<i>Zhibuzu Zhai Congshu</i>	知不足齋叢書
Zhou Wenju	周文矩
Zhu Chang	祝昌
Zhu Fang'ai	朱方藹
Zhu Hongyou	朱鴻輶
Zhu Puan	朱璞庵
Zhu Qi	祝淇
Zhu Ying	朱英
Zhuhong	祿宏
Zhushi Ting	煮石亭
<i>Zhushi Tu</i>	竹石圖
<i>zi</i>	子
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