

Toward an Integrated Methodology
Morphological Analyses in the Identification of Prime Objects
And the Sequence of Image-Change Through Historical Accretions
Wu Zhen (1280-1354), a Case Study

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Volume One



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Abstract

The thesis is a demonstration of an integrated methodology in the investigation of Chinese paintings.

Section I outlines methods of analysis used by specialists in China, Japan and the West, and proposes their integration.

Section II implements the Integrated Methodology in the identification of prime objects in a group of works attributed to Wu Zhen now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Section III presents a systematic method of investigating the non-genuine works, and charts their respective relationships to the prime objects and/or to each other.

The findings clarify fundamental issues regarding period styles in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and challenge, by implication, long held assumptions of authenticity of a great many works labelled with Yuan dates. They invite a reconsideration of our methodology as well as our basic assumptions of style-images associated with particular masters.

The clouds disperse in the empty sky, the misty waters expand.....

Wu Zhen, 1342

This thesis is written for a glimpse of

The Original Face of the Master

Preface

It is with profound awareness of one's worthlessness and helplessness without the generosity of teachers and friends that one comes to the task of finalising a phase of research. Research under the name of a single investigator is a misnomer for the fruits of continual and mutual contribution on the part of a very large group of people, representing different dimensions of the task.

In the case of this thesis, first gratitude is due to Miss Mary Tregear of the Oriental Institute and the Ashmolean Museum, who first encouraged its writing and who patiently guided it and gave it form. To Miss Tregear I owe my presence in Oxford where I have spent two of the happiest years of my life, gaining new insights into the dimensions of scholarship and of living. To her this small work with all its persistent imperfections is humbly and gratefully dedicated.

To the National Palace Museum staff in Taipei who have tirelessly ceded to my repeated requests for direct examination, words of thanks are inadequate. Without the patience of Miss Hu Sailan, and the stoicism of photographer Lin Jiemin, the discoveries reported here could not have been made or published. Prof. Li Lin-ts'an said on one particularly gloomy occasion when I was not yet able to cope with the effects of my findings, "Good, you are now in the darkest hour of your work. This means daybreak is on the horizon!" To him I owe a lesson in patience and perseverance to last a lifetime. To Dr. Chiang Fu-tsung, then Director, whose counselling and encouragement have been a constant source of support, I owe the debt of a child to its father.

Throughout these years, I have received encouragement from colleagues and teachers in Japan, and have been gathering an unrepayable debt of *on* to Hashimoto Hirotsugu of the Tokyo National Institute of Art Research, whose constant encouragement and support have been a source of joy.

Preface

To my staunch friends, Susan Bush, John Hay and James Cahill who have read parts of the manuscript in a previous form with interest and who have given invaluable comments, I owe the debt of a life-support system in a period of drowning.

Physical survival in Oxford has been made possible by the generosity of persons the least able to do so: my retired mother, Barbara Schuchardt Hsü Noël, and my aunt, Li Hsü Ying. Their support reflects both enormous loving warmth and a standing family tradition based on scholarly achievement. I have also been privileged to have the encouragement of artists I consider Masters of this century, Chen Qikuan, Ho Huaishuo and Wang Jiqian. In their support I feel the field has come full circle where the artist examines the art historian! Their generosity, passing gestures of help for each, will however be treasured as testimony of love and friendship, attributes which have no limit.

I have learned how to look at brushwork the Chinese way from years of patient coaching by Wang Jiqian (C.C. Wang). From Professor Shimada Shûjirô I have learnt something of the sensitivity and attention needed for minute observations, as well as the integrity, humility and patience which must be maintained in the pursuit of answers. His unwavering encouragement, his expectation, indeed demand, of solid scholarship in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds have been my constant source of strength and determination. To such teachers, life-times of gratitude cannot do justice. One's highest hope is not to disappoint.

For my husband, Richard, fellow traveller in the mine field who has come in support of this project in massive ways, my love has no words.

J.S-B

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TOWARD AN INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY
MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSES IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF PRIME OBJECTS
AND THE SEQUENCE OF IMAGE-CHANGE THROUGH HISTORICAL ACCRETIONS:
WU ZHEN (1280-1354), A CASE STUDY

VOLUME ONE

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I. INTRODUCTION: A PROBLEM OF METHOD

The present thesis addresses itself to methodology. It is concerned with the assessment, integration and application of contrasting systems of investigation used in the study of Chinese painting. Latter-20th-century art historians face a rich legacy of paintings about which there remains a marked lack of consensus and, on the other hand, a variety in systems of analysis which would appear to distinguish scholars of different cultural backgrounds. Contrasting methods of investigation reflect their respective traditions in aesthetic judgment. These in turn are conditioned by their particular social and cultural values. In both systems of aesthetics and in systems of analysis, the historian of Chinese art faces three clearly discernible scholastic traditions which may be grouped as those of China, Japan and Western Europe - North America (the West). Each tradition would appear to have developed its peculiar set of criteria for evaluating Chinese painting as to quality and provenance. Underlying all these traditions, however, there would appear to be two kinds of subjectivity the nature of which may be briefly considered below. These may be termed subjectivity in the apprehension of quality, and subjectivity in the evaluation of authorship and/or date of execution.

I-a Subjective Nature of the Apprehension of Quality

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) has observed that subjectivity is a fundamental characteristic of the process of aesthetic evaluation :

OF THE JUDGMENT OF TASTE, ACCORDING TO QUALITY. THE JUDGMENT OF TASTE IS ESTHETICAL. In order to distinguish whether anything is beautiful or not, we refer the representation, not by the understanding of the object for cognition, but by the imagination (perhaps in conjunction with the understanding) to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or pain. The judgment of taste is therefore not a judgment of cognition, and is consequently not logical but aesthetical, by which we understand that whose determining ground can be no other than subjective..”¹

Initial responses to a given work, for the trained art historian, may be no less subjective. The experience parallels the initial encounter with a stranger where in the first

¹Original emphasis. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) here analyzes each moment in the aesthetic process, weighing the roles of subjective, emotional response and cognitive empiricism. The passage is translated by J. H. Bernard, *Critique of Judgment*, Hafner Publishing Co., New York, 1951.

I-a Subjective Nature of Quality Apprehension

glance, a powerful first impression is registered regarding quality in a judgment of taste. It is difficult not to respond to the person or work with pleasure, even excitement, when we perceive notably high quality. Conversely when we perceive it to be inferior, a corresponding feeling of disappointment is followed swiftly by sharp decline in interest. The instantaneous and subjective nature of first impressions would appear to be a universal phenomenon.

Kant's discourse describes the amateur and the connoisseur but does not include the art historian. Different categories of art-specialists are only gradually being defined and redefined. Since the 18th century, Europeans have identified the connoisseur as distinct from the amateur, as he acquires certain skills which are part of a gentleman's cultivation and which enable him not only to recognize beauty, but authenticity. Jonathan Richardson's **Two Discourses** ("An Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism as it relates to Painting" and "Advantage of the Science of a Connoisseur", first published in 1719) discuss the civilizing influence of the arts, and the social importance of the 'Gentleman of Taste'. By 1752 the **Dictionnaire universel** defined 'connoisseur' as one thoroughly knowledgeable about the qualities of any art object submitted for his judgment, indicating a level of skill above that of the amateur. By the 19th century the term came to denote the specialized training of museum staff and in Germany was termed *Kunstwissenschaft*. In his 1835 essay, "How to Observe", Sir Charles Eastlake wrote,

The chief distinction between the connoisseur and the amateur is that the knowledge of the first assists the exercise of judgment, while that of the latter tends to kindle the imagination. The studies of the connoisseur may, however, take a wider range, and be directed not only to recognise excellence in works of art, but to investigate the nature and principles of that excellence; in short, in addition to a practical and habitual acquaintance with specimens, and a discrimination of their relative claims, to penetrate the causes of the world's admiration.²

By the 19th century, the German-trained Veronese critic Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891) narrowed the connotation further to denote specifically the area of attribution, saying that each painter has a personal use of schemata and techniques which in terms of grapho-

² Reprinted in **Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts**, 2nd ser., 1870.

I-a Subjective Nature of Quality Apprehension

logy can be identified by the trained connoisseur beyond doubt.³ Morelli's ideas most closely parallel those of the traditional Chinese connoisseur.

I-b Subjective Factors in the Assessment of Authorship

A subtler type of subjectivity would appear to be that with which the connoisseur, having apprehended excellence in a work of art, proceeds to attribute it to a certain period or to the hand of a particular master. Here various less spontaneous, less innate influences may come to affect his judgment. These influences stem from his cultural, social and personal background, and in China have assumed a uniquely powerful role. I have discussed the social factors in collecting and the emotional factors in authentication at length elsewhere.⁴ To a lesser extent modern, Western trained art historians may not be immune to this type of subjectivity. It is the more insidious as it infiltrates "objective, analytical" processes. The first type of subjectivity has been associated with the collector or connoisseur. Little attention would appear to have been accorded the second type as it affects the judgment of the scholar, or the historian of art.

I-c Collectors and Art Historians: Connoisseurship and Scholarship

While eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europeans saw the connoisseur as distinct and more skilled than the amateur, the difference between the connoisseur and the art historian would appear to have remained somewhat ambiguous. Traditions of connoisseurship, East and West, are ancient and born of private collections, centered on individual objects built into "groups" using which the curator (connoisseur) introduces particular aspects of an age to the viewer (amateur). The collector/curator would appear to be interested chiefly in objects of excellence, explanation of their artistic lineages or techniques and interpretation in terms of the cultural and social milieux which attended their creation.

The art historian on the other hand may be seen as a much younger species. In the context of painting history, while the Chinese have long developed a complex system of connoisseurship based on study of individual items (objects in a collection), the foundation

³ For a succinct article on the subject, see Harold Osborne, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Art*, 1970.

⁴ See J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *Oriental Art* XXXII, no.1 (Spring, 1986): 54-66.

and discipline of art history in the West are based on scholarship of a different order. It would appear to be a more detached, somewhat more abstract discipline which seeks to identify sources and sequences of change, to examine root causes of events, and to describe an evolutionary pattern for a specific set of events. Here analyses are based on structure and function, and degrees of excellence would appear to occupy secondary importance.⁵

Yet in many academic circles the two disciplines remain largely indistinguishable. Studies purporting to be art history are often interpretive pieces centered on specific objects or particular masters. Such studies consist often of biographical data passively translated from uncritical Chinese sources, and a catalogue of "the master's works" which have not been subjected to critical examination. The student often tries to interpret the work and the artist's intentions, producing hypotheses based on readings in social and cultural histories of the period which serve to clothe the works in viable contexts. This type of interpretive study is exemplified by good museum catalogues written by the connoisseur for the elucidation of the amateur. Here authenticity is often implicitly assumed, and the study focusses on understanding and interpreting the intrinsic significance of the art work, and its role in socio-cultural contexts.

Implicit assumptions of authenticity, however, would appear to fit neither the aims nor the approaches of sound scholarship. There may be reasons to argue that the art historian should be emancipated from the object-bound world of collectors in order to explore with greater freedom the world of ideas and processes, i.e. the stuff of history.⁶ We may thus hope to progress beyond Kant's all-embracing subjectivity. On the other hand, objectivity cannot dispense with sound experience.

⁵ An example is Prof. Max Loehr's study of the styles of bronze decoration which accurately described the developmental sequence of Shang bronze vessels. At the time of writing, there were several divergent theories on the development of Shang vessels but subsequent excavations at Zhengzhou and Yanshi confirmed Loehr's sequence and vindicated his methodology. See Max Loehr, *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China*. New York: The Asia Society, 1968,

⁶ See J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *op cit.* Social contexts, literary associations, political implications would appear to be primary objectives in the study of social, cultural and political history, which, no matter how enriching and enlightening, for the art historian, must remain secondary considerations.

For the connoisseur, the intuitive response (Kant's "imagination") is informed by years of "hands on" experience (Kant's "understanding"), that is, the cumulative visual experience of direct examination at close range, sharpened by comparisons, appraisals and reappraisals. Equipped with the training of the connoisseur, the student may with greater assurance contemplate the discipline of the art historian.

For some generations since the early decades of this century, scholars of China, Japan, Europe and North America have worked on related problems in relative isolation. Chinese scholarship claims the longest tradition, one which falls by and large within the object-oriented framework.⁷ As recollections and opinions on paintings seen or owned, it followed the literary style and format which such genres had assumed in the past.⁸ Examination of paintings or calligraphy rarely sought to identify larger patterns of change, however. It often took place in social occasions where friends gathered to admire the collection of one among them. The Chinese have been notably subjective, due no doubt to the peculiar social function of the arts of the brush in Chinese society.⁹ Virtually all painting-viewings can be traced to personal acquaintance with the owner. The emotional tenor at these occasions would be not too dissimilar from an heirloom-admiration party in the West, characterised by a reverent sort of elation associated with one's love of ancient masters in general, and friendship for the present owner in particular.¹⁰

Another feature unique to China is that collectors were often members of the social elite, and adept users of the brush. If he could not paint, a collector was almost certain to

⁷ While no clear line can be drawn to mark the beginning of more objective types of investigations in China, a convenient point may be the establishment of the Imperial Palace Museum in Peking on the 10th October, 1925 which rendered the erstwhile Imperial Collection public property. The ensuing work of cataloguing and, after the removal of the paintings to Shanghai in 1933 following deterioration of relations with Japan, the examination and reassessment, may mark the beginning of modern art historical scholarship in China. Nevertheless even this type of modern scholarship was engendered by existing works in a collection, and not inspired by a detached interest in the evolution of Chinese painting.

⁸ See for example the writings of the great aesthete and collector Pang Yuanji (1864-1949) whose records perhaps the greatest of modern collections of Chinese paintings in private hands, *Xuzhai minghualu* (Famous Paintings in the Xuzhai Studio Collection, Shanghai, 1909), its sequels published in 1924 and 1925, and the *Mingbi jicheng* (Collection of Paintings by Famous Masters, Shanghai, 1940). They follow the same language of ancient catalogues and attest to the values in Chinese connoisseurship. To possess the treasures once owned by famous ancient collectors, and to see in these works the same values reflected in their writing, affirms the continuity of the (artistic and social) tradition, and the rightfully lofty position therein of the contemporary owner.

⁹ Discussed in J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries," op cit.

¹⁰ See collection records and inscriptions on paintings where this ambiance is described.

have acquired a respectable hand at calligraphy, and familiarity with technical problems of brushwielding. He viewed paintings and calligraphies with an insider's experience, virtually a practitioner's insights. This is not so for viewers of Japan and the West.

Here another line may be drawn, however. While Western encounters with Chinese art are but a recent phenomenon, the Japanese experience is a very old one. Both her private and public collections of Chinese art include ancient holdings. Pieces whose transmissions have been meticulously recorded are known as *denseihin*. Chinese collections in Japan have through the centuries influenced Japanese perception of Chinese art and provided a significant alternative perspective on the history of Chinese painting, as we shall see.

Subjectivity in the collector/curator's (object-oriented) approach exhibits a compulsion toward comprehensiveness. In building a complete collection, "missing links" often elicit joyous acceptance more often than critical investigation.

Subjectivity in the scholar's approach is equally inescapable, however. The survey approach would appear often to induce scholars to write histories of Chinese art in Old Testament style narratives according to traditional Chinese accounts, and use paintings with "proper signatures and seals" to illustrate the masters discussed. The author is obliged by the nature of such surveys to make choices at each step, to select "representative" works. But at this stage of our knowledge of Chinese art, a single scholar can hardly be expected to be authoritative on all artists of all periods. Chinese historiography¹¹ itself has tended toward moralistic chronicles rather than analyses into patterns of change. In writing on art, the Chinese were usually connoisseurs and critics and not art historians in the modern sense.

¹¹ Chinese historiography is traditionally said to begin with the compiling of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* ascribed to Confucius and begins in its present form with Sima Qian's *Shiji* (Record of the [Grand] Historian) around 100 BC.

I-d Models and Recensions

Today we may reassess these methodological approaches and ask: To what extent does a modern art historian utilize the tools of traditional connoisseurship? To what extent can traditional Chinese connoisseurship benefit from methods of modern art history?

I-d MODELS AND RECENSIONS

While famous works the world over are subject to study through copying, for China there may be sufficient ground to propose a special case. More than other peoples, the ancestor-oriented Chinese lay stress on first attaining the essence of masters of the past, and only then to consider one's own creativity. At least from the eleventh century, and with a compelling momentum from the fourteenth century onwards, considerations of stylistic lineage overrode considerations of originality and inventiveness. The study of painting began with a search for ancient masterpieces to be used for study and repeated close copy. Finally the Master's turns and pressure-changes of the wrist, i.e. his graphological traits, became second-nature. In calligraphy, tracing copies were being made since at least the Tang when famous masters' works were traced on paper, or carved into stelae the rubbings of which in turn became copy-books for aspiring hands. The practice of copying masterpieces was widely practiced in China and great works existed in numerous versions, down through the ages when copies of copies, and copies of copies of copies (of copies) served as models for ensuing generations. In this process various artistic sideways were opened, and while many may be considered in their way creative, others impinge upon the problem of forgery. It would appear that in China a great number of forgeries acquired, once they entered major collections, what I have termed FUNCTIONAL AUTHENTICITY, as they in turn become models for later forgeries¹². By forgery I mean the effect upon the buyer, end user and student - and not necessarily the intentions of the painter at the time of production. The concept of genuine and imitation would appear to be not so clear cut in China and the endemic ambiguity has affected not only traditional collecting but as a direct consequence, modern scholarship as well.

On the other hand, while traditional Chinese connoisseurship has been to the Western-trained art historian little more than an optional sideline, it becomes increasingly

¹² See J. Stanley-Baker, 1986 op cit. Methodological terms I have introduced appear in SMALL CAPS.

clear that its techniques, especially regarding brush work, are as indispensable as they have seemed elusive. When attempting to identify prime objects from a group of works attributed to a particular master, a methodology of period style and structural analysis alone does not suffice (see Sections IIb,c, and IIIa,b).

Connoisseurship and dating of anonymous works in East and West alike, would appear on the whole to have remained fairly subjective processes founded primarily on initial, intuitive responses: the recognition and appreciation of quality. The initial perception of quality, (Kant's imagination), however, would appear to distinguish the scholars of China, Japan and the West and to condition accordingly their respective systems of analysis regarding period, school or author, in short, their methodology. In the light of a modern, integrated methodology which incorporates critical aspects of all three traditions and the subject of this study, a brief review may be in order.

I-e TRADITIONAL CHINESE CONNOISSEURSHIP

1. XIE HE'S SIX GUIDELINES (*FA*)

Chinese connoisseurship, in spite of shifts of style and value, would appear to be distinguished by stress on the first two of the Six Guidelines (*fa*) enunciated by the Southern Qi artist Xie He (active early 6th c). *Guhua pinlu* (Classification of Ancient Painters) traditionally associated with his name, is a typical treatise on critiquing written to guide collectors as much as painters. It is not, in the contemporary sense of the word, art history.

*The classification of painters is [the listing of] painters according to their excellence and inferiority. As for paintings, there is not one which does not illustrate some exhortation or warning, where the elevation and derogation [of men's lives] over a thousand years are reflected as if in a mirror with the unrolling of a scroll.*¹³

¹³ *Guhua pinlu*, YSCB ed., vol. 8, no.54: 1. See also Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, eds and trans., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, Harvard, 1985:40; William Acker, ed and trans., *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, 2 vol. Sinica Leidensia, no.8, Leiden, 1954, I:3;

Xie's moralistic aspiration contrasts with the more purely visual concerns of Western writers like Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), who prefaces *Lives of the Artists* ¹⁴ saying,

*My good intentions and the work of outstanding [artists treated in the book] will, I hope, provide the arts with support and adornment of a kind which, if I may be allowed to say this outright, they have been lacking hitherto.*¹⁵

In essential aspects, Chinese concerns would appear to be even more unique. The first two guidelines for perception in the creation (or appraisal) of painting are: *qiyun shengdong*, living dynamism of energy in empathetic resonance, and *gufa yongbi*, brushwielding along [the organic] principles of bone structure.¹⁶ These two laws, principles or guidelines for excellence are not only less tangible, less concrete than the ensuing ones, they would appear to be in fact the sole criteria which in China render a painting into a work of art. The criteria for excellence, for loftiness of expression, reside in these life-factors: dynamic psychic resonance or empathy, and excellence in brushwork.

¹⁴ *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* (1st edn., 1550). Edited by Gaetano Milanesi. Florence, 1878-1885.

¹⁵ Translation by George Bull, 1965. Penguin edition, 1985:47.

¹⁶ My translation is yet another attempt to come to terms with the *Liu fa*. While discussions in Chinese or Japanese tend to leave the original phrasing untranslated, discussions in Western languages have tended to demand more definitive terms. Since these two Guidelines, especially the First, touch on the foundation of Chinese aesthetic, stresses have differed greatly. William Acker in *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* has noted that *gufa*, "bone-configuration" or "skeletal structure" was a term used in physiognomy (Leiden, 1954: xxxiii-xxxv). James Cahill's latest interpretation, in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, eds, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, has returned to a simpler, more general and certainly universally acceptable view: "First, Spirit Resonance. Resonance which means vitality; second, Bone Method which is [a way of] using the brush..." (Harvard, 1985: 40). On the other hand, attention has been drawn to the specifically biophysical bases in early criticism by Marilyn and Shen Fu in their unpublished paper for the "Theories of the Arts in China" conference in 1979; "The Role of Figurative Language in Early Texts on Calligraphy" and by John Hay at the same conference, "The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values in Chinese Calligraphy." For an in-depth examination of the first two *fa* of Xie He in their physical and metaphysical contexts, as well as an exhaustive bibliography on previous discussions, see the searching and exhaustive study by Hay, "Values and history in Chinese Painting" in two parts, published respectively in *RES* 6 (Autumn, 1983: 73-111) and 7/8 (Spring/Autumn, 1984: 102-136). It should be remembered that Xie He was concerned with the art of figure painting. The first character *qi* has often been translated as spirit, rendering it devoid of physical values. I prefer psychic energy, a more concrete element which is measurable and is essentially physical. I take *qi* here to refer to the macro/micro, or cosmic/psychic energy which is manifested or transmitted through the individual artist, and which must be in harmony with its cosmic source. Once in harmony with the source, it is part of universal energy and yet, through the artist, is manifested as individual psychic energy bearing the individual imprint of his personality.

Yun clearly refers to some aspect of vibration, and engenders a notion of resonance. It would appear to imply something of empathetic vibrations which, in turn, may be judged along qualities of consonance or dissonance.

The craft of formal resemblance on the other hand would appear to be less important, and comes under the following headings:

3. **yingwu xiangxing** formal representation in accordance with the subject.
4. **suilei fucai** colouration in accordance with the category.
5. **jingying weizhi** distance and positioning [of elements] in accordance with plans.
6. **chuanyi moxie** copy [of good painting models] for transference.

Xie He's guidelines for the creative process parallel the Kantian order of perceiving beauty. The first encounter with an artwork, no less than the first criteria for success in a work of art, are confined to these less tangible, more psychological processes. In the First Guideline Xie He prescribes a series of relationships which transcends visual elements. He demands palpable vitality in expression, that the vital energies of the subject should be moving in a live way, and above all that an empathy is effected between the resonance of psychic energy of the painted subject and that of the universe, thereby to activate the empathetic resonance (or sympathetic vibration) in the viewer. This demand may require a consummate artist to satisfy, but is perceived by the art lover at a single glance. Here again, the notion of *qi* may be seen not so much as breath coursing through the pulmonary system as vital, psychic energy which courses through the whole person, or artwork. The apprehension of life is an instantaneous process.

The Second Guideline is also concerned with detection of natural life-force. The demand here would appear to be more concrete, however, and perhaps more quintessentially Chinese: excellence in brushwork.¹⁷ The presence or absence of life-force in this case resides in the manner of brushwielding (*yongbi*). The brush-wielding Chinese had long been producing aesthetical treatises on calligraphy¹⁸ and the supremacy of brushwork in Chinese aesthetics had been firmly established by the time of Wang Xizhi (303?-361?).

¹⁷ On the criteria for this excellence, it has been my contention that post-Song theorists have continually narrowed the scope, and have been increasingly concerned with not only the presence in the brushwork of a life-force, but a refined life-force. See my critique in J. Stanley-Baker, "Old Mr. Yu: talent and Vision" *Free China Review* Vol.36, no.5 (May, 1986: 2-17) esp.15ff.

¹⁸ The earliest extant work is the *Caoshushi* (Dynamics of the Cursive Script-Style) by Cui Yuan (77-142) which is preserved in the biography of Wei Heng (252-291) in the Standard Histories of the Jin, *juan* 36, *liezhuan* 6.

In this Guideline, expertise in the art of brush-wielding is demanded of the viewer: he must be at once practitioner and patron or judge, in other words, an insider member of the closed group of brush-wielders. A judgment of taste is not made on the shape or pictorial appearance of the brushwork, but it is through the brushwork that the viewer discerns the nature and quality of life-forces. That is, while in the First Guideline the viewer discerns life (or its relative absence) in the composition or pictorial image, the Second Guideline brings the process to a more technical, but no less subjective, level. Brushwork, the deployment of brush and ink, must be imbued with the principles which inform, and generate, Nature. In this case a sound skeletal or bone structure is not so much to support the figures portrayed as to sustain the power and continuity, the organic relationship of stroke to stroke, and the larger relationship of groups of strokes to groups of strokes, relationships charging the fabric of the brushwork. The searching eye leaves the overt message of the painted image to focus on finer points of brushwork itself. Here a seasoned hand-eye recognizes good brushwork at once, as in Kant's imagination, but an untrained viewer from a different culture, able to discern life (or its absence) in the painting, lacks the bases from which to proceed to a meaningful evaluation of the brushwork. It is this second of Xie He's Six Guidelines which has made traditional Chinese connoisseurship so unique and so inscrutable to most non-Chinese students.¹⁹ It is not a coincidence that these two Guidelines are entirely applicable to the evaluation of Chinese calligraphy. And because they are quintessential to the judgment of painting, the calligraphy-trained scholar has been eminently qualified in his rôle of critic or theorist. The good calligrapher is able to judge quality in brushwork both in paintings and in calligraphy works. In this *sense* these finer of the brush arts the exclusive domain of the brushwielding elite, the Chinese bureaucracy.

¹⁹ More recently Western art historians have come to focus on this highly personal aspect of painting as well. Sir Ernst Gombrich likens brushwork in Western painting to accents in speech and has made the acute observation that "the skill of hand in art, like the skill of throat in language, follows the awareness of differences that have to be pointed out to be experienced." He points out how "in Van Gogh's moving copy of a print after Millet's *Cornfield*, his manner - his motor habits - always breaks through. He repeats Millet's statements in his own accent. It is true that a strong obtrusive accent in its turn can be learned and imitated. Van Gogh's own can be forged with relative ease. But then his swirling lines still belong to the macrostructure of his style. It is in the microstructure of movement and shapes that the connoisseur will find the inimitable personal accent of an artist." (*Art and Illusion* : 309)

The scholar Shen Gua (1031-1095), also a scientist and keen observer of the arts and human nature, wrote,

*The wonders of calligraphy and painting must be intuitively apprehended (shenhui). They can hardly be sought through formal elements. Nowadays, those who look at paintings can usually just pick out faults of form or placement and blemishes in colouring, but one rarely meets anyone who has perceived their subtle ordering and mysterious creation.*²⁰

The hand-eye experience of Chinese connoisseurship requires fairly lengthy discussion to be presented in a different culture, in another language.²¹ While stylistic preferences varied from age to age, some of the constant criteria for excellence include such attributes as three-dimensionality and vitality (*yuanhun*), weightiness (*houzhong*), balanced centeredness (*wentuo*), reserve (*hanxu*), internal variation (*bianhua*), proper balance between firmness and pliancy (*gangzhong yourou*) and vice versa. Organic continuity is likened to vital energy, (*qi*), which must not be interrupted (*duan*). The work must be of noble air (*feng*), and must reflect a lofty spirit (*shen*). On a more concrete level, brushwork is perceived to comprise such physical attributes as flesh (*rou*), bone (*gu*), blood (*xue*), pulse (*mai*), sinews (*jing*) and marrow (*sui*)²².

Clearly, such references reflect physical experience; they are empirical and not cerebral or abstract formulations. By and large there has been remarkable consensus across the centuries. That is to say, while values in pictorial or calligraphic styles would appear to be subject to change, those for intrinsic excellence in brushwork do not. Traditionally revered works share in the constant feature of brushwork excellence, with the attributes mentioned above, albeit in varying proportions. Despite this central core of salient criteria, however, there would appear to be no uniformity of opinion concerning authenticity.

²⁰ *Mengqi bitan* (Casual Writings [or Miscellany] by the Garden of the Stream of Dreams), ca. 1090, juan 17. See also Bush and Shih, op cit :100.

²¹ I had the good fortune to conduct extensive in-depth interviews with the leading authority on connoisseurship, Mr. C. C. Wang (Wang Jiqian) of New York City between the years 1971 and 1978, during which Mr. Wang was subjected to cross-examination on various controversial issues in Chinese painting, and addressed repeated queries regarding quality and criteria for excellence. The resulting monograph-length work in discourse form, *Definition of Brushwork-Oriented Criteria in Chinese Literati Aesthetics* has recently been published in instalment form, under the title *Huayulu* (Records of Discourses on Painting) in the National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art (beginning with Volume II, no.1, April, 1984), having been retranslated into Chinese by Ms. Wang Meiqi.

²² See John Hay, "The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values in Calligraphy" in Susan Bush and Christian Murck, eds, *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton, 1983:74-102). Prof. Hay has established the physiological bases for Chinese brushwork aesthetics beyond a doubt.

I-e2 ART HISTORIOGRAPHY IN IMPERIAL CHINA

Up till the second half of the twentieth century when scholars began to go West for specific training in art history, Chinese writing on art conformed largely to anecdotal narratives and critical assessments based on connoisseurship, with few observations on patterns of change. There was little interest in causal relationships like the enquiry of the eighteenth-century writer Giovanni Battista Vico's after causes, *per caussas*,²³ or like Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574)'s investigation of the causes and roots of styles, *le cause e radici delle maniere*,²⁴ approaches so central to Western scholarship. Within the history of Imperial China, few thinkers would appear to have departed from the common practice of authentication by means of brushwork-connoisseurship which was based more on qualitative judgment of excellence than on analyses of period or personal style. Writings were devoted to accounts of painters and schools, theories on painting or calligraphy enunciating ideals to be aspired to and ills to be avoided. These treatises were read by practitioners and collectors alike. At the risk of great over-simplification, two men from the Song and the Ming are cited to illustrate the process of historical and theoretical thinking. Even so they are not typical but represent bolder examples. Mi Fu (1052-1107) toward the end of Northern Song pronounced ideals in painting to be aspired to by lofty men. By the end of Ming writers reflecting diverse approaches emerged, from among whom the most influential Theory of the Northern and Southern Schools of Painting came to be reiterated and finalized around 1630, and has since been associated with Dong Qichang (1555-1636).²⁵ Both Mi and Dong were in their own days outstanding calligraphers, connoisseurs and painters. They represent the typical practitioner-critic-theorists so pervasive in Chinese literature on the arts.

²³ "*Historici utiles non qui facta crassius et genericas caussas narrant, sed qui ultimas factorum circumstantias persequuntur, et caussarum peculiare reserant.*" Giambattista Vico, *De Antiquissima Italorum Sapientia ex Linguae Originibus Eruenda*, Cap. 2 (Opere, ed. Fausto Nicolini, I, Laterza, Bari, 1914: 135). The quote is translated by Sir Isaiah Berlin as follows: "The useful historians are not those who give general descriptions of facts and explain them by reference to general conditions, but those who go into the greatest detail and reveal the particular cause of each event." *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* London, 1976: 1)

²⁴ Vasari, op cit, II:94.

²⁵ See below.

Mi Fu, however, may be the only one to develop a long-ranging view of the history of Chinese painting (and calligraphy) based on stylistic evolution. Himself an inventive painter, he was an astute observer of other masters' techniques.²⁶ His keen eye and quick mind were greatly sought after for authentications, at the same time many of his copies of famous masterpieces were being circulated as the originals.²⁷ While not one to probe *per caussas*, Mi would appear to be the first to produce something like a history of the Dong Yuan Style,²⁸ which he termed the Jiangnan or southern style²⁹, and which eventually became known as the Southern School Style³⁰ called Nanzonghua. Mi also showed potential for identifying forgeries and in identifying their dates of execution. When

²⁶ See the study of Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, *Le Carnet d'un Connaisseur d'Art sous les Song: Mi Fou (1051-1107) et le "Houa-che"*. *Arts Asiatiques*,vii (1960): 121-130.

²⁷ See Mi's own accounts in *Shushi* (History of Calligraphy). In one entry Mi records how the Imperial Son-in-Law Wang Shen was of the habit of making him copy ancient masterpieces; on one visit Mi discovered that his copies had been mounted in identical fashion to the originals and imprinted with forged seals. Wang apparently took delight in asking his distinguished guests to write encomia on the forgeries. It can only be imagined that visitors to Wang's palace would write eulogies that were highly flattering and which, being written on Mi's copies, would render the visitors incompetent as connoisseurs, and the butt of jokes at future gatherings. On another occasion Mi and some art friends met at a temple, each having brought some art treasures along. "Each produced [works of] calligraphy and painting until I saw this calligraphy copy. I was greatly startled and said, "This is *my* calligraphy!" Shen Gua [the then-owner] objected and said, "This has long been in the collection of Family X, how can it be by you?" I laughed and said, "How can there such a strange master who does not recognize his own hand?" Mi Fu, a celebrated *enfant terrible* in his day, was extremely pleased to have fooled the redoubtable Shen Gua! Zhao Xigu (act. ca.1195 - ca.1242) records in his *Dongtian qingluji* (Compilation of Pure Earnings from the Realm of Immortals, YSCB vol.28 no.247) that "Mi Yuanzhang [Fu] used to borrow people's famous paintings to copy them, and returned the copies in order to obtain the originals. People could not distinguish [the genuine from the copy]..." For a detailed study of Mi as calligrapher, forger and connoisseur see Lothar Ledderose, *Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy* (Princeton, 1979, esp.pp.58 ff)

²⁸ On the subject of the original style image of Dong Yuan, see Richard Barnhart's reconstruction in *Marriage of the Lord of the River, A Lost Landscape by Tung Yuan, (Artibus Asiae XXVII, Ascona, 1970)*. While Professor Barnhart concludes that the Liaoning and Beijing handscrolls (are sections of a single lost handscroll and) reflect fairly accurately Dong Yuan's original style, I am unable to reach his degree of certainty on the matter. It can be said without doubt, however, that in the fourteenth century, through the eyes of Zhao Mengfu, Huang Gongwang, Wu Zhen and Wang Meng, a contemporary (that is, fourteenth century) image of the Dong Yuan landscape style was seen as one plied and piled with *pimacun* or ravelled hemp-fibre strokes and *taidian* moss dots in lake landscapes like the Liaoning and Beijing scrolls, with lowlying hills, tall water reeds, and an element of *chiaroscuro* suggesting a single light source. The problem of the Dong Yuan and Juran images as they shift and develop through the four centuries between the Five Dynasties and the Yuan, let alone their actual original images, are subject of a separate enquiry.

²⁹ Associated with the southern region.

³⁰ With a capital S, the essentially social theory associated with Dong Qichang. Dong likened the inspiration-based and more spontaneous amateur painting by the literati onto the instantaneous enlightenment of Southern School Chan, and the meticulous, skill-based professional painting onto the rigorous imitative practice of the Northern School of Chan.

shown a screen painting of the Buddhist sage Vimalakīrti attributed to the late 4th c. master Gu Kaizhi, he wrote,

It is a copy by the Tang master Du Mu (803-852)... Its brilliance dazzles people, [whereas] those [paintings attributed to Gu Kaizhi] passed down in family collections of shidaifu scholar gentry before or after [the time of Du Mu] bear not a thread of resemblance. This is because craft smen of the Western capital (Chang'an) were clumsy. The landscape and woods on this screen are strange and antique. The slopes and banks are [modelled] like Dong Yuan. Thus I know that what people call the Jiangnan (southern) style has remained the same since the time of Gu, [continuing] through the Sui and the Tang until (the tenth-century follower of Dong Yuan) Jüran, without shifting. To this day master Xie of Chizhou still uses this style (ti). I once obtained a Sui dynasty painting of Jinling (Nanjing) from Bi Xiangsun which is also in the same style. So I inscribed the Gu attribution saying, 'Mi Fu certifies this as a copy by Du Mu and so affixed the seal bofasiyin.'³¹

Mi was the first to identify a painting style in the art historical sense of the word, a style which traverses and changes in time and whose characteristics are exemplified by particular painters. He named it the Jiangnan or southern [regional] style. Here he uses the term *ti* for style. This usage has its antecedents in calligraphy where *ti* denotes script-styles in a categorical or typological sense. Up to the time of Mi Fu the term *ti* seems to have been used mainly to distinguish different types of script styles. In the discussion above Mi Fu may well have been the first to see painting styles in an evolutionary and historical sense, like calligraphy styles.

In the arts Mi was unusually perceptive and analytical. Running counter to current opinion he demonstrated, for example, that the emergence of Wang Xizhi (307-c.365) was not "an isolated phenomenon, but that he was one of a group of calligraphers, some of whom were masters in their own right and deserved equal, or even more, admiration."³² The force of his promotion of Dong Yuan and Juran, and the virulence of his denunciation of other painters helped to revive the prestige of the two southern masters and eventually to

³¹ Huashi (history of Painting, n.d., ca.1100), *Yishucongbian* ed. vol.10, no.68: 55-6. The seal Mi Fu used, *bofasi* (Agency of Waterway Transport), provides a clue to the period in which he saw the painting. The *bofasi* was a government agency of the Northern Song period, charged with the control of the Three White Waterways (Sanbaiqu) in Shaanxi which irrigated the central plains, and with the transportation of goods by waterways to the Capital (Bianjing, modern Kaifeng in Henan Province). In the *Zhiguanzhi* (Offices) section of the (*Songshi* (Song History)), it is termed *jianfasi*. I am grateful for this information which has been kindly researched by Ms. Wei Meiyue and Mr. Song Longfei of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Between the years 1101 and 1103 Mi Fu was charged with the supervision of the collection and transportation of grain taxes from the Cai River area to the Capital with the title of *Caihe bofa*. This is the probable reason that he should have been in possession of the official seal. And this would indicate that Mi Fu examined the so-called Gu Kaizhi screen between the years 1101 and 1103.

³² See the lucid discussion of Mi Fu as calligrapher and art historian by Lothar Ledderose in *Mi Fu* op cit: 54,ff

establish their styles as source of inspiration for the Yuan literati movement. By the fourteenth century Mi's dicta were followed by amateur painters and critics alike - both being of the elite scholar class. It is surprising, and no less significant, that no one after Mi matched his boldness in critiquing or originality in vision. Tacitly, later critics ignored highly probable accounts of Mi's experiments in painting using lotus-pods, squeezed-dry sugar cane and twists of paper, implements which replaced the pointed brush and produced non-linear and highly textured paintings³³. Yuan and later critics only perpetuated Mi's insistence on the supremacy of the Jiangnan style. In sum, it can be seen that Mi Fu was in fact singular in Chinese art history in his exploration of new frontiers in painting, in connoisseurship as well as in historiography. Unlike writers who merely mouthed dicta on quality, Mi searched explored techniques of painting with a keen eye.³⁴ Mi Fu's creativity and originality beyond doubt, even though not a single work which can be demonstrably by his hand has survived. Of the rounded, southern type landscape, only the large work on silk, *Misty Mountains* in the Freer Gallery (nearly entirely covered over with later brush-work that has changed its stylistic and technical appearance), may bear a pale reflection of one of Mi's many experimental styles³⁵ A closer approximation of his style-image, however, lies beyond the competence of this study.

Dong Qichang is generally credited with defining the so-called Northern and Southern Schools schism which was however, as Susan Bush has demonstrated, a

³³ This was reported by the late-12th c. connoisseur Zhao Xigu (act. c.1190) in his *Dongtian qingluji* (Compilation of Pure Earnings in the Realm of Immortals, YSCB vol.28 no. 247). Moreover, Zhou Mi once saw a work said to be by Mi Fu which demonstrated the brush-method of using the regular script *kaishu*, for painting (*kaishu huafa*). This is reported in *Yunyan guoyanlu* (Yishu congbian ed. vol 17, no 152: *xia* :96). This would indicate an angular type of brushwielding. Such brushwielding came in vogue a century later in the hands of academicians Ma Yuan and Xia Gui. For the present it is not possible to reconstruct the compositional format of Mi's *kaishu* painting, however.

³⁴ On the techniques of Li Cheng, for whom he showed envious admiration, he remarked that in painting trees, Li painted trunks hoary enough to become beams, branches in rich profusion to give shade, and: "At the knots, he does not describe a circle in ink, but comes down with one large blob to run through the trunk. The whole is gone over with a pale brush [charged in light inkwash] and looks as if made in heaven. On the opposite shore the rocks are modelled to be round and moist, rising sharply [in one continuous stroke] till at the pinnacle the brush stops. It is even so with the foot of the mountain and a rock in the water. Beneath it he uses pale ink to mark the water level. The rock goes straight down through the water and is not like common imitations done with vertical or slanted brush strokes and with no foundations beneath [the water level], or worse, without even the effect of water, but just as if floating in mid-air. Those who in ignorance claim that Li Cheng's [water rocks] have no foundation [beneath the water level] have simply never seen a genuine specimen..."(Huashi, op cit: 15-16)

³⁵ This opinion has been expressed by Professor Shimada Shûjirô. Verbal communication.

reworking of earlier theories. These had been based on lineages of the coloured landscape tradition in the academies as outlined in Cao Zhao's *Gegu yaolun* (Vital Discourses on the Investigation of Antiquity, compiled in 1387), and the implication of an inherent contrast between the coloured and the ink monochrome traditions enunciated by Du Qiong (1396-1474) in his poem on the development of landscape painting³⁶. In effect (as far as Chinese writings on painting after the Yuan dynasty is concerned), these theories did little more than to confirm Mi's original preference for the Dong-Ju mode. Instead of following Mi's use of visual criteria, however Dong imposed upon the warp and weft of Chinese painting history an elaborate social value-structure to distinguish the two schools. While claiming an analogy based on the North-South schism in the schools of Chan, the North-South theory as verbalised by the 17th century would appear to have been little more than social bias.³⁷

In retrospect it may be seen that the development of a history of Chinese art within China has been, compared to Western models, lopsided. The "imagination" in Kantian terms has been developed with much greater sophistication while the "understanding" has remained vestigial. From the fourteenth century onward at least, interest in narrative content has virtually disappeared, and examinations of paintings veered increasingly toward a graphological approach. The Western art historian on the other hand, lacks the refined vocabulary of Chinese art criticism and the Chinese perception of brushwork energy. It may be that an integrated approach which combines the techniques of all three traditions in

³⁶ Bian Yongyu, *Shigutang shuhua huikao* (Pref. 1682) II: 26F (Du Qiong).2b-3a. Shanghai, Jiangu shushe, 1921. See Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636)*. Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies XXVII 1971, 1979: 162ff

³⁷ I have pointed out in my *nanga* studies that although Dong Qichang selected the lofty example of Chan for comparison, the essential difference between the Ma-Xia oriented academic style and the so-called Dong-Ju oriented literati style is only one in brush-techniques. While the professionals' 'axe-cut' modelling strokes done with a slanted brush is rather difficult to master, as it is easily rendered flat, the literati's easy, ropey 'hemp-fibre' strokes are done with the brushtip centered within the stroke and is something far more manageable for the amateur, (see J. Stanley-Baker, "Idealist Painting in China and Japan: Chinese *wenrenhua* in a Japanese *nanga*" in *Chûgoku kaigashi ronshû* (*Festschrift* in honour of Professor Suzuki Kei upon his Retirement). Tokyo University, 1981:115-168. Furthermore, in *Yanpu tanyu* ("Leisurely Talks in the Garden", included in his *Baoyantang biji*, (Private Book-Satchel from the Baoyan Studio, prefaced 1606) Chen Jiru (1558-1639) discussed the painting of the Li Sixun "School" of coloured landscape, where he grouped diverse Song masters like Li Tang, Guo Xi, Ma Yuan, Xia Gui and the brothers Zhao Boju and Bosu, and declared that it was "coarse and stiff, totally lacking in scholarly air." The last reflects the basic attitude of superiority among scholar painters, who regarded the careful work of professionals as hackneyed and lacking in the carefree refinement of the elite. I have termed literati painting China's Elitist Tradition in "A Closed Cycle in Chinese Art: The Elite Tradition." *Free China Review* Vol 36 no 7 (July, 1986): 10-27.

the study of Chinese painting could lead the art historian past the dangers of uncritical acceptance of untested works.

I-f JAPANESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY OF CHINESE PAINTING

1. COLLECTIONS OF CHINESE PAINTINGS IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD

A fundamental difference between Chinese and Japanese connoisseurship in Chinese painting and calligraphy would appear to be the fact that in the latter Xie He's *Liufa*, which might be termed the practitioner's criteria, play no corresponding rôle. Although many Japanese connoisseurs not only read Chinese poetry but wrote it, as did for example the male aristocracy of the Heian period and members of the Chan (Zen) clergy in the fourteenth century, Japanese collectors since the fall of the Heian aristocracy were by and large not practitioners in the Chinese sense, and treated imported Chinese works with the awe and respect that come with distance. On the other hand, compared to Western scholars and collectors of Chinese brush art works, the Japanese enjoy certain advantages in three major areas of scholarship: technical command of the brush, literacy in Chinese *belles lettres* and Chinese calligraphy of various script-styles, and a protracted experience in Southern Song modes of painting. That is to say, while in Yuan China the Southern Song perception of misty distances began, especially among the *wenren*, to be replaced with a more brush stroke-oriented or linear aesthetic so that by early Ming virtually all traces of misty vistas and the expansive, breathing quality of mid-ground waters had disappeared, the same radical shift in perception did not find a corresponding echo in Japan. Under mediaeval monastic and shogunal patronage this particular mode would appear to have enjoyed a history of some six centuries where (in place of the linear Chinese literati modes) it reigned supreme. In this sense Japanese eyes would appear to be more attuned to pre-Ming structural and aesthetic criteria of Chinese painting. They are not, on the whole, as conditioned for the dry, paper-oriented modes as Chinese collectors or scholars and their American peers who tend to view the development of Chinese painting through the lens of

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Qianlong collections which themselves had been founded on the post-literati, dry linear mode.³⁸

On the whole Chinese paintings in Japanese collections would appear to be go back at least to the massive importation of Buddhist culture (and along with it painters and craftsmen) during the Tempyô Period (729-749). Non-Buddhist paintings, too, can be seen in the imperial collection placed in 756 in the Shôsôin Repository in Tôdaiji. The Japanese have legitimate claims to a long history of sinological interests, which began no later than the early sixth century in studies from statecraft, religion to the arts. Japanese perception of Chinese painting history, however, differs radically from that of the Chinese. This would appear to be due largely to the nature of imports and to the models used by Japanese artists from the at least the Heian period to the eighteenth century.

Late 15th century shogunal collections of Chinese art were at first conditioned by the type of art works brought back by Buddhist monks returning from studies in China. These, more often than not Buddhist-related, came to find their places in different parts of the monastic compound: for the public Halls of worship coloured iconographic paintings on silk, for private quarters ink-paintings in the manner of the Court painter Liang Kai (*daizhao* in 1201) who also painted in Chan oriented styles, and other members of the Southern Song academy like Xia Gui, Ma Yuan (both *daizhao* in the reign of Emperor Ningzong, r.1195-1224), the latter's son Ma Lin, as well as paintings by monks like Mu Qi and Yujian (both of the 13th century).

As connoisseurs of art, however, while Japanese imperial and aristocratic patrons of the Heian period could be considered practitioner-connoisseurs in the Chinese sense, being men and women of high artistic cultivation, the last seven centuries which had no scholar class as such, witnessed the rise of shogunal patrons who were not themselves adepts at the brush arts in the Chinese sense. While the Heian witnessed the rise of indigenous histories, literary anthologies, as well as some literary forms based on Chinese mo-

³⁸ On the movement away from descriptive, textural modelling and the ascendance of brushstroke-oriented aesthetics, see J. Stanley-Baker, "The Development of Brush-Modes in Sung and Yüan", *Artibus Asiae* XXXIX, no1, Ascona, Fall, 1977:13-59; and Fu Shen, "An Aspect of Mid-Seventeenth Century Chinese Painting: The Dry Linear Style and the Early Works of Tao-chi" *Proceedings of the Symposium on Paintings and Calligraphy by Ming yimin*. Institute of Chinese Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1976:579-617.

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dels, the study and imitation of Chinese cultural material as such begins with an intensity of purpose only in the Muromachi period (1392-1573). The 14th century, for example, witnessed a sharp rise in sinological interests among the Chan/Zen communities. Studies of Chinese literary forms rose to such fever pitch that the prelate Gidô Shûshin (1324-1405) condemned those of his followers who placed literary accomplishments above the search for enlightenment.³⁹ Different schools of ink painting came to be associated with different monastic communities, not uninfluenced by visiting Chinese or returning Japanese monks. In the capital of Kyoto, the city of Osaka and in the provinces, interest in Chinese ink paintings prevailed both in clerical and in secular circles. While Japanese shogunal collections in the first part of the Muromachi period had been conditioned by contacts with the literary monks or *bunjinsô*, toward the latter fourteenth century the ink monochrome manner came to be taken up by professional painters as well. Gradually the shogunal art establishment grew independent from the monastic community and came to rely on its own curatorial staff, the Ami.⁴⁰ Records of Chinese paintings and styles came to be kept both in clerical and in secular quarters.

Imported Chinese ink paintings as well as their Muromachi copies and interpretations would appear to have been perceived in Japan along three basic categories, each with its respective mood/function. With parallels in the script-styles of calligraphy, they saw the angular, more clearly articulated styles of Ma and Xia as the *shin* or formal style; the more rounded and abbreviated style associated with the Monk Muqi was seen as *gyô* or semi-cursive style; and the most abbreviated and dynamic style associated with the monk Yujian was perceived as the *sô* or cursive style. In descending order of formality, paintings of the respective styles were each assigned appropriate *situ* in rooms according to their mood or function within both Buddhist and secular architecture.⁴¹ In Japan more than in China, it would seem that paintings conditioned their surroundings when used in

³⁹ See introductory essay by Yoshiaki Shimizu and Carolyn Wheelwright in *Japanese Ink Paintings* (A catalogue of paintings of the Muromachi period in American Collections. Princeton, 1976)

⁴⁰ Ibid: 34. See especially Richard Stanley-Baker's doctoral dissertation, *Mid-Muromachi Paintings of the Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang*, Princeton, 1979, section III dealing in particular with the Ami as curators.

⁴¹ See R. Stanley-Baker, *Ibid*, Section II:82-100.

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more permanent architectural contexts such as sliding doors or when pasted on the wall as *kabeharitsuke-e*. For example, all the sliding-door panels which envelop a room may be painted with one continuous landscape of a certain style, with the effect of enclosing the room in one giant handscroll. In this way the paintings acquired a relatively permanent nature as part of the architecture, at least for a season. There may even be reason to relate the theme of paintings in a room with the building of a garden pond in front of it.⁴² Whether this formalised apportioning of script and painting styles to architectural contexts has antecedents in China, however, is a subject which awaits further studies.

A significant and hitherto little noted aspect of Japan's processes of assimilation of foreign stimuli is that the Japanese, more than the Chinese in their own respective processes of absorption, would appear to have demonstrated a high level of selectivity and independence.⁴³ The ranking of Chinese works in Japanese collections, for example, reflect a more direct, more aesthetic appraisal of works, relying less on the name value of the alleged artist, and more on the artistic and emotional appeal of each work. This can be seen in shogunal manuals such as the *Kundaikan sayû chōki*,⁴⁴ prepared by members of the Ami family of curators, Nōami (1397-1471) and Sōami (c.1485-1525).⁴⁵ The

⁴² See R. Stanley-Baker, *Ibid*: 84.

⁴³ See J. Stanley-Baker, "The Obaku Connection: One Source of Potential Chinese Influence on Early Tokugawa Painting" *Proceedings*, International Symposium on Sino-Japanese Cultural Contacts, The Institute of Chinese Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1979 (1986. Art volume:99-154). In my book, *Japanese Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1984, this is also a major theme.

⁴⁴ (A Fifteenth-century Connoisseur's Manual of Chinese Art), it is a compendium which now includes the *Gunshō-ruijū* version with a Nōami colophon dated to 1476; the Kofukuji *Kundaikan sachōki* of 1566, the Jishōji *Kaden* with a colophon by Sōami; the Tōhoku-bon version of 1559 with internal colophons dated to 1511 and 1526; and the Tokugawa version now in the Tokyo National Museum. See Tani Shin'ichi ed. *Sadō koten zenshū*, Kyoto, 1958: vol. II.

⁴⁵ In the simplest version, the *Kundaikan sachōki* of 1566, top rank (*jojo*) was given to a varied group including Buddhist iconographical paintings, landscapes attributed to ancient masters, the Tang masters Wu Daozi, Han Gan, the Song Emperor Huizong (1082-1135); academicians Xia Gui and Ma Yuan, monk painters Muqi and Yūjian of the Southern Song, Zhu Deron, Zhao Yong, and Sun Junze of the Yuan, and other more obscure Buddhist and secular painters. Middle rank was accorded to an equally disparate group including Zhao Lingrang, Li Gonglin, Su Shi, Yan Liben, Wen Tong and Qian Xuan who in China would have undoubtedly occupied the foremost rank. Compare Chinese ranking of the previous century, in Xia Wenyan's *Tuhui baojian* (Treasured Mirror of Painting, pref.1365) where Li Gonglin is considered the first among Song painters in grasping the essence of the ancients, Zhao Lingrang's brushwork was considered unsubstantial, Su Shi and Wen Tong were without match in sublime creativity, and Qian Xuan was however recorded without notable enthusiasm. This text, in fragmentary version, was in Japan at this time, as evidenced by the diarist Unsen Daigoku in his *Hekizan nichiroku* (Diary from the Green Mountain) which covers the years 1459-1463, and 1465-1468. See Kondo Keizo, ed, *Kaitai shiseki shuran* (Collected Historical Documents in 33 volumes) Tokyo 1900-1902: vol. 25.

earliest, or Gunshô-bon version of 1476 of the *Kundaikan sayû chôki* had established three simple classes of ranking along Chinese lines, but without subdivisions. Some of the masters here ranked in the Lowest Class are by 1511 elevated to First Class.⁴⁶ Japanese ranking would appear not to imitate that set out in Chinese treatises, but to reflect on the whole a more native perception. That is, in spite of what reputations the purported artists may have had in China, Japanese collectors and curators appraised each work (some being forgeries) according to empirical merits. It may be said that Japanese collector/curators redefined their own social and artistic values, and the roles that Chinese paintings played in them.

Here four observations may be made. Firstly, even more than in China, the label and the painting do not always appear to be closely related. That is, when monks returning from China brought with them paintings obtained from their immediate mainland Chan community, the actually genuine specimens comprised mostly contemporary or recent works by and for members or associates of that community. However, signed paintings by famous historical Chinese masters such as Wang Wei, Li Gonglin or even Zhao Mengfu were often only dimly if at all related to their purported authors. Secondly, *types* of painting the likes of which no longer exist in China and of which there would appear to be no mention in Chinese writings, survive in Japan as sole evidence of certain significant (if hitherto neglected) phases of Chinese artistic activity.⁴⁷ Thirdly, imported Chinese works often underwent a change in format and proportion to suit Japanese contexts. Handscrolls, a format originally intended for a one-to-one, artist-viewer relationship in a private

⁴⁶ Men like Han Gan, Yazi, Zhu Deren and Zhao Yong, among others. Several of the Middle Class masters are the same: Wen Tong, Su Shi, Qian Xuan, as well as some enjoying supreme prestige in China like Mi Fu, Father and son. Top Class includes Tang giants like Wang Wei, Wu Daozi, Song masters Li Gongling, Emperor Huizong, the Academicians Li Anzhong, Li Tang, Li Di, Xia Gui, Ma Yuan, Ma Lin, Yan Ciping and their Yuan follower Sun Junze, also painters of abbreviated styles, Muqi and Liang Kai.

⁴⁷ For example, there was a type of figure painting prevalent in Southern Song Chan circles called *wanglianghua* (apparition paintings) which features extremely faint ink throughout. The face is modelled in very faint indistinct dry ink, with a few extremely fine lines for facial features, while the garment is rendered in wet, light grey ink strokes. This type of painting has long been lost in China but has been identified by Shimada Shûjirô in his study, "*Môryô-ga*", *Bijutsu Kenkyû*, nos 84 (1938) and 86 (1939). The development of *môryô-ga* as a genre of figure painting in Japan has been studied by Shimizu Yoshiaki in his doctoral dissertation, *Problems of Moku'an Rei'en*, Princeton University, 1974. A slightly later genre which features paintings above which a group of friends inscribe a plethora of poetic writings on a particular occasion for a particular purpose, left no surviving evidence in China (aside from literary records), but in Muromachi Japan was known as *shiga-jiku* (hanging scroll of poetry and painting) of which a great number, done for specific occasions (a monk's departure, a friend's studio), survive.

I-f1 Japanese Contributions: Muromachi Collections

atmosphere seated by the desk, were often transformed for public display. In particular those of the *Eight Views of Xiao Xiang* attributed to Muqi, Yujian and others, were cut and remounted into separate hanging scrolls for display in ostentatious contexts.⁴⁸ Fourthly, works not originally related to one another were displayed together in formal contexts peculiar to Japan, that is, in a spatial and social ambiance entirely foreign to their Chinese creators, and so transformed in their packaging and display as to alter considerably their original aesthetic contexts and appeal.

I-f2. EFFECT OF *suibokugashi* ON THE STUDY OF CHINESE ART HISTORY

The gradual divergence of focus between China and Japan regarding the use of inkwash and graded tonalities⁴⁹ would appear to have had a significant impact, as we shall see, on their respective apprehension of the history of Chinese painting up to the Qing. This is true not only among Tokugawa writers on Chinese art, but on modern art historians as well. By the end of the eighteenth century when the painter-theorist Kuwayama Gyokushû (1746-1799) wrote his treatises on painting, his interpretation of Chinese and Japanese idealist or Southern School painting reflected a fundamental divergence in perception from Chinese counterparts.⁵⁰

Japan's perception of liquidity, amorphousness, brushlessness (lack of linear brushwork), or of a coarseness of brushwork in applications of thick ink, etc. as hallmark of the *ippin* or sublime class (though dissonant with contemporary and later perception in China where *yipin* had by the seventeenth century become identified solely with the dry linear tradition),⁵¹ would appear to have been in fact fairly on the mark with regard to the Song-founded *shirenhua*. It matched in spirit and in techniques the spontaneous expres-

⁴⁸ On the subject of repackaging Chinese paintings for Japanese use, see R. Stanley-Baker, op cit: 128-139; 198-204.

⁴⁹ I have given a thumbnail sketch, in Appendix ii, of Japan's developments in inkwash painting along Southern Song and Yuan, and early Ming (Academy) modes and its effect on perception, during the eighteenth century, of China's *yipin* and/or literati painting.

⁵⁰ I have discussed this in some detail in an unpublished monograph, *Transmission of Chinese Idealist Painting to Japan, the Early Phase, a Note on Methodology and Materia*. It is a rewriting and integration of three separate conference papers devoted to the problems and processes of transmission in the late 17th and 18th centuries. See bibliography.

⁵¹ For an excellent survey of seventeenth century views of the *yipin* style see Susan Nelson, "Rocks beside a River: Ni Tsan and the Chin-Kuang Style in the Eyes of Seventeenth-century Critics," *Archives of Asian Art* 33, 1980:65-88.

siveness promoted by Mi Fu (1052-1107), a main founder of *ximo* or inkplay who, as primary promulgator in his day of the Dong and Ju landscape styles, would appear to have been, in retrospect, king-maker of the Southern Tradition.

In this light it would also appear that had Yuan amateurs grasped the philosophical principles of Mi's playful expressiveness in painting and understood what he had admired in the Dong-Ju style: (plain and unassertive amorphousness and wetness, and certainly freedom from studious brushmanship),⁵² the development of Chinese literati painting might well have taken a different course. It is an interesting irony that Japanese artists and theorists had remained faithful to Northern Song literati ideals, that is, the original notions of sublime or *yipin*, throughout the *wenrenhua*-dominated centuries of Yuan, Ming and to a large extent Qing.

It was the Chinese themselves, in the person of Zhao Mengfu with his emphasis on linear brush strokes in the Dong-Ju style as understood and perceived in the early fourteenth century, who had as it were betrayed the original promise and potential initiated by the eleventh century explorers. In Japanese painting and theoretical circles, however, Song *shiren* or scholar-bureaucrat ideals had remained fairly intact. This is a crucial point which must be examined by students engaged in the study of pre-Ming painting. Its significance in the reassessment of Chinese art history in its broader perspectives remains to be explored in depth.

I-f3 METICULOUSNESS IN MODERN JAPANESE STUDIES

Japanese scholars are privileged to study the works direct, at close range and for extended periods.⁵³ As a people the Japanese have been, compared to the Chinese, notably

⁵² The original image of Dong or Ju is a problem distinct from the problems in this study. On the relationship between the Dong-Ju models in Mi Fu's perception and their fourteenth century renaissance on the one hand, and, on the other, their efflorescence in seventeenth century Japan, see Appendix ii.

⁵³ In the past, monastic custodians and shogunal curators had direct access to the collections and aspiring painters, monks and professional painters in the employ of shogun or regional lords, had access through the custodians. Today, public and private collections are open to scholars on a regular basis.

reverential toward old art works, treating them with something akin to religious awe.⁵⁴ Works of art are examined with remarkable meticulousness. While extensive use is made of photography, it does not replace direct examination with the naked eye.⁵⁵ They are studied under several disciplines and in great detail. The art historian has access to various collection records of temples and regional lords, shogunal and monastic diaries which are often of great help in tracing the transmission of certain paintings.⁵⁶ Textual study includes not only Japanese import and collection records, but the rich store of original Chinese sources, sometimes including texts or fragments which are now unique. Retouching is taken very seriously because a later hand, during repairs or playful "improvements", may drastically alter the original appearance of the work, not only in School Style, but also in period style. Detailed reports of retouching provide clues to the original state and the date of the painting.⁵⁷ Meticulous technical studies have uncovered much information about the

⁵⁴ There has traditionally been an association of craft and beauty with the divine or *kami* in Japan. When repairing an ancient work, for example, unlike his Chinese counterpart who aims for as complete a restoration as possible and who does not hesitate to cover the original brushwork with his own, the Japanese restorer scrupulously distinguishes the original from the repair. Art works of many different "grades", from what to Chinese eyes may appear as the most lofty to the most humble, have been treasured alike in Japan for their beauty and their relationship to the owner, and handed down through the generations with great care as *denseihin*. By contrast Chinese collections tend to lay stress on the "noble" or expensive items, items which impress with their excellence in spirit, perfection in craftsmanship, or known high cost. Damage to artworks in Japan may be likened unto a wound and in China an accident.

⁵⁵ Rather, photography of various types serve an auxiliary function, mostly for enlargements, and in facilitating the reconstruction of flaked-off or over-painted portions of the original inaccessible to the naked eye. X-Ray, Infra-Red, Ultra-Violet examinations are lavished on early Chinese works, as for example those in the Shôsôin Repository and in ancient temple holdings. The painting itself is studied beginning with the box whose lid-inscription and enclosed papers and silks carry the record of transmission. Then the mounting and backing are studied. Eye-examination is detailed to the extreme. What cannot be seen with the naked eye is examined with the aid of enlarged photographs made under the various light waves and X-rays in search of what may lie beneath.

⁵⁶ Studies in Muromachi painting by students of Professor Shimada Shûjirô have demonstrated the usefulness of such official and non-official records. See studies by Carolyn Wheelwright, Shimizu Yoshiaki, Richard Stanley-Baker and Anne Yonemura in their individual papers, or collectively in the collaborative exhibition staged in honour of Professor Shimada, *Japanese Ink Paintings*.

⁵⁷ An outstanding example of the meticulousness is *Shôsôin no Kaiga* (Paintings in the Shôsôin) edited by the Shôsôin Office and published by the Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha in 1968. Professor Shimada's discussion of the six panels of *Lady Under Tree* is a classic example of the attentive and cautious process of such examinations. Beginning with the observation that the original backing had been replaced before the screens entered the Shôsôin, Shimada covers the first four screens inch by inch, noting the incidence and nature of retouching, discussing the function of the fine red lines occasionally found along the ink outlines, keeping a sharp eye on the vitality of the work. Thus he was able to reconstruct much of the process of production for this type of "feather-coloured" painting, where large portions of colouration had once been provided by kingfisher feathers glued onto the paper. The pigment analysis by Dr. Yamazaki Masao is of the type not yet conducted on Oriental paintings elsewhere.

The National Institute for Art Research (Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyushô) in Tokyo comprises not only art historians, but separate departments of archaeology, conservation, chemical analysis and photography. Japanese scholarship in the arts is typically detailed and multi-faceted.

materials of the paintings (on tomb or monastery walls, on lacquer, silk of paper) and enlightens historical studies in general.⁵⁸

I-f4. THE MUROMACHI MODEL

Some basic assumptions of modern scholarship in Muromachi painting provide an admirable model for the study of Chinese art history. Since early Muromachi paintings in the inkwash style were then something new in Japan, a basic assumption is that each work (figure, orchid and bamboo, animals or landscapes), just like iconographic paintings, was based on a model or group of models imported from Southern Song, Yuan or early Ming China. Another assumption is that a single model may spawn several generations of copies. This does away with the notion still prevalent among some Chinese art historians that when two versions of a given painting emerge one must be a direct copy of the other.⁵⁹ There are even enviable sources of documentation for much of artistic activities in monasteries or the shogun's palaces.⁶⁰ A ~~third~~ assumption is that the primary function of a hallowed name heading a tradition is the identification of a particular style, and not the identification of the Master himself.⁶¹ In examining a Shûbun tradition, rather than cataloguing "Shûbun's oeuvre" containing all good quality attributions, Muromachi specialists tend to consider works in the style of the Shûbun School dating from the period of the Master's activity (1430s-60s) well into the 16th century.⁶² With this approach the art historian examines the

⁵⁸ The use of pigments not native to Japan have, for instance, greatly clarified issues of trade and cultural intercourse of particularly the fifth to eighth centuries.

⁵⁹ In a meticulous step-by-step investigation, Shimizu Yoshiaki unravels the mysteries surrounding a painting of orchids traditionally ascribed to the Yuan monk Xuechuang Puming. He demonstrates its stylistic proximity to the Japanese monk painter Chô'un Reihô who had been a follower of Xuechuang, but shows reasons why it could not be by Puming, nor even a Reihô original but a 15th century copy. He further cites a [late-17th century?] Kanô copy of a painting of orchids and rock by Chô'un Reihô which in turn is based closely on a 1343 painting by Xuechuang Puming. Entry 33 in *Japanese Ink Paintings*, op cit.

⁶⁰ Richard Stanley-Baker writes in the Introduction of his doctoral dissertation, op cit, "The extremely direct nature of the relationship between Chinese paintings owned and proudly displayed by the shoguns and works of similar theme and style produced by Japanese painters in the fifteenth century is one that is closely documented, especially in monks' diary entries of the late fifteenth century such as the *Onryôken nichiroku*" (p.8).

⁶¹ Carolyn Wheelwright and Yoshiaki Shimizu writing in the introduction to *Japanese Ink Paintings*, op cit, display an emancipation from the type of naïveté still common to Chinese art where any "tradition" is assumed to reflect the style of one Master: "Shûbun's significance lies not in his biography but in the ink-painting tradition bearing his name as it developed during and after the second quarter of the fifteenth century." (p.28)

⁶² See Ann Yonemura's entry on a Shûbun School landscape (Entry 13 in *Japanese Ink Paintings*, op cit)

I-f4 Japanese Contributions: The Muromachi Model

unfolding of an evolutionary process and sees the string of attributions as representative of evolving perceptions of a given style across decades and centuries. This approach would appear to be more sound methodologically than the practice evidently more prevalent among Chinese art historians who tend to explain and interpret a whole corpus of attributions through its more attractive or "representative" examples, in terms of the development of a single master, as reflections of changes in his style, age or health.

I-f5 KANÔ SHUKUZU

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the orthodox painters for the shogun in Japan were members of the Kanô family. They not only painted for the shogun and sometimes for Buddhist temples, but like the Ami before them who had served the Ashikaga shogunate, they were curators of shogunal collections.⁶³ For this purpose, and for their own edification, they began an admirable practice of making reduced but detailed copies (*shukuzu*), of extant works. Like a monumental photographic archive, the Kanô *shukuzu* have preserved for the modern art historian, not only very close copies of famous Japanese masterpieces, but of a great many Chinese paintings which had entered Japan from the Song and Yuan onward, many of which are no longer extant. Through systematic study of the *shukuzu*, one is able to reconstruct many lost paintings. The Kanô painters, especially the gifted Tanyû, made informative copies not only of works by the Muromachi master Sesshû (1420-1506), but also of many of Sesshû's "copies of Southern Song and Yuan paintings." Here much of the brushwork of the reflected original is clearly indicated, though in a somewhat simplified manner for greater clarity of individual brush-modes. To an experienced eye, however, they are invaluable documents of many little known facets of Chinese painting.

In retrospect, looking at pre-Yuan painting from a twentieth century perspective, the Chinese would appear to identify the central qualities of antique, elegant and the lofty (*gaogu, guya*) from a six-hundred year tradition of increasingly dry and linear *wenrenhua*

bias. That is, their preference has long been conditioned for the dry, linear, brush-stroke

⁶³ Major modern studies of Kanô painters by Japanese scholars include the work of Watanabe Hajime, *Higashiyama suibokuga no kenkyû* (Studies in Ink Painting of the Higashiyama Period). Tokyo: Zayûhō Kankōkai, 1948, and more recently Tsuji Nobu'o, "Kanô Motonobu" in *Bijutsu kenkyû*, nos.246, 249 (1966); 270, 271, 272 (1970). These are modern analytical studies which depart from traditional accounts by members of the Kanô school. Those were attempts, based on Chinese models of narration, to document the supremacy of their own school since antiquity, and comprised works such as Ooka Shum-boku's *Gakuko senran* (An In-Depth Look at the Craft of National Painting, Prefaced dated 1740), published by Sakazaki Tan, op cit: 43-66, or indeed the standard history, *Honchō gashi* (History of Painting in our land [our era]), a record kept by Kanô Sansetsu (1589-1651) which was subsequently edited and published by his son Kanô Eino (Yoshinobu, 1631-1697) with the aid of Kurakawa Dōyû in five books (*satsu*) in 1678. This is the first comprehensive history of art published in Japan, including discussions of the origins of painting, painting officials (in the shogunate), styles, movement, subjects and titles, biographies of some 405 painters from antiquity to Sansetsu's own day. This was followed in time by a section on signatures and seals, and in 1819, by Hiyama Tansai's *Zoku honchō gashi*, (Sequel to the History of Painting in Our Land).

oriented paintings done on paper, where the fibres of the material are raised creating an interesting textural flavour in the brushwork. The long separation from paintings which employed many layers of inkwash on silk (or paper) would appear to have resulted in a loss on the part of Chinese connoisseurs of a basic sensitivity for atmospheric rendering and subtle techniques in inkwash modelling, modes to which the Japanese eye has remained over the centuries finely tuned. Hence the renowned twentieth century connoisseur Pang Yuanji could unhesitatingly accept a dry, linear work on paper as an autograph by the late 10th century Juran⁶⁴. Such folly would have been unthinkable in Japan.

By extension, American scholars trained under Chinese guides steeped in post-Yuan texts and in *wenren* paintings, too, eventually would appear to have arrived at a perception of Chinese painting history along Chinese post-literati, or *wenren*-oriented lines. An increasing identification with post-Yuan Chinese values often accompanies the scholar's growing command of classical Chinese, and as his experience in Chinese *wenren* painting is deepened. For not only in texts, but in private Chinese homes or national museums, the contemporary viewer is exposed to collections formed under and guided by seventeenth and eighteenth century orthodox preferences. From Dong Qichang to the "Four Wang, Wu and Yun"⁶⁵ and their followers to the present day, the dry linear mode would appear to have continued to dominate the elite of painting circles.⁶⁶

But the Japanese on the other hand, had only in the nineteenth century caught up with their earlier "misconception" of *wenrenhua*, when enough contemporary examples

⁶⁴ This account is related in my interviews with C.C. Wang, published in retranslation into Chinese in serialized form as *Huayulu* (Discourses on Painting). See bibliography.

⁶⁵ The great collector-aesthete Wang Shimin (1592-1680), son-in-law of Dong Qichang and grandfather of the greatest exponent of the tradition, Wang Yuanqi (1642-1715), Wang Jian (1598-1677), Wang Hui (1632-1717), pupil of Wang Shimin and teacher of Yun Shouping (1633-1690), and Wu Li (1632-1718).

⁶⁶ For a discussion of the enervating effect of *wenrenhua* on the development of Chinese art as a whole, and its emancipation in the hands of Wang Jiqian, see J. Stanley-Baker, "A Closed Cycle in Chinese Art" in *Free China Review*, vol. 36 no.7, Taipei (July 1986): 10-27.

from Qing China arrived in the dry and dense linear style derived from the Four Wang.⁶⁷ Their dominant experience had been that of a wet, amorphous mode reflected in the writings of Gyokushû, and it is this greater familiarity with pre-Ming Chinese painting and aesthetics which has enabled Japanese artist-theorists of the eighteenth century like Gyokushû, and twentieth-century scholars like Shimada to arrive at an unimpeded understanding and lucid exegeses of many once-important aspects of earlier Chinese painting.

Though trained in the German school of art historical analysis, early modern scholars utilize Japan's own collections and experiences of Chinese art, and made their assessments independent of Chinese or European opinions. Moreover they were able to conduct extended personal, direct examinations of art works *in situ* and at close range. While to some orthodox Chinese collectors and critics Japanese collections of Chinese paintings, being largely related to the Southern Song Academy (belittled since the Yuan) and to Buddhism (hardly regarded as worthy of collection or display), represent little more than peripheral glosses to the mainstream of Chinese art,⁶⁸ these works in fact survive as unique and valuable documents of certain artistic phases which had been central to certain

⁶⁷ Compare the writings of nineteenth-century sinophiles like Nakabayashi Chikutô (1776-1853), Tanomura Chikuden (1776-1835) whose perception and painting reflect increased sinicization. Like their painting compared to the freewheeling japaneseness of Taiga's painting and Gyokushû's writings, the 19th century artist-theorists strain to become more Chinese: their writings and literary allusions become more Chinese, their landscape more linear and less lyrical, clearly departing from the early *nanga* style of the 18th century. Seen from 19th century Japan, it is clear how thoroughly japanized early *nanga* had been. Ikeno Taiga had treated the few Chinese techniques and elements he selected for incorporation in an entirely Japanese way, where brush strokes become large, graded swashes of ink wash, half-descriptive and half-evocative. I have discussed in some detail the japanisation of *wenrenhua* in "A Heterodox Chinese Painting Tradition in the Formation of Japanese *Nanga*" in *Proceedings*, International Conference on Sinology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, 1981.

⁶⁸ As is well known, while Buddhist clergy had always enjoyed high prestige in Japanese society, as most emperors upon retirement joined their midst, their lot in China had been far more precarious, winning favour with one emperor and being virtually wiped out under persecutions with the next.

sectors of Chinese painting before the Ming.⁶⁹ Even though the Chinese side of the story is largely limited to the orthodox view which, according to the bureaucratic elite, is the most refined and the only aspect worthy of study or emulation, the history of Chinese painting which the modern art historian must reconstruct in broader aspects, reveals continuous and lively interactions between disparate groups, orthodox, Buddhist and foreign, which have for centuries informed and shaped its development. The West is only beginning to benefit from the enormous contributions provided by Japan's various ancient collections and by its contemporary scholarship.

The Chinese tradition in practitioner-connoisseurship with its unique sharp eye for quality and technical details would appear to have, in retrospect, been subject to the eroding influence of social considerations. The Japanese tradition, derived on the one hand from centuries of genuine and reverential care for Chinese paintings (albeit after their preliminary format-adjustment to suit native functions) has resulted in the habit of minute examination where effects of (a series of) retouchings do not escape close analysis. On the other hand, as a result of its protracted internal development along Southern Song aesthetics, it has remained free of the dry-linear bias and has remained more finely attuned to the nuances of inkwash manipulation of pre-Ming painting. Furthermore, the study of Muromachi painting history has led to the development of a sophisticated system of enquiry after (series of)

⁶⁹ The modern field of Chinese painting history has long been immeasurably enriched and solidified by the contributions of major senior Japanese scholars like Tanaka Toyozô, Tanaka Isshō and Shimada Shûjirō. Typical of the best of Japanese sinological scholarship are Shimada's studies on lost Chinese painting techniques, and lost texts on painting and calligraphy. These are testament not only to his personal genius, but to his training in early twentieth century Japan with direct and technical access to collections of Chinese art, books and fragments no longer extant elsewhere, and above all with the patient meticulousness typical of Japanese scholarship, as well as freedom from social constraints attendant on the Chinese type of connoisseurship. His work represents a high tide of Japanese contributions which has provided new dimensions to the study of pre-Ming Chinese painting. His Chinese studies, for example, cover a wide variety of topics, including among others the *pomo* or spattered ink technique in "*Haboku sansui-zu*" (On Sesshū's *haboku* landscape) in *Kokka* 700, 1950: 213-4; his identification of *wanglianghua* as a genre of painting, and the *yipin* tradition mentioned above have opened up subjects which have long lain hidden deep in Chinese history. In his study of the lost text *Songzhai meipu* (Prunus Blossom Painting Manual) by the Southern Song artist Wu Taisu, dated to 1351 by the author (with a 1349 date on its end colophon) Shimada traces the entries into Japan of the various fragments of this text. See "*Shosai baifu daiyo*" (Main points in the *Songzhai meipu*) in *Bunka* xx, 2, 1956: 96-118. Tanaka Kisaku first explored the Qing phenomenon of finger-painting, and Yanagisawa Taka identified Tibetan influences in the Saiin mandala said to have been copied from an original brought in from Changan in the 9th century. These and other very meticulous studies, often conducted with the aid of a great number of infra-red photographs and slides, have advanced our understanding of certain subjects and techniques in considerable depth.

models for given works, and has emancipated the scholar from naïve assumptions of implicit authenticity, or of direct relationships in cases of relatable works.

Comparing China and Japan's experiences in collecting and in interest, it is clear that while China excels in its production and understanding of literati painting to a unique degree, Japan excels in its broader interest in all manner of Chinese painting except the (Yuan and Ming) literati. Together the two traditions of study would appear to produce a more accurate understanding of the larger history of Chinese painting.

To combine Japanese caution in the examination of paintings, sophistication in scholarship, sensitivity to nuances of inkwash, with Chinese traditions of the practitioner's connoisseurship and command of technical intricacies of the brush should, it may be submitted, provide a firm foundation both in connoisseurship and in scholarship. A Western attitude of disinterested investigation of the greater currents of artistic and stylistic development, the causes and function of change in an evolutionary pattern would, clearly, provide a more fully rounded methodology for the historian of Chinese art.

I-g WESTERN TRADITIONS IN THE STUDY OF CHINESE PAINTING

Western traditions in the study of art history as a form of art criticism, philosophical discourse or technical exegesis, go back at least to Plato and Aristotle; in Rome Cicero and Pliny the Elder.⁷⁰ From the beginning Western scholars would appear to have been drawn to fundamental questions of dialectics. Plato (c.427-347 BC) makes Ion ask Socrates why one is thrilled and awakened by the art (poetry) of one man (Homer) and put to sleep by that of others, whereupon Socrates' replies that is it the critic's inspiration, and not the art (in the sense of technical accomplishment) which causes this [sympathetic] reaction. He invokes the "stone of Heracles" to illustrate a chain reaction of magnetic attraction which

⁷⁰ (Gaius Plinius Secundus, 23/24-79), author of the encyclopaedic *Historia Naturalis* whose books xxxv and xxxvi deal with painting and sculpture, has remained a principal source for the modern art historian.

attracts the like-minded so that those who love Homer have no ears for others.⁷¹ In this we see an early voicing of Kant's distinction between subjective imagination and objective understanding, one inborn, the other acquired. Enquiry into the nature of aesthetic response and the categorizing of the human psyche into separate functions is evidently typical of western thought which from early writings reflects an interest in the causal structure of nature. This would appear to contrast with certain mental attitudes in China which would appear to have been searching since antiquity for effective or efficacious ways of Dao, or nature, so that one may submerge oneself in it, and not to stray beyond its operative principles. Aristotle (384-322 BC) proposes "to enquire into the structure of the plot as requisite to a good poem; into the number and nature of the parts of which a poem is composed " in his discussion of "Poetry in itself and of its various kinds, noting the essential quality of each."⁷²

Significant for the sinologist, Aristotle offers a cautionary note which would appear to have been neglected in later Western art criticism. In his *Politics*, Aristotle writes, "It is difficult, if not impossible, for those who do not perform to be good judges of the performance of others." For it is precisely this which distinguishes the Chinese connoisseur from his post-Hellenic counterpart. Chinese collectors are themselves adept at using the brush and are cognoscenti of good brushwork for which the collecting of masterpieces of calligraphy and painting held such consuming interest. Western collectors, at least of the last millennium, have often been patrons who may go so far as to commission particular types and subjects of painting, but whose interest in the art and craft of painting focusses more often on the financial details of the project.⁷³ There has not been the empathetic, *participatory* reading of an artwork wherein the patron repeats the psycho-physiological nuances of the artist's process of creation, tracing his every brush movement and sharing the mental and spiritual state of the artist at the time of creation. This which has from the beginning been the quintessential part of the Chinese experience of viewing a work of

⁷¹ *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. B. Jowett (4th ed.; Oxford, 1953).

⁷² *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W.D.Ross (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1910-1952: *Poetics:1*)

⁷³ An excellent account of certain problems in patron-artist relationships is Michael Baxandall's *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (Oxford, 1972).

painting or calligraphy, has rarely been part of Western collectors' consciousness. To date, Western-trained historians of Chinese painting have been reluctant to acquire the skill of judging brushwork from the viewpoint of the practitioner-insider, or to use Chinese criteria and to examine paintings from a Chinese perspective. In his provocative study, "Values and history in Chinese Painting," John Hay comments on Western studies in Chinese art and notes,

Exceptions are George Rowley's Principles of Chinese Painting [1958, Mai-mai] Sze's The Tao of Painting [1956], and [Roger] Goepfer's The Essence of Chinese Painting [1963]... their poor and even bilious reception...can be taken only as a massive rejection of Chinese painting as the Chinese practised it or, more reasonably, as a failing of our own methodology. 74

While this is a strong statement, it firmly points to the need of integration in our methodological approaches. For while from the Western perspective the lack of even an approximation of the Chinese experience is beginning to take its toll, from the Chinese perspective the infusion of Western analytical methodology has liberated name- and quality-bound Chinese connoisseurship from its centuries-long preoccupation with brushwork excellence and famous names "worthy of one's studio," and opened the field to a far more wide-ranging and penetrating understanding of the history of Chinese art. Incisive studies have opened new paths of enquiry undreamt of in the narrow confines of the collector-based Chinese traditions of connoisseurship. After the introductory works of earlier scholars whose contributions have brought Chinese world views to the West and made available under one cover photographs of paintings of various periods⁷⁵, and the production of extensive photographic archives of painting collections,⁷⁶ scholars could proceed to investigate diverse routes in greater depths. Students were not only enabled to produce sociological analyses based on biographical studies, or studies of the stylistic

⁷⁴ *RES* 6, Autumn, 1983 (72-111) and 7/8 Spring/Autumn 1984 (102-136).

⁷⁵ A great milestone was the publication in the 1950s of Osvald Sirén's *Chinese Painting, Leading Masters and Principles* in seven volumes which brought together a great number of photographs, as well as biographies and lists of surviving paintings, which remains to date the foundation of the Western student's material sources.

⁷⁶ Thanks chiefly to the unstinting efforts of Prof. James Cahill who pioneered the great photographic archive project, now housed at the University of Michigan, when he launched the photographing of some three thousand paintings in the National Palace Museum, then in Taichung. Recently Professor Suzuki Kei provided the counterpart with the photography of Chinese paintings in non-Chinese collections around the world, with archives in the Centre for Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo. Many exhibitions now send slides or negatives to Ann Arbor. In this way access to vast numbers of paintings undreamt of even a century ago is now available to the modern art historian.

evolution of particular painters, but in time local and international conferences came to be held on major themes in Chinese painting, each time engendering heated interest and deeper and wider probing.

In recent years the relative one-sidedness of our studies has been felt by members of the field in recent years, and gave rise to the unprecedented and outstanding interdisciplinary conference on *Theories of the Arts in China* organized by Susan Bush.⁷⁷ Here for the first time scholars of different disciplines came together and attempted to reconstruct in concert, the "mountains and valleys of the mind" of the ancient scholar and amateur artist. Here John Hay's concern with the cosmological aspect of the field is in itself a major thrust which has added a new dimension, and opened a new and vital path for investigation. These new developments may indicate a growing interest in probing the Chinese mentality of ancient times, that is, in deepening Western understanding with Chinese types of perception. Interest in processes and techniques of painting, too, serve as evidence for an eventual rapprochement of Western and Oriental traditions.

In the meantime, aside from regular publications of studies on individual paintings, particular painters or schools, and particular modern public or private collections of Chinese paintings, studies which may be termed interpretive curatorial studies, there have been also more abstract analyses on the history of Chinese painting presenting hitherto unexplored paths of investigation. Among the many notable methodological approaches in recent years are studies of social contexts which bring artist(s) into fuller relief,⁷⁸ the

⁷⁷ Sponsored by the Committee on Studies of Chinese Civilization of the American Council of Learned Societies and held at Bowdoin College at York, Maine from the 6th to 12th June, 1979.

⁷⁸ James Cahill observed for example certain relationships between social status and brushwork style among Ming painters in his studies of Tang Yin and Wen Zhengming which have since been incorporated into *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty*, Weatherhill Tokyo/New York:1978. Cahill has also identified various relational strands linking artist groups and their social status or political times. Aside from the surveys of later Chinese painting being published by Weatherhill, his exhibitions for Asia House and for the University of California have always focussed on highly interesting themes which reflect the probing mind of the Western scholar. The exhibitions have centred on themes such as the socially heterodox painters he has called *The Fantastics and Eccentrics* (Asia House, New York, 1967), the tumultuous upheaval in *The Restless Landscape* at the fall of the Ming (Berkeley, 1971), or as the transmission of Chinese literati painting to Japan, introducing to America the subject of *nanga* in *Scholar Painters of Japan: the Nanga School* (Asia House exhibition of 1972).

patterns of patronage and their effect on painting,⁷⁹ studies focussing on the nature and evolution of specific genres,⁸⁰ enquiries into the rise of theories on and techniques in Pre-Song painting,⁸¹ and investigations into the inner dynamics of Chinese consciousness which lie behind various artistic manifestations.⁸²

⁷⁹ This formed the topic of a specialized conference organized by Prof. Li Chu-ting in Kansas City in the late 1970s. While the collected papers have not yet been published to my knowledge, the effect generated on thinking about Chinese painting is reflected in much of recent writings including doctoral dissertations and teaching as far away as Taiwan. Sherman Lee studied "The Nature and Significance of the Collection of Liang Ch'ing-piao" (*Proceedings, International Conference on Sinology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, 1980*), Fu Shen studied the patterns of collection of the Mongolian Imperial House during the Yuan in *Yuandai Huangshi shuhua shoucang shulüe*, Taipei, 1980; Mary Rogers studied the Mu family in the life of Dai Jin, presenting her findings at the 31 Orientalist Congress in Kyoto in September of 1983; Chung Eun-Suk devoted her master's thesis on the collector Xiang Yuanbian in *Xiang Yuanbian zhi shuhua shoucang yu yishu* Taipei, 1984, among others.

⁸⁰ As for example the dissertation on figure painting by Ellen Johnston Laing, *Scholars and Sages: A Study in Chinese Figure Painting*, University of Michigan, 1967 and many related studies since then; Helmut Brinker's studies on Chan related portraiture, with "Shussan Shaka in Sung and Yüan Painting", *Ars Orientalis IX*, 1973:21-39 among others. Recent studies concentrating on bamboo painting have come chiefly from the east, with Li Lincan's "Zhongguo mozhuhua di duandai yanjiu (Studies in dating Chinese ink bamboo painting)" *Gugong jikan* vol.1 (1966) no.4:25-100, Xu Xiangling's master's thesis, *Yuandai mozhuhua zhi yanjiu* (A Study of Yuan Ink Bamboo Painting) for National Taiwan University, 1979, and recently Sungmii Lee Han's unpublished doctoral dissertation *Wu Zhen's Mozhupu: Literati Painter's Manual on Ink Bamboo*, Princeton University, 1983, among others. Interest in flower and bird painting has been shown in the international symposium on the subject held in Kyoto under the direction of Professor Shimada in 1983. Aside from Chinese and Japanese scholars, German scholars have shown great interest in calligraphy, with studies devoted to the subject such as Roger Goepfer's "Kalligraphie" in *Chinesische Kunst. Malerei, Kalligraphie Steinabreibungen, Holzschnitte* by Werner Speiser, R. Goepfer and Jean Fribourg. Fribourg, Office du Livree, 1965:193-246 and his *Shupu: Der Traktat zur Schriftkunst des Sun Guoting*, in *Studien zur Ostasiatischen Schriftkunst*, vol.2. Wiesbaden, 1974; Dietrich Sékel's "Die Wurzeln der chinesischen Grafik" in *Asiatische Studien* 10 (1966):1-40, Lothar Ledderose's *Die Siegelschrift (zhuan-shu) in der Qing Zeit: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Chinesischen Schriftkunst*, Wiesbaden, 1970, followed by "An Approach to Chinese Calligraphy," *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 7, no.1 (1972): 1-14, "Mi Fu yü Wang Xianzhi," *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 7, no.2 (1972):71-84 which, together with several studies of Daoist practices in the Eastern Tsin, culminated in his book on the subject, *Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy*, Princeton University Press, 1979.

⁸¹ There has been intense study and discussion of the 5th century texts of Wang Wei and Zong Bing by Susan Bush and Munakata Kiyohiko presented at conferences, some of which are published in Bush, ed., *Theories of the Arts in China*, as well as Munakata's unpublished doctoral dissertation, *The Rise of Inkwash Landscape Painting in the Tang Dynasty* (Princeton, 1965) and his searching study of Jing Hao's *Bifaji* (A Note on the Art of the Brush, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum XXXI*, Ascona, 1974). Major full-length studies include Michael Sullivan's *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China* (California, 1962) and its impressive sequel, *Chinese Landscape Painting in the Sui and Tang Dynasties* (California, 1980) and, more recently, Roderick Whitfield's studies of Buddhist painting in the Dunhuang banners from the British Museum Collection in the three-volume *The Art of Central Asia* (Kôdansha, 1982-4).

⁸² Chief among such studies are George Rowley's *Principles of Chinese Painting*, Princeton 1947, Roger Goepfer's *The Essence of Chinese Painting*, (English translation, London, 1963), and more recently John Hay's intensive and extensive investigations into the physical and cosmological bases of Chinese painting, beginning with his doctoral dissertation, *Huang Gongwang's Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains: Dimensions of a Landscape*, Princeton University, 1978, which was followed by searching studies such as, among others, "Values and History in Chinese Painting" *RES*, op cit, and most recently *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: The Rock in Chinese Art*, (China House Gallery, 1986) which introduces the subject in its many roles, from microcosmic realities and pictorial models to their uses as pigments and functions in alchemy. One of the greatest contributions made in recent decades was the publication of Susan Bush's inter-disciplinary conference *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton, 1983) where many highly individual and thought-provoking studies are presented for discussion and enlightenment of lasting value.

I-g Western Art Historical Traditions in the Study of Chinese Painting

With the concept of autonomous visual traditions impelled by internal principles of development and decay which George Kubler has aptly called the shape of time⁸³ the Western art historian is able to focus on the patterns of change and evolution of particular traditions. Such studies may be undertaken, ideally independent of emphasis on masterpieces associated with particular collections. While compared to China the notion of *style* came late to the West⁸⁴ it is the Western tradition of art historical analysis which introduced concepts such as history of style, and period style, and the notion of *periodicity*.⁸⁵

The Vicious but Methodical Circle

Applied to the history of Chinese painting, we have been formulating notions of period styles based on certain monuments which had been generally accepted, and conversely dating unsigned paintings on the basis of the period styles we have defined, in an alternating process which gradually refines our perception of Chinese painting history. This appears as a vicious circle but is in fact the inescapable route toward increased understanding. Panofsky summed up the problem in "Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art", saying, "To correct the interpretation of an individual work of art by 'history of style', which in turn can only be built up by interpreting individual works, may look like a vicious circle. It is, indeed, a circle, though not a vicious, but a methodical

⁸³ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

⁸⁴ The first one to use the term was evidently Giorgio Pietro Bellori (1615-1696) who wrote in his *Le vite de' Pittori, Scultori et Architetti moderni*, "Lo stile è vna maniera particolare e industria di dipingere e disegnare, nata dal particolare genio di ciascuno nell' applicatione e nell' uso dell' idee, il quale stile, maniera or gusto si tiene della parte della natura e dell' ingegno." (Rome, 1672: 460 ff). Here he means clearly the notion of particular manners of depiction, that is, technical particularities invoked in the execution of artistic ideas. While in European art the notion of style, which had its antecedents in literature and was applied like this in the late 17th century, in China script-styles as *ti* was a clearly defined concept already by the first century AD, calligraphy styles had been firmly established since the Tang and, as I have pointed out above, Mi Fu used it for painting by the 11th century, .

⁸⁵ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1915), *Principles of Art History*, tr. M. Hottinger, London, 1932. In modern Western studies it has become an indispensable analytical principle. An example of a recent demonstration of this principle is "Periodization in the Arts and Patterns of Change in Traditional Chinese Literary History" by Maureen Robertson in Bush, and Murck, *Theories of the Arts*, op.cit.

one."⁸⁶ At the same time, studies have been made in authentication which are based on structural and morphological analyses.⁸⁷

I-h The Present Thesis: Prime Objects and the Sequence of Image-Change in Historical Accretions of Functional Authenticity

It is my thesis that until the finer outlines of the history of Chinese painting are more firmly set, the art historian must by necessity constantly refine, redefine and readjust both his notions of period style on the basis of evidence from newly discovered, more securely datable paintings, and redate certain paintings based on newly sharpened formulations of period style. Compared to the state of art history in the West, it may be observed that the history of Chinese painting has not yet achieved such a state of relative assurance with regard to clearly defined period styles or with regard to a relatively secure chronology of major masterpieces. It is my thesis that the chronology of surviving Chinese paintings passed down as *denseihin* in imperial and private collections comprise an admixture not only of prime objects, but massive numbers of later accretions the overwhelming proportions of which have yet to be acknowledged. It may also be said that the more inspiring problems of meaning, context, patronage, indeed stylistic evolution, can only be studied in full force once we have greater assurance regarding the date of execution of most of the paintings discussed. We must at least have greater assurance and be able to demonstrate with convincing evidence the authenticity or the date of not only the genuine specimens, but those of the model behind the accretions. Working with paintings that are unsorted as to actual dates of execution but only roughly divided into clusters of styles,

⁸⁶ Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Peregrin^o 1955. Reprint 1983 :61.

⁸⁷ In this area the Princeton School, following the lead of George Rowley, have made persistent efforts at clearer articulation and sharper focus. See for example the many studies of Fong Wen, such as, "The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting," in *Artibus Asiae XXV* (1962):95-140; "Chinese Painting, A Statement of Method," in *Oriental Art* n.s. IX.2 (1963): 73-78; "Toward a Structural Analysis of Chinese Landscape Painting," in *Art Journal* 28 (1969): 388-397, and in the introductory chapter of his *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L Elliott Family and John B Elliott Collections*, Art Museum, Princeton University, 1984. Following in this vein are studies by Richard M Barnhart in his *Marriage of the Lord of the River, A Lost Landscape by Dong Yuan* Ascona, 1970, and *Studies in Connoisseurship* by Marilyn and Shen Fu, Princeton, 1973. While studies of the "Princeton School" have generated heated debates around the authenticity of the paintings chosen for discussion, it is my thesis that in such cases it is not so much the investigative methodology which is to be faulted as its application to paintings associated with one's benefactors. The dilemma of the collector/curator is discussed in J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries in Chinese Painting", *op cit*.

schools or traditional lineages loosely hung around Great Masters may be from this vantage point somewhat premature.

Prime Objects, Replications and Functional Authenticity

George Kubler's identification of Prime Objects and Replications in his study of primitive art⁸⁸ is eminently applicable to Chinese painting. "Prime objects and replications denote principal inventions, and the entire system of replicas, reproductions, copies, reductions, transfers, and derivations, floating in the wake of an important work of art. Prime numbers have no divisors other than themselves and unity; prime objects likewise resist decomposition in being original entities. Their character as primes is not explained by their antecedents, and their order in history is enigmatic." From the original work or Prime Object, to the latest copies, reductions, transfers or derivations, that is, what I have termed the quasi-originals, evolutions, alterations and accretions in Chinese painting,⁸⁹ there is as it were a life of the Master's image which develops through time.

Attributions accepted by collectors as genuine acquire what I would term FUNCTIONAL AUTHENTICITY and become in turn models for future sincere copyists and insincere forgers alike. Each generation of accepted forgeries reflects its own age, its own perception of the distant original or prime object and must be studied as a genuine document of its own (actual) time. I have proposed that we treat works (genuine or not) associated with a given master which have been traditionally accepted by discerning collectors as historical evidence of their respective times. Perceptions of different periods evidently condition the image's format, its content and motifs, compositional style, down to brush techniques as we will see below. It is the art historian's task to identify and chart the course in the gradual accretion of all these aspects in an ancient master's "oeuvre."

I have proposed a system which accounts for non-genuine works, following the model approach used by art historians of Muromachi painting, which views works first as parts of a sequence produced in the manner of a particular school or lineage, with less insistence on identifying a specific master's hand. I have further proposed four levels of stylistic

⁸⁸ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time*, New Haven, 1962: 39.

⁸⁹ See end of J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries in Chinese Painting," op cit 64-66

distance separating attributions with FUNCTIONAL AUTHENTICITY from the prime object, levels which may help mark the growth and proliferation of a particular master's style images as they are being developed by generations of pupils and forgers down the centuries.⁹⁰

The state of the field today is on the threshold of a bolder and more dynamic phase which sees history not as a set of static milestones but a complex web of continually changing mutual relationships in an on going process. These relationships are less on a static one-to-one basis but more on a one-to-many-to-many *process* of change and transformation. Not only were painting styles changing, but also the image of ancient masters in the *perception* of later artists, collectors and forgers alike.

In this thesis I propose to focus on the problem of methodology in the study of Chinese paintings of relative antiquity, that is, paintings more than three hundred years old where chances of destruction and substitution are higher. I have chosen the Yuan master Wu Zhen (1280-1354) as a case study. Integrating methods of Western and Oriental traditions, the investigation proceeds as follows:

a. Based on the Muromachi experience of collecting Chinese paintings of the Song and Yuan periods, it is assumed that pre-Ming paintings of the Southern Song and Yuan, i.e. *Sôgen no kaiga*, were perceived and painted still in a PHYSIOGRAPHIC mode (see II-a1), that space in the early fourteenth century is expansive, and that atmospheric washes are *sine qua non*. Japanese collections demonstrate that pre-Ming painters were more responsive to wash and tonal gradations than Ming artists, that interest in brush play upon fibrous paper, although gaining momentum in Yuan painting, does not displace concern with three-dimensional space till well near the end of the century. Even works by Ni Zan from the third quarter of the 14th century, while clearly progressive in the direction of dry-brush linearity, nevertheless retains a remarkable degree of moist atmospheric and an unmistakable consistency of groundplane. This has been observed by many scholars.⁹¹ I.e.

⁹⁰ Outlined in detail in J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries in Chinese Art," op cit.

⁹¹ On this subject the controversy remains open. I opt for the side of caution and uphold Fong Wen's earlier view that as prime object *Rongxizhai* of 1372 is the most reliable candidate. If this is the case, its lateness in the artist's life and its conservatism on the side of physiographic perception, would exclude a great many of the "works of earlier dates" featuring a more progressive, more Ming or ideographic outlook.

for most of the fourteenth century, in deed it would appear for all of the Yuan, within the scope of the present experiment, only works conforming to criteria defined in Section II-a1, II-a2 are considered.

b. Overall examination of the total composition is based on structural and morphological analysis. This may be the single most effective and objective method for determining the date of the *composition*. However, the date of the actual process of painting needs the Chinese methods in brushwork connoisseurship.

c. Chinese connoisseurship with regard to *gufa yongbi* or brushwork quality is utilized in the judgment of actual *hands*. In close studies of brushwork tracing or line-copies of early compositions can be identified. Furthermore I should like to submit that it is possible to define the periodicity of brushwork. That is, from external considerations such as changing structure of silks, papers and brushes, and the intimately related internal factors of changing speed and weight in brushwielding, density or layers of brushwork, proportion of wash and stroke, deductions can be made with reasonable accuracy regarding the date of production of particular paintings. Such a treatise would require a separate study, however, but observations concerning brushwork and brushwielding are made throughout the following study when relevant.

The lack of consensus in the field would indicate that reliance on Western methodology alone cannot produce a completely satisfying and more exact understanding of the subtle and organic processes that the history of Chinese painting represents.⁹²

This thesis also emphasizes the distinction between the rôles of the collector/curator and the scholar/art historian. The curator must make meaningful to the public the intrinsic and extrinsic values of the objects on display. He is often obliged to assume implicit authenticity regardless of their actual nature. For in the museum case the object often represents a host of values and traditions of which it is the sole alleged example. It must, therefore, function as a *symbol* of these values.

⁹² It may be compared to attempts to analyze a music score by studying its compositional structure (identifying its movements, changes of tempo and harmonic structure, etc., all of which can be done on paper) without once playing it, listening to a performance of it, or sight-reading hearing it with the inner ear in its actual time-frame. Such stylistic or structural analysis is devoid of its own essence: the music.

The art historian, on the other hand, can be free of the psychological pressures affecting acquisition-based enquiries. He is therefore better able and duty-bound to proceed from a ground zero attitude and enquire with greater open-mindedness. It is incumbent on the art historian to be detached enough to be prepared to discover that not a single work has survived of a given master's hand, or that the "masterpieces" with his signature are recensions of one of the non-genuine categories I have outlined above. The art historian should account for all attributions which had acquired functional authenticity and spawned subsequent forgeries in *their* likeness. For once a work has been accepted into a serious collection it forms an aspect of the purported Master's image and becomes, no less than prime objects, part of the Master's image and a model for posterity, that is, students, followers and forgers alike. The art historian must not only distinguish the pearls from the fish eyes, but also identify the various types of apochrypha which intrude into the Master's oeuvre and range of style-images at each stage. He traces the sources of each new addition and defines, in relation to the Master's genuine oeuvre, its respective distance. That is, he determines whether they are QUASI-ORIGINALS, EVOLUTIONS, ALTERATIONS or ACCRETIONS, and assess^{es} their dates.

The present thesis is devoted not so much to particular painters or paintings, styles or biographies as it is an examination and demonstration of various analytical techniques at our disposal. I have used techniques of the three traditions discussed above in a complementary fashion and have found them to be efficacious as mutual checks and balances.

The integrated critical methodology is implemented here in a case study on paintings attributed to Wu Zhen (1280-1354) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. I have made extensive and repeated investigations of each work at close range, over a period of well over a year, viewing and reviewing them in different combinations. In this regard it cannot be overemphasized that direct examination is essential for in depth understanding of a work of calligraphy or painting. This crucial process cannot be replaced by arm-chair examinations through photographic reproductions. Vital considerations of size and scale, relative size to other works, relative texture and colour of silk or paper, relative colour or seepage

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of ink, the incidence and nature of retouching, repairs, cropping, numbers of silk-widths, and above all the palpable *qi*, the resonant energies of the work, are reduced to irrelevancy in reproductions. But these considerations are *sine qua non* and observable only in direct examination, with the relevant works displayed side by side and no glass between painting and viewer.

The conclusions in the thesis regarding date and hand of particular works pertain primarily to paintings subjected to direct and lengthy examination. Conclusions regarding other works cited to greater or lesser degree cannot carry the same weight, as they result from indirect or arm-chair analysis, based on evidence from photographs or slides alone.

In the following sections, prime objects will first be identified from among the group of landscape paintings and, if any have survived, their peculiar traits will be noted. Next, to test the method, these criteria will be used to search among the bamboo attributions to determine if any attributions satisfy the defined personal prime criteria. Lastly, if prime objects are found in both groups and contain specimens of calligraphy, morphological analysis of the calligraphy will define the graphology of Wu Zhen's hand. It will be a test of these analytical methods to determine if personal traits identified in landscape painting, or bamboo painting, agree with those identified in the calligraphy.

II. AN INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF PRIME OBJECTS

a. PROBLEMS OF PERIOD AND PERSONAL STYLE

1. PHYSIOGRAPHIC AND IDEOGRAPHIC MODES OF PERCEPTION

Reverberating Mountains and Breathing Waters in Song and Yuan: the Physiographic Principle in Mediaeval Chinese Painting

Examining more reliable monuments of the Song, Yuan and Ming periods¹, it becomes evident that composition and especially morphology undergo a radical change in basic structure and in perception of mass and space. A clearer definition, or a better confirmation of our current definition of early fourteenth century painting style, may be arrived at by comparing groups of paintings of Song date to groups of paintings of Ming date. It may then be seen that the polarities represented are also present in the fourteenth century, where the shift appears to take place somewhere at the end of the century.

Panofsky's dilemma is once more invoked here. As initiator and investigator of a pilot study which seeks to determine with greater accuracy the authorship of a group of paintings attributed to Wu Zhen, I am forced by circumstances to use what I call "untested" monuments for other Masters. There is no way around this. As more studies using my method are completed and as more works are firmly established as monuments, scholarship will move toward the state when tested works will outnumber the untested. For the moment in this pilot study, however, the ratio of untested works to those being tested is overwhelming, as none of the other works has been subjected to the type of scrutiny being given here to the works attributed to Wu Zhen. This need cause no undue alarm, but hopefully inspire relief that at last it is being done. I can only hope that my choices are not too wide of the mark, falling if not on Prime Objects, then hopefully on quasi-originals or at best evolved images² of not too great a stylistic

¹ These will be chosen from excavated tombs and murals and some *denseihin* passed down through the generations, the dates of which have not been rigorously established, however. The *denseihin* represent my own opinion founded on my present research experience, but their dates, like those of most *denseihin* paintings, remain to be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt in a thorough, systematic manner.

² See Joan Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *Oriental Art* XXXII no.1

II-a Problems of Period and Personal Style

and periodic distance from the originals. The following monuments are cited to illustrate morphological relationships of house-to-trees-to-mountains, boats-to-waters and figures-to-landscape as practiced in the Song.

a. Archaeological monuments, more reliable though perhaps not always as "contemporary" in style as metropolitan works, include the following:

The Liao tomb in the Zhaowuda district in Liaoning.³

The 1116 Liao tomb in Tianqing, Hebei.⁴

The Jin dynasty tomb of Yu Yin.⁵

The Southern Song tomb of Yu Gongzhu and his wife, built in 1226.⁶

b. Among *denseihin*, or ancient works which have been passed down through the generations, for more fully rendered Song paintings with some colours and on silk we may cite:

-*Fishermen* handscroll associated with Xu Daoning (c.970-1051/2), Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Mo. (fig.1),

-*Travellers Among Autumn Mountains* by Fan Kuan (early 11th century), Taipei (fig.2)

-*Buddhist Retreat by Streams and Mountains* attributed to Juran (fl. 960-985, early-11th century?), Cleveland Museum of Art,

-*Solitary Temple Amid Clearing Peaks* ascribed to Li Cheng (919-967, mid-11th c?), Nelson Gallery (fig.4),

-*Landscape* handscroll ascribed to Yan Wengui in the Abe Collection, Osaka, Japan,

³ Xiang Chunsong, "Liaoning Zhaowuda diqu faxiandi Liaomu huihua ziliao," (Sources on painting discovered in the painted Liao tomb at Zhaowuda, Liaoning Province), *Wenwu*.1979.6:22;

⁴ Hebeisheng wenwu guanlichu, "Hebeisheng Xuanhua Tianqing liunian Liaomu fajue jianbao," (Brief report on the excavation of a painted Liao tomb dated to 1116 in Xuanhua, Hebei Province), *Wenwu*. 1975.8:37.

⁵ Li Fangyu, You Baozhang, "Jindai Yu Yin mushi bihua," (Murals of the Jin period tomb of Yu Yin), *Wenwu* 1982.1

⁶ CPAM, Sichuan Province and Cultural Centre of Pengxian County, "The Southern Song dynasty tomb of Yu Gongzhu and his wife," *Kaogu xuebao* 1985.3:383.

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-*Early Spring* by Guo Xi (c.1020-1090) dated 1072, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (fig.3),

-The anonymous handscroll, *Streams and Mountains Without End* datable to the early 12th century in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig.5),

-*Twelve Landscape Views* ascribed to Xia Gui (fl.c1180-1224), Nelson Gallery (fig.6),

-*Travelling Upriver during the Qingming Festival* by Zhang Zeduan (early 12th c.) and

-Anon, *Autumn Colours Amidst Rivers and Mountains* ⁷, National Palace Museum, Beijing.

For the more abbreviated, inkwash-based Southern Song compositions on paper there are:

-*Landscape* by Li Gongnian in the Princeton Art Museum and from Japanese collections:

-*Dream Journey on the Xiao and Xiang*, an evolved Mi style in Tokyo National Museum (fig. 7),

-*Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang* ⁸ ascribed to Muqi in the Nezu Art Museum, Tokyo, and to *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang* ascribed to Yujian dispersed in various collections.⁹

As has been observed by many scholars and is here confirmed by monuments, it would appear that during the Song, mountains were perceived to possess a sovereignty and integrity next to which other elements were reduced to secondary importance. This is in marked contrast to paintings of the 10th century which, while already reflecting increasing importance of the landscape elements, still hark back to Tang preoccupation with narrative painting in which the human figures dominate and

⁷ Attributed to Zhao Boju by Emperor Hongwu in 1375. Most of these are reproduced in Osvald Sirèn, *Chinese Painting, Leading Masters and Principles*, 7 volumes, New York and London, 1956-8, Vol III. also Cleveland Museum's *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Paintings*, 1980 for works in the Cleveland Museum and Nelson Gallery.

⁸ These were original from single handscrolls and are now fragmented images (cut up and hung as separate scrolls) depicting various scenes of the Eight Views series.

⁹ Works in Japanese collections cited are published together in *Sôgen no kaiga* (The paintings of the Song and the Yuan) compiled by Tokyo National Museum, Benridô, Tokyo, 1962.

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loom large, as can be seen from the late-10th century painting called *Shenshan huiqitu* (playing chess in deep mountain) excavated from a Liaoning tomb showing figures interacting in the setting of soaring peaks.¹⁰ The eleventh century begins to develop an unfettered perception of nature's larger contours, depicting soaring peaks or low-lying ranges both of which are often ringed with clouds or mists and highlighted from beneath. This technique serves to imbue the mountain forms with a sense of hallowed nobility, grandeur and distance. The surrounding space was carefully preserved through mists, low shrubs, distant hills or waters, all of which appear to reflect 'guest-like' attitudes or *binge*. Whether Northern or Southern Song, whether painted in colours and detail on silk, or more abbreviated in ink on paper, or whether frescoes on plaster grounds, compositions of these centuries share certain features which must reflect period style. To enumerate:

In overall perception, there is a sense of stillness, or rather a grand resonance which reverberates through the valleys and extends deep into space (perpendicular to the picture plane), recalling the echoing reverberations of plain song or antiphonal choir music in Europe's mediaeval cathedrals, where reverberation lingers long after the sound-making has ceased. Space here, compared to that in paintings of other periods, seems alive and palpable, acting as the medium which conveys these reverberations. The resonance reverberates through deep valleys, gorges, or floats outward, expanding across calm waters. It is a *yinyang* configuration where the visible, positive mountains serve to enliven the invisible though equally positive space. Thus from mountain peak to mountain peak, from valley to valley, the integrity of these, nature's largest forms, is established by the resonance echoing back and forth amidst their grand substantiality. The visible mountains dominate their surrounding area on all sides, and the invisible but palpable space is a major integral factor of the reality described in the composition.

¹⁰ See Yang Renkai. "Yemaotai Liaomu chutu guhua di shidai jiqita," (Concerning the dating and other problems of the excavated paintings at Yemaotai in Liaoning). *Wenwu*.1975.12:37 and more recently in *Yemaotai diqihao Liaomu chutu guhuakao* (Studies on the ancient paintings excavated from No.7 tomb in Yemaotai, Liaoning), Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1984.

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In structure this view is achieved by the use of an unreal ratio symbolizing a hierarchical order of nature where supremacy resides in the mountain forms and majestic space, to which all else (tree, house, boat, man, shrub, grass in decreasing order) is subservient and dependent. Human activity (marketing, travelling, fishing, etc.) is notably dwarfed (in size as well as in decibel count) in the midst of resonant Nature. Mountains in Song do not appear to be punctuated with assertive human dwellings as in Ming paintings. Whether imposing cliff-top temples or thatched huts in humble hamlets by the water's edge, buildings on the whole seem not to disrupt this all-encompassing, reverberating stillness of Nature, but tend to conform to the contour lines of the mountains or lie tucked away beneath a covering of verdant foliage, recoiling, as it were, from the space. Mountain markets and hermit dwellings are usually tucked behind mountain folds, enveloped in bamboo groves or shrubs; they tend not to alter the mountain contours with disproportionate architecture. Fishing villages hug the coast, the buildings creep close to the ground, and boats align themselves along the shore in close parallel so as not to create extra "noises" with individual direction-angles or obtrusive size, their masts are barely visible beyond the banks. Rooves in general appear to be pitched more on the horizontal and do not seem so steep as in Ming works. Their upturned "owltails" at the two ends of the ridge are not so stressed as in Ming works. In the Fan Kuan *Travellers*, buildings atop the right midground ridge are darkened with wash; they sink low and proceed in the same direction along the mountain ridge, in keeping with its contour line. In cases where palatial manors or grand temples crown a peak as in the Nelson Gallery Li Cheng attribution with a monastic compound (probably a work of the mid-eleventh century), contours of the hexagonal hall and lesser buildings beneath do not dominate. Instead, they echo the form of the mountain of which the hall serves as functional and symbolic pinnacle, in sympathetic resonance while the buildings below, by the water's edge, face the viewer in quiescent, parallel rhythms. In the Cleveland anonymous handscroll *Streams and Mountains Without End* (end section), the outlines of the buildings integrate with, extend, or reinforce the contour lines of the mountain or hill in which

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they are placed, and do not create a separate rhythm as in Ming paintings beginning with those associated with Li Zai (d.1433) and Dai Jin (1388-1462). Guo Sui's record of Guo Xi's teachings, *Linquan gaozhi*, says,

*Mountains are large...and water is live...To skirt mountains with mists brings out their height, to lead streams in meandering across far distances brings out their movement.*¹¹

Streams were considered the arteries of mountains which, too, were alive, breathing and exhaling vaporous mists, in communion with Heaven. Nature was perceived to possess a macrophysiological life. Distracting incidents such as outsized people, or buildings placed in dissonance, that is, in tangential directions, are clearly inconsistent with this view. Guo Roxu in the 1070s observed Fan Kuan's painting saying:

*In doing buildings he will first establish their general character, and then wash over them with ink.*¹²

The effect of this procedure is to reduce the buildings' clarity and obtrusiveness, as is clearly demonstrated in the Fan Kuan work mentioned. Guo further points out:

*In painting buildings among trees, one's calculation should be faultless... perspective distances [should] penetrate the space... In painting towers and pavilions, one usually shows all four corners, with the bracketing ranged in order. Front and rear are clearly distinguished without error in the marking-lines...*¹³

Around 1121 the late Northern Song master Han Zho discussed the placement of man-made features in landscape paintings as follows:

Passes (guan) are [only situated] in deep gorges, and with only one path going through. Only when there is no stream can there be a pass...

Castles are surrounded with crenellated walls; buildings face each other. They must be placed within tree groves, on the dark sides of mountains. They must not protrude one after the other lest they resemble cartological renderings. In landscape paintings, only ancient fortresses may [stand out].

¹¹ In Yu Anlan's critical compilation *Hualun congbian* (Henceforth HLCB). Beijing, Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1962: 22.

¹² Guo Roxu, *Tuhua jianwenzhi* Experiences in Painting translated by Alexander C. Soper, American Council of Learned Societies, Studies in Chinese and Related Civilizations ;no.6, Washington, D.C., 1951:22

¹³ Ibid:12. Emphases mine.

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In painting Daoist and Buddhist temples, it is best to enclose them in dark and mysterious valleys, deep ravines, or place them by precipitous cliffs. Only wine shops and inns may be placed on paths [in plain view] among villages. But dwellings of recluses and hermit scholars, people of unfettered [spirit], should be placed in seclusion. On flat plains one may paint rustic wooden thatched huts...

*[Place the] lonely castle on the far side [of the mountain], and the desolate market place at the foot of the mountain... and the mountain village by the narrow pass... buildings should not have many rooms... Pavilions and huts should not be used often... towers and temples should be separate...*¹⁴

Note the stress on quietude, on shielding man-made artefacts behind foliage and mountain folds. As for the integrity of mountains themselves, Han Zhō continues:

Mountains should be lofty. Tall peaks should be engirdled with mists, long ranges should have clouds screening their feet. As distant mountain [ranges] twist their way forward, use clouds and mists to articulate their arteries. Solitary peaks should be placed in the far distance... distant mountains should be in three layers.

*Mountains are ordered along the principle of nobility and deference between host and guests... The hosts are grouped in the centre [of the picture], they are tall and large, substantial and are of heroic mien. They are surrounded by protective, flanking peaks. The large ones are noble and dignified, the lesser ones are inferior [i.e. deferential or dependent in attitude.]*¹⁵

On woods and trees, the text continues:

Trees should intermix, stretching out branches in four directions withered and flourishing... Distant trees should be rendered in two layers, with vapours rising from their feet... A great mistake ;in painting woods is to have the tops [of the trees all of] equal height. One should diversify them by painting taller and shorter [tips]. Among a forest of tall trees, one or two should coil and twist... Tall trees should be sparse and placed on flat plains...

On roads and bridges:

Paths should twist and bend... roads should be alternately visible and hidden... bridges sometimes exist, sometimes don't...

Solitude and quietude are palpable, pervasive, and envelop. man-made objects:

The isolated bridge in the wilderness leads to a distant, bamboo-enveloped hut, ancient temples are bleak and desolate , with pine forests covering the stupas... lonely mists rise from the water's edge... thin fog gathers at the feet of the cliffs.¹⁶

The Han Zhō text, especially the stressed sections, anticipate images in *Twin Junipers (Shuangkuaitu, fig.8)*, *Fisherman's Idyll (Yufuyitu fig.9)* and *Autumn*

¹⁴ Han Zho, *Shanshui chun quanchi* Complete Text on the Painting of Landscape, in the HLCB edition:42. Emphases mine.

¹⁵ Ibid:35. Emphases mine.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Mountains (Qiushantu, fig.10) .This coincidence may suggest either a later (late thirteenth century?) date for the text, or a markedly conservative artists who painted the landscapes. In any event, these three paintings exhibit conservative qualities related to Song painting, and, ^{which} vastly strengthen the probability of their being of early, or Yuan date.

Spring Dawn on a Clear River (Qingjiang Chunxiao fig.11) on the other hand, commits several transgressions: The single path is all-visible and circular; there are far too many bridges with the largest one at lower left further faulted in the perspective of its understructure. The trees are of a single variety, they do not intermix, and are usually of the same height, with distant trees washed in a single shade. There are far too many houses and in too many clusters. They are ostentatious, out of scale, exposed and not shielded by foliage. They face in various (discordant) directions, and one is soaring up far too high. That it is inconsistent with Yuan perception we shall see below. For Rao Ziran, writing in *Huizong shi'erji* (Twelve Pitfalls in Painting, c. 1335), the first pitfall to avoid is overcrowding, or the lack of spatial clarity surrounding all sides of objects:

First [pitfall to avoid]: congestion in composition... first use a bamboo charcoal to sketch out the mountain's dynamics or momentum (shi) in its rise and fall, the sizes of trees and woods, pavilions and figures, each given its proper position. Then step away and examine it [for errors]. When you see that is alright, go over it in light ink to secure it. This is called the minor draft, xiao-lobi... There must be broad expanses above and below, as well as sparseness [space] and clarity on all four sides [of elements or objects] so that it is nearly ethereal [in expression, i.e. above the bustle of common life]. But if it is clogged up above and below, the entire picture painted over [with objects], then the breezes cannot flow and the work lacks interest. ¹⁷

Earlier, Northern Song works tend to be treated frontally and front, middle and backgrounds are treated in separate vantage points. In the Southern Song the vantage point rises significantly and covers a larger part, or most of the composition in one perspective. This permits a more three-dimensional perception of low-lying hills over a lake vista, and more attention is devoted to their sides and flanks. Curiously, by the fifteenth century, a return to Northern Song frontality is evident.

¹⁷ Rao Ziran. *Huizong shierji* in Yu Anlan, ed. *Hualun congkan*. Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1962:52ff

Morphologically, pictorial elements (buildings, trees, houses, boats, man, shrubs and grass, as well as the brushwork itself) of Song times do not appear to have been perceived as adornments stuck on as afterthoughts, unrelated to the mountain. On the contrary, they emerge like boulders engendered by the rock, growing out of it in an integrated, organic manner. The mountain is beyond a doubt the primary element and the source of all life, from which all other elements grow and to which they tightly cling.

In technique, Song paintings are more carefully described, with emphasis on appropriate and varied modelling, to bring out the myriad dimensions in nature of mass, volume and texture. Trees and shrubbery growing on mountains or planes are delineated so as to stand out from the background, with an indication of the space between them and the background mountain. This is often achieved by setting them in the highlight which engirdles the background mass. But morphologically the emphasis is on trees growing in space, out of the earth, and not as in later imitations and forgeries, as flattened tree-shapes silhouetted against a flat layer of light-coloured cloud patch or mountain-mist.

Brush strokes in the eleventh century are invented to suit particular needs, and are used in mixed fashion. To a certain extent this continues to be the rule through the Northern Song. They are not regarded in their own right as brush-modes until the latter 12th century.¹⁸ But through the middle of the fourteenth century, even when a more obvious, brush-mode has emerged, *they do not lose their descriptive function*. Only from the latter 14th century, that is, the early Ming onward, is a clearly non-descriptive approach evident. Post brush-mode forgeries of Northern Song, even Southern Song and early Yuan works often err on the side of brushwork, where texture and modelling strokes are not only rather obvious, but often overly neat. In less inspired tracing or close copies they tend to be applied in a mechanical fashion, as if the artist were constrained to blanket the area with identical strokes or dots.

¹⁸ I have identified the rise of brush-modes in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in which they become a conscious mode, acquiring a value which begins to be divorced from that of description. See J. Stanley-Baker, "Development of Brush-Modes in Sung and Yüan," *Artibus Asiae* XXXIX, Fall, 1977: 13-59.

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Early in the twentieth century Max Verworn proposed the term physioplastic art to designate compositions "consisting of a direct reproduction of the natural object or of its immediate memory image."¹⁹ This term was later adopted by Viktor Lowenfeld in his study of creative processes of the visually impaired who, he found, created works based largely on the artist's own physical experience of the subject (size, texture, depth, etc.) It would appear that the landscapes of Song observe a larger share of the physical experience of nature than landscapes of the fifteenth century onwards. To crystallize the concept of the reverberating mountains and breathing waters described above which reflect a relatively physiological sensitivity in the perception of nature, we may consider the term physiographic as a general guiding principle underlying Song painting.

Sophisticated Brush and Elegant Ink: the Ideographic Principle in Later Chinese Painting

At the other end of the investigation, compositions of the fifteenth century offer a radically different view. For morphological relationships of houses-to-mountains, boats-to-water and figures-to-houses/landscape in 15th century Ming painting further untested but hopefully relatively reliable paintings include,

a. Archaeological or architectural monuments including among others the Baomingsi Daoist temple in Yüxian in Shanxi, with a completion date of 1474.^(fig 18) The many *gachûga* or paintings within paintings with landscape elements provide ample evidence for period style of the mid-15th century. These form a stark contrast, for example, with similar details in the Yongjogong which was completed roughly a century earlier, in 1365.

b. *Denseihin* (in order of antiquity):

¹⁹ Verworn's observations derived from a study of "the earliest beginnings of artistic production in prehistoric times, [where] there existed an art form the creative impulses of which were directed solely by attempts to copy nature. This is the art of the palaeolithic hunter" (interpretation by Viktor Lowenfeld, *The Nature of Creative Activity* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939. Reprint 1952:131). Of tangential interest to the history of the development of Chinese painting, the researches of Verworn and Lowenfeld were guided in part by the desire to examine the theories regarding phylogenesis which held that art of mankind appeared to evolve from the "physioplastic" art of the primitive hunter to the more sophisticated "ideoplastic" art of more developed societies.

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- Festival of the Peaches of Longevity*, anonymous handscroll in the Nelson Gallery,
- Landscape* ascribed to Li Zai in the Tokyo National Museum (Cahill 1978: pl.11),
- Travellers on a Bridge* by Dai Jin in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (fig. 12),
- Rainy Thoughts* (1487) by Shen Zhou (1427-1509) in the same collection (fig. 13)²⁰
- *Fishermen on Autumn River*, a handscroll ascribed to Dai Jin but probably two or three generations later, in the Freer Gallery of Art (fig.14)
- *Twelve Views of Tiger Hill, Suzhou*, album leaves by Shen Zhou (fig.15), as well as works like *Spring Trees After Rain, Boat Returning in the Rain, Brewing Tea* in the Palace Museum, Taipei of Wen Zhengming (1470-1559)

The Palace Museum publication *Ninety Years of Wu School Painting* (1975), for example, contains a great number of illustrations of Ming or later date, but none, of course, of Yuan date, thus forming a convenient group for comparison.

Summing up the new directions taken since the Ming, Tang Zhiqi writes in *Huishi weiyan* (Modest Observations on Painting Matters, ca. 1620):

Landscape [painting] is originally an elegant and sophisticated thing, just like the writing of calligraphy in the cursive or semi-cursive scripts; It is not something which [should] constrain [one] or require arduous work. For if landscape painters were to work with ruled outlines and [meticulously apply colour] pigments like craftsmen painting figures or flowers and birds, then what flavour would there be in it? ²¹

Unlike the writing of Han Zho cited above, the Ming treatise is striking in the number and significance of motifs, and in the absence of space-oriented concepts such as waist- or foot-encircling mists of mountains, or mention of images which are "desolate", "isolated" or "distant". There is no injunction against using too many buildings, carriages, and no hint of "shielding" buildings "behind bamboo groves" or on the "dark side of the mountain."

When painting [first] sit quietly and concentrate: think about where [you will] place the mountain, and where the water; where [to place] pavilions, mansions, temples and Daoist halls, rural manors and rustic huts; and where the bridges, figures, carriages and boats, and only then begin to paint. This way the mountains and valleys will be fresh and new...

²⁰ Works in the Nelson Gallery and Cleveland Museum are well published in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*. (Cleveland, 1980).

²¹ Yu Jianhua ed. *Hualun leibian* (Classified Discourses on Painting):731ff.

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*When you paint buildings, there should be eight or nine people, or [at least] three or four distributed in [various places] before there can be a sense of life. When painting monasteries or temples, then it does no harm to have some quiet, and no people, -- or perhaps one or two old monks, but they should have a peaceful and quiet appearance. With some ancient hoary trees it would be marvellous*²²

Such description perfectly matches the warm conviviality and lively rhythms of such works as *Twelve Views of Tiger Hill, Suzhou* (fig. 15) attributed to Shen Zhou. Buildings and men dominate the hills, dwarfing the hill. And waters are relegated to a backdrop function. A new sound is heard in the gentle and pleasant chattering of old friends. Absent is the notion that things had relatively fixed places or rather, *relative positions* to other things, in the total scheme of nature. Tang Zhiqi offers an active and free association of ideas, ideas which the artist can freely distribute and contrast in his composition. Here one may once more refer to Max Verworn who "

uses the term ideoplastic art when the representations do not spring from immediate observation but express ideas, deductions or abstract knowledge."²³

Note how trees in monastic compounds come almost as an afterthought rather than as a *sine qua non*. Song texts stress the living mountains being fed by living, arterial streams. The Ming text centres on people in social activities. Tang does not speak of "a solitary scholar" or lonely traveller, but conceives of man as an integral part of a definitely social setting.

A new animation in contrasting sizes, colours, directions of motifs accompanies a markedly pictorial (rather than descriptive) contrast in inktones, and contrasts in wet and dry brushwork.

²² Ibid, p. 747.

²³ Lowenfeld, op cit:131. Here the standard of measure was 20th century European children who "produce drawings which are perfect examples of ideoplastic art and paradigmatically illuminate the psychology of ideoplastic processes." Comparing the ideoplastic art of European children with the physioplastic art of the palaeolithic hunter, Verworn pointed out, provided "the strongest possible contradiction to the fundamental biogenetic law according to which ontogenesis - by which we would mean in this connection the development of the art of children - is a condensed recapitulation of phylogenesis by which we would here mean the development of art as a whole." Verworn thus concluded that the European child's art 'represents a higher level of mental activity than the naïve physioplastic art of earlier times. In the art of children there does not seem to be a physioplastic stage preceding the ideoplastic stage...the reason lies in the fact of education, that is, that the consciousness of the child is filled with all sorts of ideas before it proceeds to attempt to represent objects.' Lowenfeld counters this assertion by pointing out that "the reason lies not in education, however, but in the inability to control his muscles accurately enough before it reaches the ideoplastic level." Lowenfeld demonstrates "that the first stage is naturalistic" (136 ff).

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Ming paintings alluding to Song models, for example in *Clearing After Snow in a Mountain Pass* (*Hanguan xuejitu*, fig. 17) by Tang Yin (1470-1523) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei²⁴ may be worth examining with the 14/15th century divergence in mind. Tall mountains have lost their monumentality (vis. the lack of bottom highlighting, and lack of sufficient atmospheric distance between it and the mid-distance architectural complexes). Such a snow scene in the Song and Yuan (cf. Cao Zhibo's painting by the same name in English) in the same collection (fig. 16) in expression would have evoked a sense of pervasive tranquillity and calm which is subsumed in one, unifying, overall reverberation. Here in Ming, however, the mountains and valleys are cluttered with distracting buildings creating sub-rhythms and occluding the open space where in Song a reverberation might have been. Clustered foreground tree foliage obscures the momentum, *shi*, of the mountain and stream in their twisting descent toward the foreground. Above all, it is the bustling human activity, including the rumbling of carts, clattering of hooves, which animate the scene and form the central focus. The artist's own poem (top right) excludes mention of nature except in the lead-in of the first line. His interest is more in the beasts' burdens, the travellers' anticipation of a good drink at the rest stop around the bend. The architectural complexes are characteristic of Ming interest in social status. The high-roofed house and its surrounding cluster of low roofs placed (floating) in the valley between the mid- and backgrounds is not rendered with the intention of providing a rational accounting of its space, but to reassure the viewer-traveller that there is no lack of human comfort nearby. This is an excellent work of its times and is relatively archaistic in conception. Its Song motifs are however entirely transposed, morphologically, to suit Ming functions. The painting is integrated and unified without a jarring accent that feels "out of place", as a Ming picture of a Song painting idea. In this respect it differs in concept and execution from Ming paintings which purport to be Song or Yuan works such as *Spring Dawn*, or *Autumn River* attributed to Wu Zhen, where all the antique elements are jarring and out of phase. (See more on Ming works in Section III).

²⁴ *Ninety Years of Wu School Painting*: 70; Cahill, 1978: 177

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By the fifteenth century the Yuan interest in reaching into deep space (perpendicular to the picture plane) appears to be replaced by an equally strong interest in stretching brushwork along the picture plane and stretching the painting vertically. (This is presaged already in works associated with Wang Meng and other late Yuan masters). In the oeuvre associated with Shen Zhou, a new scale, a new standard of proportions between (the values of) man and nature is established. It would seem as if the artist has now definitely retreated into his studio and closed his windows to the real mountains, to devote himself fully to the art of painting from a study of older *paintings*. That is, variations on art historical models. This approach may be termed ideographic²⁵, and with it scale and shape acquire a new freedom. But evidently there were still certain transgressions in architectural rendering that were to be avoided. Tang Zhiqi notes:

*Today's artists do not know how to depict the brackets and window frames of buildings, and seek to cover them with blue-greens, using the pretext that they are working with fine-outlines and gold paste. This is sheer deception! Actually the bracketing (both parallel and perpendicular to the wall) has its obverse and reverse sides, and the brackets should be two parts depth and eight parts length. The rafters consist of those extending beyond the eaves, and those which project outward and upward beyond the eaves, those with flat ends and those with pointed ends. Missing one fraction destroys a thousand li.*²⁶

Tang's exegesis on architectural members confirms the increase in clearly visible upper structures and increasing roof sizes evident in early Ming paintings from the time of Shen Zhou or even earlier, from around the time of Dai Jin. It is a marked divergence from Song writers' advice against too many buildings, and the repeated injunction to keep buildings low-cropped and close to the land, of darkening them with wash or shielding them with foliage. While Guo Roxu had enjoined Song artists to show the four sides of the roof by means of bracketing lines, Tang Zhiqi's emphasis is

²⁵ Verworn used the suffix -plastic in comparing drawings by palaeolithic man and European children. The suffix -graph seems more applicable to the case of Chinese painting, as the vocabulary (motif), stroke-order (brush-mode) for landscape painting seem to crystallize more markedly in Chinese painting than in Western painting, and to succumb more readily to stereotypes. That the term ideograph is sometimes used for "character" in Chinese writing is significant and useful in that, in the words of Tang Zhiqi himself, by Ming times the performance of a landscape painting had become as exhilarating a pastime as calligraphy and had become a routine feature of tasteful activities at social gatherings. That is, one wrote out a painting at one sitting as much as one wrote out a prose or poetic inscription.

²⁶ Tang Zhiqi op cit:746 in *Hualun lei bian*.

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on displaying in detail the complex variations of a roof's understructure, thus focussing attention onto the building rather than on the landscape-space around or beyond it.

In this light, reexamining the two landscapes so often considered mutually supportive in authenticating exercises, *Spring Dawn on a Clear River*, (fig 36) and the unsigned *Autumn Mountains* (fig. 35), it is clear that a fundamental difference distinguishes the two. The probing into deep space seen in *Autumn Mountains* here represents a physiographic approach while the arbitrary proliferation of motifs in *Spring Dawn* illustrates a basically ideographic approach. What to a Yuan artist may appear as undesirable occlusion of the waterfall at left had become tolerable by the fifteenth century, as it is not the physiographic description of the waterfall which matters then but merely its ideational inclusion in a composition with many different motifs. In an ideographic context, *Spring Dawn* fulfills the expectations of genteel conviviality in the comforting clusters of houses, the reassuring display of affluence, the overall sense of animation and activity with peaks sprouting in friendly profusion, and large, T-shaped distant trees contrast with the vertical accents of fore- and mid-ground trees, and where distant peaks converge on the horizon in lively layers and staggered points. The deep reverberations in *Autumn Mountains* are stopped short as it were, if one looks at *Spring Dawn* expecting to find it expanding in the skies, the waters or in the valleys between peaks.

Looking again at the collection of Ming monuments in this amalgam of archaistic and progressive, coloured and ink monochrome, silk and paper paintings cited above, features which relate them (and Ming-dated works ascribed to Wu Zhen discussed in Section III) include:

In overall perception there is more of a sense of noise, of dominant mass, crowding and movement forming quite a contrast to the stillness, living space and calm of what may be termed the Song view. The first notable difference in composition is the disappearance of breathing, expanding space. Mass is clearly dominant over void. Space has become the leftover part, the caesura which serves to punctuate and emphasize the mass. Houses are larger, as are boats, which are now more obtrusive in

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their rakish angles often in the middle of the waters. The *yinyang* symbiotic relationship of mass and void seen in the Song, gives way to a *yinyang* relationship of brushwork activity and rest. The interest withdraws from deep, three-dimensional space to focus *laterally* upon a lively balance between colours and silk, or in black and white, between ink and paper.

Morphologically houses no longer creep close to the ground as if grown out of the rock, but tend to larger sizes and are placed, inserted onto the mountains, like a brooch. Patterned clouds, trees, pavilions and figures would appear to acquire independence if not individuality and tend to be displayed against a "background." In literati works brushwork has clearly assumed primary significance. Now strokes and dots, like figures or other pictorial elements, acquire individual value and seem externally applied, like a brooch, and no longer generated by the rock and grown out of it. Scholars have long observed the calligraphic quality of the *wenren* mode of painting. It may be seen as part of the process of morphological change from Song to Ming where overall unity gives way to multifaceted fragmentation, where a unifying sound of silent reverberation through space gives way to the busy orchestration of individual movements and values. Compositionally, elements are no longer subservient to a Host but assume equal value, in brushwork, against the background which had become devoid of value. At the same time the view has emerged from deep spatial recesses onto the picture plane, to be all-visible. And only visible elements matter.

Contrasting Song and Ming rendering of similar motifs, one may examine the motif of figures in boats on a body of water as it evolves through the centuries as, for example, between the low-slung boats hugging the shore in the Nelson Gallery Xia Gui scroll of the 13th century (fig. 6), and the bustling activity of the *Fishermen* handscroll ascribed to Daijin (but perhaps of the later fifteenth century, fig. 14) in the Freer Gallery of Art, the world view undergoes a fundamental change. It is the same transformation revealed in the morphological relationship between the lowslung rooves of mountain dwellings and their environment in Guo Xi's *Early Spring* of the late 11th century, and the protruding rooftops which face every way atop dwarfed moun -

tains as in the Shen Zhou *Twelve Views of Tiger Hill* of the late 15th century (fig. 15). It is as if somewhere along the line man-made values have overtaken those of Nature. If this tendency is a gradual one, we may find a mid-point somewhere toward the end of Yuan.

2. FEATURES OF YUAN PAINTING

Western analytical techniques have helped formulate the outlines of period style for the larger phases of Chinese painting, based on archaeologically dated monuments as well as on less solidly datable but generally accepted masterpieces. As mentioned above, it is a reciprocal process where firmly dated paintings contribute to further refinement of our notions of specific period styles, and period styles in turn help us date otherwise undocumented paintings. But in its relatively infant stage, there remains enormous scope in the history of Chinese painting, as it is being continually revised, for adjustment not only of details, but of larger aspects, as we shall see.

For the first half of the fourteenth century, a good deal of work has been done toward a description if not consensus on major features of period style.²⁷ However, there appears to have been no investigation which proceeds from complete scepticism, considering all attributions suspect till rigorously established as genuine, or which first establishes on solid evidence the authenticity of works cited as genuine or "standard." In searching for Prime Objects from works attributed to Wu Zhen, the basic premise in this dissertation has been *not* to assume that there is a "standard style" or image of the Master as has been customary, but to treat all works as unknown quantities until each has been thoroughly analysed as to style, probable date of execution and, if possible, authorship. To be sure, such a process is extremely time-

²⁷ In particular the studies in the English language which have appeared regularly over the last two decades by Li Chu-tsing, and those in both Chinese and English by Chiang I-han, by Chang Kuang-pin in Chinese, have concentrated methodically on the Yuan and on changes in period style. The 1968 large scale exhibition and catalogue by Sherman Lee and Wai-kam Ho produced for the Cleveland Museum a substantial body of important research under one cover, *Chinese Art Under the Mongols*. James Cahill's *Hills Beyond a River* (1976) is the first large-scale general book to concentrate on Yuan painting. There have since emerged doctoral dissertations in the US which focus on single masters and master's theses in Taiwan focussing on single masters or problems of painting technique. See bibliography.

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consuming and, indeed, may lead to nought. That is, it may lead to the discovery that all the works associated with this master are of later dates, and that there is no work surviving from Wu Zhen's hand. To be prepared for this possible (and for older masters even more probable) eventuality however is, I feel, the first step toward the degree of objectivity needed for a systematic examination of the masses of paintings surviving under famous signatures.

For our purposes, some archaeologically dated monuments include the following:

- (c.1265) tomb of Daoist Feng Daozhen with landscape scene.²⁸
- (1300s?) early Yuan tomb with literati motifs, in Miyuan County, Beijing (figs 20,21).²⁹
- (Early Yuan) painted tomb at Sanyanjing in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia.³⁰
- (Early Yuan) tomb of a Mongolian aristocrat with landscape scenes at Yuanbaoshan, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia.³¹
- (Early Yuan) painted tomb of a Mongolian official of the middle to lower ranks in Fujiadun, Liaoning.³²
- (1307) tomb with scenes of filial piety in tomb at Zhōmacun in Changzhi, Shanxi Province.³³
- (completed 1358) murals of the Daoist temple Yonglegong (built between 1247 and 1262) in Shanxi Province (fig.24).³⁴

²⁸ See Datong Museum & Committee for the Preservation of Yungang Caves, Shanxi Province. "Shanxi sheng Datongshi Yuandai Feng Daozhen, Wang Qing mu qingli jianbao" (Report on Yuan tombs of Feng Daozhen and Wang Qing at Datong City in Shanxi), *Wenwu* 10:34-46. 1962

²⁹ Zhang Xiande and Yuan Jinjing. "Beijingshi Miyunxian Yuandai bihuamu" (A Yuan period painted tomb excavated in Miyuan County, Beijing), *Wenwu* 6: 57-60. 1984

³⁰ Xiang Chunsong. Wang Jianguo "Nei-Menggu Chifengshi Sanyanjing Yuandai bihuamu" (A painted Yuan tomb at Sanyanjing in Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia), *Wenwu*.1.1982

³¹ Xiang Chunsong. "Nei-Menggu Chifengshi Yuanbaoshan Yuandai bihuamu" (The painted Yuan tomb at Yuanbaoshan, Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia), *Wenwu*.4:40. 1983

³² Feng Yongqian, Han Baoxing (Liaoningsheng Bowuguan and Ningyuanxian wenhuaguan). "Lingyuan Fujiadun Yuanmu" (A Yuan tomb excavated at Fujiadun, Lingyuan County, Liaoning Province), *Wenwu*. 6.55. 1985

³³ Wang Jinxian. "Shanxi Changzhishi Zhōmacun Yuandai bihuamu, (A Yuan period painted tomb excavated in Zhōmacun, Changzhi City in Shanxi Province). *Wenwu* 6: 66-74. 1985

³⁴ *Yonglugong Bihua Xuanji*, Beijing, 1958, *Yonglegong Bihua*, Shanghai, 1959, *Wall Paintings in the Daoist Temple of Yonglegung*, Beijing, 1964, and most recently *The Yongle Palace Murals*, Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 1985.

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On the collection of securely datable monuments a few points may be noted:

a. Murals after the 1268 tomb of Feng Daozhen, both under and above ground, bracket the period from 1307 to 1358, they do not coincide with the smaller, inner period between 1328 and 1350 to which Wu Zhen-related works ascribe. b. While Yonglegong murals are markedly conservative in conception and strongly suggest Song matrixes, in execution and morphological details however Yuan handling can be seen. c. Even the more "modern" tomb paintings, such as that of the Mongolian aristocrat featuring literati motifs of ink prunus, bamboo and rocks, predate the period of Wu Zhen's activity by several decades. d. While the subject of our investigation is landscapes, most of the monuments are figure paintings. If our methodology relied largely on motifs and composition, these would indeed prove a major obstacle. However, since these paintings allow analysis of morphological relationships of parts, an identification of features of period style pertaining to the late-thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries remains eminently feasible.

A remarkable illustration of recessional three dimensional spatial perception during the early Yuan (1300s) is a carved ceramic pillow depicting a theatre stage (figs.22,23).³⁵ In the last, ceramic actors are placed well *within* the ceramic stage in glaring contrast to the surface oriented perception of later times. In the same issue of *Wenwu* a Qing period carving of a theatrical stage³⁶ places the actors flush with the outer wall. In contrast, on the larger sides of the Yuan pillow, the actors welcome the viewer from across a bridge which is modelled with a *built-in spatial recession*, in one-point perspective, narrowing on the inside.

From older Japanese collections, Chinese paintings recorded by the late-14th and 15th centuries are numerous and derive largely through the clergy and include among others:

³⁵ Fengcheng Xian Lishi Wenwu Chenlieshi. "Jiangxi Fengcheng faxian Yuandai yingqing diaosuo xitaiishi cizhen" (A yingqing-glazed ceramic pillow of the Yuan period in the form of a theatre stage), *Wenwu* 8:82-84. 1984

³⁶ Ibid:80-81.

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- Anon, Yuan. *Reeds and Geese*, inscribed by "Tendai Kyôdô," Inoue Kohô-an (fig.25)³⁷
- Bo Ziting *Orchids and Rock*, Umazawa Kinenkan (fig.26)
- Mao Lun *Cowherd and Trees*, Eda Yuji Coll.
- Tan Zhirui *Bamboo and Rocks*, Nezu Institute of Fine Arts (fig.27)
- Xuechuang *Puming Orchids and Rock*, Imperial Household Agency (fig.28)
- Yong Tian, *Squirrel on Pine*, Osaka Museum of Art,

Later Fourteenth century paintings painted between the times of Ni Zan and Wang Fu, on the other hand, begin to exhibit a gradual flattening of the images and an upward tilt of the groundplane. Although the problem of prime objects among the oeuvre of these masters has not yet been dealt with conclusively, there is virtually no work dated from the time of Wang Fu which stresses an expansive spatial extension perpendicular to the picture plane and which is done in the gradual and consistent recession discussed above. Somewhere past the 1370s, evidently, a major shift in focus occurs and paintings, certainly in the literati camp, begin to stretch in length, becoming taller and slenderer, and the brushwork more overtly calligraphic, with a concurrent loss of interest in physiographic depiction. The complex of causes behind this shift is beyond the scope of the present study. It need only be observed here that the major contrasts seen between Song and Ming painting find a pivotal point toward the end of the fourteenth century (during the early years of Ming), and separate the basic perception of Yuan masters such as Zhao Mengfu, Wu Zhen, and Huang Gongwang Wang, Meng and Ni Zan on the one hand, and early Ming masters like Wang Fu, Liu Jue on the other. Wang Meng, to whose work Richard Vinograd has devoted extensive study, was technically perhaps the most accomplished among the idealist painters, with professional skills the others did not attempt to match. In his densely piled up vertical compositions, the awareness of deep space is manifested in *shenyuan*, or deep distance

³⁷ In the Gunma Prefectural Museum of Modern Art this same painting has been attributed to Mu qi. See Suzuki Kei, *Comprehensive Illustrated Catalog of Chinese Painting*.

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type of compositions. where through mountain crevices deep grottoes penetrate the space perpendicular to the picture plane. Vinograd has shown how interest in late tenth century painting has accounted for many facets of renaissance in Yuan painting.³⁸ That is, in the more reliable attributions to even this very late Yuan master, extending if not expanding space is still very much a central feature.

From the group of images cited above it is evident that during the early Yuan, and certainly in the first half of the fourteenth century, a PHYSIOGRAPHIC perception continued to dominate the world of painting. In lake landscapes the reverberating space of Song is seen to expand, pushing, as it were, the solid elements to a subservient role of bracketing, focussing on, the space. Solid elements occupy real space and are separated from elements around them with a spatial allowance. The consistency of groundplane, and the clear articulation and rationality of recession into space observed by most scholars are confirmed in these monuments and inscribed paintings.

To summarize, it has been demonstrated that the PHYSIOGRAPHIC approach is aware of physical realities such as volume and space, and that care is given to the rendering of space perpendicular to the picture plane whether in flat vistas of expanding space, or in vertical images of layered peaks with tunnel-like grottoes. Early Yuan painting of the idealist school moves away from a textural rendering to a more calligraphic approach, *without abandoning spatial realism*. That is, Yuan idealist or literati painters created brush-modes out of tenth-century southern earthen landscape models just as Southern Song academicians had done with theirs of the northern rocky style.³⁹ The move away from spatial and volumetric realism must wait till the early Ming Hongwu period toward the end of the fourteenth century.

The above exercise serves not so much to introduce a new understanding of period style of the fourteenth century as to confirm the principles enunciated by earlier

³⁸ See Richard Vinograd, *Wang Meng's Bian Mountains: the Landscape of Eremitism in Later Fourteenth Century Chinese Painting*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1979.

³⁹ See J. Stanley-Baker "The Development of Brush-Modes in Sung and Yüan," in *Artibus Asiae* XXXIX, no.1, Ascona, Fall, 1977.

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scholars. The only contribution here may be in the practice of identifying prime objects where these principles will be adhered to more strictly. That is, when works do *not* conform to these criteria, the assumption will be that different periods may be involved. For the sake of this study in methodology, once criteria are defined (right or wrong), they will be applied with constancy throughout. Paintings not conforming to identified structural and morphological criteria, no matter how attractive and regardless of the numbers of impressive collectors' seals, are set aside to be examined in terms of morphological criteria identified for other periods. If it can be demonstrated in each case that "non-conforming" works actually conform to well-defined criteria of other periods, then there will be no need to revise our concept of fourteenth century style. This is both a test of the methodology by which such criteria are identified, and a test of the validity of isolating period and personal styles by means of structural and morphological analyses.

Having posited such procedure, the task of identifying paintings of Yuan date among the corpus of attributions to Wu Zhen in the National Palace Museum becomes relatively straightforward. I will examine the landscape and bamboo paintings separately, and first identify works conforming in structural morphology to early fourteenth century criteria. Those which do not, are examined in Section III where their respective time frames and their places in the chronology of historical accretions will be determined.

3. Focussing on Wu Zhen

Plan of Work

There have been to date several major studies on the Yuan master Wu Zhen.⁴⁰ Differing in focus and methodology, they share in an *a priori* assumption of a repertoire of "representative works" without first subjecting any of the works to rigorous analysis with regard to its date of execution and school or regional affiliation. For to pass over the crucial first step of testing each work as to its probable date of execution and authorship puts the scholar in the position of the interpreter rather than that of the investigator, and can render his study into an historical narrative without elucidation of the processes of stylistic evolution, the nature and function of change, i.e. the stuff of art history proper. This section attempts to conduct a preliminary investigation of Wu Zhen's attributed oeuvre from more detached grounds. An integrated methodology is implemented here in the identification of Prime Objects from among twelve major works in the National Palace Museum, Taipei associated with Wu Zhen and, should any be found, to isolate particular features which distinguish his hand, that is, special features which in a particular combination pertain to Wu Zhen's work and to no other. Freedom or detachment of two types are stressed for the degree of objectivity required for the task. First is the freedom, at least in spirit, from affiliation with

⁴⁰ On the topic of Wu Zhen, four major studies have been undertaken over the last three decades. They are a. James Cahill's *Wu Zhen, a Chinese Landscapist and Bamboo Painter of the Fourteenth Century* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1958), b. Zheng Bingshan. *Wu Zhen*, Shanghai, Renmin yishu, 1958, c. Chen Jingguang, *Yuandai hua jia Wu Zhen (The Yuan Master Wu Zhen*, master's thesis for the Department of History, National Taiwan University, 1974, published in the series *Gugong congkan, jiazhong*, Taipei, 1983), d. Zhang Guangbin, *The Four Great Masters of the Yuan* (National Palace Museum bilingual publication, 1975) e. Sungmii Lee Han, *Wu Zhen's Mozhupu: Literati Painter's Manual on Ink Bamboo* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 1983), and f. Li Shu-mei, *Yuanchao Wu Zhen yufutu zhi yanjiu* (Studies in Fisherman Paintings by Wu Zhen of the Yuan, unpublished master's thesis, Dept of History, National Taiwan University, December, 1985). The first four discuss the Master's oeuvre while the last two focus on the nature and function of the ink bamboo manual format and on the image of the recluse-fisherman in terms of Yuan literati in general and Wu Zhen in particular. Biographical studies form important parts of the studies, with c. and d. the more rigorous in the sifting of primary sources with regard to their date and reliability. Much has been contributed by and can be learned from all six studies. It must be remembered, moreover, that at the time Professor Cahill wrote his landmark study of Wu Zhen nearly thirty years ago when the notion of *wenrenhua* was hardly the familiar subject it has since become, his main task was to explain this esoteric, Chinese practitioner's or insider's art to the non-practising Western outsider. It is because of Cahill's major contribution to the studies on Wu Zhen that one can now dispense with much of the historical, explanatory and interpretive aspects of the investigation and proceed to the problem of systematic connoisseurship and analytical art history.

curatorial activities or private collecting.⁴¹ Second is the freedom from *a priori* notions or preconceptions of a Master's "standard image." Surely nothing can safely represent a master's hand until it has been so demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt.⁴² In this sense it may be the better part of wisdom to consider each candidate suspect until established genuine beyond reasonable doubt.

While it is customary to begin study of a work by examining the documentary evidence in catalogues, presence of apparently early (even if untested) seals tend to elicit acceptance on the part of the viewer and often unduly pre-condition the investigator's attitude, influencing the assessment. I propose therefore to confront the paintings direct at the outset, beginning with the internal evidence of the works themselves, and leave the matter of materials and seals to a subsequent phase of the investigation.

I propose to begin by studying the landscapes, using a system of analysis which integrates strong points of the three traditions described in the Introduction in order to identify, if any should have survived, paintings which issued from the Master's hand, the Prime Objects. Then the Prime Objects will be analysed in order to identify characteristics pertaining uniquely to Wu Zhen, that is, his personal habits or graphology.

Next, this system of analysis is tested against the group of bamboo paintings to determine if any of the attributions match those personal features of Wu Zhen's hand

⁴¹ The psychological pressures on personnel in the collecting profession cannot be overemphasized. While this has been discussed at some length in connection with emotional factors in traditional connoisseurship in the Introduction, the same subtle dynamics function in today's high-finance areas of collecting where vast sums in tax-deductions are involved in museum-donations and private investments in ancient art. Although more enlightened museums around the world are increasingly open to reassessments of their collections, powerful forces remain which operate on Great Masters and are politically and economically committed as it were to their authenticity.

⁴² Any *a priori* notions of representative work, based on acceptance of general consensus, or on the most excellent quality, can be fatal. One begins as it were already having fallen into the trap, and surveys the field already predisposed to a particular - and untested - image as the "standard" from which to judge other works.

which had been so identified in the analysis of the landscapes.⁴³ If the system has validity, and if Prime Objects do indeed exist in both categories, then the personal features pertaining to the Master's landscape painting should apply equally to his bamboo painting and, of course, to his calligraphy.

The next section introduces a system of morphological analysis for the study of the various blocks of calligraphy on the paintings, to arrive at an understanding of the essential features of each distinct "hand". Unlike traditional Chinese practitioner-based connoisseurship of calligraphy which focusses mainly on turns of the wrist which engender particular forms of strokes, the present system also incorporates features of western structural and stylistic analysis used in painting. This completes the connoisseurship aspect of the investigation.

In Part III I propose to identify the respective dates of execution of the non-genuine attributions, and to range them along an historical grid. This serves to clarify the manner in which Wu's image expanded over the ensuing centuries by means of alterations and accretions in painting and calligraphy.

The landscape paintings I have examined include:

1. *Shuangkuaitu (Twin Junipers)* ⁴⁴ hanging scroll, ink on silk (Fig. 39)
2. *Zhongshantu (Central Mountain)*, album leaf, ink on paper (fig.32)
3. *Dongting Yuyintu (Hermit Fisherman on Lake Dongting)*, hanging scroll, ink on paper (fig.31)

⁴³ It is submitted that the process could and should be reversible. That is, a search for and identification of prime objects made among the bamboo paintings ascribed to a given master can be undertaken first and, should prime objects be found, a list of characteristic features drawn up with which the art historian should be able to scan the corpus of landscape paintings (figure paintings or for that matter, calligraphy) ascribed to the same master, and identify the prime objects in these genres, should there be any.

Reading the "list of characteristic features", it cannot be over-emphasized that what I propose differs radically from lists based on the sum total, or majority image, of all "plausible" attributions. For without a rigorous preliminary search for, and identification of, prime objects which can be established beyond reasonable doubt, the list of characteristics or the general "image of the artist" may be very wide of the mark, as will be shown in the case of works attributed to Wu Zhen.

⁴⁴ Misnamed *Shuangsongtu* or *Twin Pines* upon entry into the Qianlong Collection and so registered in *Shiqu baoji* down through the present *Gugong shuhualu*, the National Palace Museum's official catalogue of paintings and calligraphies, first edited in Taizhong in 1955 and printed in 1956. Names, dates and even formats of some of the paintings have undergone retouching and change which will be detailed below in each case.

4. *Yufuyitu* (*Fisherman's Idyll*), ⁴⁵ hanging scroll, ink on silk (fig.33)
5. *Qiushantu* (*Autumn Mountains*), originally attributed to Juran. Hanging scroll, ink on silk (fig. 35)
6. *Qingjiang chunxiao* (*Spring Dawn on the Clear River*) , hanging scroll, ink on silk (fig. 36)
7. *Nangqin huaihe* (*Cherished Companions: Lute and Crane*), originally associated with Juran. Hanging scroll, ink on silk (fig. 37)
8. *Qiujiang yuyintu* (*Hermit Fisherman on the Autumn River*), hanging scroll, ink on silk (fig.38)

Examining the eight landscape paintings in terms of structural and stylistic criteria indicative of a Yuan date of execution, it becomes clear that some of the works reflect a later date and must be excluded at the outset. These are nos.4, 6 and 8 and will be discussed in detail in Part III. Paintings 1,2,3,5 and 7 on the other hand, clearly conform to Yuan perception, as detailed in the first part of this chapter. They reveal a consistent groundplane, a measurable space and spatial recession from fore- to background a treatment of forms as weighted masses and of space as live, reverberating and expanding. The morphological interrelationship of elements is organic, where smaller elements are grown out of larger ones, springing from them and adhering to them. Finer aspects of brushwielding, using criteria of traditional Chinese connoisseurship however, reveal different hands. Having five Yuan paintings with or without signature but associated with Wu Zhen, the art historian's task is to determine if any of these may indeed have come from his hand.

This step is facilitated by careful perusal of contemporary evidence, written by people who have known the artist, or who can reasonably be believed to have had access to *genuine* examples of Wu's work. Earlier sources up to the Hongwu period would appear to be relatively more consistent in profiling the artist and his hand.

⁴⁵ This has been misnamed *Yufutu* or *Old Fisherman*, in a crucial misreading of the artist's inscription. See below.

Unfortunately these sources are extremely scanty. As James Cahill had accurately observed in his insightful dissertation:

*The obscurity in which we find [Wu Zhen] today merely reflects the obscurity in which he lived most of his life. Unlike the greater number of 'scholarly hermits' of his time, who withdrew from the world only in a collective way, setting up for themselves a kind of sub-society within which they continued to lead fairly gregarious lives, Wu Zhen seems to have been a bona fide recluse. We have no cause to believe that he ever travelled more than a few scores of miles from his birthplace. His friends were evidently not many, and none among them seems to have belonged to the company of authors of those chatty collections of anecdotes and personal comment, often written as accompaniment to occasional verses, which make up so large a part of the literature of the age."*⁴⁶

This conclusion alone should alert the art historian to probable problems in the numerousness of works attributed to Wu Zhen. But in view of his posthumous fame which continues to the present, it is not surprising that the iconic status of the man and the reliquary function of attributions to his name continue to retain their undue influence. Wu Zhen was however not entirely ignored in contemporary accounts. Fifteen sources by thirteen men are given below in chronological order:

a. Pref. 1338. Qian Weishan (d.1379-) in a colophon to a painting of "*Ink Vegetables* by Wu Zhonggui, harmonizing with his rhyme scheme:

*The evening is fragrant with ink moistening the inkstone,
The vegetables in the field have been picked clean,
as Spring rains weep.
The Daoist Wu is in his Meihua-an (Plum Blossom Hut),
Painting all the vegetables with special virtuosity.
The guest sits on [the ground] cold without a carpet [but]
By the bedstead there is [enough] money to buy vegetables.
Familiar with the good taste of greens in all seasons
I know this one is even more suited to my taste.
Suddenly a visitor brings a painting scroll,
Laughing, I lower my brush in the southern breeze.*⁴⁷

Through the poetic allusions some key images concerning the man emerge: rusticity, poverty, weeping rain, cold floors, and the joy in painting vegetables and in

⁴⁶ James Cahill. *op cit* :86

⁴⁷ Qian Weishan. *Jiangyue Songfengji* (Collected Writings from the Studio of River Moon and Pine Winds) 12j, buyi 1j, wenlu 1j, fulu 1j. From *Wulin Wangzhe yizhu* vol.8: j12. Qian was from Qiantang (Hangzhou), his *zi* was Sifu and his *hao* Qujian jushi, Xinbai zhiren. He was recommended for office by his hometown in 1341, and served in the Confucian School, dying at the turn of the Hongwu era. See Wang Deyi, et al. *Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* vol.III: 1992 for biographical sources.

living on them. Projected here is a sense of stillness and desolation without, and of serene contentment and fulfillment within.

b. Pref. 1345. Huang Jie. *Tribute to Plum Blossom Hut, written for Zhonggui.*

*The three energies were in the beginning undivided⁴⁸
Including the myriad manifestations of solar Spring.
Or like a solitary root holding its solitary warmth,
Without sharing the light and earth of peaches and plums.
Alas, those who understand the meaning of this are few.
I will enquire of the master of this hut.
High office cannot match plain-robed honour, and
Great wealth does not know the poverty of bare farming,
His thatched hut is smaller than a leaf-woven hat.
His nostrils resonate in phase with the cosmic breath,
His eyes beholding flowers do not see himself:
His body has already taken flowers as body.⁴⁹*

The speaker is himself a Daoist and a hermit, and his lines communicate the bond of a deeper mutual understanding among kindred spirits. Allusions to the triune energy *qi* are Daoist and may refer to physical energy-calisthenics, as does the allusion to the root in darkness holding in the warmth, in a solitary exercise beneath the ground. This allusion may however also touch on the metaphysical. A social note on eremitism, exclusiveness, solitariness is made in the reference of being apart from the flowery, brilliant or highly prominent types. Then the author mentions the act of harmonizing with the cosmic reverberation, and identification of self with Nature (flower). This last passage has a significant Northern Song ring. Huang may be alluding to Su Shi (1037-1101) who described the process of complete identification with the subject during painting:

*On Wen Tong (1019-1079) painting bamboo,
When Yuke paints bamboo, he sees bamboo, not his person,
Not only unaware of himself, in trance, he has abandoned his body.⁵⁰*

⁴⁸ The three *qi* or psychic, essential energies of Heaven, Earth and Man.

⁴⁹ Huang Jie. *Bianshan Xiaoyin Ninglu* (Recorded Verses from the Small Hermitage at Bianshan), 2 j. From *Si Ming congshu* (Yueyuan-ben) dierji, in *Xuxiou Siku Quanshu*. j.2:33b Huang Jie was a native of Cixi (near Ningbo in Zhejiang Province), his *zi* was Bocheng. He loved to wander among the lakes and hills of Wuxing and knew Zhao Mengfu. He made his living as a diviner, once writing: "I am a wanderer, I shall leave for the seclusion on the south side of the Zha River beneath the Bian mountain.", dying at the age of eighty (n.d.). His associates included many Daoists. His sources are found in Wang, op cit, vol.III:1470.

⁵⁰ Su Shi, *Jizhi fenlei Dongpo Xianshengshi* (collected, classified and annotated poems of Su Shi), in *Sibu conkan*, *chubian*. Reduced *suoben* facsimile reprint, Taipei, 1965.

The surrender or loss of self to the subject in an act of union is part of the physiographic perception of the universe discussed above. In another forty years this view would be reversed by Ni Zan (1301-1374) who wrote,

My [painting of] bamboo is merely for venting the exhilaration in my breast. Then why should I check and compare its resemblance [to the subject] or lack thereof, the denseness or sparseness of its leaves, or whether the stem is upright or aslant? Or on occasions when I've smeared ink for a long time and someone looking on thinks it is hemp or swamp reeds, I myself can certainly not argue and insist that it is bamboo, how much the less can onlookers!? ⁵¹

In Ni, instead of losing myself in Nature, I borrow Nature's forms (bamboo) to express my own feeling. And so important is this self-expression that it no longer matters if my painting does not properly represent those forms. Nature is subsumed under my feelings. I paint but the outer manifestation of myself. Trees and leaves provide the foil for the excellence of my brushwork. This self-expressionistic world-view presages the ideographic tendencies which emerge in Ming painting, but is still embryonic stage in the 1360s and 1370s. Wu Zhen, as we shall see, lived and thought in the physiographic mode as did his associates. What they saw of him and in his work reflects this older, more Song-based *Weltanschauung* of which Wu Zhen may well be the last major exponent.

The observations by Qian Weishan and Huang Jie are the only two which date from Wu Zhen's lifetime. The rest are dated and posthumous, or undated but probably from the 1360s. Together they illustrate a subtle but radical shift in perception which evidently occurs in the mid 1370s:

c. 1361. Ni Zan writing in a colophon on a Wu Zhen landscape, *Pinglin yeshui* (Level Woods and Wild Waters), which he saw in the lodgings of Zhou Yuanzhen the Daoist Yuanchu zhenshi, formerly master of the Zixuguan Daoist Temple. Ni Zan inscribed the painting thus:

The Daoist Master Yuanchu used to live in the Zixuguan Temple in Jiahe and was fond of visiting with the Hermit (yinjūn) Wu Zhonggui. He was therefore able to obtain many of his poems and paintings. I have begun to know Master Yuanchu only in the tenth lunar month of this year, when he produced this scroll and commanded me to versify on it. I therefore let go my brush and following Hermit Wu's rhyme scheme, wrote the poem above. The Hermit calls

⁵¹ Ni Zan. *Ni Yunlin Shiji* (Collected Poems) from a SBCK facsimile of the 1460 edition, *zazhu* 5a-b.

*himself Meihua daoren. Recorded by Ni Zan in the twenty-first year of Zhizheng, the year xingchou (1361). [Ni's poem reads]:
Lake Yuanhu is in Jiahe, its waters are billowing,
[Dwelling in his] home in Meihuacun,
his dreams coil round the village of white clouds.
Plying the brush he enjoys pure freedom,
His songs and poems are even more leisurely and serene.
Remembering the person in the painting
I gaze upon the palm branch in the clouds.⁵²*

Ni's poem follows the rhyme and essence of Wu Zhen's original poem which reads:

*Misty and indistinct are the level stretches of woods,
Wild waters are billowing.
In the azure expanse the sun is about to set,
Weary is the traveller from a different town.
The thatched-hut inn is wrapped in moonlight,
When the throng has dispersed from the wharf,
The fisherman is heard to sing. (Signed: Meihua daoren)*

Wu Zhen's own poem suggests an expansive lake landscape in sunset, with the play of moonlight upon the thatched hut and the dappling waves. Joy in solitude is clearly expressed in the last two lines.

Ni Zan's entry is dated to 1361 but refers to Wu Zhen in the present tense, explaining that Hermit Wu calls himself Meihua daoren or Daoist of the Plum Blossom. There is no hint of knowledge of Wu Zhen's death, reflecting the obscurity in which Wu had lived and died. The poem reflects a watery expanse, echoing Wu's original image, the waters gently rippling, and in two references to clouds and mists we may infer a generous use of inkwash. In another undated colophon to a landscape by Wu Zhen, Ni Zan wrote:

*The Daoist lives in Plum Blossom Village,
Beneath his window a stone crock is filled with resin wine
When drunk he wields his brush to paint mountain scenes,
In mountain vapours and sleet [the scene is] pale without [brush] traces.⁵³*

Since Ni never met Wu, his comment on Wu's drinking in general and of the humble resin wine in particular may be either fictitious as artistic licence, or it may be

⁵² Ni Zan. *Qingbigu Quanji*, in *Changzhou Xianzhe Yishu*, compiled by Sheng Xuanhuai and privately printed in Wujin, Jiangsu, 1899. Passage cited in j.2:91. The poem rhymes with the original one written and inscribed by Wu Zhen which follows above.

⁵³ Ibid. j.7:328-9.

fact gleaned from accounts by their mutual friend, the Daoist master Yuanchu, Zhou Yuanzhen. Significant in this encomium is Ni's stress on the use of pale ink and the indistinctness of the brushwork, *dan wuheng*. That is, what to Ni Zan who had developed a distinct brush-mode where each stroke is clearly visible, appears to be "without brush traces." Ni's verse again suggests that Wu Zhen was not well known, that an introduction was called for, as he does in the first line.

In the fourteenth century, the remark "without [brush] traces" may point to a lesser reliance on modelling-strokes, brush-modes or *cunfa*. This may indicate a shift in focus from its Northern Song meaning where no brush traces, *wubiji*, meant excellence in overall harmony. That is, where the painting is without noticeable, jarring or discordant brush-strokes which mar the descriptive and visual unity of the work. The earlier usage is seen in Guo Xi/Guo Si's treatise on painting, *Linquan gaozhiji*, among others. For Ni Zan, then a mature artist in his sixty-first year whose own works had become increasingly dry and linear, the remark on Wu Zhen's use of wash and shading may be seen therefore to point to Wu's notable divergence from current trends introduced by Zheo Mengfu and firmly established by Wang Meng, Huang Gongwang and himself.

d. 1350s-1360s? Liu Ji on Wu Zhen's *Reading in the Shade of Locust Trees*:

Reading in the Shade of Locust Trees was painted for Wang Xingdao by Wu Zhonggui of Jiaxing. Mr. Wang's forebear had planted three locust trees in the courtyard expecting his descendants to produce three lords. Later things turned out exactly as he had expected, [his descendants] became worthy ministers of the Song. Today Zhonggui's painting of this picture is to encourage Xingdao in making efforts in scholarship in order to follow in the examples set by his forebears.⁵⁴

Liu Ji received his *jinshi* degree in 1333. While his collected works were published posthumously in 1386. This entry suggests a date sometime during Wu Zhen's lifetime or not too long after his death in 1354. Liu Ji here testifies that Wu Zhen painted, among other subjects, trees, and, like Ni Zan, he is introducing an unknown artist as a man of Jiahe (Jiaxing).

⁵⁴ Liu Ji (1311-1375). *Taishi Chengyibo wenji* (Collected works, preface 1386) 20 juan. SBCK facsimile of 1572 edition, Shanghai, Shangwu yinshuguan, 1929. j.13. Liu Ji, *zi* Bowen, was a native of Qingtian in Zhejiang Province. His biographical sources are found in the Central Library's *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin*, II:1788.

e. 1360s? Yuan Hua on Wu Zhen's *Ink Bamboo*:

*In the wind, gentle waves ripple on the waters,
Frosty shadows invading the slopes, in much moonlight
Reflect upon brilliant jade tubes. (bamboo stalks)
Full of emotions, how mournful is the flute masters tune! 55*

This painting may have been of ink bamboo by a lake. Again references to winds, moonlight, rippling waves, frost and desolation. The poem exudes a melancholy air, with a sense of silvery rustling of bamboo leaves in frosty moonlight, shaking in the gentle wind. Silence and expanding space are invoked. Since Yang Weizhen had edited Yuan Hua's works during the Zhizheng era (1341-1368), this poem may be tentatively dated to the 1360s. Certainly, in feeling it has nothing of the Ming values reflected in Bei Qiong (see below) and subsequent Ming writers.

f. 1364. Sun Zo (fl. mid- to late-14th c), writing the *Record of Ink Bamboo*, gives the longest and clearest profile of Wu Zhen the man and his style:

Wu Zhen Zhonggui of Jiahe excelled in painting landscapes, bamboo and trees, attaining extreme inspiration [in his works]. In loftiness he is not beneath Xu Daoning or Wen Yuke (Tong). Yuke covered his painting with [the spirit of] bamboo, Zhonggui covered his bamboo with [the spirit of] his painting. Recently in the painting world aside from Zhao Wenming (Mengfu), father and son, of Wu (Suzhou),⁵⁶ Zhonggui is certainly the next in excellence. There is in the world no adverse criticism of Zhonggui's work, except those who say that his bamboo paintings have an air of acerbity and inwardness.⁵⁷

He was refractory and unsociable, solitary and fastidious of spirit, lofty in his outward deportment; and esteemed himself highly. His hao was Meihua daoren. The powerful could not wrench paintings from him. [One could] only leave good-quality paper on his desk, for when he was inspired or exhilarated, he would go to his desk and paint as he pleased. [Only this way could one obtain his works.] Therefore Zhonggui's paintings on silk are quite scarce. When I was in Xiuzhou⁵⁸ I scoured all the homes of the literati for three years, looking for traces of his brush, but none had been preserved. How many people will there be in another hundred years who may know and love his paintings? In the

⁵⁵ Yuan Hua (b.1316). *Gengxuezhai shiji* (Collected poems from the Studio of Ploughing Scholarship, 12 juan, SBCK *zhenben sanbian* vol 297) j.12:10a. Yuan Hua, zi Ziyang, was a native of Kunshan near Suzhou. He studied poetry with Yang Weizhen who during the Zhizheng era had edited his works into a book *Kechuanji*, 1 juan. Biographical sources are listed in Wang Deyi op cit II.952-3.

⁵⁶ Zhao Mengfu was a native of Wuxing in Zhejiang, but toward the end of the Yuan in the period of the great upheavals in the Zhejian area beginning in 1348, as well as the famines, Zhao Yong and his family were forced to move to Suzhou (Wu).

⁵⁷ "Air of acerbity and inwardness" is James Cahill's inspired and insightful translation for *suanxianqi*. See his dissertation: 98ff which cites this passage.

⁵⁸ Jiaying, Wu Zhen's hometown.

summer of the jiachen year in the Zhizheng reign (1364) ⁵⁹ my friend Zhang Xiangnan brought me the ink bamboo in the collection of his clansman Xuan⁶⁰, and showed it to me saying, 'You have loved Zhonggui's paintings. Here. Please inscribe and record this.'

I see that Zhonggui was a recluse. His joy was perennially in lofty mountains and beneath dense woods, therefore his brushwork is imbued with a feeling of profound distance and of detached, lofty ease. And it is thoroughly lacking in the [wordly] air of roaming scions of the wealthy and mighty. Is it for this reason that his critics belittle him? After all, those who would survive in posterity by brush and ink do not rely on one single thing (or category). As to the survival of [a painting of] bamboo, is it enough merely to say we like its colours, sound, scent or taste (i.e. physical or outward attributes)? If so, then [those detractors should know that] the profound remoteness and unfettered quality [i.e. spiritual or inner attributes they see in Wu Zhen's paintings] are [none other than] natural qualities inherent in the bamboo itself! And yet there are those who point to his paintings and say, 'This has the air of a mountain monk or a Daoist recluse!' As for bamboo, Zhonggui has actually grasped their heaven-born nature. How can one possibly fault him for this?

The thousand mou of swamp-like bamboo [growing along the banks of] the Wei River are dense as hemp, their attitudes of soaring uprightness and their luxuriant elegance are qualities easily admired by both those who understand and those who do not understand [the real nature of bamboo]. But the qualities of desolation, the misty tip and bedewed leaf, [bamboo bent under] freezing rains or [split by] crackling sun, [or those lonely species] hanging on precipices brushing against the clouds; whether prone, stooping, climbing or upright; in youthful growth or withering age, --[such qualities] cannot be comprehended by anyone who is not himself a lofty scholar and unfettered recluse with many moons' and years' observation of bamboo living in the wild.

To insist that the masses understand this sort of unknowable [state of consciousness], is no different from placing a rare and plain swamp weed and Bramble prune [both of a rare but delicate flavour] alongside a regular and lavish feast [expecting the uninitiated guests to savour their sublime essence]. There are things in this world which even surpass this in strangeness in form or difference in conception. I cannot help but feel compelled to come to his defence, and accordingly record this here.⁶⁰

Such a long encomium was probably written on the endpiece of a handscroll.

The passage contains several crucial clues which later writers either ignore or attempt to

"correct" in accordance with changing perceptions of Wu Zhen:

⁵⁹ From this it can be inferred that Sun Z^u began his three-year search for Wu Zhen's works in Jiaying in 1361, seven years after the Master's death there in 1354. At the end of his book, *Cangl^oji*, Xue Zhangxian wrote a postface giving some details of the publication of his collected works in 1496. Sun's *zi* included Daya and Cizhi, his *hao* was Dongjiazi. He was a native of Jiangyin but fled the disturbances, taking his family to Suzhou. Biographers stress the fact that he took with him only two trunks of books. He enjoyed renown as a man of letters in the early Hongwu era. Biographical sources are found in the Central Library's *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 1:435.

⁶⁰ Sun Z^u. *Cangl^oji* (Collected Writings, Preface by Song Lian, 1373, postface by Xue Zhangxian in 1496) 6 juan. *Qinding SKQS*, jibu, 6. j.3:6b-7b.

II-a : Problems of Personal Style: Textual Sources

1. By 1361, seven years after Wu Zhen's death, nothing could be found from his hand in the homes of local literati. Significant is the focus of Sun's search, aimed at scholars and the intelligentsia. Yet in that same year Ni Zan was shown a painting by Wu Zhen when he visited a Daoist monastery. The Daoist master Yuanchu who had preciously lived in Wu Zhen's town of Jiahe, wrote Ni, managed to obtain "*many [of Wu's] poems and paintings.*" Had Sun looked into Daoist institutions rather than among the literati coterie, would his chances of finding Wu Zhen's works have improved? Leaving this query aside it is clear, however, that by the decade following the Master's death, his works were "out of circulation" among the literati. Sun wonders "*How many people will there be in another hundred years who may know and love his paintings?*" The resurgence among this very group a century later of so many Wu Zhen works should have raised doubts regarding their provenance, but did not. Instead, Wu Zhen's name and oeuvre underwent considerable development beginning with the fifteenth century, as we shall see in Part III.

2. Sun stressed Wu Zhen's solitary and aloof nature, underlining what must have been closer to historical fact than later writers may have liked to believe. This solitariness is evidently as native to Wu Zhen as it has remained unacceptable to later writers including twentieth century scholars. James Cahill in his dissertation warmly defended Wu Zhen as a friendly person, citing the implications from the corpus of attributions:

We must note that most ⁶¹of his pictures reveal a more sympathetic personality than such words as "refractory and uncivil" would suggest. The harsher judgments were no doubt formed by those outside his circle of intimates. ⁶²

That there was a "circle of intimates" in Wu Zhen's life may well have been a foregone conclusion centuries ago, for many of the 15th century literati, when admirers and collectors projected onto Wu Zhen a behaviour pattern paralleling that of his Suzhou colleagues.

⁶¹ Cahill voices the widespread opinion not only of 20th century scholars but of collectors since the Ming. We shall see what "most" signifies, below.

⁶² Cahill, dissertation, op. cit: 98.

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Even in her recent master's thesis Chen Jingguang attempted to "correct" notions of Wu Zhen's unsociability, enumerating his known friends and acquaintances totalling no less than thirteen. Some of these are however gleaned from dedicatory inscriptions recorded on untested paintings ascribed to Wu's name.⁶³

The gregarious and convivial nature highlighted in Ming painting forms a distinct contrast to the bleak and desolate image reflected in the oeuvre of Yuan masters, especially Ni Zan. Though conviviality may be an ethnic trait of Chinese people as a whole, during the Mongol rule much of it may have been deliberately suppressed on the part of some artists for political and patriotic reasons. That is, among the "sub-society" of Suzhou literati who, as Cahill points out, "continued to lead fairly gregarious lives," the eremitism was an externalized form of social and political protest. But with Wu Zhen it was his genuine nature, one which was censured by contemporaries who knew him as "acerbic and inward, refractory and unsociable." In his eulogy it is clear that Sun himself considers this type of reclusiveness and solitude untypical. He was evidently aware that the scholarly eremitism practiced by Ni Zan, Huang Gongwang and Wang Meng in Suzhou was merely a collective protest which did not disrupt their mutual conviviality and friendship. A case can be made here that Wu Zhen's genuine eremitism was actually considered unacceptable social behavior in his own day, (except, of course, to other reclusive Daoists as the writers above). Sun was however prompted to "come to Wu's defence." This throws light on the political nature of much of fourteenth century eremitism, which should be distinguished from Wu Zhen's natural eremitism or predisposition to solitariness, the one pearl among fish-eyes, as it were. It should also alert us to the probability that many admirers of a more "normal" social bent would attempt to "correct" this personal failing by adjusting their perceptions of and writings about his works and personality accordingly. That this tendency is followed by artists painting under the name of Wu Zhen is clearly demonstrated in the many gregarious and lively Ming works attributed to him, some of which are discussed in Section III.

⁶³ Chen Jingguang op cit: 38ff.

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If Sun Zō in his diligent search had come across Wu Zhen's works reflective of a "sympathetic personality," he no doubt would have presented the same argument so eloquently formulated by Cahill six hundred years later. Instead, Sun had little choice but to take the opposite position and defend the qualities of solitude and aloofness, declaring such qualities difficult to appreciate, (requiring as it were more lofty erudition), because they are truly rare. Sun's eulogy clearly distinguishes art lovers into two groups: the gregarious and the solitary. Note the repeated dichotomy throughout his text: recluse versus wealthy scions; viewers who appreciate only the physical qualities of sound and smell and those who understand the spiritual qualities of solitariness, those who appreciate only upright, dense luxuriant growth of bamboo, and those who appreciate also the solitary stalk bent, but not bowed by rain, wind and sleet; those who only know how to appreciate ostentatious banquets and those who understand the flavour of delicate but plain wild herbs; those who abhor the "air of a mountain monk or Daoist recluse" and those few who, like himself, understand and appreciate it.

Sun Zō's critique is addressed on several levels. One is on the overdependence on social contexts and conviviality, one is on the general preference for the more obvious, more assertive gestures, and one points to the shallowness of taste which recognizes only well known "treasures" and which lacks the sensitivity of discovering for oneself the subtle beauty of the less well sung, the solitary and plain, in short, the values of genuine introversion, as well as those of independence in aesthetic judgment. Although Sun was not himself a hermit like Wu Zhen or Wu's friend Huang Jie, he counted himself among the few who understood and appreciated true eremitism. This last quality was enlarged upon in the seventeenth century by a fellow townsman Qian Fen who contrasts Wu Zhen's genuine reclusiveness with the coterie oriented milieu of fourteenth century Suzhou literati like Gu Ying, Ni Zan, Yang Weizhen etc.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Qian Fen. *Meihua daoren yimo* Preface. See bibliogrphahy.

3. From the contrasts clearly expressed in his text, it is evident that Sun saw Wu Zhen's painting as a reflection of solitary introspectiveness.⁶⁵ Sun imagines Wu's spirit to be roaming amongst "lofty mountains, dense woods, profound distance, detachment, loftiness." More concretely, the bamboo Sun describes, probably reflected in the bamboo types appearing in the handscroll, include the following:

- Solitary bamboo
- Tips in mist
- Moist, bedewed leaves
- Beaten by freezing rains
- Brittle from scorching sun
- Sparse species hanging precariously on precipices
- On high peaks, brushing misty clouds
- In a reclining state
- In a prone state
- Young shoots in states of growth
- Ancient trunks in states of decline

It is not unreasonable to suggest that Zhang Xuange's painting by Wu Zhen described in such detail by Sun Zhe contained bamboo with these eleven features. Sun's record comprises the most extensive contemporary and therefore most important account on both the man and his art.

g. 1365 Xia Wenyan in *Tuhui baojian*:

Wu Zhen, zi Zhonggui, hao Meihua daoren, was a native of Weitang in Jiaxing. In painting landscapes he followed Juran and his copies, variations, and master-pieces are excellent without match. Yet there are often among his surviving works some done without full concentration which tend to be too abbreviated and cursory. He also painted ink bamboo and ink flora.⁶⁶

Xia's criticism of cursoriness and abbreviation is levied also at works of Ni Zan's later years which "appear to come from two different hands and done [merely]

⁶⁵ It may be inferred from Sun's text that he had discovered and admired Wu Zhen's works earlier elsewhere, prior to coming to Jiaxing on his three-year hunt.

⁶⁶ Xia Wenyan, *Tuhui baojian*, pref. 1365, j.5. YSCB ed. vol XI no.83:87.

for social obligations."⁶⁷ Xia clearly did not grasp the import of the innovations by his younger contemporaries. His own less than novel writing is a case of reliance on forebears, being conditioned though not enlightened by the writings of Mi Fu.⁶⁸ His lack of understanding is revealed also in the entry on Zhao Mengfu which heads the list of Yuan painters. Instead of a lucid analysis of Zhao's contribution, it is filled with references to his royal lineage and ranks, ending with a superlative but meaningless note that "his calligraphy is based on the method of the Two Wangs and his painting on Jin and Tang, both categories entering the Divine Class."⁶⁹ However, Xia's entry is full of valuable information. He gives us Wu Zhen's name, *zi, hao*, native town, stylistic origins. We are told that Wu Zhen painted close copies of ancient masterpieces, and that he had evolved a style of his own which appeared "too cursory," that he painted landscapes, bamboo and ink flora (including vegetables and fruits).⁷⁰

h. 1369. Gu Ying (1301-1369), writing on a *Bent Branch of Bamboo* by Wu Zhen:

*The phoenix has left [its perch on] the beam of the Imperial dwelling,
Desolate mosses pervade the [once opulent] garden Pond of the Xi clan.
Who in the drizzling Spring rains
Can see the emerald moth's brows [bamboo]?⁷¹*

Here the sense of melancholy and desolation is pervasive. The reference to bamboo in rain may point to a kind of delineation that is not too sharply etched. It may be proposed that this painting showed a branch of bamboo bending in hazy atmosphere, that its leaves drooped with rain; that it was painted in pale ink, creating a vaporous, pale-inkwash atmosphere. It is probable too that it had indications of a groundplane, where some mossy ground cover in diminishing size underscored spatial recession. This runs counter to the now prevalent assumption that Wu Zhen's ink

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ This is evident for example in his entries on Juran and others which are lifted almost verbatim from Mi's *Huashi*.

⁶⁹ Ibid: 82

⁷⁰ One early record describes a branch of lychee. See Zhang Xian in *Yusiji* (collected writings from the jade basket, 10 juan, preface 1389), j.10. Zhang once served the rebel Zhang Shicheng and, following his defeat by Zhu Yuanzhang, took refuge in a Hangzhou monastery, taking the tonsure and living out his life as a monk under an assumed name. His biographical sources are found in Wang Deyi op cit II:1097.

⁷¹ Gu Ying. *Caotang yaji* 10 juan. SBCK zhenben ed.vols 390-391. j.10:5b The biography of Gu Ying may be found in j.8 of *Yuanshi*, and his source materials found in Wang Deyi, op cit IV:2188.

bamboo is typically done in jet black ink with silhouette leaves sharply etched against white, blank paper as seen in attributions such as, for instance, *Bamboo in Wind* in the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 87), or *Spray of Bamboo* in the Palace Museum, Taipei (fig.88), among others.

Gu Ying, a Suzhou literatus par excellence,⁷² is seen here to spearhead the type of ornate literary allusions which fill the verses of later writers below. Instead of concentrating on what is in the painting, external, historical and literary references are introduced.

i. 1374. Gao Qi (1336-1374), on *Withered Trees, Bamboo and Rock* by Wu Zhen:

*A clump of bamboo leans against the tall tree,
In the Autumn gloom there is much rain,
Winds and frosts cannot shake down [the bamboo leaves which]
give shade to the medicinal herb growing by the rock.*⁷³

Here again there is a suggestion of cloudy weather, drizzling rains, vaporous atmosphere and an overall expression of desolate isolation, of plain, humble herbs, upright in autumnal silence.

j. 1376 Tao Zongyi (1316-1399-?). *Shushi huiyao* (Essential points of the History of Calligraphy, preface 1376):

⁷² See David Sensabaugh's enlightening study, "Life at Jade Mountain: Notes on the Life of the Man of Letters in Fourteenth-Century Wu Society" in *Festschrift in honour of the Retirement of Professor Suzuki Kei*, Tokyo University, 1981:43-71.

⁷³ Gao Qi. *Gao Taishi daquanji* (Grand Collected Works of Gao Qi), 18 juan, lithographic facsimile of the Jingtai(1450) ed. in Wang Yunwu, ed. SBCK, vol.81. j.16:179. Biographical sources on Gao Qi may be found in the Central Library's *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin*, vol I:389.

*Wu Zhen, Zhonggui was a native of Jiaxing. His cursive script follows the manner of [the Tang monk] Master Gongguang.*⁷⁴

This is a rare and early reference to Wu Zhen's calligraphy style. Unfortunately, of the Tang monk Gongguang there is little more than a scant record. His surname was Wu, his *zi* Fengdeng; he was a native of the southern Jiangnan region and excelled in the cursive script. Sometime during the reign of Emperor Zhaozong (888-904) he was summoned to perform in the imperial presence and awarded a purple robe. The early twelfth-century *Xuanhe shupu* ranked him beneath other Tang masters Huaisu and Zhiyong in brush dynamism (*bishi*) but considered him to have established an individual style of his own.⁷⁵ The Huizong collection held only two works by Gongguang. Could they have survived the many upheavals into Tao's time? Tao Zongyi would have been most fortunate indeed to have seen a work by Gongguang. His casual reference to this master here seems somewhat puzzling today and deserves further scrutiny which is, however, beyond the scope of the present study.

k. 1379. Bei Qiong (d.1379). On Wu Zhen's *Solitary Angler in the Autumn River* (*Qiujiang dudiao tu*) in the rhyme scheme of the *qu*, *Yingtianchang*:

⁷⁴ Tao Zongyi. *Shushi huiyao, buyi* (Essentials of the History of Calligraphy, addenda). Facsimile of Wujin Taoshi yiyuan Hongwu edition. Shanghai shuju, 1984. In later editions, such as that selected for inclusion in the SKQS *sanbian* this brief entry is followed by the phrase, "He was also good at painting ink landscapes." Interestingly, not "ink bamboo." This may be an oversight on the part of the bibliographer, since by 1365 Xia Wenyan already mentions "bamboo and ink flora." Tao Zongyi, whose maternal uncle was Zhao Yong, son of Zhao Mengfu, was a native of Huangyan in Zhejiang. Failing in his bid for the *jinshi* towards the end of Yuan he gave up further attempts. He was recommended in 1373, but due to illness he did not serve. In 1396 he led a group of students to sit the examinations of the Ministry of Rites and was still alive in 1399. His works include *Zhongglu* (Jot tings Upon Putting Down the Plough), and aside from the history of calligraphy compiled the encyclopaedic *Shuofu*, 120 juan. His biography may be found in Sun Zo's *Cangfubi*, j.4:8b ff. Biographical sources are found in Wang Deyi, op cit II.1346ff.

⁷⁵ *Xuanhe shupu* j.19 (Catalogue of calligraphy pieces in the Xuanhe collectin of the Song Emperor Huizong, 20 juan, edited in the Ming by Mao Jin, in YSCS ed. vol 1, no.4:428-9). Other biographical materials on Gongguang may be found in [Tang] monk Daoxuan, *Xu gaosengzhuan* (Sequal to Biographies of Eminent Monks, 40 juan, published in 1610 in the Fu'an Jingshan Shu - zhao'an edition) and in [Song] Ji Yougong, *Tangshi jishi* (miscellany on Tang poets, in Wang Yunwu ed. *Guoxue jiben congshu 400 zhong*, Taipei, Shangwu, 1967) j.48; and the undated *Baoguanglu*, probably of Song date, by one Mr. Chen of Wu-Yue, (in the large collectanea of miscellany and narrative writing *Biji xiaoshuo daguan sanbian*, 123 zhong, published by Xinxing Co. Taipei, 1974).

Sunset falls over infinite expanse of the Cheng River. A solitary skiff returns for night-mooring by the estuary. Who might the angler be, without a care about the winds/and currents' adversity? The western hills are visible, sharp as a knife, over a thousand li. The southern hamlets are desolate. Ask where it may be [answer] the Peach Spring [of eternal youth] is right here. [One may] gaze upon the flowers and [find their splendour] as of yore. Many affairs of the past are now unwarranted. Envy Fan Li his flair⁷⁶ [for abandoning wealth in favour of unfettered seclusion]. Traces of such ancients may still be found, though extremely rarely. [As for those who seek after] ineffectual power and empty fame, in what way do they differ from [the smallness and insignificance of] heads of flies or horns of snails? [I have] no interest in donning the robes of state, and will live out my life wearing green and azure rush coverings of fishermen, slice a piece of [fresh caught] perch and drink through the moonlit night - to drink again upon reawakening.⁷⁷

We may detect here the beginnings of a kind of standardisation in Ming references to Yuan hermits who shun public office and prefer the plaited rush cloak of the fisherman and solitary moonlight drinking to the silken robes of office, i.e. fame and fortune. It may be submitted that this reflects a Ming view of Yuan eremitism. The repeated references to wealth and officialdom, even in a negative way, reflect the positive values they hold in the writer's mind. These are absent from the long eulogy by Sun Zb who viewed potentially "negative" elements such as frost and rain, desolation and solitude in a decidedly positive light. In Bei Qiong's verse, on the other hand, positive evaluations of rusticity and solitude are missing altogether. It would seem to be a sort of "arm-chair view" of Yuan eremitism. In these two views we may detect the subtle shift from a type of positive eremitism of Yuan to a perception of a hermit-by-default type developed in the Ming.

1. 1380s? Wang Feng *inscribing a landscape by Wu Zhen for Li Yuanfu (Li Qian):*

*Since birth I have not paid up my debt to mists and vapours,
Seeing mountains and streams is my heart's delight.
With warfare's disruptions of over a decade [I have found that]
Real streams and real mountains cannot match [the beauty of] paintings.*

⁷⁶ See Sima Qian, *Shiji* (The Record of History) j.41. Fan Li was willing and able to help his lord, King Goujian of Yue, to regain losses to the State of Wu. However, after the great victory he refused the high post and honours, and asked instead for permission to live the life of a commoner. Regarded as one who knows when to leave the arena of ambition, Fan is admired as an astute recluse who can serve effectively when he chooses.

⁷⁷ Bei Qiong. *Qingjiang Bei Xiansheng shiji*, 10 juan, *fu shiyu* (Collected poetry of Mr. Bei Qingjiang, 10 juan, plus additional poems included in *Qingjiang Bei Xiansheng wenji*, 30 juan. SBCK, chubian 72) *shiyu* 1b. Bei Qiong was a native of Jiaying, Wu Zhen's hometown. His biography is found in *Mingshi* 137/13.

*In this painting by Meihua daoren Wu Zhonggui, he
hits upon the strange inventions in his heart.
Now for this wordless poem to be inscribed with a voiced verse,
Qian will surely laugh and say "If it isn't my Lord who can it be?"
The sandbanks zigzag like crooked teeth,
From the immortals' thatch with three ridgepoles mixed fragrances emanate.
Splendorous heavens open magic eagle clouds,
After the reed music, the azure dragon's rains.
An ancient man walking with staff returns from abroad, and seems to converse
With the fisher boy on the trawler.
Climbing brambles, ancient trees, mosses and lichens are painted
With shapes like dried wood standing in the first whispers of Spring.
Across the plank-bridge, a splendid scene of wild herbs in dense profusion.
In my old age I would be neighbour to the fishmonger.
Fishing or angling in seclusion, like men of Zhou fleeing the [despotic] Qin.⁷⁸*

The language is unusually personal, referring to artist Wu Zhonggui and collector Li Qian by name. Military and political events are thinly veiled references to Wang's own history. Perhaps Li Qian had shared in Wang's resistance activities and/or political refuge. That is to say, the sentiments expressed here are those of the writer, and hardly his reading of Wu Zhen's. The Hongwu autocracy appears to have embittered men's hearts more than the Mongol conquest a century earlier and writings of this period, like that of Bei Qiong, appear to project onto the Yuan a type of eremitism that is largely Ming in character.

The landscape described probably featured zigzagging sandy banks, misty atmosphere, rain and clouds, a thatched hut, an old man walking with a staff, a boat with a fisher boy, a plank bridge, dried brambles, mosses and leafy herbs, and above, an expansive sky. Mention of mosses and herbs in these comments point to a marked use of moss-dots by the artist.

m. 1390s? Shen Menglin on a "Landscape painting by Meihua daoren":

⁷⁸ Wang Feng (1319-1388). *Wuqiji* (Collected Writings from the Pawlonia Stream, 7 juan, in *SKQS zhenben, erji*, Taipei, Shangwu yinshuguan, 1971) j.7:15. The compound Zhou Shang in the last line, *yuhuodiao, Zhou Shang bi Qin*, is difficult to explain completely. I have taken the implied if not the direct, meaning. Wang Feng, *zi Yuanji*, was a native of Jiangyin in Jiangsu Province. His services were employed by Zhang Shicheng and subsequently sought by Ming Taizu but on pretext of illness he did not serve, choosing to retire in seclusion by Wujing. His biography is in the *Yuanshu* 91/14, the *Mingshi* 285/6, among others. Biographical sources are found in Wang Deyi, op cit I:109-110. The autobiographical nature in this and other early Ming inscriptions and poetry in general deserves further study which is however beyond the scope of the present task.

II-a : Problems of Personal Style: Textual Sources

*Meihua daoren is vast and unfettered of spirit. Mountains, waters, there is nothing he cannot paint. When inspiration comes he brandishes his brush without using modelling strokes. Strange peaks soar upwards like lotus blossoms, with roots [coiled around] rocks, and tall trees in clusters. Giant evergreens are ranged [with the artlessness] of children. Two old men sit by a table beneath a thatched eave. In clothing and mien they resemble ancient recluses on Mount Shang. An old man hurries down the mountain as if trying to catch the ferry to cross the river. The dusty path sizzles in the summer heat. Why carry the tall sombrero parasol in all the blaze? Alas! I am already ninety years old, for decades I have been graced [by His Majesty's order to] superintend the Examinations. I have no way of repaying His Imperial Bounty, and now retire among springs and rocks for the rest of my days.*⁷⁹

Shen's inscription, like Wang Feng's, is autobiographical in places and, like Wang's, uses the painting to vent his own feelings, projecting onto it a reading which is more Shen than Wu, more Ming than Yuan. That the earlier writers merge themselves more thoroughly into Wu Zhen's painting and identify with it may be explained by two factors. They were closer to Wu Zhen's own time and *Weltanschauung* and were themselves either living recluses or friends of genuine hermits. In contrast, Ming writers under autocratic persecutions the Hongwu Emperor, read political refuge into Yuan painting in general, identifying figures and sites associated with political resistance. This type of writing represents a type of perceptual accretion imposed over the Mongol-conquered Yuan by early Ming writers. Motifs such as flight into the Shang mountains, hermits resisting the Qin, retiring from political engagement to live *and fish* as fishermen, etc. was read into Yuan painting, and began to distort their original expression and meaning. They are anathema to the spirit of the 1330s-1360s which reflects in the citations a positive involvement with Daoist practices and a positive enjoyment of rusticity. Earlier inscriptions with references to expansive space and misty atmosphere point to a more meditative mood, to introversion and tranquillity; there is a positive value in the quiescence in moonlit ripples over the lake, in bamboo weighed down by rain, and in singing after everyone has dispersed.

The landscape Shen Menglin describes probably featured a group of peaks, tall trees, some of whose roots are coiled around rocks, two old men sitting by a thatched

⁷⁹ Shen Menglin. *Huaqiji* (Collected Writings from the Flower Stream, 3 juan. SKQS ed.) j.2:23b. Emphasis mine. Shen Menglin's *zi* was Yuanzhao and he was a native of Wuxing in Jiangsu Province. He passed the provincial examinations in 1353 and died sometime in the Hongwu era at the age of ninety-three *sui*. This poem mentions being in his nineties and may be dated to the late 1390s. Biographical sources on Shen are found in Wang Deyi op cit I:601-2.

hut, one man descending from the foreground mountain, a lake expanse in the middle and, probably though unnoted, distant hills on the other side of the lake. But the positive values in introspection, resonant space and solitary tranquillity are missing in the later writing from Bei Qiong onward. Here the stress is clearly on more material things and concrete historical, political allusions. The writer's own preoccupations dominate the colophons and the language itself becomes more florid, more precious, and acquires more ornamental expressions. Another inscription on a landscape by Wu Zhen, written by the same Shen Menglin for one Liu Shiduan, reads:

The creations of Daoist [Wu Zhen] embrace [all feelings in] his breast. He can paint the pinnacles by the lake, with life-nourishing vapours rising from the valleys, and tall pines hovering above emerald clouds. Magnificent mansions crowned with [the mythical, nine-plumed] phoenix, and the milky way descending in twin dragons. Mr Liu, having received this painting returned. [Delirious with joy] stepping out of the gate, laughing, he sailed on the Wusong River [and went home]. ⁸⁰

By the second decade of the Hongwu period, then, there is a clear shift in perception of Wu Zhen's work. For greater accuracy regarding Wu Zhen the man and his art, only the first ten examples will be used for reference.

They offer a collective perception of Wu Zhen up to ten years after his death. Their consistency is remarkable. Whether each writer was of like spirit, approved or disapproved of what he saw, the collective perception of Wu's work is consistent and remarkably homogeneous. It can be classified into three categories.

a. Traits of the man:

- unknown artist
- humble in circumstances
- hermit by choice ("Hermit Wu")
- Daoist by name ("Meihua daoren") and in association ("the Daoist Wu")
- Meihua'an, Meihuacun, Plum Blossom hut and village as name and dwelling
- serene and content [in solitude]
- refractory and unsocial [toward others]
- solitary and aloof

⁸⁰ Ibid.j.3:52b

II-a : Problems of Personal Style: Textual Sources

- Daoist calisthenics (resonating with Cosmic Breath)
- complete, self-forgetting identification with subject
- fastidious
- loved to paint when inspired
- virtuosity in painting

b. Painting subjects include:

- rippling waters in moonlight
- ink vegetables
- lake landscapes with expansive vistas in moonlight
- locusts
- ink bamboo in wind by rippling waters in moonlight
- varieties of ink bamboo in desolate states,
- ink flora (ink vegetable, ink lychee)
- bamboo by pond in rain
- bamboo by tall tree in rain
- cool rains, gentle rippling winds
- a lake landscape in sunset with a fisherman's tiny skiff homeward bound.

c. In expression they reveal the following traits:

- melancholy
- tranquillity
- vastness [in spatial consciousness]
- serenity
- solitariness
- resonance: (rippling waves, bamboo leaves in moonlight trembling in the breeze)
- magic, expansive and introverted quality seen in prevalence of moonlight scenes

d. In painting technique and brush-usage, some clues are offered which however must be treated with caution:

II-a : Problems of Personal Style: Textual Sources

- use of inkwash, in prevalence of clouds
- use of ink to indicate light sources such as moonlight, sunsets, and shadows
- complementary use of highlights, possibly in reserve technique
- lack of brush traces, that is, indistinct use of blended brushwork
- use of *chiaroscuro*
- fastidiousness
- studies after complex Song paintings
- evolution of cursory style (by Xia Wenyan standards)
- cursive script in the manner of Gongguang.

These general features can not be more specific or detailed without reference to actual paintings, should any be identified. On the basis of all the points above, the five Yuan paintings were examined anew to determine if any fit some or all of these descriptions. Prolonged and repeated side-by-side comparisons were made in different combinations. It was found that three works more than share all the features detailed in categories c, d, and that together they confirmed not only the relevance of these criteria, but with other criteria unnoted by the early writers (but present in the works) there emerged the outlines of a painter whose individual style is quite unique. The three paintings are *Twin Junipers*, *Fisherman's Idyll* and *Central Mountain* which are closely examined below.

II-b1. *Shuangkuaitu* or *Twin Junipers* (fig. 39)⁸¹

The name *Twin Pines* is a misnomer as can be plainly seen, for the species depicted is the juniper, *kuai* and not the pine, *song*. Before entering the Qianlong collection where the misregistration first occurred, the collector and antiquarian of Korean descent, An Qi (c1683-1744-) had studied this work for its purchase and had recorded the experience as follows:

[Wu] Zhonggui had a painting called Twin Junipers (Shuangkuaitu) in which he painted two ancient junipers together with a level-distance landscape. The composition is rather extraordinary and marvellous. It is also a large work of two widths of silk, and was painted during the Taiding era for the Daoist Master

⁸¹ Detailed catalogue of the paintings examined is found in Volume Two, Catalogue

no.1.

*Leisuo...I bought it from the Cai family of Sanhan. Twin Junipers is not marked with [artist's] seals.*⁸²

INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

The composition

Two ancient juniper trees writhe upward where the tips spread out and disappear into mist.⁸³ Supporting the two junipers, a grand expansive vista stretches from the foreground at the viewer's feet to the distant horizon in one, continual recession, with clusters of dwellings, rolling hills and a long, meandering stream marking the distance. The branches of the junipers extend into three dimensional space, front, back and laterally, to swoop down and twist, fading into mist at the top. The mist is not fixed in a single plane but disperses and converges in deep space, recalling late eleventh century works such as Guo Xi's *Early Spring* (fig.3) and the Juran School work, *Layered Mountains and Dense Trees* (*Cengyan congshutu*), both in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.

The consistent spatial recession is typical of Yuan painting, and the juxtaposition of the tall trees against a landscape which occupies more than half of the painting is essentially a bi-focal effort, requiring equal clarity in both "subject" and "background."⁸⁴ The groundplane extends with remarkable consistency more than halfway up the picture plane. The gently undulating plain stretching back to the horizon seems alive as if breathing. The stream begins near the horizon left of centre and meanders past three zigzags before swinging over toward the right of the hillock to re-emerge at the feet of the giant junipers. The foreground plain is fed from three sides: the long stream just described, one emerging from the left foreground and one to its right in the centre of the picture. Recession is indicated by diminution of the cedars which, too, fade into mist. Houses (fig.45) are nestled discreetly in the woods. They

⁸² An Qi. *Moyuan huiguan*, 4 juan, supplement, 2 juan. (YSCB no.17, no.161), j.3. Emphasis mine. The problems of spurious seals and retouching are dealt with in the following section.

⁸³ Some inconsistencies are caused by clumsy retouching. See below.

⁸⁴ This marks the "second phase of Yuan painting" identified topically by Li Chu-ting in his "Stages of Development in Yuan Painting" in National Palace Museum *Bulletin*. Part 1 in vol.3 no.2 (May-June, 1969):1-10 and part 2 in vol. 3, no.3 (July-August, 1969):1-12.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Twin Junipers*

are positioned in parallel pairs to avoid visual commotion. The rendering is freehand but precise and firm, using reinforced ink lines. Major architectural features are gone over a second time in dark ink, the gables are strengthened with an additional line on one side to underscore their direction. Interior lines in light grey ink define three planes. The ratio of house-to-tree is somewhat small, resulting in an illusion of greater distance from the foreground junipers and a sense of overall tranquillity.

Use of Inkwash

Wu Zhen's extensive use of wet inkwash and hazy atmospherics had distinguished his work from those of his contemporaries not only in the eyes of Ming and Qing writers, but contemporaries like Ni Zan, Huang Jie, *et al* who early on had remarked on his use of pale inkwash and the lack of obvious brush traces. At a time when painters were moving away from a mixed and hidden, *yuanhua*, use of modelling strokes and inkwash toward increasing clarity in dry, linear brush work, the significance of graded inkwash in such works as the *Twin Junipers* appeared startling even to contemporaries, as we have seen.

The work is bathed in inkwash, graded from light to dark, achieving an illusion of great distance and a remarkable suppleness of form. In the far distance toward the upper right, layered mountains are washed and highlighted in ink of many tonalities. The layering of inkwash and the ink gradation with no sharp edges and no abrupt planes inform these rounded forms with a peculiar substantiality. They acquire thus an integrity and a resonance which appears to reverberate in the background, hollow spaces between hillocks.

Use of *chiaroscuro*

The most remarkable aspect of this work is the very conservative manner of modelling with which the artist defines plasticity and volume: a manner of *chiaroscuro* evolved from early Northern Song painting. There is however at the same time a calligraphic clarity of brushwork typical of Yuan painting. The modelling of the junipers' tree trunks deserves closer scrutiny. It contrasts fundamentally with the increasingly linear fashions of the time and reflects a preoccupation with a painterly

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Twin Junipers*

manner of modelling of plastic forms in space. It is a technique which harks back to tenth century prototypes, to the pre-texture-stroke, colourist manner which relies on contrasts in shading and on tonal gradations to bring forms into relief. Needless to say, the artist here uses long, hemp-fibre *pimacun* type modelling strokes instead of pure inkwash, but the *manner of application* and the *effect* are those of a more painterly mode. The strokes are piled densely in areas that are recessed and therefore dark, and dispersed sparsely in areas that are convex and highlighted. The entire surface is suffused with inkwash and the very wet modelling strokes are fused into the shading in many layers of wash; they are gone over again with darker accents to create a *chiaroscuro* that is dramatic, giving the trunks a gauntness and tautness resembling convoluted surfaces of weather-worn rock (fig.40).

Writings attributed to Wu Zhen often mention the Northern Song idealist or *shidaifu* masters Wen Tong (1019-1079) and Su Shi (1037-1101).⁸⁵ It is highly probable that Wu Zhen, as other Yuan masters interested in the Northern Song idealist or *shirenhua* movement, would have acquainted himself with the works, or copies of works, related to Su and Wen. In this context it may be of interest to consider an encomium for a painting of *Withered Trees* by Wen Tong written by a younger contemporary scholar, Bi Zhongyou (1047-1121):

On Viewing Withered Trees Painted by Academician Wen Yuke:

⁸⁵ The largest collection is *Mei daoren yimo* (Surviving works by Mei daoren, 1 juan, preface 1 juan, biography 1 juan, contents 1 juan and addenda 1 juan) compiled by the 17th century fellow townsman Qian Fen, published among others in the YSCB diyiji series, vol.11, no.79, Taipei, 1962. In one entry Wu Zhen describes his numerous efforts to capture the essence of Wen Tong's painting of a bamboo in wind which had been carved onto a stone stele, then already broken (p.48). The work as a compendium has been roundly criticised by the SKTY bibliographers and by Yu Shaosong in his critical bibliography of art treatises, *Shuhua shulu jieti*, for Qian's indiscriminate collation, including some fragments of marked low literary calibre and some which contextually make no sense. Some of the writings attributed to Wu Zhen will be discussed in detail in the thesis, but examination of the text of the *Mozhupu* ink bamboo manual, a work of major problems, cannot be accommodated within the space of the thesis and awaits publication elsewhere. Suffice it to say here that the collection cannot be entirely fictitious but contains some genuine specimens from the Master's own writing. To identify the Prime Literary Objects from the *Yimo*, however, is beyond the scope of the present task.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Twin Junipers*

[The Tang master] Wei Yan's paintings of trees and rocks are known world-wide; later painters could not match him. The Hon. Ren lent me this painting of Withered Trees. The hoary spirit of its rocks is like Tang painting. It is painted with only an ordinary brush which comes to hand (chuangtoubi), and Yuke has personally inscribed it as an authentic work. Frost and bark meld together: they are indistinct and not clearly visible. Of the trees' ancient dome and hoary branches only half remain. The tips are worn, the bone is decayed and the heart worn through. With rotten trunk and dragon scale, the tree is emaciated. Although the life force has receded, the root is still vital. Abruptly, tip-shoots stretch up against a darkened sky. Flowing and interrupted, the resin carves deep marks [into the bark]. Delapidated bamboo shoots stand straight as needles. Sitting for a long time in front of the painting I feel as though I were amidst ancient wastelands. Permeating the icy skies, the pale greyness chills a thousand years. Rising I feel as if I were in the presence of spirits. I see no brush traces, only pale inkwash. This kind of brushwork cannot be imitated by anyone. With integrity and purity [the ancient tree/lofty artist, withstood] poverty till death. The Hon. Ren treasures this painting not only for the [art] but because of the heart [of Wen Tong, which is that of a true] Gentle man. If Yuke were a common sort of person, Ren would not have kept Withered Tree even if it had been a superb painting. ⁸⁶

The Tang masters Wei Yan and Bi Hong appear in Song accounts as exemplars of genius of spontaneous and inspired painting, especially in their depiction of trees.⁸⁷ The association of these two painters had been a contemporary phenomenon, as the poet Du Fu (712-770) had already observed in a verse on Wei's *Twin Pines*, "How many in this world can paint the ancient pine? Bi Hong is already old and Wei Yan is [still] young..."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Bi Zhongyou. *Xitaiji* (Collected Writing from the Western Terrace, 20 juan. SKQS zhenben dibaji, diersi, compiled by order of Emperor Qianlong. Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan reprint based on the Yangben in the National Palace Museum, 1976) j.18. Emphasis mine.

⁸⁷ See eulogies on them by Wang Anzhong (1076-1134) and Wang Tang (act.1135-) in the collection of Song encomia, *Shenghuaji* (pref.1187) compiled by Sun Shaoyuan (in *Lianting 12 zhong* compiled by Cao Yin in 1706. Shanghai, Gushu Liutongchu, 1921).

⁸⁸ *Ibid* j5:1a.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Twin Junipers*

For the kind of plastic modelling based on shading rather than on linear texture strokes, we may refer to Dunhuang paintings from the Tang (Fig. 39b)⁸⁹ and for its application on the painting of trees and rocks, to cave paintings of the late tenth century, and also to undocumented works such as *Bamboo, Old Trees and Rock in Winter* ascribed to Xu Xi now in the Shanghai Museum (Fig.39c).⁹⁰ The latter work is free of outlines and relies on tonal contrasts in the inkwash to achieve separation of planes and description of volume. *Twin Junipers* illustrates an evolution from this technique; at the same time, it reveals a decidedly fourteenth-century approach in its forthright use of clear contour lines, both dark and light, around the tree trunk and atop the rocks.⁹¹ Shading is achieved by overlaying long hemp-fibre *pimacun* strokes and graded inkwash, and no longer inkwash alone. The remarkable combination of inkwash and linear modelling is seen in the rendering of the elongated knotholes: the periphery is shaded in pale ink with painterly strokes, and the centre is deepened with jet black ink (figs 40,43).

Bi Hong's references to Tang masters in connection with the techniques of Wen Tong's relatively *hidden* use of brush strokes and his extensive use of pale inkwash evokes interest in ancient, painterly techniques. This remarkable description seems to find an echo in observations by Wu Zhen's contemporaries on Wu's own use of pale inkwash, and the lack of brushwork traces in his works. *Twin Junipers* clearly reveals a latent echo of Tang modelling which leaves "no traces of the brush, only pale

⁸⁹ See Mary Fong, "Technique of *Chiaroscuro* in Chinese Painting from Han Through Tang" in *Artibus Asiae* XXVIII, 1976:91-127, where she argues convincingly for China's adoption of the use of *chiaroscuro* not only in Buddhist painting but earlier, already in the Han. Opposing this view is a long article by Peter Glum, "Light without Shade: the Divine Radiance, Moonlight, Sunsets, Translucence, Lustre and Other Light Effects in Chinese and Japanese Painting" in *Oriental Art* n.s. XXXVII.4, Winter, 1981/2:3907-412, and XXXVIII.2, Spring, 1982:46-63. Glum argues that the Chinese and Japanese were more interested in the effects of lustre on textiles, and not interested in *chiaroscuro*. His argument reveals a narrow understanding of *chiaroscuro*, and a fairly restricted understanding of Chinese and Japanese perception of space, volume, light source and highlights. While from Glum's perspective only works like Castiglione's may be considered to use *chiaroscuro*, from a Chinese perspective, what Mary Fong has observed around the Han may indeed be considered an innovation, introduced probably from Roman or Roman-related Indian sources. The invention of highlighting by the Greek master Apelles active in the late fourth century BC and its transmission eastward across the Roman empire has been discussed by Ernst Gombrich in *The Heritage of Apelles*, Oxford, Phaidon Press, 1976.

⁹⁰ See Cahill, 1982:30-31.

⁹¹ That is, there is less effort than in Northern Song to hide the contour lines as brush strokes, to blend them into the shading.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Twin Junipers*

inkwash."It represents a survival and evolution of the eleventh-century painterly *chiaroscuro* used by Wu's idol, Wen Tong.

The landscape portion of *Twin Junipers* is likewise striking for its *chiaroscuro* (fig.39a), its use of shading for plasticity. This is a singular work not only in the context of Wu Zhen attributions, but stands out from the corpus of identifiable Yuan paintings in its primary reliance on inkwash. In view of its recognizable Yuan features however, it cannot be given a Southern Song date but must be seen as a fourteenth century work which employs markedly conservative techniques.

Expression

The overwhelming impression is a sense of profound tranquillity that seems to reverberate through an expanding, breathing space. The gently undulating landscape appears to absorb, rather than expel, vitality and energy. Elements appear to be drawn down into the soil (which is supple rather than hard) as if sinking into a giant cushion. That is, the outward placidity belies a gentle but vital course of energy within. The brushwielding is weighted and measured throughout, in the strokes, dots and wash. With a worn tip, the artist covers the silk several times with wash and brushwork. There is no haste: the energy in the ink traces is steadfast in a measured and even pace, without agitation in the wrist and attending changes in stroke-width (except for retouched areas discussed below). The application of moss dots combines a lively mixture of dark and light accents, and here functions to define convexities in the land. The effect of sinking into depth is largely enhanced by the supple but markedly weighted and measured brushwork. The motif elements in the picture also appear to sink deep into the painting surface, the ink fusing into the silk. The brushwork morphology and expression in this work differ radically from the crisply delineated, dark-inked and dapper image of Wu Zhen works commonly accepted these days, an image which emerges from cursory glances at surviving attributions, and enforced in the descriptions of post-Hongwu writers.⁹²

⁹² As a fundamental change seems to take over perceptions of the Wu Zhen image from Hongwu writers onward, an image at odds with pre-Hongwu writers, it is important that textual evidence be critically evaluated prior to acceptance. This is critical regarding Wu Zhen, as we have seen above in Section IIa3, and may be equally vital for other Yuan masters.

EXTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

Subsequent to the painting's completion and circulation among collections, it has suffered two areas of retouching which have significantly altered the original appearance and documentation. These should be mentioned in detail.

Retouching on the Painting:

The top branches of the foremost juniper feature in two instances dark "crab claws" of the type associated with the Li-Guo school. One is at the lowermost extension of the long, drooping branch at left (fig.41), while another extends from the topmost branch to the right (see fig.39) into space. They are rendered in dark wet ink, and executed in weak brushwork. The effect is of two flabby tips suddenly lunging back into the foreground. The darkness of inktone contradicts the recession into misty space that has been carefully described by the original artist. Compare for example the lightness of inktone in the other branches receding into space above and below. Models for the additions can be found in the section above the leftmost tip (fig.42) and in the right tip above the branch with needle-clusters. In both instances the original bare tips are simpler than the added ones, and do not suggest crab-claw forms. They are done in very pale ink, with firm, taut brushwork charging the barren twigs with virility. The illusion of spatial recession is complete. The retoucher's misunderstanding of the original is clear: the blackened added tips are in silhouette, in imitation of the original receding tip seen in the top centre of fig.42 where however the ink *recedes in tone as it moves away into space*. Both additions are echoes of the originals in their arched-bridge shape, but the brushwork is dull, of an even, flat, dark ink. And this dead twig is mistakenly sprinkled with too many stubs and moss dots.⁹³ The brushwork of the dots, too, is weak and the application careless, with no attempt at description or adhesion to the twig's surface from which they purportedly spring.

A photographic reconstruction of the painting prior to the retouching (fig.43) illustrates the overall tautness and vigour of the original composition as well as live

⁹³ Moss ordinarily grows only on living (moist) parts of trees and not on withered tips, as clearly illustrated in the original sections.

space which extends and expands from between the branches, a space occluded by the retouching.

Retouching on the inscription.

Taiding wunian chun eryue Qingmingjie wei

Leisuo zunshi zǒ. Wu Zhen

On the Qingming Festival, Spring, 2nd lunar month in the 5th year of Taiding (1328), for

Master Leisuo [I] made [this]. Wu Zhen.

The inscription of eighteen characters in two columns is an addition evidently made after a narrow border had been patched onto the right side of the painting in a remounting operation. The characters *wu*, *chun*, *Qing* and *wei* spill over beyond the original silk onto the border strip (fig.45). The ink of the inscription is darker than any used in the painting and is applied after much of the silk had already begun to wear thin, covering its tears and cracks. The only damage to occur *after* the inscription was added, is a tear that cuts through the bottom of the character *Qing*. All other damages lie *beneath*, and are covered by the ink.

The configuration as it now stands reveals stiffness and exaggeration of certain features. These include the unnatural linking strokes in the first characters of each column and in *chun*, the awkwardness in executing the circular turns for *wei*, etc. Traces of earlier writing in lighter ink can be seen beneath most characters of the second column. This raises questions concerning the authenticity of the dedication. Other examples of awkwardness and unnaturalness include the disproportion between the left and right elements as in *Qing,ming* in the first column and in *suo, shi* in the second. Whether this is the result of an unsure hand writing the whole inscription for the first time, on the ancient and worn silk, or an unsure hand ineptly reenforcing what might have been an original inscription lying beneath the presently visible ink, cannot be determined without the aid of examination with ultra-violet light.⁹⁴

Content of Dedication

⁹⁴ It is a source of deep regret that during my four years in Taipei, limitation of facilities had made such vital examinations impossible.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Twin Junipers*

To sign one's name, *ming*, rather than one's *zi* or *hao* is an indication of respect. *Twin Junipers* bears the earliest of dates associated with Wu Zhen attributions, where 1328 corresponds to the artist's 49th year. It is dedicated in respectful terms to a Daoist master.⁹⁵ In view of Wu Zhen's own Daoist leanings as reflected in his self-styled name, Meihua daoren, and in view of all references to him up to the Hongwu period, the humble attitude reflected in the dedication is consistent with a master-disciple relationship, even if it may be an indirect one two generations removed.

If the original inscription in pale ink beneath the dark covering now visible is from the hand of Wu Zhen, it would probably comprise the only, though heavily retouched and modified, example of his regular script, *kaishu*, which has survived. While difficult to relate to examples of Wu's cursive and semi-cursive scripts which will be examined in Section III, in *content* it is certainly consistent with the bare facts of Wu's life as known.

Addition of artist's seals after 1742

An Qi's record expressly observed that *Twin Junipers* lacked seals. The two relief seals, Zhonggui and Qulu now seen beneath the signature,⁹⁶ are of remarkably poor quality, and are unique examples surviving on attributions.⁹⁷ It is not unreasonable to date the addition of the seals to sometime after 1742 and prior to the painting's entry into the Imperial Collection where it is registered as bearing two artist's seals.⁹⁸ Such a move was not designed to deceive the Emperor so much as to lend authority to the painting. Dealers and collectors would appear to have relied in the process of authentication rather heavily on collective external evidence (the cumulative if

⁹⁵ Chen Jingguang suggests in her 1974 thesis that Leisuo zunshi was the Daoist master Lei Siqi (1230-1301) of Linchuan in Jiangxi Province (Chen, op cit: 51ff). This hypothesis however is not as forceful as that posited by Zhang Guangbin a year later where he identified Leisuo as the Daoist master Zhang Shanyuan whose disciple two generations down was Wu Zhen's friend Zhou Yuanzhen who had lived in Jiaying's Zixuguan and who had, according to Ni Zan, acquired "many poems and paintings" from Wu Zhen (Zhang, op cit: 17). Zhang Guangbin cites the authority of the *Gusuzhi*, gazeteer for Suzhou of the Zhengde era (1506-1522) for the identification. In this latter context, the reverential tone of dedication to Zhou's great-grand-master seems quite fitting.

⁹⁶ I have been unable to obtain a satisfactory reproduction of the seals and am unable to include them in the chart of seals related to Wu Zhen (fig.198).

⁹⁷ There are other seals with the same character-combinations, but not identical to the pair on *Twin Junipers*. See Catalogue in Volume Two.

⁹⁸ In the *Chonghuagong-lu* of *Shiqubaoji* chubian.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Twin Junipers*

circumstantial evidence of artists's seals, collectors' seals, inscriptions by and seals of prominent previous collectors or admirers). Such evidence would appear often to outweigh the single direct evidence of internal style and graphology, visual evidence of which the interpretation depends solely on the particular eye-experience of the particular connoisseur at hand. It was the better part of wisdom, therefore, for a donor or seller to ensure that his offering was complete with artists' signatures and seals. Indeed it is rare that a work presented and accepted as a great master's work is unsigned or without seals. In this light it would appear to have been common practice to restore proper (or insert improper) signatures and seals on paintings where these were missing or had been damaged. The fear that others would not understand or accept an unsealed or uninscribed work is all too well known. Further instances of such practice are discussed below.

In the foregoing section *Twin Junipers* has been thoroughly examined as to period and personal styles, the areas and nature of retouching have been identified, a probable original appearance has been photographically reconstructed. In the examination of this work, both eastern and western criteria and techniques have been satisfied. Its Prime Object status has been established beyond reasonable doubt. In sum, therefore it may be submitted that *Twin Junipers*, in spite of additional painting or retouching, suspicious calligraphy and demonstrably false seals, is a Yuan painting which reveals features in accord with contemporary descriptions of Wu Zhen's work. Moreover, it shares many personal features in graphology with the following two works, as we shall see.

2. FISHERMAN'S IDYLL OR *YUFUYITU* (fig.46)

Original meaning of the poem and the painting

This work has been misnamed *Yufutu* or *Old Fisherman* in Ming and Qing collections and in its registration in the National Palace Museum, in spite of the fact that the artist has in his dedication expressly named the painting *Yufuyi* (feelings of the fisherman or fisherman's idyll):

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In the second month of Spring in the second year of the Zhizheng era (1342), [I have] playfully made for Zijing Fisherman's Idyll, (Yufuyi). Meihua daoren inscribed. (Frontispiece, fig.58).

Reclining in the boat is a scholar dressed in long robes for the study and not in trousers and shirt for fishing. He does not row, paddle or steer; nor does he hold a fishing rod or net. This scholar does not abandon his own identity but merely *borrow*s the fisherman's boat for a moonlight cruise, to enjoy the scenery and the emotional ambiance usually accessible only to fishermen, and only after the day's chore is done. He does not propose to take up their livelihood. However, in view of Ming perception of Yuan eremitism where the role of political fugitive-turned-fisherman is ascribed to Yuan figures, it is not surprising that this painting could have been misinterpreted since Ming times.

The painting depicts a lake scene. Water, rippling gently in the breeze and shimmering in the moonlight, forms the centre and focus of the work. The lake area is not only palpable and alive, its luminous expanse in the stillness of the night actually forms the focus of the painting. The poem written and inscribed by the artist in the top portion reads:

*Soughing, the west winds make the tree leaves fall,
The sorrow of azure mountains on the river is ten-thousand fold,
Long years' meditative tranquillity take joy in the fishing line,
How many times have bamboo-hat and grass-mantle
offered respite from wind and rain?
Forgetting east and west, the fisher boy drums on his steering oar,
His song bursts forth, rippling along the waves,
'midst windblown bulrushes in flower.
The sound of the jade pot is long, its song unending,⁹⁹
Lifting my head [I see] the clear moon like a polished bronze mirror.
In the deep of night, fishes splash behind the boat: plosh!
The clouds disperse in the empty sky, the misty waters expand.*

The poem talks of an expansion of space in sky and lake, and of sounds which reverberate through the stillness of night. These motifs are also visually evoked in the painting. The quiet ripples of waters expanding in the moonlight and the night skies opening as clouds disperse comprise the subject of the painting. They may be seen as

⁹⁹ The voice or sound of jade-pot, *yuhu*, may be interpreted either as the sound of the pouring of unending wine (kept in jade ewers) or the sound of time, as it drips unending in water-clocks, *yuhu*. The character *sheng*, voice or sound, has been mistranscribed as *shen* (deep) in *Yuan sidajia*, but not in *Gugong shuhualu*.

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the purpose for which the scholar borrows the fisherman's boat: for thus he attains the relaxed, meditative serenity of the fisherman after work, or, the fisherman's idyll in moonlit solitude. It may be observed that for this artist these tranquil, introverted aspects in a world of expanding and reverberating space represent positive values. That is to say, there is in them not a hint of the sour-grape satisfaction projected into Yuan culture by men of later periods, as seen already in writings of the Hongwu period. It may further be stressed that this idyll forms a distinct contrast to literary and pictorial evocations of elegant, expensive manors (which allude to official positions), or to the physical enactment of fishermen's activities which have come to dominate Wu Zhen's posthumous image (see Section III).

INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

The composition

The painting features a large shimmering lake in the centre, occupying a quarter of the entire space, matching that occupied by the sky above. While in works of the Ming and later, the eye tends to leap across blank areas to focus on areas with brush interest, in this and other Yuan paintings the water and sky are not blank, but comprise the *yin* part of a viable *yinyang* symbiosis of solids with fluids and vapours. To read this painting in the same way one reads the fifteenth century *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting* with which it is often paired, has caused not only a misunderstanding of this rare autograph of Wu Zhen, but a misconception of the vital differences in perception which characterise the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Spatial recession is measurable. As in *Twin Junipers*, the trees rise up against a described background, here of lake life, with rows of rushes measuring the distance between the trees and the low-slung skiff. The latter is carefully aligned parallel to the rushes to enhance a sense of stillness and order, and the long steering oar emphasizes horizontality within the painting, that is, the stretching, expanding quality of the lake. The main occupant of the skiff, the scholar reclining in full robes, turns his head toward the illumined space, confirming as in the poem, the central focus and mood of the painting. This portion of the painting harkens to the background of sleepy

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hillocks bathed in mist and moonlight, across a central expanse of lake distinguished by its measurability and substantiveness.

The light source is from the moon which is hidden behind clouds just breaking near the top centre of the painting, between the 7th and 8th column of the inscription. The effect of moonlight is consistent throughout. The foreground hillocks by the bank are divided by the path, the one on the left is in light while its opposite on the right is in shadow. Interest in this play of light and shade is carried throughout the painting to the furthest hills.

Waves in rippling strokes of light and dark ink define the bright, central area of moonlight and shadows upon the waters. The background mountains (figs.48,50) are seen in three-quarter view allowing clear recession into depth. Depiction of distant hills is reduced to layers of pale inkwash, highlighted from beneath as in Southern Song landscapes. The low hillocks on the left are illumined, while those on the right, behind which dormant houses huddle, are dark as in the foreground, being under the shadow of a cloud not yet dispersed. From the foreground to the farthest hills, the groundplane is consistent throughout. Water enters from the background between the two groups of low-lying hillocks in zigzag fashion, to expand once more before the bank of shrubs in mist.

The painting of the thatched gate (fig. 47), like that of the houses in *Twin Junipers* (fig.45), is done freehand in measured and weighted strokes of even widths. Major structural elements like posts and roof are gone over a second time in darker ink. This is over the first outline in grey ink which leaves a "white" (reserve) space alongside. The top half of the "thatch" is washed in graded inktones, the bottom half is finished with downward strokes. The combination of white, grey and black lines in triple line, done in a steady freehand, straight but not mechanical, is a hallmark of Wu Zhen's architectural rendering. These appear in the prime objects but in no other work ascribed to Wu Zhen.

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The morphology

The pictorial elements (mountains, trees and grasses, boat, bulrushes and scholar) function as in *Twin Junipers*, to frame the water which, with the parting clouds above, are seen to expand, as if breathing. They relate closely and adhere to the earth where the energy is internalized and does not radiate outward into space. And as in *Twin Junipers*, these motifs recoil from space and cede to the expanding waters and sky.¹⁰⁰ Attention is given to volumetric description and each element is positioned in measurable space. As in *Twin Junipers*, the ratio of house-to-tree is small, dwarfing man-made elements in order to enhance the stature of trees and to allow space its expanding cope.

Pictorial elements are perceived, and described, as three-dimensional entities. Effort is made to account for space behind masses, separating one from another. The two cedars in the foreground are discrete entities and nowhere confused. The footpath is clearly articulated beneath the thatched gate (fig.47) and, at the water's edge, hugs the shoulder of the hillock, moving behind to the right.

The branches emerge from the trees, but adhere solidly at the joints. Grasses emerge from and adhere to the earth, and the marshes (figs.48,49). Distant hills rise weightily out of the water, and the space between the island-hill groups, and the distant mountains is clearly described with a band of mist from which distant shrubbery and woods loom in inkwash as in a Southern Song lake landscape (figs.48,50).

The brushwork

The modelling of plasticity is done in *chiaroscuro*. In this painting it combines firm brushwork in *pimacun* strokes with an overlaying of inkwash of many layers and shades. The brushwork is weighted and steady, never hasty or jerky. Elements inter-
relate in an organic way and cling, sinking downward, earthward in the painting, and

¹⁰⁰ Japanese scholars have long noted that expanding space and dispersing inkwash characterise early Muromachi ink painting still conditioned by Southern Song and Yuan painting. They see this as distinct from latter-Muromachi painting after the onset of influence from Ming painting with its characteristic emphasis on mass. Shimada Shūjirō discusses the shift from expansiveness to contraction, from space to solids witnessed particularly in the paintings of Sesshū. For the former phase he introduced the terms *hirogari*, broadening, expanding and *chiri*, dispersal, blurring. See his "Haboku sansuizu" broken ink landscape, in *Kokka* 700, July, 1950: 213-5.

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inward, fusing into the silk. This is in contrast to many Wu Zhen attributions where ink splashes fly outward, piercing space and forming black silhouettes against white paper.

A notable feature of Wu Zhen's brushwork is the weight and the measured pace which, in musical terms, would be *legato cantabile* and *andante maestoso*. This accounts for the deep fusion of ink and silk. The lavish use of wash has been noted by contemporary writers, and it is seen here: not only in washy areas like sky or distant hills, but throughout the entire work, many layers of wash, of different ink tonalities, provide a sense of depth and suppleness. Wash is applied beneath and over all the brush-stroke areas as well. Rocks, where necessary, are gone over with oblique strokes, *cebi* (fig.49).¹⁰¹

The dotting is remarkable for its consistency of direction: moss dots are strict verticals. They are applied, as the wash, in several layers of different tonalities, and they intermix: light, medium, dark, very dark - but always strictly vertical. The effect is one of depth and life (figs.47,48).

Compared to the *Twin Junipers*, this work represents essentially a different brush-mode. Much use of hemp-fibre *pima* brushstrokes has replaced the greater reliance on wash of *Twin Junipers*. The artist has moved to a different style. But the basic features of his work remain the same: use of *chiaroscuro* both by means of wash and in the grouping of strokes and dots; interest in a clearly defined light source; preference for strict verticals, horizontals and parallels; neatly ordered clumps of dots or strokes in parallel directions as if galvanized; meticulousness; weighted and steady brushwork.

The brush motifs while limited are used in free and live combinations. Chief among them are the *pimacun* hemp-fibre stroke, the long and slightly ripply water strokes, blunted vegetation dots applied in firm pressure but in a single direction, though at various heights and tonalities, for distant cedars the remarkably parallel use of

¹⁰¹ It is this feature which may have appeared to some observers as traits of the Ma-Xia School, as many later imitations, especially in the rocks in paintings of bamboo and rock, where they are applied in swift, broad wash strokes which more directly evoke the Ma-Xia tradition.

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horizontal strokes in groups, firm strokes with angular hooks for swamp reeds, and the use of oblique strokes or *cebi* for the texturing of shiny water rocks (fig.49).

The expression

In expression *Idyll*, like *Twin Junipers*, is introspective, tranquil and serene. The *tempo*, if one were to read time into space, is slow and grand. It is this introspective aspect which may have caused Hongwu period writers to misread into Wu Zhen's works such expressions as melancholy, solitary, lofty, or filled with autumnal gloom.

These two paintings reveal a world wrapped in a moist and breathing atmosphere, with supple earth and rippling waters both of which are substantive, measurable. The mood is inward-directed, serene and contemplative. Although it may be using negative evidence, in view of the fact that so many attributed but non-genuine works project the following moods, it may not be amiss here to note that neither early commentators nor the evidence in these two landscapes project bright, sparkling conviviality, dramatic contrasts in shapes or ink tonality, crisp, snappy movements or outward-directed energy. Because the contrast between these two prime objects and most attributions is of a radical nature, the issue not only of hands but of periods is forced upon the art historian, and he must decide one way or another. That is, if *Twin Junipers* and *Fisherman's Idyll* are of Yuan date or even by Wu Zhen, "standard works" like the *Fishermen* handscrolls in the Freer Gallery of Art and Shanghai Museum, *Poetic Feelings in a Thatched Hut* in the Cleveland Museum of Art, the frequently cited *Eight Views of Jiahe* (provenance unknown) and the many versions of a single fisherman speeding toward a cliff in an oversized boat not only must be by another hand, but of a later date. Otherwise, if these works are deemed authentic, then logic would dictate that *Twin Junipers* and *Fisherman's Idyll* must be by another hand, and from an earlier period. We have here no less than a major crisis in period style where, it may be submitted, works from two separate eras have been accepted as homogeneous, and have long confused the stylistic features of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Fisherman's Idyll*

Fisherman's Idyll has not only satisfied structural and stylistic criteria for fourteenth century painting, but in brushwork criteria it matches those from the author of *Twin Junipers*. The work may be regarded as a Prime Object.

This painting has been considered to bear strong relationship to the *Wintry Trees by a Lake* attributed to Dong Yuan, now in the Kurokawa Collection. This problem is discussed in Appendix iii.

3. Central Mountain or *Zhongshantu* (fig. 55)

Problem of the Name

The name *Central Mountain* or *Zhongshantu* may strike the inquisitive observer as curious if not altogether inappropriate. What we see in this small composition would appear to be part of a mountain range of many layered peaks, of which the central one is not particularly distinguished by notable height, vegetation, paths, temples or other features which might justify lending name to the work. If it may be translated into the plural to read *Central Mountains*, then the question arises: central to what?

INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE COMPOSITION

The painting is now mounted as one of eight horizontal small works ascribed to various Yuan masters in one long handscroll. It has been warmly regarded by critics and scholars alike and has been noted for its extraordinary quality. The eighteenth century collector An Qi writes,

...layered peaks and deep groves without a single mixed tree in the picture. It is entirely in the tradition of [Dong Yuan] Beiyuan, done with a coarse hemp-fibre brush-stroke. In the moss dots atop mountains, perpendiculars and horizontals are kept separate. In the deep valleys among the mountains [Wu Zhen] used deep ink to moisten the two peaks which are lower than those around them, [the effect is] surpassing in wonder. According to Li Zhulai (Rihua) who in his Zitaoxuan zazhui (Collected miscellany from the Purple Peach Studio) cited the following line from Sun Xinggong's "Ode to Tiantai": "Reversed shadows [over] layered abysses, hiding the tips of a thousand peaks." I now believe in the so-called hidden peaks. The brushwork in this scroll is thick and hoary, its energy resonance is antique and forthright. It is an exceptional work by [Wu Zhen] Zhonggui, and should not be regarded as [a painting done by] a Yuan

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Central Mountain*

*man. It has truly captured the quintessence of Dong Yuan. The inscription at the end says "in the Second month of Spring in the Second Year of Zhiyuan, I made Central Mountain for Kejiu. Written by Meihua daoren."*¹⁰²

An Qi remarks on the early Northern Song quality of Wu Zhen's work, that is its conservative and antique quality, stating that it did not resemble Yuan paintings. "Distant mountains are in three layers," and "trees are in two layers" are indeed principles conforming to Song and Yuan guidelines to PHYSIOGRAPHIC rendering (see IIa above). The righthand side of the painting is in many respects virtually identical to that in the right distant hills in *Fisherman's Idyll*.

Use of Inkwash and Atmospheric

Observations on the conservative nature of some of Wu's works have also been made by Dong Qichang and Wu Sheng cited elsewhere in this study. An Qi here notes specifically the use of dark inkwash to cast certain peaks in deep shadow. Indeed, once more our attention is drawn to the physiographic approach in its use of *chiaroscuro* for plasticity, and a clear sense of light source which renders some peaks light and some in shadow. This is reminiscent more of Five Dynasties and early Northern Song painting, than it is of Yuan.

The right side of this fragment is enveloped in misty rain while a cloud, now out of range of the painting, hovers above the lower hills toward the left, casting a shadow over them. Shorter peaks in deep recession, surrounded by taller peaks on all four sides, are entirely darkened in a dramatic, but no less physiographic *chiaroscuro*. There is a remarkable play of light over the tallest peak, ranging down toward the foreground (waters?) Gradually and systematically, it decreases in light intensity. Next in brightness are the two peaks to the left, followed by the one on the top right, then that in the right foreground group (with rain-soaked Mi-dot trees), then the evergreen-

¹⁰² An Qi, *Moyuan huiguan*, j.4 (YSCB vol17, no.161:236) Writing in *Daguanlu* (1712), Wu Sheng has misread the dedication. Instead of Kejiu, he thought the recipient was one Ziji. The name Ziji is repeated twice in the entry (j.18) and demonstrates that it is all too human to mis-transcribe associated words. Ziji is the name of Huang Gongwang and to a Qing man represents one of the other Four Great Masters. Similarly, the reign title Zhiyuan and Zhizheng, can easily be confused in the mind of the transcriber.

ringed group overcast by the "reversed" or "upside down" cloud-shadow which had startled An Qi.

Internal life

The scene is alive with an internal life remarkably close to the 1342 *Fisherman's Idyll* which is a night scene where the surface of the water, bathed in moonlight, is brighter than the sky which has been suffused in inkwash. While this is not a moonlight scene, the play of light and shadow is no less intense and dramatic. In the short span there are areas of sunlight, areas of shade, and areas damped with misty rain.

Clarity at a Distance

When "read" from a greater distance approximating that given to a hanging scroll, the painting acquires surprisingly greater clarity. What appears at close range blunted brushstrokes appear from a distance as forms in light and shadow. This effect recalls Shen Gua's description of Dong Yuan's style. It also marks the very close resemblance to *Fisherman's Idyll*, and the formative influence on these by Dong Yuan-related works like *Wintry Trees by a Lake* in the Kurokawa Collection (see Appendix iii).

Problem as a Complete Composition

Not only is this like no other work among Wu Zhen attributions, it is in its present state like no other Chinese landscape. The brushwork is reduced to four types (*pimacun* hemp-fibre stroke, *taidian* moss dots which are here vertical, the horizontal strokes of the cedars, and wash). To some observers it has even appeared monotonous, and has caused Cahill to write,

*It is unenlivened by any streams, waterfalls, figures, buildings, even paths. There is no indication of season or weather, no mists - which, as the drifting "breath" of the landscape, would provide some hint of motion and change. A total stillness and timelessness pervade the scene. One would be hard put to find, even in Yuan painting, a more determinedly unexciting work than this one.*¹⁰³

¹⁰³ *Hills*: 70.

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Actually, viewed from a distance it will be seen that there is a great deal of "breath" and atmospherics and that, as a Chinese painting, there *must* have been water in some form, now evidently cut off. With the removal of all inscriptions and seals (fig. 56), it is not difficult to see that what we behold is a fragment, and not a whole composition. That would explain why the motifs here are limited to a few types, the brushwork appears "broad and relaxed...[and is used in a] tranquilizing repetition of simple forms".¹⁰⁴ Even for Wu Zhen, whose brush habits have been identified above, this is too limited. In its present state, mountains are truncated and there is no water. Water as lake, stream, cascade or distant rivulet is prerequisite in Chinese landscape paintings, *shanshui* or mountains and waters.

The painting measures only 26.4 cm in height (and a mere 90.7 cm in width). This is notably shorter than Yuan and late Southern Song handscrolls such as Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling on the Fuchun Mountains* (Wuyong version, measuring 33.3cm in height), *Clear and Remote View of Streams and Mountains* attributed to Xia Gui (46.4cm), or the Jin dynasty *Red Cliff* scroll (50.8cm). Of particular interest is the measurement of the *Fishermen* handscroll attributed to Wu Zhen now in the Freer Gallery of Art which is 32.5cm in height, 6.1cm, or 23% more than *Central Mountain*. This handscroll is given a completion date of 1342, the same year as *Fisherman's Idyll* and, as here submitted, *Central Mountain*. The probable relationships of these works is discussed in Appendix iv.

It is submitted not only that the fragment has been cut off from its left and right extensions, but that it has been deprived of some five to six centimetres from the bottom as well where the foot of the central mountain range and, most probably, the water's edge would have been. It is not difficult to see this as a portion of a handscroll, situated in a position comparable to the portion of a landscape handscroll such as Huang Gongwang's *Fuchun shanjutu* published in Cahill's *Hills Beyond a River* pl.42. That is, it is the central mountain portion, showing the greatest peak at its closest, with its foot running down beyond the scroll, and streamlets and eddies on two

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

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sides visible in the bottom five or six centimetres. In view of the fact that Chinese landscape paintings usually feature water, and in view of the fact that this fragment is notably short, a strong case may be made that similar streamlets and eddies had been originally part of a handscroll the only surviving portion of which is now called *Zhongshantu*.¹⁰⁵ In its present state, the composition appears to have "no real distance, only peak beyond peak" and resembles no other work.

In an enlarged context our fragment may well read as a central mountain passage in a longer handscroll, with one section touching the foreground, that is, running to the bottom of the scroll as in the corresponding section in the Freer scroll, rather than largely recessed into the mid- and back-ground as it now appears. In such a context, *Central Mountain* may be seen to possess very real and measurable space, volume, and the valleys are filled with the reverberation of the mountains, resounding from dark and spacious depths. In the lost bottom strip, the central mountain may have been allowed to penetrate to the foreground and the hills to the side, particularly those toward the left, may have been come to rest by the water's edge. In short, in its original taller state the "real distance" was most probably quite obvious, perhaps like the upper section of *Fisherman's Idyll*.

EXTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

James Cahill has remarked on the unassertive quality of the work in which "we are confronted with the quintessential, one might say irreducible, Wu Zhen and must come to terms with it."¹⁰⁶ He was also the first to note that the date of 1336 of the inscription seems too early, as it is "a harbinger of what is to come."¹⁰⁷ This problem, and that posed by the present name of the painting, may be dealt with by examining one more problem.

Spurious artist's inscription and seals

¹⁰⁵ Scrolls stored in a vertical container on end often suffer damage with water seepage or mould or insect infestation. Mounters cleansing old scrolls often remove severely damaged ends (bottoms or tops in handscrolls, left or right sides in hanging scrolls) to keep the painting fresh and clean looking.

¹⁰⁶ James Cahill, *Hills Beyond a River* : 69.

¹⁰⁷ James Cahill, *Dissertation*, op cit:145.

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The inscription in the upper left is spurious and a later addition. The artist's dedicatory inscription is scribbled in a messy hand, in shaky alignment. There is a notable awkwardness in the size-relationships among the characters, as well as in the positioning and scale of the inscription block to the painting. The characters are too large for such a small picture.¹⁰⁸ The placement of the inscription reveals a lack of sensitivity to the space above and beyond the layered peaks.¹⁰⁹

Comparing the dedicatory inscription block of *Central Mountain* to that in *Fishermen's Idyll*, their relationship becomes clear. The latter is firm and confident, while the former uncertain and weak. Both comprise three columns. *Fisherman's Idyll* reads:

Zhizheng ernian chun eryue wei
Zijing xizuo Yufuyi
Meihua daoren shu (standard pair of seals; fig. 58)¹¹⁰

The inscription in *Central Mountain* is a virtual paraphrase of the above, and aligned likewise:

Zhiyuan ernian chun eryue feng wei
Kejiu xizuo Zhongshantu
Meihua daoren shu (standard pair of seals, copies; fig. 57)

The character alignment and the calligraphy of *Central Mountain* betray a different hand. The sensitivity for block-alignment seen in *Fishermen's Idyll* is missing in the *Central Mountain* inscription where each column has a different length and there is no intention of forming a rectangular block, as in the painting on silk. The fastidious nature of Wu Zhen's calligraphy is discussed below in II-e. The penchant for forming a neat rectangular block into which the seals are tucked neatly to conform with the edge is a feature of Southern Song inscriptions and continues in the Yuan among Chan monks and conservative artists like Wu Zhen.

¹⁰⁸ They are the right size for a handscroll some six centimetres taller, however. That is, they may well have been copied from the original in fairly much the original size.

¹⁰⁹ The ubiquitous seals and inscriptions of the Qianlong Emperor have destroyed the breathing space of many fine early works, and indeed have dulled the modern viewer's sense of proper placement of artists' inscriptions and seals in relation to the paintings.

¹¹⁰ A brief discussion of Wu Zhen's seals is found in Appendix viii. See also plate of collected seals in figure 199.

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Of great interest is the difference in the dates which, while six years apart by Western count, is only one character different in Chinese. The 2nd year of *Zhiyuan* (*Central Mountain*) corresponds to 1336 and the 2nd year of *Zhizheng* (*Fisherman's Idyll*) to 1342, comprising a large gap of six years. In close examination it becomes evident that the two works, while on different media, are identical in brushwielding (cf. fig.59 with *Central* on top and *Idyll* below). As has been pointed out above, *Central Mountain* is painted as if on silk and as a large-format work to be viewed from a distance. This is in distinct contrast to the type of close-up reading of handscrolls being developed in the Suzhou area by Zhao Mengfu and his successors. It retains the hoary grandeur of Northern Song hangings which, tapestry-like, adorned walls and were viewed in sizeable rooms, that is, from a distance.

Features identified with Wu Zhen's graphology are present:

- The same use of *chiaroscuro*.
- The same complex use of wash and brushwork of several layers, intermixed
- A single light source, with dramatic contrasts in highlights and shadows among the peaks
- Weighted and steady brushwork, with blunt, heavy, even strokes
- Tendency to align along strict verticals and horizontals
- Preference for parallels

In view of the close resemblance in style, and the spurious nature of the 1336 inscription, it is submitted here that:

- a. *Central Mountain* was painted by Wu Zhen in the same year, even in the same month, as *Fisherman's Idyll*.
- b. *Central Mountain* was originally part of a larger work, perhaps a handscroll, which had subsequently suffered damage, leaving this fragment after rescue operations in remounting.
- c. Its original image extended beyond the two sides and the bottom of the present sheet of paper.

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d. After cutting it down to the present size, the mounters copied, that is, "transferred" most of the original inscription which must have been at the end of the handscroll, far to the left of the present central, mountainous, fragment.

e. The original inscription by Wu Zhen read :

Zhizheng ernian chun eryue wei
Kejiu zuo ????
Meihua daoren shu (standard pair of seals)

where ??? was a name as replete with meaning as *Yufuyi*, perhaps some poetic evocation of misty rains in autumnal streams and mountains. But as most of the "incidents" giving name to the painting had had to be cut off, a new and more plausible name had to be found for it.

f. That an error of a single character was made in the transcription and the original *Zhizheng* was mistranscribed as *Zhiyuan*,¹¹¹ causing the apparent gap of six years.

g. The original inscription block was neater, forming a rectangle as in *Fisherman's Idyll*.

h. A formative relationship may exist between the original composition now surviving as *Central Mountain*, and the *Fishermen* handscroll ascribed to Wu Zhen and also dated to 1342 now in the Freer Gallery of Art. This problem and the relationship to the Shanghai scroll of the same subject, and the scrolls' function in the inscriptions added to the *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting* ascribed to Wu Zhen, are discussed in Appendix iv.

Conclusion

In the three Prime Objects identified, two have been demonstrably altered by later hands. This should be a clear demonstration of the precarious nature of survival for paintings in Chinese collections.

¹¹¹ The characters *zheng* and *yuan*, both denoting primal or orthodox, are in Chinese easily confused. This error need hardly elicit surprise for, as we have seen, absent-mindedness would appear to be a constant feature in much of the activities connected with forging of spurious works or even with doctoring of genuine works described here and in other sections, especially in Section III. The profile of a harried shop artisan, perhaps working in conjunction with a mounter, coying and imitating works of some variety and at great speed, would not be too different from an over-worked secretary. The work is intense, but the inspiration is not original.

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Central Mountain*

For our understanding of the personal style of Wu Zhen, the three works share in several features which mark them apart from the other candidates for his authorship dating from the same period. These may be divided into structural features revealing period style, structural features and tendencies of brush usage (*yongbi*) which identify his personal style. There are also features brush style and expression which integrated produce as it were the voice print of Wu Zhen. They have been isolated by means of western and oriental traditions outlined in the Introduction.

Period Style

- a. Consistent groundplane
- b. Expansive, breathing space
- c. Pictorial elements characterised by volume and weight
- d. Brushwork is primarily descriptive

Personal Style

- e. Notable use of inkwash
- f. Marked light source (sun or moon) which affects "lighting" of the entire work

- g. Consistent and descriptive use of *chiaroscuro*
- h. Downward, sinking momentum
- i. Fastidious and meticulous
- j. Pictorial elements recoil from space

Brush Habit

- k. Centred, blunted
- l. Weighted
- m. Steady, slow in execution
- n. Energies focussed inward
- o. Polarized to strict verticals and horizontals
- p. Stress on internal space
- q. Detached. Few linking strokes, little "scribbling"

II-b The Landscape Paintings: *Central Mountain*

Expression

r. Quiescent

s. Serene

t. Introverted

Thirteen criteria of personal style and three of expression link the three prime objects. In Section II-d the integrated system of analysis is tested against the body of ink bamboo ascribed to Wu Zhen in the same collection, to determine if any conform to them and may be identified as Prime Object. For the moment, however, we shall examine the other landscape attributions of Yuan date.

II-C TWO ANONYMOUS COMPOSITIONS OF YUAN DATE

Although the four period criteria for Yuan painting are met in *Qiushantu* (*Autumn Mountains* fig. 60) and *Nangqin huaihe*, (*Cherished Companions, Lute and Crane* fig. 66) both originally attributed to Juran, these two paintings fail to satisfy the twelve personal criteria associated with Wu Zhen's hand as we have defined above. It must be stressed that in our study the criteria do not pertain so much to levels of artistic excellence (the assessment of which is a subjective process), but to concrete evidence of habits of brushwork. It may be observed furthermore that the habits pertaining to Wu Zhen's work span nearly twenty years, covering two distinct landscape styles, works on silk, paper, and in different genres (landscape and bamboo painting). That is, they pertain to a wide spectrum of artistic activity, and cannot be considered limited or arbitrary. They constitute, one may say, the handprint of the artist.

Autumn Mountains has been reattributed to Wu Zhen by James Cahill in 1958,¹¹² and again by Fu Shen in 1967.¹¹³ Both reattributions were made on the basis of a Wu Zhen seal in the upper right corner (Fig. 198g), and superficial resemblance to another Wu Zhen attribution, *Spring Dawn on the Clear River* or *Qingjiang chunxiao*

¹¹² Cahill, dissertation: 140ff,

¹¹³ Fu Shen, "*Juran cunshi huajizhi bijiao yanjiu* (comparative study of surviving Juran attributions)" *Gugong jikan* II.2 1967:51ff.

(figs. 36, 126). To date the latter has been numbered among basic works of the Wu Zhen repertoire by most members of the field, with few exceptions.¹⁵ A side-by-side comparison of the two works, however, demonstrates a PHYSIOGRAPHIC construction of *Autumn Mountains* and an IDEOGRAPHIC mode of *Spring Dawn* in a text-book illustration of the shift in perception which occurs at the turn of the fifteenth century.¹⁶

1. *Autumn Mountains* or *Qiushantu* (fig.60)

Autumn Mountains, or rather, the *model* behind the present painting, belongs to the group, perhaps larger than hitherto suspected, of landscapes painted in the first half of the fourteenth century in a Jiangnan idiom then associated with the School of Juran. They are based on Song compositional principles but reveal a Yuan perception in consistency of groundplane and recession. The relative clarity of brushwork confirms their Yuan date.

While in western methodology the three Yuan landscapes reveal similar structural and morphological principles, in brushwork, to use a Chinese criterion, the scholar may distinguish different hands. Comparing details of brushwork in the rendering of distant cedars in *Autumn Mountains* (fig.61), with that in *Twin Junipers* (fig.62) and *Central Mountains* (fig.63), and of buildings among woods in *Autumn Mountains* (fig.64) and *Twin Junipers* (fig.65), the differences become quite clear. They reside not in structural morphology but in brush habits:

a. In the depiction of the cedars, (including *Central Mountains*, fig.63), Wu Zhen distinguishes one tree from another by the stroke and direction of the foliage dots as well as by their ink tonality. That is, each tree features one or more groups of strokes going in the same direction. This is part of his habit of "polarizing" the brushwork,

¹⁵ The only person who, to my knowledge, has expressed doubts about *Spring Dawn* is Chen Jingguang who found it lacking in coherence and unity. She notes its sprinkling of alum heads and watery rocks and the ubiquitous placement of houses, which create a confused and cluttered feeling in the work. See Chen, op cit: 74.

¹⁶ The details with buildings published by Fu Shen (op cit, 18b and 18d) illustrate the difference in morphology which distinguishes the two works. Although thematically similar: *pimacun* basic modelling strokes, cedar groves and buildings, the interrelationship of these elements is entirely different. In *Autumn Mountains* the buildings hug the ground, emerging from it; they are tucked beneath trees, approached by a path and occupy real space. In *Spring Dawn* they do not occupy real space, dominate not only the trees but the mountains with their ostentation and size. Their relationship to the space they supposedly occupy is nebulous, that is, clearly insignificant to their artist.

II-c Two Anonymous Yuan Compositions

most notably when they conform to strict verticals or horizontals. It is particularly striking in the distant cedars in *Twin Junipers* (fig. 62), in *Central Mountain*, as well as the group in the right background of *Fisherman's Idyll* (fig.47). Even at oblique angles they tend to create repetitive rhythms, whether as clumps of grass, mosses or distant shrubbery. This is not true for *Autumn Mountains* (fig. 61).

b. In the *pimacun* hemp-fibre stroke of Wu Zhen (figs.59, 68), the stroke-ends are hidden, mixed in with the others, while in *Autumn Mountains* the stroke endings are often exposed. They are more individuated, more crisp and linear, while in Wu Zhen's hand they are used like wash, they function as *chiaroscuro* and are often deployed to build darker, or lighter "areas."

c. The buildings in *Twin Junipers* (fig.65) are neat, but not so in *Autumn Mountains* (fig.64). In *Twin Junipers* the houses are grouped neatly, fastidiously in parallel formations: their ridgepole lines are aligned in the same direction. Together they emphasize the horizontality in the painting. In *Autumn Mountains* they are cluttered and confused.

d. The Wu Zhen examples (figs. 65, see also *Idyll*, figs. 47, 50) feature wash in the roof, darker at the top, becoming lighter toward the eaves. The *Autumn Mountains* group feature flat grey wash without gradation.

e. Wu Zhen works exhibit a tendency for strict parallelism. That is, groups of strokes in parallel mutually harmonize, as the fences around the houses, among tree trunks in fig.65. In *Autumn Mountains*, parallels are not strictly adhered to, and diverse groups (as those of buildings, walls, and trees) mutually conflict, causing a sense of commotion.

f. In Wu Zhen's hand, buildings are conceived as horizontal accents. They are rendered simply and accurately, especially where interior planes are concerned. Important lines are gone over once again in dark ink. This is not true for *Autumn Mountains* where buildings are complex, the rendering inaccurate, resulting in a confusion of lines and planes with a number of mistakes. At this point the western trained art historian may be alerted to the probability of a close copy or what I have

II-c Two Anonymous Yuan Compositions

termed a QUASI-ORIGINAL.¹⁷ That is, a quasi-original of the composition, which in structural morphology reveals a Yuan date in perception.

- The gatehouse features two louvres at right angles the function of which is not clear. A branch behind it has no apparent source.
- The long, covered walkway leading to the fishing pavilion in the lake becomes disjointed behind the group of trees. Its rendering is not consistent, the floor boards are not only of different widths and angles, but some extend beyond the proper area (beginning with its second section with broader posts.)
- The courtyard space between the buildings does not exist.
- The relationship between the houses in the group to the right between the three trees and the foot of the mountain, is entirely confused.

g. The moss dots in Wu Zhen's works where they are applied are in dense groups in similar strokes striking down largely in the same direction, and overlaid in different tonalities. Moreover they are grouped firmly at the *base* and contours of boulders in order to bring out the protrusions (fig.68). In *Autumn Mountains* they are applied loosely, the brush striking down in different directions; they are laterally sprinkled in a single layer, side by side rather than overlaid; the application of dots is more random, spilling over to the *surface* areas of boulders and protrusions.

Figures 120a, b and c demonstrate the morphological differences between a genuine work, alterations and evolutions in painting as I have defined them. The subtle handling of a flowing stream as it emerges from deep space and meanders along rocky boulders and cascades downward in vegetation-covered crags, was clearly understood in the fourteenth century when physiographic rendering was current. This can be seen in a. *Cherished Companions*. However, the copyist of *Autumn Mountains* (b), while closely following the composition with its consistent spatial recession and morphologically interrelating elements, down to the T-dots to represent shrubbery in the distance, has failed to grasp the way of handling a flowing stream and in his rendering, provides an example of ALTERATION in what to art historians may be an

¹⁷ See J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries" op cit: 65ff.

II-c Two Anonymous Yuan Compositions

otherwise QUASI-ORIGINAL image of this fourteenth century landscape. But the forger without model, in c. *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River*, simply rendered the cascade as it had come to be perceived and painted in the fifteenth century. The example provides an illustration of what I have termed EVOLUTION. That is, the evolved image of an old theme: cascades, in its early fifteenth century appearance.

It has been shown that while there is a superficial resemblance in motif, in compositional schemata, and even in the basic *types* of brushwork between *Autumn Mountains* and prime objects, these similarities are those of a common *style* current among (evidently numerous) different artists active in the same period. Wu Zhen, clearly, was not the only one in his day to paint in the traditional Jiangnan style of Juran. Structural analysis has demonstrated that the composition of *Autumn Mountains* belongs to the first half of the fourteenth century. Brushwork morphology on the other hand, points to its being a QUASI-ORIGINAL of a Yuan landscape, indicating a later copyist the date and identity of whom will be discussed below (IIIa).

2. Cherished Companions: Lute and Crane (fig.66)

In spite of its somewhat odd composition with the central mountain tipping over to one side like a depleted camel's hump, and in spite of some retouching, the Yuan date of this work remains indisputable. Its relationship to the Yuan perception of Juran is, once again, a matter of style, and it joins the work of Wu Zhen and the *Autumn Mountain* among others, as Yuan developments in the Juran tradition. Its reattribution to Wu Zhen by Siren, Cahill and Fu Shen is due largely, once again, to its superficial resemblance in compositional outlines to an early Ming painting with Wu Zhen signatures, *Hermit Fisherman an Autumn River* (fig.121, see Section III).¹⁸ Citing resemblances in composition, motifs, general brushwork style between *Companions*

¹⁸ Non-Yuan, that is, Ming and later Wu Zhen attributions are discussed in Section III..

II-c Two Anonymous Yuan Compositions

and *Autumn River*, Fu Shen has argued that it is not a Song work, nor by Juran, but a Yuan work from the hand of Wu Zhen.¹⁹

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to demonstrate that identical style does not constitute sufficient evidence to prove identical authorship. To identify the author or "hand" of a painting, it is not enough to point to motifs or brushwork style. It is of the utmost importance to identify personal traits in perception, personal morphology of mass and space, and personal brush habits in brushwielding. In case of similarities in brush modes, *bifa*, between two attributions to Wu Zhen such as *Cherished Companions* and *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River*, it is vital to examine the glaring differences in brushwielding, *yongbi*. Only then will it become clear that neither is by Wu Zhen, and that while one was painted in the fourteenth century, while the other was not painted till a century later.

The contrasts we shall examine do not reflect different periods, states of health or mood of a single person as they reflect different hands working in the same style in the same period. Such misattribution of diverse hands to a single authorship is a common occurrence in Chinese art history, but because of prevailing insistence of attaching famous names to works of apparent antiquity, it has been underexposed. Yet it is a crucial point the importance of which cannot be over emphasized.

- Compared to the three prime objects so far identified, the use of *chiaroscuro* in *Cherished Companions* is far less intense. Although it is descriptive in function, on the whole it is more bland, less dramatic or persistent (fig. 67).

- Compared to prime objects (fig.68), the application of *pimacun* hemp-fibre strokes in *Companions* is more light and transparent, using wetter, lighter strokes.

¹⁹ Osvald Sirén made the attribution in his *Annotated Lists in Chinese Painting*, vol. VII; Cahill sees a relationship to Sheng Mou, thinking the work is done in colours (it is not), but decides on the whole the authorship must go to Wu Zhen during his period of rivalry with Sheng Mou (this anecdote is first told in the mid-Ming) but places it in the "B" category of works not 100% secure (dissertation: 153ff). Fu Shen argues that it is not a Northern Song composition but clearly of Yuan date, and that in brushwork and motif-configuration it reveals the hand of Wu Zhen, adding, "but the differences in modelling stroke, *cunfa*, represent Wu Zhen's different styles....Although this work reveals more artifice than most Wu Zhen works, Wu Zhen, too, has differences between his early period and his middle and late periods...See for example the great difference between his 1341 *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting* and the 1342 *Fisherman's Idyll*" (see his study of surviving Juran works, op cit: 67-8)

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- The application of dots in groups is concentrated around the bases of forms, as in prime objects, but the perception of ink tones is in layers, appearing in a layer of dark dots which stand in front of a layer of light grey dots, suggesting distance. In prime objects dark, grey and light strokes or dots are intermixed for a sense of depth and density. And, while the dots here are aligned largely in the same direction as do those in prime objects, their application here lacks the emotional intensity, the highly charged energy typical of Wu Zhen's hand. Next to brushwork of the prime objects, that of *Cherished Companions* is softer, lighter, less blunt, less forthright. The touch, *bichu*, is less weighty, less firm, more casual and relaxed. The effect is therefore lighter, less riveting (fig.69a+b).

These are critical differences. They point to different hands, not different moods.

We have examined the landscapes of Yuan date attributed to or associated with Wu Zhen in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, and have identified three prime objects, and works by two other contemporaries working in the period, in the same tradition and style. Landscapes under the name of Wu Zhen and painted in the first half of the fourteenth century in this collection comprise works by three different masters, only one of whom was Wu Zhen.

d. Systems Check: Identifying Prime Bamboo Paintings by Defined Criteria

In the sections above we have identified criteria based on contemporary references pertaining to Wu Zhen the man and the artist. The criteria were then used to identify from among the landscapes of Yuan date those which best matched them. These landscapes could be seen therefore as works with the strongest qualifications to be from the hand of Wu Zhen. From the three landscapes thus assigned to Wu Zhen,

II-d Prime Objects Among the Bamboo Paintings

we proceeded to a definition of the Master's graphological and personal traits. Testing the system, the personal traits or criteria thus obtained will now be used as a basis from which to identify, if any have survived in the Palace Collection, bamboo paintings by Wu Zhen.

It is beyond the scope or intention of this study to investigate the history of ink bamboo painting in general, or the Wen Tong (Huzhou) School in particular. Such a topic deserves, and has already engendered, special studies.¹¹⁹ The burden of this thesis lies in the identification of prime objects, that is, the hand of Wu Zhen, from among the attributed works in the National Palace Collection. Contenders which had been traditionally accepted include, according to their respective inscriptions:

1344 *Twin Purities: Branch of Bamboo* [and Prunus branch] (figs. 72, 155)¹²⁰

1347 *Bamboo and Rock* (fig.70)¹²¹

1348 *Mozhuce Ink Bamboo Album* (figs.74)¹²²

1350 *Spray of Bamboo* (fig.71)¹²³

1350 *Mozhupu Ink Bamboo Manual* (figs. 73)¹²⁴

In a reversed application of our methodology, we will now determine if any of the five bamboo attributions satisfy the ~~thirteen~~ personal criteria obtained from Wu Zhen's landscape paintings (see Conclusion of preceding section).

Bamboo and Rock, dated to 1347, alone fits all ~~thirteen~~ criteria. The painting depicts two stalks, and a short clump, of bamboo standing behind a mossy rock. Bamboo roots, and some clumps of dandelions on the ground, help define a consistent

¹¹⁹ The study of ink bamboo comprises virtually a field unto itself, falling as the genre does, between painting and calligraphy. It has become subject of increasingly specific methods of painting where even the stroke-order in the configuration of leaf-clusters and stem segments have been standardized. Many studies have been made by Li Lincan of the National Palace Museum in the *Quarterly*, some of which have been gathered in his collected essays, *Zhongguo huashi yanjiu lunji* (Taipei, 1970). Among the most recent theses on the topic are Xu Xiangling's *Yuandai mozhuhua zhi yanjiu* (Studies on Ink Bamboo Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, unpublished thesis for the Department of History, National Taiwan University, 1979) and Dr. Sungmii Lee Han's *Wu Zhen's Mozhupu: Literati Painter's Manual on Ink Bamboo* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 1983). Another dissertation, on the earlier Yuan master Li Kan, is underway as well.

¹²⁰ Album leaf, ink on paper, mounted together with *Ink Prunus* attributed to Wang Mian, recorded in *Gugong Shuhualu* (SHL) IV: 289.

¹²¹ Hanging scroll, ink on paper, recorded in SHL V:203.

¹²² Twenty-leaf album, ink on paper, recorded in SHL VI: 17-20.

¹²³ Hanging scroll, ink on paper, recorded in SHL V:203.

¹²⁴ Twenty-two-leaf album, ink on paper, recorded in SHL VI:12-17. More in figs.159ff.

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groundplane. The bamboo leaves are dropping and the air is misty from recent rain. They stand in real, measured space. There is extension into depth not only of the earthen ground (fig.78), but the leaf and twig clusters too, occupy three-dimensional space. Like elements described in the prime landscape paintings, they recoil from space, enhancing the sense of its expansiveness. The substantiality of the leaves and their tactile presence are achieved with graded inkwash where each leaf becomes lighter toward the tip. Significantly, the rendering presents the leaves not only in frontal aspect, but also in profile as some turn away from the viewer and disappear into space, while short, blunt, detached dots off the stem indicate small twigs and movement in space (fig.77). The rock is modelled in several layers of graded inkwash which define its bulk and contour, and the moss dots adhering tightly to the rock are of mixed tonalities which provide a sense of density and profusion, as well as increasing distance from the viewer (fig.79, 200). The stems of the bamboo are done according to their natural growth pattern, short and thick at the bottom, increasing in length and slenderness as it grows. The joints, too, change as they reach the tips, being done in two strokes, accented with two or three dots of darker ink around the edges at the bottom and toward the top, in single strokes with only one dot, or in smaller sections, without the horizontal stroke at all, but with the brush doubling back on itself and moving forward again in "semi-cursive" strokes (fig.77). Leaves are seen in front of the stems as well as from behind them where the stroke is broken in two. That it is fundamentally different in perception from other Wu Zhen attributions such as the

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Bamboo in Wind (fig.81) in the Freer Gallery of Art, has been observed by distinguished art historians from outside the discipline of Chinese art.¹²⁵

Above all, the work is fresh and alive throughout, without any sense of mannerising when the same formula is used. For example, a basic unit is the five-leaf cluster done over a smaller unit of two to three short leaves or sprigs, facing various directions. But there is no stereotype of formulaic repetition, either in the leaf-structure or in the depiction of branches or even joints. With each occurrence of the same motif (five-leaf clusters, stalk segment, twig dot or joint) a new variation is created which is suited to *that* element occurring in *that specific place* within the whole. The variations are not so much a function of visual stimulation as they are physiographic representations of particular aspects in the growth of a particular species of bamboo after rain in autumn. This marks the inspired artist in the process of a creative act. The casual and natural variations seen here indicate a creative approach to painting which is one of exploration and enjoyment. It differs fundamentally from "compelled" works where hacks working for money aim at swift completion and tend to repeat favourite

¹²⁵ On the 3rd July, 1986, Professor Ernst Gombrich kindly allowed me to visit him at the Warburg Institute where he reviewed slides and details of the two ink bamboo hanging scrolls on paper attributed to Wu Zhen. On the left was the *Bamboo and Rock* and on the right was the *Bamboo in Wind*, a work which we shall see was by the same Hand A responsible for *Spray* (Cf. fig. 97c,d). Asked to comment on the nature of the differences between the paintings without being told the attributions and dates, he first reiterated the fact that he is not trained in Chinese art history, and then proceeded to examine the slides. He thought that *Bamboo and Rock* on the left, was perhaps "faded", as the ink tones were so light compared to the Freer work. When assured that that was not the case, he went on, "The two works are simply very different. The left hand one is much, much more restrained than the other. Yes, in the details, I see an enormous difference here. The left one is much more spacious, and the gradation of thickness and of strength ... than the other which really has only more or less two registers. There is a strong one and a flatter one. Yes I would say that this one, the left one, has higher quality according to my feeling. It is much more controlled, ... and has the sense of spacious freedom because of the potential mobility we were talking about. I don't like to speak about space because everything is space in a sense. [There are after all only two dimensions on which one creates the illusion.] But this one has more mobility. And that one on the right has more calligraphy. I would say that this has higher quality ... in my understanding. [The rock and lower portion] is simply marvellous.

After the viewing I explained that I felt the works reflected different periods. That in the 14th century, as exemplified by *Bamboo and Rock*, artists were conditioned to account for three-dimensionality, so that in a work like *Bamboo and Rock* the awareness of space is automatic, but that by the 15th century its importance was diminished, as exemplified in *Bamboo in Wind* where leaves even supposed to be moving in wind have lost their potential mobility in space and are depicted largely in a frontal manner. "I agree, I think you are right," said Sir Ernst. He meant of course the structural analysis, rather than period style in Chinese painting. Both are good paintings of their times, I added, but Sir Ernst quickly replied, laughing "Yes, but I would buy this one (*Bamboo and Rock*)."

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formulae passively, thoughtlessly, to fill the space as it were, by the yard. In such cases many instances of identical repetition, and parallelism in the leaves, are notable features (as in the *Mozhupu Manual* discussed below).

The brushwork in *Bamboo and Rock* is slow, weighted and measured, no less so than in the landscapes in a characteristic *lento espressivo*. Here it is on a relatively well sized paper, revealing little pools of ink at the end of each stroke. Accidental spillage of the darker ink (used for the inscription) midway up along the second stalk does not destroy the original effect. And, as Chen Jingguang has observed, mistakes made in the painting do not detract from the work's life or artistic value, as for instance where the "fattest leaf" in the right-hand cluster midway up the picture, is in fact an overlapping of a regular-sized leaf in front, over a thin, up-turned twig on the branch behind.¹²⁶ Such mistakes of oversight differ from those made by forgers or copyists which often reveal a misunderstanding of the model's structural principles.

That the excluded attributions all happen to be of the dark ink silhouette genre does not suggest that the silhouette genre was not current in the Yuan. Rather, since these attributions fail to satisfy even a single one of the twelve criteria, they must be examined as products of later times and, as will be shown below, conform to Ming criteria. It is the position of this thesis that whether in silhouette, graded inkwash or outline-and-colour-fill, bamboo paintings of the fourteenth century were being perceived and painted in a physiographic manner. That is to say, Yuan bamboo painting displayed leaves extending into three-dimensional space. As an experiment, a section of *Bamboo and Rock* (fig.82) is over-exposed for high contrast to resemble a silhouette painting without half-tone values (fig. 83). It should be clear that in Wu Zhen's work it was not only the factor of graded tonalities which achieve the sense of volume and spatial extension, but that the limning itself is physiographic.

Bamboo and Rock finds a temporal companion in the *Orchid without Soil* attributed to the resistance painter Zheng Sixiao of the early Yuan, now in the Abe Collection (fig.80). Both works are physiographically perceived and so rendered. They

¹²⁶ Chen Jingguang, *Yuandai huajia Wu Zhen*. Taipei, (1974): 87.

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share in expansive and breathing space. At the same time an inwardness of focus, a solitude and a gentle melancholy fill the air, the mists, down to the tiniest leaf. While physiographic in structural morphology, Yuan painting would appear to begin to use themes from nature as vehicles for somewhat more personalised and emotional expression.

The inscription in *Bamboo and Rock* is incorporated into the painting through modulated ink tones without impinging on the fluid space around the rock as the calligraphy, too, seems to recede and advance in space, like the moss dots. In the detail (fig.85) it can be seen that there is no slipperiness of the brush, no rush, even in this quiet and unassuming little painting produced, as the artist claims, under duress. The same meticulous, fastidious attitude toward the application of each stroke, hook and dot is manifest in inscription and painting alike, in the favoured tempo *lento espressivo*. In four and a half columns of text finished off with two half-width columns recording the date and place and followed by two seals, the artist has formed a neat rectangle with straight edges on four sides. The text reads:

Prunus Blossom Daoist has been studying the art of bamboo [painting] for over half a lifetime. Now I am already old, alas. I have sought to gaze on the works of Wen Tong and Su Shi, but genuine specimens have been difficult to obtain. Only the Qiantang (Hangzhou) family of Xianyu have in their collection a branch of [bamboo growing from an] earthen wall. It is a work which common varieties cannot match. I have tried with all my might but have not been able to capture one-ten-thousandth [of its spirit]. Why should this be so? Alas, it is because the power of my brushwielding is not yet mature! A friend brought out some paper and insisted that I paint for him, and I made this so that in future years discerning scholars will agree that my foolish words are no exaggeration! In the early winter of Dinghai, the seventh year of the Zhizheng reign, I made this at the guest lodge of Chunbo in Zuili.

The ink used here is, compared to other bamboo attributions, less oily and more watery and transparent. The overlaps are clearly discernible. This agrees with the ink used in another prime object on paper, *Zhongshantu (Central Mountain)*. A more watery ink may afford a greater variety of tonal gradations, which would best suit the relatively more descriptive function of modelling in Yuan painting. Seen from the perspective of Japanese scholarship which is more finely attuned to inkwash gradations and spatial expansion, the four prime objects identified here would seem to point to an

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artist who is notably conservative in his work, and who uses inkwash much as it had been used in the Southern Song.

The brushwork from the perspective of traditional Chinese connoisseurship agrees with that observed in the landscapes: careful, slow, weighted, with a natural uprightness, a penchant for the plumb vertical and a tendency toward asymmetrical balance.

Now the prime objects in the Palace Collection have been identified and analysed by structural morphology, brushmanship and uses of inkwash. It may be appropriate here to attempt an analysis of Wu Zhen's calligraphy in these terms, using the two blocks of inscriptions provided in the 1342 *Fisherman's Idyll*, and the 1347 *Bamboo and Rock*.

II-e. GRAPHOLOGY OF PRIME OBJECTS AND RECENSIONS: STUDIES IN CALLIGRAPHY

Overview

The study of ^{Chinese} calligraphy in the West would appear to be formed largely by Chinese traditions. In his study of approaches to connoisseurship in Chinese calligraphy, *Traces of the Brush*, Fu Shen¹²⁷ discusses the five traditional categories of reproduction in calligraphy. They are *mo* (tracing copy), *lin* (freehand copy with the original in sight), *fang* (imitation from acquired experience, often without the original in sight), *zao* (creative invention based on familiarity with a Master's style) and *ketie* (carved stone or wood, with subsequent ink-rubbings taken). It would be perfectly reasonable to suggest that any of the first four categories and the

¹²⁷ Yale University Art Gallery, 1977. Written as a catalogue to accompany an exhibition of ninety works of calligraphy (including paintings with long inscriptions or significant frontispieces), it is an ambitious work which seeks in 314 pages to introduce the five basic brush-scripted styles in the form of works of art, as well as major problems in their connoisseurship. Catalogue entries in the last 50 pages are written by students and collaborators while the bulk comprises Fu's five essays, the first of which is entitled "Reproduction and Forgery in Chinese Calligraphy." This fifty-page essay is in many ways an in-depth elaboration of the earlier study by Fong Wen, "The Problem of Forgery in Chinese Painting" in *Artibus Asiae XXV* (1962): 95-140

brushed model for the fifth, become potential forgeries simply by affixing the signature of an appropriate Master and removing the signature of the student or copyist. Any of these five may therefore acquire what I have termed functional authenticity and be carved onto stone or wood and thereby generate series of tertiary images and images even further removed, in ink rubbings.

Certain assumptions which would appear to be endemic in traditional connoisseurship may however warrant reconsideration. For example, when two or more versions of a given work should be discovered, one is usually seen as the original and the others its direct copies. (If none exhibits relative excellence, all are seen as direct copies of a lost original.) The calligraphy of Wang Xizhi (303?-361?) for example, has been treasured in works dubbed as faithful, or even tracing copies. A version of the *Xingrangtie* now in the Princeton Art Museum has been presented for example as a Tang "tracing copy" of the original or prime object.¹²⁸ In a remarkable mental, direct image-transference is declared between the Princeton work and an assumed original inked sixteen centuries years ago. Traditional connoisseurship saw little need to explain with precision each step by which the scholar defines or reconstructs an exact, or reasonably approximate image of an ancient master's calligraphy image. Nor, in this case, do analytical processes appear to be required which would demonstrate with reasonable certainty either the Tang date of the 'tracing copy', or the approximate date if not authorship of the model which was traced. There would appear to be even less concern with problems of (the series of) models behind that model.

A "copy" and its "model (masterpiece)", as well as an uncovered forgery and its perceived model evidently continue to be perceived in a direct one-to-one, unique relationship. For the contemporary scholar, however, some questions would appear to demand reconsideration which traditional connoisseurship has left unasked. These include: a. How does one ascertain which, if any, of the many attributions to a given Master may be original? b. When no identifiable original is known, how does the art historian ascertain whether the work(s) at hand are close or distant copies of some lost

¹²⁸ Anonymous loan, Princeton Art Museum. See Fu, op cit, 1a,2a, Cover, pp-22-3.

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original (prime object)? c.If so, is the relationship that of an evolved image, an altered image, or sheer invention (accretion)? d.How many steps of close and/or free copying separate a work which has been identified as a copy from *the* original (extant or reconstructed)? e.What are the respective dates of execution of the non-genuine works (created or copied)? f.What are their respective relationships to any identified or reconstructed original? g.In which ways do the non-genuine works relate to each other? Indeed, the more sceptical scholar may decide to work backward and first ascertain the date of execution of the painting or calligraphy at hand; secondly ascertain if it is a genuine creation, a tracing copy, free-hand copy, variation or invention; thirdly, attempt to identify the *date* of the model of which it is a copy or accretion; fourthly ascertain whether *that* model was itself a tracing copy, imitation or accretion; fifthly, ascertain the date of *that* model. Six, decide if there is any probability a genuine prime object had been involved in the process, and if so, attempt to reconstruct its original image.

Configuration and Brushwielding: Style and Graphology

In following a Master's style, students and imitators first aim at achieving a likeness to his configuration. Attention is focussed on shapes of characters and strokes, but not so much on the spaces they enclose, as the driving force is the movement of the brush. However, Western structural analysis can be of help here in seeking to study a work of calligraphy as if it were a painting, that is, as a static form in and of space as well as a process of dynamic movement in and of time. Some followers may not thoroughly investigate a Master's brushwielding and may unthinkingly perform with the brush aslant (in *cefeng*) what in the original had been done with the brush upright (in *zhongfeng*). Fewer imitators study the *types* of changes in wrist pressure or follow the *rate* of change in width in the course of single strokes. Fewer still will follow the original in wrist weight and brush speed. It may be submitted, however, that these are basic, crucial criteria which must be activated in the study of calligraphy. It is in this combination of traditional and modern methodological perspectives that the

modern student can distinguish with greater assurance the hand of the Master. And it is this integrated methodology combining structural analysis with traditional Chinese brushwork connoisseurship which helps us distinguish the various followers and identify their mutual relationship.

Analysis of Wu Zhen's Graphology in Calligraphy

In the case of Wu Zhen's calligraphy and its original image style, having uncovered the original paintings, we are now in a position to examine in depth the two blocks of prime inscriptions. The calligraphy will be analysed on pictorial principles and, utilising the sensitivity to space developed in Japanese scholarship, the "holes" will be examined with the same care, so to speak, as the "donuts (or bagels)." The 1342 *Fisherman's Idyll* (fig.84) is written in four-square characters on silk, while the 1347 *Bamboo and Rock* (fig. 85) is written in a more attenuated manner on paper. That both of these inscriptions are integral parts of the paintings, written at the time of the painting is demonstrated by the fact that in each case the inktones and seepage are identical between painting and calligraphy. The inscriptions on *Idyll* and *Bamboo and Rock* , therefore, must be regarded as Wu Zhen's genuine and representative calligraphy, or prime objects.

Interestingly, a shift in calligraphy style may be observed between these five years,¹²⁹ but it is evident that the *personal brush habit* or *graphology* has remained constant and, once defined, clearly recognizable. That is to say, while there may be configurational features in common between works like the non-Yuan *Spray of Bamboo* (fig.86), *Bamboo in Wind* (Freer Gallery of Art, fig. 87) and the prime object *Bamboo and Rock*, the common features pertain only to style, motif or external appearance. That is, later artists practised Wu Zhen's *character-configuration* in calligraphy as seen in his bamboo paintings (which may have been more numerous). This would be like imitating a *brush-mode* in painting, using hemp-fibre strokes to model

¹²⁹ Some of the attributions, usually landscapes on silk (such as *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River*), reveal calligraphic inscriptions based on the earlier style while others, usually the bamboo specimens, are based primarily on the later work.

low-lying hills in emulation of the Jiananan style made famous by Dong Yuan and Juran. This motif or configurational proximity identifies the *style*, not the *hand*. In identifying the characteristics which define Wu Zhen's personal brush habit, an analysis must be made of his *brushwielding* or *yongbi* which, in conjunction with features of -configuration, define his graphology. For while styles and configurations can be imitated, personal graphological traits tend to be misunderstood, transformed or missing altogether in imitations.

1. Block Formation and Internal Dynamics.

In the two prime examples the inscription is shaped into a notably clean-edged block (figs.84,85). They are calculated to place all necessary writing and seals tidily within an invisible oblong boundary. The blocks conform to strict verticals and horizontals, agreeing with traits observed in Wu Zhen's brushwork. Neatness in the formation of the inscription agrees with Wu Zhen's painting habits, including neatness, uprightness, and a marked tendency to recoil from space. This is in clear contrast to inscription blocks in non-genuine attributions, which tend to defy boundaries. The formation of inscription blocks along invisible oblong boundary lines which would appear to indicate an early Yuan extension of Southern Song practice.¹³⁰ See for example Zhao Mengfu's *East Mountain on Lake Dongting* (Shanghai, fig. 89) where stress is placed on the outer contour: the calligraphy covers portions of the distant hills in order not to break up the block formation. In the prime (Wuyong) version of Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, the block is tidy, with an even, horizontal "bottom line" (fig.90). But in the seventeenth-century Ziming version the

¹³⁰ For Southern Song inscriptions see the Xiao-Xiang paintings attributed to Yujian and especially the many anonymous Buddhist paintings to which Southern Song clerics had added encomia, now in Japanese and Western collections.

four columns of dedicatory inscription are of four different lengths.¹³¹ For Ni Zan (1301-1374), a generation younger than Wu Zhen, in genuine and non-genuine works alike, the image projected and imitated is one of a tidy hand and neat block formation (fig. 91).¹³² Even the flamboyant Yang Weizhen (1296-1370) whose colophons tend to dominate the paintings, confines his remarks to neat blocks.¹³³ There seems to be a notion through the Yuan of taking up as little space from the work as possible. The practice of a more spontaneous genre of self-inscription seems to become more widespread only in the Yuan period, in contrast to Southern Song poetical inscriptions which would appear to be fairly rigidly bound in square formats, as if they were seals to be added onto but kept distinct from the painting.

Yuan inscriptions reflect a growing sense of *integration* of writing and painting toward the latter half of the 14th century until in the Ming Shen Zhou's works, for example, begin to make of calligraphy and painting a pictorially integrated whole.¹³⁴ In *Rainy Night* of 1487 (fig.13), the inscription develops a "ragged edge" along the bottom, and final characters of the ten columns rise and descend in accordance with the contour of the distant peaks beneath, integrating calligraphy and painting but allowing

¹³¹ Seventeenth century characteristics include the concentration and proliferation of stylistic elements such as the wiggly water lines, the wavy *pima* modelling strokes modelling the mountains, among others. Parallels are seen in the work of Four Wang and especially their studies of Huang Gongwang. Features typical in the Ziming version are very close to those in Wang Hui's copy of the same scroll. See Hin-cheung Lovell, "Wang Hui's 'Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains': A Classical Theme, Its Origin and Variations," *Ars Orientalis* VIII (1970):217-242. In my analysis of the evolutionary pattern of inscriptions, the Ziming inscription with its ragged bottom edge would clearly indicate a post-Ming date.

¹³² Self-inscription on the late work, *Rongxizhai* of 1372, in the Palace Museum, Taipei.

¹³³ See his inscriptions on Huang Gongwang's *Nine Pearl Peaks* (Taipei) and on the *Quails and Sparrows in Autumn* by Wang Mian (act 1328-1347+, Cleveland), among others.

¹³⁴ The *Ninety Years of Wu School Painting* published by the National Palace Museum, Taipei in 1975, amply illustrates the relative freedom in inscription block-formation in these works once considered acceptable by 18th century connoisseurs. That is, regardless of authenticity, the paintings gathered in the imperial collection of Ming dynasty Suzhou masters indicate an increasingly organic interrelationship between inscription and painting, where the bottom "line" rises and falls in consonance with the contour lines of mountain peaks beneath, Shen Zhou's 1480 *Mount Lu* (colour plate 1) straddles the rightmost peak with sixteen lines of ragged-edged calligraphy. *Farming in Jiangnan* by Tang Yin of 1504 (pl.58) shows five columns of inscription and one of seals by the artist, tracing the mountain contours. Wen Zhengming, the most fastidious artist of the lot, continued to use the neat-edged block, but would appear to have chosen on the whole to place signature and seals on a separate column.

distinct blocks and assigned different relative sizes. Each sub-block is confined within its own imaginary boundary.

In the 1342 *Fisherman's Idyll*, the double quatrain in heptametre is inscribed in large inky characters of remarkable size-variation, in eight columns which form a horizontal oblong. The bottom characters conform to an invisible bottom horizontal "line" or margin. The dedicatory portion written in reduced size forms an adjoining vertical block of three columns, the last containing the signature and two seals, all aligned to the horizontal margin. In the 1347 *Bamboo and Rock*, the dedicatory section was calculated to fit, in a double column of radically reduced characters, the space left over beneath the end of the main prose text, the whole to form a single well-ordered, clean-edged, oblong unit of five columns. In both inscriptions the horizontal bottom margin is rigorously maintained, seals are tucked in and aligned with care, the blocks are conceived not only in terms of the size and shape of space they occupy, but in terms of the quality of their relationship to the space around them (see below). These niceties are not observed in most of the imitations or fabrications.

The inscription and signatures on the *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting* (fig. 115) are added considerable time after the painting, as close examination shows. The strokes are literally painted on, that is, brushed on in repeated strokes in virtually every single character as the paper through the numerous rollings and unrollings had become shiny from the waxed backing and was no longer absorbent. The illustration shows the repeated brush strokes,¹³⁶ and how the ink in many straddles over ancient worm holes and paper cracks without being affected. That is, long after the cracks had been made. Japanese art historians, more sensitive to retouching, doubtless would have called the painting into question. The inscription is placed without concern for its relationship to the painting or surrounding space and, before the Qianlong inscription on the right, looked quite out of place, as the reconstruction shows. The inscription itself, as comparative photographs indicate, is copied from the Master of the Freer Gallery's

¹³⁶ The *non*-retouched characters comprise by far the minority. They are: Column 2, 3rd character up from the bottom (henceforth 2:3^), and column 4, 2nd character from the bottom: 4:2^,

Fishermen handscroll ascribed to Wu Zhen (fig. 116) and something close to the first of the stanzas of fishermen's songs.

2. Unused Space as Positive Element.

From the two identified prime examples of Wu Zhen's calligraphy (figs. 84-5) it is evident that the space between the last column (full-length of main text as well as reduced one of dedication and signature) on the left, and the next element (left border of *Fisherman's Idyll*, and bamboo in *Bamboo and Rock*) is imbued with an ordered feeling equal in weight to the painted areas. Space in Wu's paintings is seen to occupy a positive rôle, and precludes the concept of "leftover" space, a term which is operative in all the non-original works studied.

Compare for example the inscription of the *Branch of Bamboo* dated to 1344 which features painting and inscription on separate but joined pieces of paper (fig. 155).¹⁵⁴ The calligraphy, like the painting, reveals a decided preference for repeated forms and parallels strokes, and internal variations of size and ink tone. The inscription reveals an unsettled, inconsistent quality in the configuration of the characters, the whole seemingly written with three charges of ink¹³⁷ in a delighted play with ink tones. The blocking, however, is conceived only in terms of the calligraphy, with no thought of the shape of the paper around it: the columns lost their vertical 'plumbline' from about the third column onward and increasingly list toward the left during the descent. The penultimate column goes so far that the signatory column, attempting to reassert plumb verticality, creates an inverted triangle with it. The horizontal margin along the bottom "line" is ragged, and its relationship to the bottom border of the scroll is clearly not complementary, but dominant. That is, the rest is 'leftover space'.

The *Spray of Bamboo* dated to 1350 (figs 87) also lacks a clearly defined sense of blocking. Altogether three sub-blocks cover most of the higher space above the bamboo, the signature and the date forming separate units. There is no concept of a

¹³⁷ At the beginning, at 6:4, and for the last time on the last character of the first section.

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common edge for the bottom margin. The spaces to the right, top, bottom and left of the inscription have no intrinsic meaning, but are seen as leftover spaces.

Coming closest to the prime examples is the artist of *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River* (fig. 93) who is identified as an early Ming artist contemporary to Dai Jin, and who had access to prime objects.¹³⁸ His works in the Wu Zhen mode are of the ALTERED type in the EVOLUTION of Wu Zhen's image, in contrast to the mid- to late-15th century author of *Spray of Bamboo* whose free inventions I have termed ACCRETIONS.¹³⁹ Many points of resemblance to prime objects can be cited, and block-consciousness is one of them. The calligraphy itself is a close study of prime examples and is discussed further below.

The first painted illustration, Leaf 3 of the *Mozhupu Ink Bamboo Manual* dated to 1350 (fig. 161) reveals a symbiotic interrelationship between painting and calligraphy which begins only in the Ming as has been indicated above, with artists like Shen Zhou. The bottom margin, in its lively ups and downs, responds to the topology of the bank beneath. The signatory sections takes up no less than three columns. The last column of the main text had gone too far to the right during its descent (a condition which began with column one) so that the inscriber committed the last columns resolutely on a strict plumb to correct the situation. The curious gap between text and signatory blocks, however, could not be corrected.¹⁴⁰

3. Expanding Inner Space

Looking at calligraphy as forms in space (rather than progressions of energy in time), a unique characteristic of Wu Zhen's calligraphy becomes apparent. The brushstrokes seem to recoil, to shrink from an expanding space which breathes within and on the outside of the characters. The space between columns is decidedly more generous in prime examples than in the non-genuine attributions, stretching downward

¹³⁸ Attributions of Ming manufacture and later are discussed in the next section.

¹³⁹ See categories in J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries in Chinese Painting," op cit.

¹⁴⁰ Leaves with more regular block-form inscriptions are Leaves #4, and 21 (figs. 165, and 172), written in standard *kai* script. But the neatness is not in concert with surrounding space. The total freedom in the other leaves would, by the criteria identified here, be more indicative of later developments.

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like a broad and deep river. Space appears to cause the calligraphy to squeeze into tight, neat blocks. As seen in Fig. 84, individual strokes recoil from surrounding space and enclose interior space which expands outward.¹⁴¹ Strokes in bracket-type elements do not fill the interior space but veer off to one side of it. Compare for instance a column from each work ranged in Fig.99. Viewed as a positive element, this space is seen to flow generously (between and) within columns of the prime objects¹⁴². Space in prime examples (a and c) is alive and dynamic within and between characters. It swells in a balanced manner between the left- and right-hand components, growing within squares or container shapes like hoops and loops.¹⁴³ In between characters it is charged as if electrified by the strokes or dots at the top and bottom of neighbouring characters, resulting in a cohesive, centripetal force which drives the brushwork inward and

¹⁴¹ In the configuration of the character *feng* (wind), for example, the internal *hui* (insect) element is reduced and pulled off to the right in all three instances of the word in the prime object *Idyll*, allowing the interior space maximum expansion. Note by the way the upright, foursquare configuration of the outer element which conforms to strict horizontals and verticals. This personal trait is followed to some extent by the early 15th century author of *Autumn River* although evidently without understanding the function of expanding interior space: he has allowed the first stroke of the bracket element to double back on itself, returning on the *inside* of the internal space. The still later author of *Spray* and *Bamboo in Wind* (Freer) on the other hand, exhibits a clear preference for a slanted horizontal axis, so that the outer element is written like an N, but also for filling internal and external spaces with active brushwork. Not only does the *hui* element occupy the middle of the central space of the *feng* character, it is moreover pulled downward to cut across the inter-character space to link to the following character. The other examples in this chart, taken from various leaves of the 1350 *Mozhupu* manual, reveal that artist to be relying on both the 15th century artist and on prime objects as models: his configurations are sometimes fairly upright and foursquare, as in leaves 3 and 6, but more often they are slanted to the upper right, and spaces are occluded with heavy linking strokes. The two examples of *feng* from the *Dongting Fisherman* picture, reveal a primary reliance on the 15th century author of *Spray and Wind*.

¹⁴² From left to right the columns are a. *Idyll*, b. *Autumn River*, c. *Bamboo and Rock*, d. *Spray of Bamboo*, e. *Spring Dawn*, f. *Mozhupu Manual*, and g. *Mozhuce Album*.

¹⁴³ In the *Idyll* column, space flows out of the first character 1, *xi* (west), coming down the two sides of ch2, *feng*, and into its interior and round the dots and beneath the horizontal, largely on the left side of ch3, *luo* (fall), continuing down along side the ditto dots, to swirl around the pin-wheel-shaped ch5, *xia* (drop) and glide down the extended arms of ch.6, *mu* (trees), where the last stroke is the first instance of projection into space in contrast to a recoiling from space, the next and last one being another *na* stroke in the signature, *ren*. In the column from *Spray*, on the other hand, virtually every stroke is a projection into, a piercing of space, in ink on paper, revealing not only a different personality, but perhaps also a different period.

downward along the column in a distinctive manner.¹⁴⁴ This is not true of *any* of the later imitations. When inter-character spaces are viewed as positive elements (and the strokes as negative elements), it will be seen that only in the two prime specimens, *Idyll* and *Bamboo and Rock*, do they flow down the column with a steady rhythm, and that they swell within characters. In *Autumn River* (b) the spaces swell and shrink unsteadily from right to left during descent along the column, and loops are harshly turned to constrict interior spaces.¹⁴⁵ The calligraphy is tense and awkward, betraying the hand of one not in his element, working in a manner not his own.

In *Spray of Bamboo* (d) and *Spring Dawn* (e), on the other hand, we see the hand of an artist of great self-assurance, working in a well-practised style which had become second-nature. There is no attempt to eliminate all traces of his own brushwielding. Rather, only aspects of Wu Zhen's calligraphy which were evidently palatable to this artist have been incorporated into his sure and fluid hand. His own personality is more strongly asserted: an abundance of linking strokes occlude the space within and between characters.¹⁴⁶ And while more steady than *Autumn River*, it lacks the measured pace and natural grace of the prime objects, and the tendency to fill bracketing forms is not disguised. Instead of recoiling from space, each stroke projects into space. This is one of the fundamental differences in graphology between this artist

¹⁴⁴ Similarly, in the column of *Bamboo and Rock*, space dances around the dots perched atop ch7, *ban* (half) which shows a linking stroke looping up from the bottom. Note its thinness, in contrast to linking strokes in other attributions. The space then glides down the two sides of ch8, *sheng* (life), expanding to touch the top of ch9, *jin* (now) and glide down the sides of ch10, *lao* (old) in an asymmetrical way, and the next, *yi* (alas) in a symmetrical way. And so forth. Its mean "weight" is always balanced in the centre of the column, and swells outward across a notably expansive, towards the next column.

¹⁴⁵ Sitting atop of ch1, *shu* (tree), the space is next squeezed between it and the character below, *zhuan* (turn), from the interior of which it surges downward to the left of ch3 *qu* (departing), to be shot out of sight on the long *pie* stroke of *yan* (wild goose) and squeezed again between *yan* and *bei* (back), to be confined again to the left side. Clearly, space was not a positive element to this artist, but something leftover. In following Wu Zhen's configuration, he missed the central role of space in the Master's graphology.

¹⁴⁶ See note above on the character *feng* (wind) in chart i. In the block inscribed in *Spray*, for example, there are altogether 72 characters (the character *hui*, return, in the penultimate line of the hepatmetre, is missing), but there are 14 instances of inter-character linking strokes (3: 1/2; 4: 2/3, 8/9; 5: 1/2, 3/4, 5/6/7, 8/9; 6: 1/2/3/4, 1/2^; 7: 1/2/3). In *Idyll*, on the other hand, in a total of a 76 characters there are only 7 instances of linking strokes between characters (1: 1/2; 2: 5/6; 3: 2/3^; 8: 1/2; 2/3^, 11: 1/2/3).

II-e Graphology of Prime Objects and Recensions: Studies in Calligraphy and Wu Zhen. Columns from the two bamboo albums reflect their indebtedness to the *Autumn River* and *Spray* respectively.¹⁴⁷

Energy and momentum of prime objects continue to flow *in the spaces* as well as within the brushwork. The linking effect is not achieved by overt linking strokes but through spatial cohesion which binds the characters in one, continuous flow down the column. Mass and void, brushwork and space, occupy equal importance in the prime objects where configuration often recall an enclosure, with the elements pushed to one side to allow for interior flow of fluid space.¹⁴⁸ It is seen that space is invited to the inside by the yielding lines, so to speak, or else it is moving along the outside of the strokes, a remarkable example being the implied but unarticulated loop of the first stroke of *you*,¹⁴⁹ In the large loop which is interrupted in its ink trace but continuing in its momentum upward where it forms the firm, horizontal stroke, suggests a giant, curved space outside, supported by the character.

The calligraphy of prime examples is, like the painting, remarkably expressive and surprisingly emotional even though the expression is inward-directed rather than overt, yielding and reserved rather than assertive or ostentatious. In *Idyll*, the character *wang*, to forget (oneself), here referring to the boatboy lost in the beauty of the moonlit lake (4:5), is written as four parallel horizontal lines facing right, lost and "not pulled together", floating in the current and off-centre, weighted on the right, out of the column. In sum, the significance of space for Wu Zhen, it may be argued, has resulted in there being notably fewer linking strokes, and their form remarkably more discreet and self-effacing than expected when one is struck, at first viewing, by the weightedness and foursquare hoariness of his brush. This misapprehension is seen in his imitators who, too, projected a degree of extroversion onto their model which was not really there. Wu Zhen's calligraphy reflects a dynamism which is immediately sensed but perhaps not clearly understood. It resides *not* in extroversion or agitation of

¹⁴⁷ The two albums are discussed further in Section III-b3,4 below.

¹⁴⁸ *Idyll*: (Fig.84) 1:1,2,3; 3:2,3[^], 1[^], 4:1,3,5,8,1[^], 5:1,3,4; 6:3,4,2[^], 1[^],7:3,3[^],1[^]; 8: 1[^]; 9: 1[^]; 10:2,4,5,6. In *Bamboo and Rock* although the configuration is more attenuated, this feature is evident still, in 1:7,3[^], 2:1,2,3,5,7,1[^], 3:1,2,3,5,12,13; 4:7[^], 4[^], 3[^], 1[^]; 5:7, 4[^], 2[^], 1[^]; 6:4[^].

¹⁴⁹ To have, *Bamboo and Rock* (Fig.85) 4:1[^].

brush movement as his imitators evidently believed, but in a stillness, weight and gravity which move with a compelling momentum down the column, and into the fabric. This quality however, seems to have escaped observers of succeeding ages. When struck by its reserve, Dong Qichang remarked on seeing one example, that Wu Zhen's painting was like that of a Northern Song Master.¹⁵⁰ This is offered as evidence for the accretion in Ming-dated Wu Zhen works of extrovert or outward-directed qualities with highly visible, diagonal linking strokes, centered internal elements which fill up internal spaces. The concept of "leftover space" or, at least, the concept of the dominance of brush activity, and the relative unimportance of untouched areas of the paper now perceived only as background, are submitted here to be Ming phenomena. The apprehension of continuity and energy which in prime objects was manifested by means of equal levels of brushwork and space, was in the hands of Ming artists translated into overt dynamism in brushwork alone.

4. Balance and Symmetry.

The prime examples reveal a divided tendency toward symmetrical configuration of the characters and a left-right balance within the column. Characters with bilateral dots or outward-extending strokes are placed in an easy, natural symmetry without artifice. And yet they carry a marked pictorial value. In *Idyll, xia* (drop, 1:5) is constructed of three equidistant dots pointing inward at each other. The two lower dots of *le* (joy, 2:1[^]), the two lateral strokes poised atop of the radically abbreviated *fan* (times, 3:6), the two lower dots in *wei* (not yet, 6:3) are all placed in a symmetrical relationship, across significant breathing space, and exert a mutual pull, enforcing the centripetal structure of the character. Wu Zhen's use of symmetry shows a more than ordinary sensitivity.

¹⁵⁰ Inscribing reduction copy number 11 in the *Xiaozhong xianda* album of copies of famous ancient masterpieces now attributed to Wang Shimin or Wang Jian, "Wu Zhen is the only one who truly inherited the spirit of Juran. This painting should not be seen as a Yuan work but as a transcendental masterpiece (*sanmei*) by a lofty person of the Northern Song." The model was a painting on silk, in light colours. The probable provenance of the model is discussed in the appendix. The quotation is recorded in *Gugong shuhualu* volume 6:73. This is illustrated as fig.195b, and discussed in Appendix vii.

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In the 1347 *Bamboo and Rock* this awareness of and delight in balance and symmetry is further developed, and nearly all dots are rounded, equally sized and placed in equilateral symmetry with pictorial mastery. Perhaps as part of the movement toward brushwork-consciousness manifested in Yuan literati painting, Wu Zhen evidently came to perceive calligraphy as a complementary aspect of painting. Wu Zhen's calligraphy more than anyone else's, resembles pictures. The five columns of writing here are full of pictorial interest. The relationship extends beyond single characters, such that dots in one character relate directly with those beneath. For example, the dots in *xue* and *ban* (Fig.85. to study, 1:5; half 1:7) are poised with a unique sort of insight, both with regard to their internal mutual relationship, and with the rest of the character and, being mid-way toward those directly above them (*ren* man and *zhu* bamboo respectively), create a pictorial continuity which gives the column more than its ordinary share of momentum and energy. Similarly, further down, the dot-wiggle of *zhi* (of the, 1:4[^]) is written to integrate pictorially with those of *zuo* (creations, 1:3[^]) directly beneath. The bottom dots of *zhen* (true, 2:1) are poised like little ears atop the following *ji* (traces, 2:2), to which the dots of *wei* (not yet, 2:3) serve as counterpoint. Such internal play provides life and elasticity to the column which imitators miss or misunderstand. The simplicity and artlessness of the six dots flanking the two parallel verticals of *fei* (3:1) belie the profundity of Wu Zhen's mastery of pictorial form and of calligraphy. Another trio of dot-pairs, like light percussion, drum at the bottom of the column in *gai bi wei* (because [my] brush [power] has not yet, 3:4[^], 3[^], 1[^])¹⁵¹. So much is the brushwork a centripetal one that whenever possible, strokes are reduced to dots and placed across spatial gaps. These instances of subtle and introverted play may be considered "miracles of sublime perfection" but usually go unnoticed by connoisseurs and imitators alike.

In later recensions, imitators attempt to display brush virtuosity in an ostentatious manner, which is overt and of a different order altogether from prime

¹⁵¹ See also Fig.94 which illustrates the pictorial symmetry of prime objects using selected characters from the two prime objects.

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objects. In the well-loved *Spray of Bamboo* dated to 1350, the brilliant, extroverted artist leaves nothing appearing simple or artless. On the contrary, his brushwork is seasoned, confident and flamboyant.

5. Brush and Ink Used as in Painting.

One of the remarkable features of the 1347 *Bamboo and Rock* (fig.85) is the ink play on less absorbent paper both in the painting and in the calligraphy. Wu Zhen responds to the heavy sizing by drawing the brush slowly, and bearing down for darker inktones; and for a gradual lightening of inktones in the bamboo leaves, stems and calligraphy, he releases pressure, *but never with increased speed*.

The calligraphy in both prime examples behaves in identical manner in painting and calligraphy. The inktones move naturally from dark to light, brushstrokes are large and small, character-sizes change. These pictorial qualities of Wu's calligraphy have been discerned by all copyists who however misunderstood its personal nature. The changes in size or inktone are not features *per se*, but are the *result* of structural and visual forces preceding or surrounding them. It was not a matter of making a choice at each step of the writing, but an organic response to artistic impulses which generate the entire stream of writing, as it were, in one cohesive, organic whole. Imitators focus on the effect and not the cause, and create stilted versions with arbitrary and artificial changes in inktone and character-size. To a certain degree all imitators identified here fall into this trap, though they behave within the criteria (as they perceived them), in mutually different ways.

6. Parallel Double Strokes Along Axes (Prime examples: figs.84,85,94)

Two paired strokes, either horizontal or vertical, in Wu Zhen's hand tend to be placed along horizontal or vertical axes in marked parallel, accentuating the intervening space. The "ditto" dots in *Idyll* (*lo-lo* to drop, fig. 84.1:3-4, also fig.94, bottom of 1st col.) are two meticulously placed short strokes, pulled off in typical reduced fashion to the right. The linking stroke is thread-fine, almost vertical, eased to the left. The zhi

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 in *Bamboo and Rock* (fig.85 1:4[^], 3:4,10, 4:2, 6[^], 4:3,9; fig.94:bottom section) are made with two tiny parallel horizontal dots followed by a small wiggle ending with an in-turned tail. The yi (as, for, 4:5[^], 5:6) is made of three tiny vertical dots placed across spatial gaps, without internal linking strokes. The last strokes in zhong (final, Idyll 6:4; fig.94: bot.1:1) are also nearly horizontal, with a very fine linking stroke. Space is thus bracketed within.

When the same situations occur in *Spray of Bamboo* (fig.87.1:2[^], 2:3[^]), however, the ditto dots and the two strokes under leng (cold) are two attacks of diagonals with no clear articulation of the break in between. The brush is not, as in prime objects lifted, in recoil. There is no clarity as to when the dots stop and when the linking stroke begins.

Wu Zhen's observance of parallels is not in the normal sense of parallels which follow structural dicta. Rather it is a creative use of parallelism in unexpected places, part of his pictorializing of calligraphy. It is complementary to grouping moss or vegetation dots in parallels. I have discussed his wang (to forget, hereto be lost in thought, *Idyll*, 4:5; fig. 94 bot :3:1) dominated by four horizontal strokes, the top three being placed, across the gap, in the centre of the space opening in xie (rowing sweep) above. In *Bamboo and Rock* 1:7-9, *bansheng, jin*, Wu Zhen executes seven successive horizontals in parallel, threaded through by two continuous verticals as if they were one, crowned by two rounded, equidistant, pictorialised dots of *ban*. It is no accident that jin was written like two slashes here. Looking down a column, the horizontal strokes laid in parallel, often across two or more characters, serve as accents, like down beats, to the music of his brush.

The parallel verticals, too, are remarkable. In nian (year, *Idyll* 2:6, 9:4; *Bamboo and Rock* 4:2[^] See also fig.95 showing the two prime signatures and dates.) they form a remarkably narrow box, hinged on the plumbdownward axis. In fei (not, *Bamboo and Rock* 3:1, fig.94 1:1) they are like posts to a swinging door. Fig.94 shows a selection of characteristic configurations. Coils 1,2 of the top section illustrate vertical dots handled along horizontal axes, spaciously deployed along vertical strokes.

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Note the asymmetrical balance of horizontal strokes in col.2 function to bracket and confirm strictly level horizontal axes. The bottom section of fig.94 illustrates vertical dots or strokes performed as horizontal parallels, the rhythmic repetition of level horizontal strokes, 2:2-3 *shengjin*.. 3:1-2-3, *wang xi-dong*, forgetting east and west. In characters with loops and hoops, 4:1-2 *yutong*, fisherboy and 5:1-2-3, *chou-wandie*, sorrow of ten-thousand layers, the horizontals tend to be particularly level.

7. Even Wrist Pressure

Using a worn brush, Wu Zhen evidently kept his wrist pressure fairly even, without much agitation up and down. The stroke-widths are fairly even throughout the two examples. Even in *pie* strokes drawn down leftward, or *na* strokes drawn down to the right, cases when the ordinary calligrapher tends to stress the middle of the curve with a slight addition of wrist weight (and stroke-thickness), Wu Zhen would appear to keep a steady rate of progression. This can be seen in fig.94. col. 3 in the top section, with *zhu*, *wei*, *li*, *li*, etc. in fig.95, the two signatory *ren* characters, exhibit this even keel in either direction.

8. Breaks Preferred to Linking Strokes.

Linking strokes in the prime objects are rare and inconspicuous, as has been shown above. Openness in space is preferred to occlusion. Later accretions however exhibit dark linking strokes of sharp diagonality and bold sweeps. In the few instances where they do occur in prime objects, they are hair-thin or very discreet. In the anonymous *Spray of Bamboo*, (fig.87) linking strokes assume an importance in the total configuration on a par with all major stroke types. They are dynamic and prominent here, as internal links in 1:1,2,4,8-9; 2:1^; 3: ,3 and as external links between characters in 1: 5^4^, 3: 1-2, 4: 2-3,8-9; 5: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6-7, 8-9. The four characters of the signature are done in a single brilliant deployment of *qi*, two strokes in actual brush usage. This is followed by *ximoyu* in one stroke, and in the next column *wanfengchu* again in one stroke.

On the other hand, *Idyll* (fig.84) shows 7 linking strokes (1: 1/2, 2:5/6,7/8; 3:2/3^; 4: 2/3, 8/9; 5:1/2,3/4; 5/6/7; 6:1/2/3/4, 2/1^; 7:1/2/3); and *Bamboo and Rock*

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(fig.85) has only 6 instances (1:1/2; 2:5/6; 3:2/3; 8:1/2, 2/3[^]; 11:1/2/3). Wu Zhen which would appear to reveal a marked reduction in linking strokes and growing awareness of spatial emptiness and symmetry in old age.

Statistics may highlight this point. In 76 characters of *Idyll*, the 7 linking strokes form a ratio of one in 10.8 characters. Five years later, in *Bamboo and Rock*, only 6 linking strokes in a total of 99 characters, shows a sharp decline to one in 16.5 characters. *Spray*, etc., on the other hand, has 14 linking strokes in a total of 72 characters, or one in 5, representing a 300% higher incidence than those occurring in prime objects.¹⁵² These differences not only point to contrasting personalities, they reveal different epochs.

9. Strict Verticality.

Coursing down the columns of the prime objects is a compelling verticality that is among the calligraphy's most notable features. The vertical axis of each character adheres to a strict plumbline and all are aligned along the central, columnar axis. No energy is directed outward of the column, to the left or to the right. Centripetal, the inexorable downward momentum of the column is introverted. And like strokes in the paintings, the strokes and dots are grouped along verticals and horizontals in an inward-directed drive, fully charged with energy and weight.

In contrast, vertical axes of characters in non-prime works swing to the left and to the right in the course of the columns' descent, their energies are centrifugal, and the effect is one of busyness and extroversion. This is especially true of the *Autumn River* (fig. 93b, whose columnar instability next to the prime object *Idyll*, fig.93a, presents a sharp contrast). In calligraphy he provides an EVOLVED IMAGE some two generations removed from the Master. Note the uprightness and internal space of his *feng*, maple, in fig.98b. On the other hand, *Spray of Bamboo* (fig.87, and its related work *Bamboo in Wind* in the Freer Gallery of Art, fig. 88) is even more flamboyant, with more swings in the vertical axes. Imitations based on it in the *Mozhupu* (figs. 159ff) would appear

¹⁵² This busy, filled up space with its network of agitated brush movement has been the world's perception of Wu Zhen's calligraphy since the middle Ming when the artist of *Spray*, and the *Bamboo in Wind*, *Fishermen handscroll* in the Freer Gallery of Art, created his new Wu Zhen masterpieces. But the art historian examining these works at close range identifies irreconcilable differences.

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to reflect both prime objects and *Spray*- related works. The verticality is more steady, but then *Mozhupu* is altogether stilted, not so natural and spontaneous as *Spray*, and its more cautious brushwielding is more full of hesitancy than personal traits.

On the whole the .tilt of the vertical axis reflects personal habit and is more difficult to disguise. *Branch of Bamboo*, (fig.155, top and bottom right, also fig.196) for example, while unable to maintain columnar verticality, is more successful in maintaining a continuity of vertical axis over several characters at a time, though not the entire column. However, this particular calligraphy would appear to bear little relation to prime objects either in configuration (motif) or in brushwielding (graphology). There is a fleeting resemblance to *Spray* and its sister-work, *Fishermen* handscroll (attributed to Wu Zhen, in the Freer). Efforts towards a sustained plumb in vertical axes are impeded, however, as dependence on models causes awkward repetition in configuration. For example all the water radicals¹⁵³ are made in identical two-stroke formation, aligned along a strict vertical. Compare the water radical in *Idyll*¹⁵⁴ where some are made in single strokes, some in two strokes, but no two are identical. In each case the configuration relates organically to the preceding or following character, and to its neighbors in the previous column.

The inscription on *Hermit Fisherman on Lake Dongting* (fig.115) being inferior in quality and a close copy from a model, is discussed in detail in Section III-a1.

The *Mozhupu* calligraphy (fig.159ff) reflects little concern with consistency in the vertical axes of characters or of columns. The artist would appear to have memorized specific configurations for particular characters and to repeat them in fairly identical fashion at each occurrence. Note the monotony of his six performances of *qingfeng*, pure breeze, in fig.98d. which derive mostly (esp. bottom four) from *Spray*, (fig.98c), with only one probable reference to prime example (fig. 98a) in *ruyi-feng*

¹⁵³ Column 1:1 (*jiang*) is repeated in identical fashion in column 2: 3rd up (henceforth 3[^]), and the water radical is repeated in the following two characters and again in column 3:4,5,6.

¹⁵⁴ 1:3, 1:3[^] (*jiang*), 4:1, 4:1[^], 5:1, 7:5, 8: 1[^].

middle group, rightmost column). His models include both prime objects and the later Master of *Spray*.

10. Graphological Constancy within Shifting Styles

The two prime signatures and dates may differ in configuration (motif) but are identical in brush-wielding (graphology). It is the same hand writing in different styles, on different media, at different times. But the basic habits identify his work. Fig.95¹⁵⁵ shows contrasting configurations for Meihua daoren, *nian* (year), *zuo* (make), *wei* (for), *wei* (not yet) but identical brush habits as follows:

a. *Meihua daoren* (1342 *Idyll* :1st column; 1347 *Bamboo and Rock*: 2nd column)

DIFFERENCES IN CONFIGURATION

Mei - The earlier version is more abbreviated, the right-hand element wider and more open, and done in one stroke. In the second version, the right-hand element is done in two strokes with the brush lifted and forming a 3-like double loop downward, to link into the -dao below.¹⁵⁶

Hua - Second version adds a prominent horizontal top, and the two winglike flourishes of the earlier version are reduced, hugging the central vertical; no linking stroke to Dao here.

Dao - radically reduced configuration in later version; new link to ren. Earlier version has five wrist-movements, the later one only three. Note bracket-like bottom element in the earlier version, a feature often imitated by the author of *Hermit Fisherman on Autumn River* (fig.96b)

ren - the two strokes touch in the second version, where the second stroke features some "friction waves" in its course outward, in contrast to the earlier version which has a separated second stroke of a more angular articulation.

¹⁵⁵ From the right, *Idyll* cols 1,3, and *Bamboo and Rock*, cols. 2,4

¹⁵⁶ This linking stroke in *Spray* and *Wind* (cf. fig. 97a, first two cols) comes down vertically like a major stroke.

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nian (year, 1342, fig.84: 2:4[^], 9:4; 1347, fig.85: 4:2up; 5:7[^]. See also fig.95). The first three examples are of the single-stroke variety while the last one is more in the standard *kai* script.

zuo (to make, 1342: 10:4; 1347: 1: 3[^]; 5:2[^]). Three different configurations. The earlier writing made an angular turn at the bottom of the first stroke, which in 1347 became rounded out. The last dotting differs in numbers.

wei (for, 1342: 9:1[^]; 1347: 4: 4[^] and 4: 7[^]). Earlier writing shows more change in wrist pressure in the first horizontal, and the closing of the circle by the last pig-tail loop. By 1347 the shape had become elongated, the wrist-pressure-changes reduced, and the last loop tightened to open the central space at the bottom.

wei (not yet, 1342:6:3; 1347: 2:3; 3:1[^]). No two are alike, but all are *zhō* artless, like little rag-dolls with outstretched arms. The central vertical can arch to stress the vertical momentum, the two horizontals can tilt to embrace a strictly level horizontal interior space, and the two strokes, here as rounded dots, are deployed high or low at either side to balance the total effect and relate with neighbouring configurations.

CONSTANCY IN GRAPHOLOGY:

In both versions, however, the brush is held fairly upright, the wrist-pressure is weighted yet supple, and consistent, with little exaggerated up-and-down movement. The weight and slow manner of writing is identical in both versions, and even though the brush is blunter, more worn in the 1347 work, so that fewer stroke-endings are pointed, it is clear that the weight is sustained throughout the course of each stroke to its very end, and does not glide up from the surface toward the end like a take-off.

Conversely, close imitations of the configuration by imitators, nevertheless betray different brush wielding habits. (See signature chart fig.96).

a. Meihua daoren. In configuration, the Prime Examples (96 a,d) show an internal evolution toward simplicity but essential features of graphology remain the same. There is change in inktones in the brushwork, space is a positive factor, centrality and verticality is constant, the weight is heavy and the brush moves with ponderation. The

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ren serves as a roof for the following word which fits beneath and within it. In all imitations except *Autumn River* the next word *stuffs* that space. Rather, there is no awareness of a potential space flowing within the *ren* character. In 1342 the two strokes are separate and there is slight tilt to the lower right. Consequently the following *shu*, reduced at the top, also tilts slightly to the right at the top. The verticality is brought back to plumb in the completed configuration. In the 1347 example the *ren* is on a strict vertical and horizontal. Consequently the following *xue* posits three dots almost geometrically balanced, beneath its grand umbrella, leaving plenty of breathing space beneath before writing the reduced horizontal. None of the other examples share this degree of spatial sensitivity, even though each has caught some external configurational likeness; none have caught the essentials.

In configuration, *Autumn River* is seen here performing a signature of the older, 1342 variety. But he betrays agitation, an abundance of wrist-movements which cause the brushtip to flick. Wu Zhen's wrist energy is quiescent in comparison, reserved, withheld, but charges each stroke or dot through to its very end and, extends *beyond* the termination, after the brush lift-off. In Chinese parlance the *qi* is amply reserved, there being far more than revealed. In *Autumn River* the *qi* energy is depleted even before stroke-endings are completed, so that pointed tips, whitened endings prevail.

The Master of *Spray* (cf signature in 97c and in *Wind* in 97d, with primes in a,b.) prefers the later style of Wu Zhen's calligraphy, and his signature is based on the type seen in 1347. But in brushwielding immediately one senses that Wu Zhen's slow weight and friction are replaced with fluidity and speed. Wu's space is replaced by strokes, the introversion by extroversion, the naïve awkwardness by slickness. The brush is more slanted, the tipsharp and more exposed. Now that Wu Zhen's true features are identified, *Spray's* incompatibility becomes glaringly apparent, even though generations of connoisseurs have been drawn to its beauty and exuberance.

b.nian (year). Preface leaf II (fig.160) of *Mozhupu*, last column:5. It imitates the configuration of the Prime Examples' single-stroke variety mentioned above, but has

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exaggerated the slight leftward dip on the vertical's descent and curved the rest of that vertical. In the Prime Examples, the strict verticality is meant to be heightened by the initial dip. The most dramatic difference is in temperament. Wu Zhen carries the weight through to the very end, not skimping on any aspect, whereas the *Mozhupu* reveals a higher speed, more agitation in wrist movement, and a tendency to skimp on the finishes.

c. *you* (to have) in fig.183 where prime is a. and *Mozhupu* c. In the Prime Example, after lift-off from the first stroke or large, fine arc, the wrist continues moving upward turning right and, when relanding, appears as the *second*, thicker horizontal stroke which enters however in the *same breath*. but is now weightier, more masculine as it forms the angle and turns vertical, finishing with a rounded loop for the moon element. There is breathing and life in the execution of the original, and a lifeless painting-in, with no weight and many changes in wrist-pressure in the imitation.

d.feng (wind). In the Prime Examples, it occurs three times in 1342: 1:2, 3:3[^],5:4. See fig.98a. *Mozhupu* examples are in fig.98d, and 183c. Configurational features of the prime object include: four-squareness, centeredness, verticality of central axis, expanding internal space (that is, the internal element, the *hui* or insect radical, pulls notably to the right, yielding to expanding inner space, a feature typical in Wu Zhen's painting as well as calligraphy).

The closest approximation is that in the undated *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River*, where it occurs in (fig.93b: 1:6, also fig.98b) as the right-hand element of *feng*, (maple). The calligrapher would appear to have caught the essentials in configuration. It is in the more slanted brushwielding, *cebi*, the clear preference for sharper tip-ends, the more cavalier manner of flinging the inner element, and the lack of weight and the agitation that a different hand is revealed. Wu Zhen's calligraphy exhibits in comparison the *least* brush movement. The merest twist of the wrist produces the wiggly descent of the internal *hui* element. In *Autumn River* the entire brushtip is flicked this way and that. More effort is expended in nervous brush-tip gesticulations.

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Moreover, the hand in *Autumn River* is unable to maintain verticality. But on the surface many points of the original are grasped. **Jiangshang** (on the river fig.93b, 1:1-2, also fig.151d,e) also occur in 1342 (fig.84.1: 3[^]-2[^], also fig.151a). The anonymous artist captures the thickness, without the vigour, nor even the pictorial balance implicit and explicit in the original. In Wu Zhen (fig.151a) the spatial gap between the left- and right- elements of **jiang** create a flowing space into which the energy of the **shang** is introduced, which asserts its centrality and the verticality of the group. The vertical stroke of Wu's **shang** does a little genuflexat the bottom, playing with, but not disturbing, the plumb. The bottom horizontal is a complement to the next horizontal (the top stroke of **qing**) where the two enfold in equilibrium and supple, horizontal space-flow. In the imitation, none of this is understood. The inter-character relationship is artificial and the brush-energy lifeless. In **yu** (fisher, fish 1342, fig.84: 4:1, 7:1[^], also fisherman, fig.150.2:3[^]), Wu Zhen delights in making a circle of the "fish-belly". This was imitated by the *Autumn* artist who reduced the top element, circled the bottom so as to erase all traces of stroke-order and, following the prime example (for fish, not fisher), drew an exaggerated horizontal beneath. The misunderstanding is clear: in the original (figs.84 7:1[^]), without leftward extension of the horizontal the upper element would have appeared to topple over, falling to the left (because of the thick leftward opening stroke, the large leftward gap, and the thick ending of the circular loop which thickens as it becomes a horizontal. The long "diving board" effect in front of it corrects the balance, restoring the plumb. Furthermore, an all-important gap allows for space flow between the top element and the bottom horizontal. All this is misunderstood by our imitator who monotonously writes long horizontals for all his **yu** characters without grasping the structural principles of Wu's configuration. His strokes as usual lack life, inner transformation or *qi*. This is inevitable when the eye and mind are constantly on models.

Space prohibits further elaboration. Comparison of figs. 93a (*Idyll*, section) and 93b *Autumn* total) should make clear the irreconcilable differences between prime object and recension.

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The more dynamic master of *Spray of Bamboo* (fig. 87) writes *feng* twice: 2:3 and 7:2. In the first example attention is paid to approximate the model's configuration (especially fig.85.1:2). But already his own idiosyncracies creep in. An abhorance for internal space: note the separation of the first stroke's upward swing making a large V with the downward movement. (These in the Prime Examples are closed in as much as possible to make a large container for the internal space). Next he draws the internal *hui* element leftward to *fill up* the internal space. In brushwielding this artist reveals a far speedier hand and a far lighter touch. The brush flies over the paper and the ink sits on top of it in unvarying blackness, like a silhouette.

In the second *feng* the master of *Spray* reverts to personal style. His calligraphy is of all later accretions the most natural. It is "convincing" because it does not strain. Instead, he adopts some configurational points from the Prime Objects but mostly lets his own creative habits take over. Here in fig. 87, col. 7, after the signature, in *wanfeng qingchu* (where the evening breezes are pure) there is hardly any trace of Wu Zhen's original image. The hall-mark ink-seepage, the consistency in black tone, the reluctance to yield to space within and between characters, the consistent upward slant of horizontal axis, the speed in brush-usage, have come to represent the new 'Wu Zhen'.

Some more examples of identical configuration with different brush usage can be seen between the *Spray* artist and his imitator who made the *Mozhupu*:

Weichuan qianqing (Thousand *qing* of the Wei River)¹⁵⁷ occurs in *Spray* in 4:2-5 and on the *Mozhupu*'s Prefatory Leaf II (fig. 16e) in 4:6-9. compare *Spray* in fig.185 c and *Mozhupu* in d.) The imitator exaggerates the linking strokes between the first two characters, and the stiffness and artificiality are quite apparent. In the model the brush is lifted, trailing only the tip hairs, to come down with a firm attack on the first stroke of *chuan*, here formed like a hook, leading to the second stroke. In the imitation *chuan*, the joint to the first stroke is unnatural, the hook leading to the second stroke is inaccurate: the second stroke is entirely reformed afresh with a new "breath"; it

¹⁵⁷ Discussed further in relevant section of catalogue raisonné.

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is not a continuation of the momentum of the first upward hook or in the same breath. Then follows a most artificial link with *qian*, a *qi*-continuation which in the "model" is only implied but not carried out. I do not insist that the *Mozhupu* artist copied the very painting of *Spray*. Rather, that he had in front of him or clear in his memory, impressions of calligraphy from both Prime Objects and works by the master of *Spray*, both of which he considered images of Wu Zhen¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁸ See Section III where further examples of imitation from the 15th century Master and from Wu Zhen are discussed.

SECTION III SEQUENCE OF IMAGE-CHANGE THROUGH HISTORICAL ACCRETIONS

A STUDY OF MING AND QING ATTRIBUTIONS

a. The Landscapes

Having confirmed methodically the existence of Prime Objects, and having defined their unique characteristics, Wu Zhen's original image would appear to have been unearthed, as it were, from layers of stylistic images and format types which had accrued around his name through the centuries. In the exercise the conservative nature of Wu Zhen's painting may have been more firmly established than hitherto. At the same time, some features of early to mid-fourteenth century painting have become clarified. It is now possible to attempt a study of the non-prime objects, that is, the replications, recensions, copies, variations or inventions, through comparative analysis both with the tested Prime Objects and, unavoidably in this first endeavour of the kind, with untested works of the Ming and Qing periods. In this section non-Yuan attributions are examined in order to determine their respective dates of execution and, if possible, school or regional affiliation.

1. *HERMIT FISHERMAN OF LAKE DONGTING* *Dongting yuyintu* (fig.100).

As a painting, *Hermit Fisherman on Lake Dongting* presents major problems on several levels. Done in ink on paper, it is a smallish work about half the size of *Fisherman's Idyll* to which it has been often compared in books, where they are reproduced to the same size.¹ The condition of the paper is extremely poor, the retouching ubiquitous. *Ayuefu* or *ci* lyric verse on top, alleges a date of 1341 in the dedication. Handling of groundplane, recession, mass, space and brushwork however, conforms more to later perceptual principles. While many scholars have accepted this painting implicitly and some have explicitly attributed the difference between this work and *Fisherman's Idyll* which was painted in 1342 to a shift in mood on the part of Wu Zhen,²

¹ Measuring 146.4 cm x 58.6 cm against the 176.1x95.6cm of the *Fisherman's Idyll*, it has some 8,579.04 cm² in area versus some 16,835.16 cm² of the latter. It is not only on a notably more intimate scale, it is also proportionately more slender, 2.50: 1 versus the latter's 1.84:1. This difference is exaggerated however by cropping of about 2 cm on the left side. See below.

² See respective sections in Wu Zhen studies by Cahill, Chen Jingguang, Zhang Guangbin and Li Shumei cited throughout this text and in bibliography.

there exists between the two works a subtle but unbridgeable difference which marks the perceptual transition between two periods roughly a century apart. The image of *Dongting* as it appears today presents methodological problems of multiple dimensions.

i. Problem as an original creation

This painting exhibits, even from a distance, major flaws in composition which raise doubts about its integrity as an originally conceived painting.

- Awkward scale and ratio. The relationship between the two sections is not clear, and they conflict. Compare for example the Ni Zan *Rongxizhai* (fig.101) and Wu Zhen's *Fisherman's Idyll* (fig.46), where the background hills appear reduced, as it were, by the distance. Their scale is by implication somewhat grand. In *Dongting* the "distant" mound is neither distant, nor close; neither monumental, nor diminutive. This may be attributed to its construction and rendering in the manner of a foreground earthen repoussoir. For hills across a river, the convention of painting "distant trees" in various degrees of abbreviation had been long established. In this painting foliage on the mound does not signify distant trees but shrubbery of the type usually seen in foreground sections. Compare corresponding details in similar compositions such as *Idyll*, *Qishan yuyintu* (Hermit Fisherman in Streams and Mountains) ascribed to Zhao Yong now in the Cleveland Museum of Art³, *Qiujiang daidutu* (Awaiting the Ferry on the Autumn River) ascribed to Sheng Mao.⁴ Grouped foliage dots, ringed by dots of paler hue, suggest shrubbery growing in some density which the eye, from a relatively close distance, can discern as being near (dark ink) or far (lighter ink)

When similar dots are deployed on mid or background sections in these comparable compositions, they do not suggest shrubbery, but distant trees too small for the eye to see. In *Dongting* there would appear to be no perceptual difference between the foreground and the middle or background hills. Both sections are modelled in the same manner, with the same sized strokes and clarity. Distant shrubbery here is done in the same foliage strokes

³ See *Eight Dynasties*, no.106..

⁴ What may be the original early 15th century version is published in Xu Bangda ed. *Zhongguo hui-huashi tulu* (Pictorial record of Chinese painting history, 2 vols. Shanghai, Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981) vol. I:126.

and with the same clarity in articulation as those of the foreground. The over-sized dots signify nothing in the context of clearly articulated shrubbery and bulrushes next to them. In particular, the flourish of shrubbery tendrils done in dark and light ink strokes on the right flank would appear to be actually a transposition of foreground motifs from some other model.

- Misuse of bulrush reeds motif in the distance. Around the further mound these plants should be dwarfed and form of a different type and size of brush stroke. Being articulated here with the same clarity, even tonal variation, as the foreground groups is a compositional error no original artist (of any century) would commit. Placing them into deep water would appear to be an error : the water, judging by the angle of the mound's slope, becomes rapidly deeper and at this distance would have been too deep for such shallow-water plants.

- Double bend in the groundplane. The foreground is seen from an elevated vantage point but the river, in the context of the mound which is seen from below, forms an angle with the foreground and is seen thus to be tilting upward. Further to the right where the water stretches into the broad distance , the angle of perspective is lowered again.

- Incorrect use of exposed roots (fig.107). When roots of one tree are exposed, those of its twin in the same terrain is usually depicted in the same manner, unless blocked from view by a little mound. Compare Wu Zhen's *Idyll* (fig. 103), *Twin Junipers* (fig. 108), or Sheng Mao attributions such as *Wintry Trees by a Lake* in Taiwan⁵, *Singing While Boating on an Autumn River* in Shanghai.⁶ In *Dongting* the second and third trees, unobstructed by mound or shrub, are sunk deep, without showing their roots.

- Incorrect structure of alum heads. In the mound they are stuffed like rubber eggs into a cushion which is indented in turn. It reveals a misreading of motifs as seen in corresponding sections of Jiangnan models such as for example the conservative fourteenth century composition, *Qiushantu* (Autumn Mountains, fig. 60), or even its progressive fourteenth century transformation by Huang Gongwang in the *Fuchun shanju tujian*

⁵ Cahill, *Hills*, pl.23.

⁶ Ibid: pl.25.

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(fig.128). An instance of later evolution of this ancient vocabulary which was more successfully updated may be seen in *Qingjiang chunxiao* (Spring Dawn, fig.126), etc. In *Dongting* this motif as rendered geologically and structurally untenable.

- Top of distant mound is an artistic "disaster." (fig.113) In spite of attempts to erase it, there remains a top extension of the mound, which would render a profile of distant vertical pinnacles usually featured in more conservative compositions such as *Cherished Companions* (fig.66) and done in light inkwash. Here the artist evidently stopped and attempted to erase it. There is instead a mess of faded, blurred strokes which signify or express nothing. The ubiquitous retouching is visible in the lower left quarter of this detail where several holes are covered with ink swipes.

The pictorial additions, too, present problems.

- The fishing boat (fig.110) is a quotation from the Ma-Xia School (see discussion of later additions below).
- Fisherman's weight fails to affect the boat's tilt and buoyancy.
- Fisherman is punting and angling at the same time. This is a practical impossibility .

In sum, at the outset I would submit that *Dongting* as first painted was not a creative endeavour by a competent artist, but a freehand composite based on a variety of Yuan models of the Jiangnan School, by a less-than-competent artisan. Several further major problems of cropping, retouching, and addition of new motifs and attribution compound the ^{problem of the} identification of the painting.

ii. Date of composition

The physiographic comprehension of a reverberating nature is absent in *Dongting*. In contrast to illumined and breathing waters and space of *Idyll*, the water of *Dongting* is a lifeless backdrop against which to display brushwork (of the trees). Pictorial elements no longer function to bracket the central space, but have themselves dominated the focus of the painting. Recession is implied but not described. These perceptual principles would appear to suggest a date of execution somewhere in the Ming no earlier than Wang Fu (1362-1416; fig.102) whose landscape in imitation of Ni Zan (1301-1374; fig.101), illustrates the

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morphological transition in spatial perception. In the Ming version by Wang Fu and in *Dongting* (fig.100), the foreground is seen from an elevated vantage point while the hills across the river are seen from the front and a lowered vantage point. Moreover, they are flattened in depth and begin to function as a screen to block off extension into further horizons. Note how the distant hills in Ni Zan (fig.101) differ from their neighbours in a gradual and consistent recession into deep distance. They would appear to be viewed from the same vantage point as that held in the foreground.

Compare the physiographic treatment of elements in *Idyll* (fig 103) and *Rongxizhai* (fig.105) with the ideographic rendering of the Ming in *Dongting* (fig.104) and the Wang Fu imitation of Ni Zan landscape (fig. 106). In the former, the trees rise up against a measurable background of water, just as they do against land (see *Twin Junipers*, fig. 49b). In Ming the intervening "space" loses descriptive or measuring function, and the trees come to be silhouetted as brushwork against blank paper.

The *models* of which *Dongting* would appear to be a freehand amalgam, may hail from somewhere toward the end of the fourteenth century. The date of the first painting of *Dongting* however may well have been past the first quarter of the fifteenth century evidenced by the many instances of misunderstanding of fourteenth century perceptual principles. It may be submitted that the painting itself, prior to additions (reconstruction fig.120a), was executed in the early-to-mid fifteenth century.

Ideographic perception would appear to be accompanied by a return to frontality. Compare for example the (untested) copy of Zhao Mengfu's *Hermit Fisherman on the Autumn River* dated to 1476 by Yao Shou (1422-1495) in the Huihuaguan, Beijing.(fig.193). While in structure the Ming work has retained something of the early Yuan scale,⁷ space, consistent groundplane and continual recession which would appear to have been in the original, the treatment of brush, ink and paper would appear to reveal late-fifteenth century understanding and preferences. The water is not shimmering or breathing as in, say, Zhao's *East Mountain in Lake Dongting* (fig.192)⁸ where the water, though

⁷ The boat and its fishing-rod holding official may both be apochryphal, if not an enlargement of what may have been in the original.

⁸ Reproduced in Cahill *Hills*, pl. 17.

criss-crossed in an archaizing wave pattern, shows areas of light and areas of dark. The lake shimmers and ripples as if alive, much as in *Idyll*. Yao's copy however, captures Zhao's painting in a new light: it is brushwork-oriented and exhibits no descriptive interest. The function of the lake would appear now to serve as foil for the display of brushwork. These would reflect perceptual and morphological changes in the function of brush work on paper (see Appendix vii for more on the problem of copying).

iii. Retouching and Additions

In its present mounting, the second foreground tree has lost its leftmost tips, the background mountain its leftward slope. Under close examination, crucial areas of retouching come to light.

- The left side of the painting would appear to have been cropped by about 2 cm, removing the left slope of the large mound, the left tips of the tree and, significantly, the signature of the original artist. This is not an uncommon method of saving a painting which had been damaged in its rolled up form at one end or other by fire, water or insects. This would require "surgical removal" of the damaged side.⁹ Fig. 120 (left) is an attempt at reconstruction of the missing inch prior to remounting and the addition of "artist's inscription and seals" as well as Qianlong's subsequent contribution, to restore something of its original appearance.

- The *yuefu* lyric and signature attributed to Wu Zhen top centre, and a repeat signature in the lower left, are later additions. They were painted on, requiring several wipes of the brush before the ink would take hold, as the painting surface, after repeated rollings and unrollings had become waxy from contact with the backing. In many instances the ink is dragged over cracks, wormholes and tears, covering them. Fig.114 shows an enlargement of the character *jiao* (bottom of column 1 in fig.115). Several attempts were needed to paint the characters on so they adhered to the paper and were clearly visible.

⁹ This means removing the damaged inches from the left or right sides in the case of hanging scrolls, or the tops or bottoms in the case of handscrolls. Cf. the problem in *Central Mountain*'s present condition discussed in II-b.

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- The square boat with fine line ripples around it, is a quotation from Ma Yuan School works.¹⁰ For a *wenren* painting this represents a wrong choice. It is a later addition as seen in its ink tone and brushwork which differ markedly from those in the landscape. Its placement toward the "distant shore", and rendering as if seen from above at close range, as in *Idyll*, would appear to be a contradiction. The scale and positioning of the boat next to the bulrushes makes it bizarrely dwarfed and, in its acute angle, exaggerates the discontinuity in the groundplane. It may be reasonable to suggest that the addition was made in the same remounting during which the left side was removed and the inscriptions added. However, its addition has not helped matters. It is out of scale and, for the only part of the boat carrying (the fisherman's) weight, the bow sits too high out of the water. In his left hand the fisherman holds, upside down with the reel on top, a fishing pole. At the same time in his right hand he is wielding a long pole with which presumably he seeks to anchor the boat.¹¹ In practice, each of these activities requires both hands. In this picture the punt pole is stuck vertically into the water, and the fishing pole is held up, neither casting out - ward, nor drawing inward. Moreover, no fishing line may be seen to issue from the rod. The artist who made the additions evidently transferred them from model-types like the *Fishermen* handscrolls ascribed to Wu Zhen and Dai Jin and, evidently opting for a variation on the subject, chose to render one man doing the work of two. This artist clearly has no knowledge of the different implements depicted in the handscrolls. In the Wu Zhen attributions, they include steering oars and canoe paddles, each with its distinct function and correct usage.¹² In the Dai Jin and Li Zhu handscrolls they include poles, traps and nets.

¹⁰ Compare the Southern Song Ma Yuan School work, *Fishing Along on the Frozen River*, ink and light colours on silk (26.8 x 50.2cm), Tokyo National Museum. This may have been a fragment of an album leaf or of a larger painting. This type of brushwork and format used for painting boat and water strokes is transmitted in Academy style painting through the Yuan to the Ming as exemplified by Dai Jin (1388-1462), to whom is attributed another painted fragment on silk, *Recumbent Figure in Boat near Rock and Reeds* (28.0x28.6cm) now in the Fujita Museum (figs.118) Such formulae may have been the models for other Ming productions such as the Freer *Fishermen* scroll attributed to Wu Zhen (fig.119).

¹¹ I have not found among works attributed to Wu Zhen a parallel to this image, where a boat is held in place by means of a punt pole held upright and, out of sight, inserted into the mud at the bottom of the lake. However, in works attributed to Dai Jin, such as the *Fishermen* handscroll in the Freer Gallery of Art, or in the *Fishermen* handscroll by Li Zhu, a younger Ming artist, in a private Japanese collection such poles are commonplace, and used in pairs to stabilize the skiff.

¹² These are more graphically demonstrated in the Shanghai version which features often more lively and varied action.

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There would appear to be no less than four separate problems in this painting. They are, the stylistic lineage and date of the *models* for the original landscape portions of the painting; the actual date of execution; the problem of remaking it into a painting in accordance with the image style of Wu Zhen as then perceived, and the problem of the *models* for the inscription and fishing boat.

iv Quality

The judgment of quality in a work of art as Kant and others have been at pains to point out, is a subjective matter. It has been a category deliberately omitted in this thesis. However, on the subject of *Hermit Fisherman on Lake Dongting*, a painting in which many scholars have invested so heavily, it is perhaps fitting to emphasize here that as revealed in close-up, direct examination, the extraordinarily poor quality of this painting can no longer remain suppressed. Compare typical brushwork of *Dongting* (fig.111) with a comparable passage from *Central Mountain* (fig. 112). The difference is not a reflection of Wu Zhen's different styles or different states of health. The haphazard, harried strokes and confused dotting of *Dongting* detail bear no relation to the weighted, slow, orderly brushwielding of Wu Zhen. The long-lived fame of the *Dongting* painting is on the one hand regrettable and bizarre, and on the other testifies to the enduring power of hearsay in traditional Chinese connoisseurship.

v. Problem of Stylistic Affiliation

In composition, in the placement of trees, roots and bulrushes, and in some features of brush-mode, *Dongting* relates to various stylistic accretions in the Sheng Mao (fl.1310-1360) School evolved during the Ming.¹³

¹³ I have prepared for publication in *Oriental Art* an outline of the evolution of the Sheng Mao style-images through the Ming to illustrate the proliferation of brush-modes and image styles in time, using the Sheng Mao School as an example. A fusion of the Wu Zhen and Sheng Mao modes in 16th century perception features lake scenes with trees rising out of a foreground earthen mound, sometimes including fine line rendering a scholar in a boat. The style is calligraphic and ideographic in concept, consisting basically of different brush-idioms wiped on the paper. Sheng Mao School works feature generally crisp and elegant brush strokes, tending to the seductive, as opposed to the comparatively artless or *zhō* type of blunted brushwork (which exerts much friction with the painting surface) typified by Wu Zhen.

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It would appear that *Dongting* may originally have been a minor and unassuming imitation among fifteenth century accretions in the Sheng Mao School. And that by the end of the century when the scroll had been damaged and required remounting, it was transformed into a Wu Zhen painting. It may not be unreasonable to suggest that the name *Dongting yuyintu* became attached only after the fishing boat and the *yuefu* by the same name was copied onto the painting. By this time the idea of Yuan artists painting fishermen in reclusive activities had become a firmly established Ming perception of the previous century, as literary evidence can demonstrate.¹⁴

The right side of fig.120 illustrates the probable appearance of the repackaged and relabelled painting, prior to presentation into the Qianlong collection.

vi Calligraphy : a problem of model

In configuration, the calligraphy looks remarkably like the first stanza, *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting*, in the Freer *Fishermen* handscroll attributed to Wu Zhen (fig.116). Closer study reveals that while the text follows more closely that in the Shanghai version (stanza number five), in character configuration and linking strokes it is decidedly closer to the Freer version. The *yuefu* comprise five phrases, respectively of 7,7,3,3,7 characters in length. There is only a slight difference in the second triplet, where the Shanghai scroll's *caoyiqing* (my grass garment is light) is here transcribed as *caohuaxin* (grasses and flowers are fresh). This, however, does not disturb the internal rhyme or metre.

Examining the calligraphy wiped on in repeated strokes in the *Dongting* painting, the uncertainty and inferiority of the brushwork would appear to indicate a low-calibre and nervous copyist. Next to a potential model such as the *Fishermen* handscroll in the Freer Gallery the first stanza of which is illustrated in fig.116, the *Dongting* calligraphy (figs.115) can be seen to lack cohesive dynamism in *hangqi*, columnar momentum. Inter-relationships of the characters in size, configuration and tilt as well as in breathing space as they follow one another down the column, is nowhere natural. Note the slow, cautious

¹⁴ I have touched on the problem of perceptual changes as reflected in literary works in Section IIa3.

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manner of painting on the characters to resemble the carefree and easy image of the model. The model would appear to have been a work by the artist who produced the Freer (and Shanghai) scrolls and, doubtless, many others in the same vein, attributed to Wu Zhen.

The placement of the inscription (prior to the Qianlong colophon, figs.120b) is less than inspired. In deciding on a vertical, oblong block rather than a four-square block as in the Freer model, the copyist was forced, mid-way in his stroke-for-stroke copying, to cut off the linking stroke between the 6th and 7th characters *feng* and *sheng*, in order to avoid repetition further down where *feng* appears again, and is now linked to *jiao* (cf. figs.114-117). Note the lack of *hangqi*, the "severed breath" in the first interrupted link, and the awkward, forced appearance of the second one made in imitation of the model's link between its *feng* and *chu* atop the second column. The following column-by-column comparisons reveal how each corresponding character, each stroke reveal irreconcilable differences between *Dongting* (Fig.115) and the *Fishermen* inscriptions (Fig.116). A line-by-line selection is illustrated in fig.117, the Freer version being on the right.

- The calligraphy of the Freer version is fluid, bouncy, resilient, crisp and energetic, with graceful lifts and drops of the wrist, changing the thicknesses within and between strokes. That of *Dongting* is clumsy, turgid, hesitant. This is emphasized by the dead inter-character spaces. Compare for example the *pie* leftward diagonal, and the last, horizontal stroke of the character, *-ting* of *Dongting*, for a typical view of the assurance and energy levels in the two hands.

- The inscriber of *Dongting* would appear to be virtually illiterate. He is certainly unfamiliar with the shortcuts and stroke-order of the semi-cursive script, and seems often to have misread the model in this brief exercise:

-Linking space between *Dong* and *ting*. In a quick up-down movement of the wrist, the Freer artist brought down the first stroke of the second character before lifting off the brush for a crisp breather, to be followed by the second, horizontal stroke of *ting*. The *Dongting* inscriber misread the break, thinking it to be between integral characters. He thus put an abrupt halt to the loop finishing off the interior of *Dong*, not letting it protrude and

turn into the top of the next word as in the model. This is followed by a dead space, and an awkward, meaningless gesture atop the *ting*.

-feng (breeze). The *Dongting* version copies the swelling in the stroke end of the first *pie* stroke which is ordinarily tapers to a point. However, in the Freer version this swell is caused by the brush doubling back upward since it had come from a linking stroke descending from the character *wan* (evening) above. In *Dongting*, both instances of *feng* lack the linking strokes from the characters above, and have no calligraphic justification for doubling up on the brushtip to form the swell where a gradual tapering point ought to be. It would appear to be a textbook illustration of the simple-minded, uneducated copyist.

-yu (fish, 4th from end of verse) is executed in a single stroke in the model. The *Dongting* inscriber, unable to decipher the stroke sequence, wrote his *yu* in four strokes, ending with a rather awkward left-faced horizontal V, crossed with a vertical dot, for the interior.

-Lefthand, metal radical of *diao* (2nd from end) is written by the Freer artist in a single stroke involving one 3-shaped loop with one upward hook at the end. The *Dongting* inscriber, evidently failing to understand this, made the upward linking stroke before the loop and then, clumsily added on an ear-shaped loop destroying the integrity of the character. And so forth.

- Great divergencies in quality aside, the surface similarities in configuration (or motif), cannot be interpreted as "Wu Zhen" or the Ming master writing at different times or different states of health.

The signatory section

In signing the date and name, (fig.149b), the author of *Dongting* evidently had access to a work by the author of the Freer *Fishermen* handscroll, where the signatory section appears in fig.149a. Parallels in configurations may be found:

- Zhi of *Zhizheng* (a.1:2[^], b.1:1) is the same attenuated, two-stroke configuration, with the righthand dot being the second stroke. In Prime examples (figs. 84-5) the left dot is counter-balanced with the protrusion on the right of the loop.

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-nian (year. a.2:1, b.1:4). A one-stroke configuration, *Dongting* would appear to perform the same swing of the brush in its initial upward movement to the right, followed by a hollowed downward arc, then to loop up, twist, turn horizontal and zig-zag down along the trunk. It would appear that both the author of the *Dongting* inscription and the author of the *Fishermen* scrolls had studied this configuration from prime examples (of which three examples are illustrated in fig.95). Wu Zhen does not let the horizontal stroke tilt upward but maintains an awesome horizontality in the top and bottom strokes so that the whole character appears riveted in true north-south alignment. Note the contrasts in maintaining vertical axes too. However, the curiously tight loop or switch of tip direction at the corner following the upward swing, is observed only by the *Dongting* copyist, and ignored in the *Fishermen* handscroll.

In sum it may be submitted that the calligraphy of neither the *Dongting* nor the Freer (and Shanghai) scrolls, can be related to prime examples by Wu Zhen. Neither hand would appear to have exhibited a single criterion in common with those cited for Prime Objects in Section IIe. While the calligraphy of the Freer (or Shanghai) version was inscribed on the handscroll by the same artist who painted it (some time in the mid-fifteenth century contemporaneous with Shen Zhou), the calligraphy on *Dongting* was not inscribed by the painter of the picture, but by someone active at least a century later, who had used works by the author of the Freer (and Shanghai) handscrolls as his model for Wu Zhen inscriptions. That it is based on close copying, and that its awkwardness is a result of frequent interruptions to look at the model.

Scholars have taken sides, preferring either the Shanghai or the Freer handscroll as *the* authentic version¹⁵ as both works have been recorded since the sixteenth century and evidently considered among the more prominent of Wu Zhen's works. That is, by the sixteenth century this type of jolly fishermen scrolls and dark, flat but dramatic ink bamboo

¹⁵ In her master's thesis which focusses on the topic of eremitic fishermen, a National Taiwan University graduate student Li Shumei has opted for the Shanghai version as the original Wu Zhen, with the Freer version its copy. Her decision is reached without benefit of direct examination of the works involved but from study of their photographs and slides. More importantly, her chief criteria were not structural principles, but relative quality (as reflected in unsatisfactory reproductions) of the respective works.

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with Wu Zhen signatures had not only proliferated but assumed FUNCTIONAL AUTHENTICITY. Even as both these types are TYPOLOGICAL ACCRETIONS, they became in turn, by the late sixteenth century, models for further study, and further EVOLUTION, ALTERATION AND ACCRETION.¹⁶ Some of today's scholars would appear to have become even more naïve than collectors of the past who knew that artists reproduced their favourite work or works in multiple images and variants. To insist on a one-to-one model-copy relationship between the Shanghai and Freer scrolls would appear to be a reflection of twentieth century Europocentric thinking which considers art in terms of unique, original, masterpieces.

Hermit Fisherman on Lake Dongting in its present form, then, may be submitted as a work by two men working nearly a century apart. The painter worked in styles which by the first half of the fifteenth century had become associated with Sheng Mao, while the inscriber imitated the calligraphy and fisherboat of a master who in mid-to late-fifteenth century created the most important and influential group of paintings in the name of Wu Zhen.

From photographic archives it would appear that as a work by Wu Zhen, *Dongting* did not inspire a great following. The artist of the painting will not be classified in the series of deliberate imitators of Wu Zhen, since it is posited here that its attribution to Wu Zhen was, for its maker, a posthumous event. The inscriber, on the other hand, has been shown to be a deliberate forger who chose for his models, however, not prime objects by Wu Zhen but inventions by the Ming master active a century later.

2. Hermit FISHERMAN OR AUTUMN RIVER, QIUJIANG YUYINTU (fig.121)

This painting on silk has been subject to some damaging retouching.¹⁷ Although it has been compared with the fourteenth-century *Nangqin huaihe* or *Cherished Companions: Lute and Crane* (fig.66ff) which has been reattributed to Wu Zhen by James Cahill and Fu

¹⁶ See Appendix iv, and J. Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries ..." op cit.

¹⁷ See entry for this work in Catalogue (Volume Two), for fuller details.

Shen,¹⁸ the resemblances are superficial, being only in composition, motifs and general contour.

Companions depicts real and measurable space extending from the foreground earthen mound to the foot of the mountain in deep space beyond the group of low-lying buildings, but *Autumn River* reveals primary interest in the vertical, with major elements ranged, attenuated, along the picture plane. There is no measurable space or consistent ground plane. The vertical mass is like a cardboard screen which emerges abruptly from nowhere. The interrelationship between the foreground rocks and trees, buildings, watery gap, lowlying hills and further tree groups is one of piled up motifs displayed like staggered screens, not one of coherent and consistent continuity into depth perpendicular to the picture plane. It is Ming in concept where motifs are associated through juxtaposition along the picture plane, in virtual outline or silhouette form. It is an ideographic association of motifs, the perceptual principle of which parallels the writing of characters to symbolize ideas. The ideas are not described, but merely identified in logical sequence in a common code: the Chinese script. Pictorial elements in Ming would appear to be similarly ranged in abbreviated, coded form and ranged, functionally symbolic rather than descriptive, onto the painting surface in a lateral manner along the picture plane.

This aside, in the case of *Autumn River*, the unnatural interrelationship of elements, especially in placement and in scale, belie the hand of one working in a manner and period style not his own. James Cahill had wondered if the "wry perspective and fanciful size-relationships may... allude to archaic stages of painting... The fisherman steadfastly refuses to be dwarfed and humbled by his natural environment..."¹⁹ Accepting this painting as a work of Wu Zhen with some reservations, Zhang Guangbin suggests a date

¹⁸ Modern scholars, accepting *Autumn River* as a Wu Zhen painting, have noted its resemblance to *Companions* (traditionally attributed to Juran), and have noted the remarkable 14th century characteristics of the latter, discussed in Section II. It was a natural reaction to consider *Companion*, by far the more accomplished and finer of the pair, as an unsigned, early study work by Wu Zhen. Ironically, the non-Yuan characteristics of *Autumn River* continued to go unnoticed and the two works remained a pair of Wu Zhen paintings through many generations of modern scholarship. A similar irony lies in *Spring Dawn* discussed below.

¹⁹ Cahill, dissertation, op cit: 148 ff.

of 1334, early in the artist's active career.²⁰ Chen Jingguang, however, raises doubts about its authorship, saying,

*Wu Zhen pays considerable attention to the depiction of spatial distance. He uses position, ink tone, width of brushstroke or shape of motif to indicate distance and girth of the elements. Autumn River is notably weak in these respects. The alum heads on the high bluff are not properly grouped, and the whole tendency toward leaning [off centered] is atypical [of Wu Zhen].*²¹

Chen brings up three aspects which deserve to be examined at greater length. She cites problems of motifs, placement (scale) and sense of space. These, it would seem, represent three distinct methodological categories and point to three separate problems. The problem of motifs pertains to an individual's artistic vocabulary, and these may grow or change with each new decade. The problem of bizarre placement and odd scale on the other hand points to lack of ease with the language, and raises the question of *conceptual intent* on the part of the painter. Was it deliberate and creative archaizing by a master evoking a bygone flavour, or ineptitude of a minor forger working with a forgotten grammar? There should be no difficulty in distinguishing between the two. For in the former the process though odd is well integrated and organically whole,²² but in the latter it produces spatial occlusion, discontinuity and sudden gaps in the harmony or rhythm. In short, it appears clearly uncomfortable, uneasy, and ill-fitting. In the former, it is less a matter of awkwardness than newness or oddness for its time, but never ill-fitting in its own context. *Autumn River* would clearly appear to be of the second type, and suggests the discomfiture of a forger working in a language whose structural principles, the grammar, are unknown to him. The curiously bent tree in *Companions*, a quotation out of context, illustrates the awkwardness in motif concept. But the awkwardness in *Autumn River* lies in the ill-fitting mutual relationship of boat, houses, trees, i.e. the morphology. The problem of artificial and ill-fitting scale touches upon the problem of authenticity.

The third problem of space which in this study has been shown to be a period feature of central importance in distinguishing pre- and post-fifteenth century painting. The

²⁰ Zhang, op cit:51/42.

²¹ Chen, op cit: 73-4

²² For this one may compare Zhao Mengfu's famous *Autumn Colours on the Qiao and Hua Mountains*.

problem of spatial organization or structural morphology touches on the larger problem of period style.

Close examination would appear to reveal that in both composition and structural morphology *Autumn River* is incompatible with Yuan perceptual principles. Rather than comparing it with its misconceived twin, *Companions*, it may be more fruitful to compare an early Ming work such as *Travellers on a Bridge* attributed to Dai Jin (1388-1462, fig. 122). This composition expresses the ideographic tendencies developing at the time. Mountains no longer resonate in three-dimensional space, architectural elements protrude distinctly above surrounding trees: they float between mountain peaks and occlude the expansive space that in physiographic rendering had been occupied by mists or hollow valleys. The waterfall emerges from the lower left quite unaccountably, with no discernible source. The curved bridge painted in lively detail leads to an undefined, low-lying area hidden by the boulder in the left foreground. Consistency in perspective or groundplane is not attempted. Nor indeed is it intended. Rather, it is the colourful grouping of diverse motifs: burbling stream, clattering hooves, scholar's mid-travel, mountain manor, autumn foliage, boat asail,²³ etc. which command the attention not only of the viewer, but of the artist as well. The brushwork, too, emphasizes motion, and emotion. In sum, the painting exemplifies in its compositional elements the lively exuberance and social consciousness, and in brushwork its dominance over descriptive function. These may be seen as characteristics of the fifteenth century. Some typical period features present in both the DaiJin and *Autumn River* include:

- Flat, vertical mass to one side, occupying no real volume.
- This is fronted by two to three separate vistas with undefined spatial relationships.

²³ Note the acute angle of the boat which thus creates a commotion and agitation in the watery space. A physiographic rendering most probably would have had it tucked to one side to allow the water to expand and breathe.

III-a 2 *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River, Qiujiang yuyintu*

- A lake to the right is delimited by low-lying distant hills which are frontal and approach the massifs somewhere along its height.²⁴
- Streams cascade from no discernible source.
- "Floating mansions" with no perceivable foundation, are inserted behind or between peaks.²⁵
- The water is lifeless and functions as "leftover space" around the solid objects which are the real focus. Usually enlivened with activity, there tend to be fishing boats at oblique angles, large branches or boulders protruding into the centre, blocking from view any potential expansiveness.

An archaeological monument for the mid-fifteenth century may be found in the silk banners of *shuiluhua* or water-land ritual paintings preserved in the Baoningsi Daoist temple in Youyu County west of Datong in Shanxi Province, built in 1460. The paintings, based on traditional matrixes, inescapably reveal aspects of then-current perceptual principles which may however have been relatively conservative. The banners thus may represent in morphology the precepts of the past half-century or so, around the 1420s-30s. Compare *Autumn River* with the banner paintings *Child Falling from a Tree* (fig.18) or *Lonely Souls in Eight-Cold and Eight Hot Hells*.²⁶ In the banners, the rocks are not solid three-dimensional masses but serve as foil for excited brushwork, and their apparent mass

²⁴ This would appear to have been an old idea. In Yuan-originated compositions like the *Qiushantu* (fig.123), the relationship of far distant shoals to mid-ground peaks is clearly defined. The distant landmasses are not screens but a series of low-lying hills which are seen from the same high vantage point which is consistent throughout. The hills' recession into space, and relationship to the central massifs are clearly defined every step of the way. In Ming compositions, however, foreground elements may be depicted from a high vantage point, but for the background hills the vantage point is lowered, and the groundplane made to appear to tilt up toward the vertical. This frontal perspective is further enforced by the screen-like hills at the end. Their respective places in the recession are obscured. There is a gradual fading out toward left as they approach the tall massive, as in *Travellers*. (fig.124). In *Autumn River* (fig.125) the artist simply abuts the screen of distant hills against the left massifs. This effectively annihilates the distance between the massifs (relative foreground) and the hills (far background).

²⁵ This would appear to reflect a social phenomenon toward materialistic interests developing at the turn of the century. Mansions seem to replace deserted pavilions or humble huts. But instead of sitting squarely and in full view as Yuan pavilions, the luxurious mansions now emerge tucked between peaks, suspended mid-air above any conceivable ground support. Pictorially and psychologically they fill the vital space of the physiographic era, replacing what had been channels for energy flow with solid, often ostentatious mansions. The "floating" aspect appears around the turn of the 15th century. In the *Travellers* they appear left of centre; in *Autumn River* they are at the bottom, incongruous, but clearly an articulation of the same principle. See illustrations in figs.130-133.

²⁶ Published in *Baoningsi Mingdai shuiluhua* (Daoist Ritual Paintings on Water and Land in the Baoningsi Temple) Shanxi Provincial Museum, ed. Beijing, Wenwu chubanshe, 1985, pl. 144.

III-a 2 *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River, Qiujiang yuyintu*

dominate the space. Pictorial elements at different distances are represented as flat planes, one visible behind the other. Extension into three-dimensional space is either not considered, or dismissed with a puff of cloud which serves as background to the object painted over ("in front of") it. This is the aspect of solidification and concentration discussed by Professor Shimada, which in Japanese painting followed that of expansiveness and vaporousness in the mid-Muromachi period.²⁷ The banners do not seek to appear more ancient than their time, but represent the evolved or current image of their tradition which, in the Datong area, may have been somewhat more conservative than contemporary developments or evolutions in academy or literati painting. It is clear that *Autumn River* betrays these same morphological principles. The difference between the two lies only in *intent*; where banner painters worked in the language with which they were comfortable, the author of *Autumn River* would appear to have tried to disguise his accent to have the viewer believe it came from the previous century.

The artist of *Autumn River* probably lived at the time of Dai Jin in the early fifteenth century. Certain aspects of his work however indicate familiarity with prime objects:

- The attempt at *chiaroscuro*.
- Application of dots stressing a strict vertical.
- The configuration of the background hills suggest some familiarity with works like *Central Mountain* or *Fisherman's Idyll* in the use of overlaid gentle forms, some in darkness, separated by trees.
- The low-lying rooftops in the central portion, their parallel placement and simple depiction, recall modest dwellings in prime objects such as *Junipers* and *Idyll*.

- Like *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting* (IIIa1), *Autumn River* may be regarded as a composite of quotes and misquotes from various earlier models and, like *Dongting*, it betrays fundamental misunderstanding of Yuan structural principles. The outsized hatted paddler at the helm of the outsized boat which does not fit into the water (fig.125a) is posited above the houses. This fault is a variant of the dwarfed boat posited too close to the

²⁷ See his article on "*Haboku sansuizu* (Broken ink landscape by Sesshû)" in *Kokka* 700, 1950:213.

III-a 2 *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River, Qiujiang yuyintu*

"distant bulrushes" in *Dongting* (fig.110) and does not indicate inexperience on the part of the painter. It points to the inability to handle the idiomatic expressions of a bygone age

Autumn River would appear, then, to be a fabrication by someone with access to prime objects, but who betrays a Ming perception of Yuan eremitism. That is, it may be seen as a Ming view of Yuan artists who were perceived by the fifteenth century to have painted recluses in active pursuit of fishermen's occupations. It may be reasonable to place this artist contemporaneous to Dai Jin (1388-1462) and date *Autumn River* to the first half of the fifteenth century.

THE CALLIGRAPHY (FIG. 93b)

In the upper right hand corner, a *lüshi* poem of four five-syllable lines is inscribed, together with signature and seals, over four columns, reading,

*Pale is the autumn light over the river,
Thin is the frost on the maple leaves.
The slanted sunrays turn with the trees,
Departing geese fly away, turning their backs on man.
The shadowy clouds join the river shores,
Fishermen's huts blend into the azure hills.
Seagulls as if by pre-arrangement,
Escort the fishing boats homeward.
Meihua Daoren plays with ink.*
(followed by standard pair of 3-9 seals. Fig.198e)

In agitated cursive script, the calligraphy displays an arbitrary and self-conscious use of ink in the contrasting of lights and darks. The ink is allowed to become thoroughly depleted, pale and dry in colour, before the brush is recharged. This, as shown in Section IIe, is not the habit of Wu Zhen who kept his brush charged with much lifting between characters and indeed between strokes. The *Autumn River* inscription is more cursive than that in the two surviving prime examples. In case of linked characters which occur twice, the brush is necessarily bound to the silk and not lifted for recharging, causing a paling of ink. But it must be observed that even when the brush is lifted, this artist did not always recharge it, and caused the following characters to be written in notably lighter ink. This is seen in

- column 1, character 4 (*guang*), 9 (*ye*), 12-13 (*yang, sui*)
- col 3, ch.7-8-9 (*ru you-yue*), 12 (*diao*)

- col 4, ch.2 (*gui*, in the last, long stroke)

Hangqi or columnar momentum is weak and erratic. This would appear to be caused by the arbitrary and unnatural changes in character-size and inktone, the irregularity of individual vertical axes which sway to the left and right, and the highly unnatural spaces between characters, spaces which lack organic breathing room but betray the interrupted flow that comes from pausing (to look at the model) in the midst of writing.

The most dramatic column (5) in prime object *Idyll* has only seven characters: "-*yang luhua-feng, yuhu-sheng*- ([song] floating [amidst] the bulrush blooms, the sound of the jade ewer is long" fig.93a, last column). The previous column has ten and the following one eight. The last character, *sheng* (sound) is three times the size of ch.3: *hua* (flower). It is three times as thick in stroke-width and in character-size. Yet the interrelationship of the seven characters is cohesive where each is tucked into the space of the next, and all follow the inexorable downward momentum. While the *Autumn River* inscription would appear to bear superficial resemblance to the prime object in size-change, it is clearly neither as bold, nor does it achieve the steady downward momentum. On the contrary, due to the swinging axes, the effect is one of agitation. Compare col.2: *ren/fei* where the former is wispy and the latter bold and dark. Note the lack of organic space linking the two, and the swinging vertical axes, *ren* to the left and *fei* to the right. The lack of ease and natural flow, the striving for effect in highly mannered configurations, and the contrived contrast in character-size, as much as the awkwardness in the painting, point to the hand of an artist working in a style other than his own.

Autumn River may represent an early fifteenth century stylistic evolution of the cursive calligraphy style of Wu Zhen. Since the elusive Tang Monk Gongguang (cited by Xia Wenyan as Wu Zhen's model) is not represented by surviving monuments, the cursive script examples by this artist made in the name of Wu Zhen²⁸ may have become for some art historians a reflection of the Tang master's style-image. No such relationship may be established, however, as the calligraphy is clearly based on careful study of prime objects.

²⁸ This artist has engendered a minor tradition of his own. There are not only other examples of Wu Zhen works with inscriptions in cursive script by him, but imitations of *his* painting and calligraphy style are also in circulation. However the topic of second and third generation stylistic accretions outside the Palace Collection, except where vital, must await further study.

III-a 2 *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River, Qiujiang yuyintu*

It departs only in ineptitude, and in further cursiveness, but does not inject creative initiative as in the case of the Freer Gallery works. In character configuration it owes much to Wu Zhen's earlier work on silk, *Fisherman's Idyll* (Fig.84) and less to the 1347 *Bamboo and Rock*:

- Foursquare character configuration.
- Signatory *hua* and minor or reduced characters are carefully aligned to the right.
- Foursquare *feng* (wind), with inside element pulled to the right (*Autumn* 1: 6; *Idyll* !: 2, 3:3[^], 5: 4)²⁹
- U-shaped *chǔ* or walking radical (*Autumn* 1:1[^], 2:4[^], 4:4[^]; *Idyll* 11:3)
- 2-stroked water radical with a firm, downward stroke for the first dot and a driving momentum in the next downward stroke (*Autumn* 1:1, 2:3[^], 2[^], 1[^], 3:4,5,6)
- Identical configuration of *jiangshang* (on the river. *Autumn* 1: 1,2; *Idyll* 1: 8,9)³⁰
- Identical cursive configuration, stroke direction and stroke order for *ye* (leaf. *Autumn* 1: 9, *Idyll* 1:7)
- Identical configuration of *yun* (cloud, *Autumn* 2:8, *Idyll* 8: 3)
- Identical configuration of *yu* (fish, fisher. *Autumn* 2: 1[^], *Idyll* 4:1, 7:1[^])
- Identical configuration for *chuan* (boat. *Autumn* 4: 1, *Idyll* 7:3[^])

The differences however, would appear to be irreconcilable. They pertain both to configuration and to the subtler habits in brushwielding and morphology. In configuration alone, however, *Autumn* could not have been expected to be taken as a genuine specimen when prime objects have been identified, Basic differences include :

Character Configuration:

- *Autumn* features individual characters with some sensitivity regarding interior space, but without an organic external linking *space*.
- *Autumn* lacks consistent and strict vertical character and columnar axes.
- It fails to imply strict horizontals.

²⁹ Column 1: character 1 counting up from bottom. Numbers without the ^ sign are counted down from the top.

³⁰ See fig 151d and e which issue from *Autumn River*. The second occurrence of *jiang* in *Autumn* (2: 3[^]) is nearly identical to the first. That is, the copyist attends closely to his model, repeating what he perceives to be the salient features of the prime object..

- The meticulous balance and symmetry in the prime objects are absent in *Autumn*.

Morphology:

Compared to *Idyll* (151a), differences in the writing of *jiang* or *shang* is not in configuration or motif but in the interrelationship of parts or morphology. Wu's horizontal axes are dead level. *Autumn's* are tilted up and down. Compare also inter-character space. Wu Zhen in *Idyll* (151a) would appear to think ahead, or *xinzai biqian* having the mind before the brush. Each character's bottom forms a space appropriate for the configuration of the next one. It is this space, sculpted to enfold the next character, which renders the columns so galvanized as if electrically charged. *Autumn River* cannot repeated this as the writer must look up between characters, losing the momentum and the fore-planning.

Brushwielding:

In brushwielding the differences are even more pronounced. The graphology in *Autumn* is lighter in wrist pressure, with the brush gliding over the silk, barely allowing the ink to sink in. Many characters are only faintly inked, and the parched brush reveals its tip hairs. By contrast, the calligraphy of *Idyll* is so slow and weighted that the ink has fused into the silk. It may be submitted that the criteria of speed and weight in brushwork may be studied to great benefit, as it reveals the writer's habitual characteristics in the degree and consistency of wrist pressure, speed and ink usage, traits peculiar only to his hand. It may be reasonable to submit here that it is the intrinsic personal habits of brushwielding, and not extrinsic aspects of configuration or motif, which distinguish one artist from another.

Hermit Fisherman on Autumn River represents the earliest of stylistic accretions to be consciously produced as a work by Wu Zhen.³¹ The artist of this painting produced other works with Wu Zhen signatures which in turn inspired further generations of

³¹ Yuan works like in *Companions* and Ming copies of Yuan compositions like *Autumn Mountains* discussed in Section II do not bear Wu Zhen's signature. They were evidently not conceived and painted with intent to deceive. The content of the inscription once in the top righthand corner of *Cherished Companions* which had been removed, will perhaps never be known. In any event, both works had been treasured as masterpieces by Juran in traditional Chinese collections. They did not, in other words, serve as models for Wu Zhen followers or forgers.

imitators.³² That is, this artist generated his own particular Wu Zhen tradition. But since the influence of his style image on later students and imitators is second, as we shall see, to that of another artist, he shall here be designated Hand B.

3. SPRING DAWN ON A CLEAR RIVER, QINGJIANG CHUNXIAO (FIG.126)

This large painting on two widths of silk has been regarded as a genuine Wu Zhen landscape by most scholars with few exceptions.³³ Although an imposing picture from a distance, careful examination reveals features incomensurate with perceptual principles of Yuan landscape painting as defined in this study. This work has received in recent years further support by being paired with the QUASI-ORIGINAL³⁴ of fourteenth century composition *Autumn Mountains (Qiushantu)* to which it bears superficial resemblances (fig.60).³⁵

The painting is inscribed with four large characters of the title, *Qingjiang chunxiao*, followed by the signatory *Mei daoren ximo* and the standard pair of Wu Zhen seals, *Meihua'an* and *Jiaxing Wu Zhen Zhonggui shuhuaji*. It has been considered an important work in the Wu Zhen repertoire certainly since Dong Qichang's large encomium on a separate piece of paper came to be affixed above, reading :

Large hanging scrolls by Meihua daoren are extremely scarce. This work is filled with the vibrant energy of life resonance, its disposition of elements is antique and refined, very much in the manner of Juran. [Such quality] Wang Meng could not envision even in his dreams! Authenticated and inscribed by Dong Qichang.

James Cahill expressed discomfort with *Spring Dawn (Spring Morning* in his dissertation) as follows:

³² There can be found in photographic archives what appear to be other works by Hand B and at least one by his imitator, who might be called Hand B.1, both outside the Palace Museum Collection. I have not been able to examine these works in person and cannot identify them with complete assurance. The task of tracing all works of the tradition of Hand B, down to Hand B.1, Hand B.2, etc.however, lies outside the scope of this study.

³³ Only Chen Jingguang to my knowledge has rejected it outright, remarking on the sloppiness and clutteredness of the many houses, bridges, as contradictory to the orderliness and quietude of Wu Zhen's typical image and concludes, "In sum, it is highly probable that *Qingjiang chunxiao* is not a genuine work of Wu Zhen's." op cit: 74

³⁴ See my definition in "Forgeries..." op cit.

³⁵ See Section II-c and Catalogue in Volume II for discussion and details of this work. This is another case where the Yuan features of a Five Dynasties attribution were recognized, and an anonymous work brought into the ranks of the great masters, like the unsigned *Companions* being paired to *Autumn River*. And just as in the above case, the Ming features of the Wu Zhen work went unnoticed. The one-sided analysis would point to a tendency to gather works into the limelight of famous masters, as if the study of art history depended on signed works.

The decision to include this among the probably genuine works of Wu Zhen was reached after a long period of vacillation. I was not favourably impressed by the picture when I saw it; it seemed heavy-handed in detail to a degree which not even its large size could entirely excuse...

When it is seen beside the ["Juran: Autumn Mountains"] the similarities are immediately apparent. Both pictures are interpretations by Wu Zhen of the Juran manner. Close affinities are to be seen in composition, in depiction of mountains, buildings, near and distant trees, bridges, small rocks, paths, waterfalls - almost every element in the Spring Dawn has parallels in the Autumn Mountains. But the latter picture, in a sense the less original of the two, probably retaining the broad characteristics of its Song model, departing from it only to enliven details with personal quirks of the artist's hand, is nevertheless the more satisfying. Foreground trees which in it are individualized and interesting are in the Spring Dawn stereotyped and monotonous; they fail even to produce the quiet and pleasant pattern which is the occasional humble role of undifferentiated groups of trees in Yuan landscape...³⁶

Zhang Guangbin has suggested that it is a work of around 1330 made around Wu Zhen's 51st year when he was still working closely with ancient models.³⁷ This view agrees with that of Cahill who argues that it is

an early essay toward a decided break with Song painting, a not wholly successful attempt at a general stylistic personalization and "modernization."³⁸

We have seen above that *Autumn Mountains* is indisputably a very close copy of an early fourteenth century composition. In terms of western structural analysis, seen next to this work *Spring Dawn* clearly reflects another era. Its compositional schemata and morphology do not satisfy Yuan criteria, as those of *Autumn Mountains* do. As discussed in the preceding section, there is a critical difference between a genuine work of its own time, and a fabrication which attempts to evoke a bygone period whose pictorial and morphological criteria are no longer operative. Although some instances of awkwardness have been noticed by scholars, these have been usually cited as indication of inexperience on the part of a young Wu Zhen.³⁹ Few notice the absence of similar categories of awkwardnesses in the early work, *Twin Junipers*.

It may be important to stress the difference in *nature* and *quality* between the absent-minded mistakes in writing or rendering, ink splashes made by an artist in the

³⁶ Ibid, 143

³⁷ Zhang, op cit:41/49.

³⁸ Cahill dissertation, op cit:144.

³⁹ Both Zhang and Cahill suggested this possibility in their respective studies cited above.

creation of his own work, and the awkwardnesses and mistakes caused by misunderstanding of the ground rules on the part of an imitator, student or forger when attempting to reproduce aspects of an ancient painting which speaks necessarily in the language of a different time. The latter type is almost always awkward and unnatural in appearance. Things do not fit. Bridges and paths lead nowhere, buildings do not fit into space, people and boats are too large or too small relative to the other elements. Such gaps in understanding are radically reduced in the case of close or tracing copies when the result is of QUASI ORIGINALS. Here one may only find lines which connect one tree to another, which change planes midway, or which twist the planes of drapery and sashes, or mix up architectural elements, natural mistakes made when tracing or copying, as in the case of the *Wintry Trees by a Lake* in the Kurokawa Collection (figs.51-54). In the case of freehand forgeries, however, the ill-fitting aspects are more serious and result in EVOLUTIONS at best, but usually ALTERATIONS.

In the case of *Spring Dawn*, I submit, instances of awkwardness are not those of a copyist or youthful admirer, but those of an imitator consciously attempting a creative sort of archaizing. That is, it is not a direct copy of a genuine Yuan painting, as is *Autumn Mountains.*, where proper structural formulae, the scale and the internal logic of a Yuan composition are fairly carefully reproduced. *Spring Dawn* would appear to be, by contrast, a freehand interpretation, a variation based on an ancient image. The artist creates from memory variations on ancient works seen, anonymous mid-Yuan Jiangnan paintings which could not have been scarce in mid-fifteenth century.

The model behind *Autumn Mountains* would appear to be an honest, conservative Yuan painting evolved from Song prototypes. This would be an EVOLVED IMAGE.⁴⁰ As it is, the composition of *Autumn Mountains* stretches inward along the horizontal plane into deep space in one, continuous and consistent recession.

⁴⁰ Had it been a Yuan dynasty copy of a *Five Dynasties* picture as many scholars seemed to think, the foreground elements would probably have been foreshortened to afford a higher vantage point, so that the mid-section with the bridge would command a frontal perspective, seen face on, while the major peaks would have been much larger, and would have been cut off from the midground section by encircling mists, and highlighted from the bottom. The lake expanse to the right would have been tilted downward and formed a deep distance or *shenyuan* to be viewed with its own separate groundplane unrelated to those of the fore-, middle- or back-grounds.

III-a3 *Spring Dawn: Qingjiang chunxiao*

This is entirely at odds with corresponding elements in *Spring Dawn*, which reveal a decidedly vertical perceptual emphasis, parallel to the picture plane. The distant mountains rise in staggered layers, peak beyond high peak, from both sides. Space is stopped by vertiginous formations.

Spring Dawn marks a lively contrast to the continuous horizontality seen in Yuan works such as *Autumn Mountains*, or Wu Zhen's own *Twin Junipers* and *Fisherman's Idyll*. The freedom and play with space exhibit a basically different approach. The foreground presents three islets each with its own vantage point even though an attempt has been made to link them visually with bridges. The rightmost one is seen at eye level, the middle one is viewed from a higher vantage point, and the left one is seen from an even higher viewpoint.⁴¹ Space between foreground and middleground is disrupted by the oversized boat.⁴² The mid-ground is shielded by a row of trees which are nearly all on one plane. Two more bridges link inconsequential rocklets while a single path marks a circular view nearly entirely in full view, unhidden by trees or rocks.⁴³ A waterfall is occluded and denied access to the water at left, while sandy shoals close up the space around the central peak, to the right. Background elements touch the mid-ground elements at four points, and render the distance ambiguous: this is not so much a matter of the artist's carelessness as it is a reflection of the lesser importance accorded spatial niceties when primacy is accorded to pictorial and brushwork excitement, in accordance with fifteenth century values.

Compared to the low-lying, tucked away deployment of Yuan buildings as in Zhao Mengfu's *Autumn Colours* (fig.127), Huang Gongwang's *Fuchun* scroll (fig.128), Wu Zhen's *Twin Junipers* (fig.129a) and *Idyll* (fig.129b), the eruption in *Spring Dawn* of twenty-two houses over five locations would appear to indicate not a change of mood or style but of era, here symptomatic of the conviviality for which fifteenth century painting may be noted. In particular, attention should be drawn to the ostentation of the outsized architectural complexes midway up the central mountain to the left (fig.132), and that

⁴¹ Covering the islets with the hand and viewing each separately will make this clear, using the illustration in fig.60

⁴² Notice a fourth islet in the foreground, half-hidden by trees, beneath the oversized boat.

⁴³ See Song and Yuan writers discourse on the proper ways to paint paths in Section IIa1.

looming large between two peaks to the right (fig.130). Their tilt, their exposed bracketing, non-parallel placement and their dominance over the landscape suggest the period of Shen Zhou, where even a monastic compound is depicted with a sense of noise, activity and jollity as in the album, *Twelve Views of Tiger Hill, Suzhou* ascribed to him now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 133) or the Dai Jin *Travellers on a Bridge* (fig.131)

Careful comparisons would appear to reveal that, in spite of superficial compositional similarities with *Autumn Mountains*, *Spring Dawn* shares more in structural morphology with the fifteenth century *Tiger Hill* vignettes. It may be submitted therefore that *Spring Dawn* represents a Ming work made in an archaizing mode. It is probably a freehand variation on some Yuan work of the Juran School done from memory, with much invention. It is a fabricated pastiche and, in terms of Wu Zhen's *legacy*, an ACCRETION in motifs and expression.

Relationship to *Autumn Mountains*

While morphologically *Autumn Mountains* reflects an early fourteenth century composition, brushwork analysis has revealed it to be a close copy. Fig. 134 shows details of the background trees, forming T-shaped dots, which in *Autumn Mountains* are dwarfed and adhere to the earth, intermixing in different ink tonalities, effecting a sense of profusion and distance. The same passage in *Spring Dawn* (fig.135a) and the *Fishermen handscroll* in Shanghai (fig. 135b) reveal the T-dots to have been applied more sparsely, and enlarged, functioning as interesting brushstrokes rather than (oversized) distant trees. This may be offered as a critical morphological difference which indicates different eras, as reflected in the composition, that is, the STRUCTURAL MORPHOLOGY..

Closer examination in BRUSHWORK ANALYSIS, on the other hand, reveals striking parallels in brushwielding, *yongbi* between all three works (figs.134, 135a and b). ^{Conversely} One may further compare similar passages of trees and earth from *Autumn Mountains* (fig.136) and *Spring Dawn* (fig. 137) against, for example, *Idyll* (fig.48):

III-a3 *Spring Dawn: Qingjiang chunxiao*

- There would appear to be the same speed of the stroke, and the same weight of the wrist, in all three examples. The strokes appear to brush lightly and swiftly over the surface, (albeit more densely applied in the Yuan type composition). Comparisons of brushwielding in the tree trunks, the *pimacun* fibre strokes, the *taidian* moss dots, even the short, contour-reinforcing strokes which go over a bump, would indicate the same hand, working in the same speed, with the same wrist-weight and gesticulations up and down in the course of a stroke.

-The strokes lack vigour and friction with the painting surface (that is, compared to prime examples, their *bichu* or *touch* is more smooth). There is a pleasant ease in sitting on top of the painting surface.

- The grouping of dots is less descriptive and more of an overall, pictorial sprinkling.

- They tend to range along contour lines, sitting on them, forming a line, and do not function, as in prime objects, as volumes of dots galvanized into specific groups of mixed ink, which occupy real mass and measurable space within hollows.

The tree foliage dots are round, tending to the horizontal in *Autumn Mountains*, and downcast in *Spring Dawn*, but the application and handling are identical: They do not describe discrete trees but form a blanket of dots which are evenly sprinkled over parallel lines for tree trunks. This is counter to the physiographic principles seen in *Central Mountain* (top of fig.59, 63), or *Junipers* (fig. 62, 65). Although the copyist was careful in the foreground portion of *Autumn Mountains* (fig.64) to distinguish the trees, in less conspicuous areas, evidently, his habitual brushwielding may be seen to reassert itself (fig.61, 136).

In sum, a strong case may be made to link the following works to the same hand: *Spring Dawn*, the *Fishermen* handscrolls and *Autumn Mountains*. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that *Autumn Mountains* represents a serious study effort of a Yuan landscape, that *Spring Dawn* and the *Fishermen* handscrolls represent the same artist's own, more daring and more carefree, creation, albeit in the name of Wu Zhen. In other words, *Autumn Mountains* represents what I have termed QUASI ORIGINAL (of a Yuan painting) which provides the art historian with a fairly accurate image of Yuan structural

III-a3 *Spring Dawn: Qingjiang chunxiao*

morphology, while *Spring Dawn* and the *Fisherman* handscrolls, removed from prime objects in essence and in appearance, are termed stylistic ACCRETIONS which provide the art historian with a view of Ming morphology in disguise.

Producing by far the largest corpus of paintings with Wu Zhen signatures which have survived in major collections, this artist would appear to have impressed the most distinctive stylistic stamp on Ming and Qing (indeed twentieth century) perception of the Wu Zhen style image. He would appear moreover to have engendered the largest following in students and forgers alike during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Active in the mid-to late-fifteenth century, this artist who has dominated the Wu Zhen image for the past half-millennium, is here identified as Hand A.

III-b THE BAMBOO PAINTINGS

Periodicity in Bamboo Painting

More than landscapes, bamboo paintings tend to be restricted in configuration, bound to *a priori* formal considerations such as species, climatic conditions and age. In the fourteenth century, special canons had been written and illustrated by Li Kan (1245-c.1320) and Ke Jiushi (1312-1365) among others. Whether formulae for *wenren* ink bamboo painting or matrixes for craftsmen working on murals, they tend to conform to type, and are transmitted through the ages. But under closer scrutiny it can be seen that while conforming to external configuration or motif, the same category of bamboo painting undergoes subtle *morphological* change in time. The flattening which appears to affect all aspects of landscape painting beginning at the end of the fourteenth century, becoming the hallmark of the fifteenth century, can be seen to affect the same category of bamboo, for example, in dated archaeological monuments of mural paintings from Shanxi Province.

III-b1. *Spray of Bamboo, Yundang qingyin* (fig.141)

This work would appear to exhibit ideographic perceptual tendencies not yet developed in the Yuan. However, next to *Spring Bamboo* (fig.140) dated to 1533 and ascribed to Wen Zhengming (1470-1559), it does not appear too archaic. More factors would appear to relate *Spray of Bamboo* and the Wen bamboo than either does with

III-b Non-Yuan Bamboo Painting

fourteenth century examples such as Wu Zhen's *Bamboo and Rock*. The long, narrow format⁴⁴, the broken, ragged-edged inscription block, the bamboo leaves deployed like forceful calligraphy strokes,⁴⁵ brushed along two dimensions. Unequivocal contrast in black ink and white paper dominates the work while atmospheric wash, or tonal gradations rendered in a wet brush would appear to be irrelevant. The brushwork of the stems in both works comprises mere calligraphy strokes, not the painterly segments which are modelled in changing hues and narrowing girth as the plant grows upward.

The branch of bamboo in *Spray* is rendered silhouette fashion, as if tracing shadows of moonlit bamboo onto a paper window or a wall. Thus the face and back of leaves need not be distinguished. Jet black ink is uniform throughout. This would appear to be the cause of its two-dimensionality, however. The leaves seem to have been pressed flat against the hypothetical window, and are depicted frontally. Even the wind-twisted, worm-damaged leaf round in the central cluster fails to extend into space. The upward tilt and even-edged depiction would appear to be further factors which account for the ubiquitous frontality. It would seem that a single basic formula had been applied throughout.

This would appear to be typical of fifteenth century painting, where interest in three-dimensional space is replaced by an interest in brushwork which functions as calligraphy: black strokes on white paper. A work worth examining for parallels in brush habits is the *Bamboo in Wind* (fig 145) attributed to Wu Zhen in the Freer Gallery of Art. Compare details of painting in *Spray* (fig.142) with those in *Wind* (fig.143). The brushwork in both is accomplished, assured, and somewhat hasty. A graceful fluidity borders on slipperiness. The tendency to "wash out" may be seen in the more emphasized strokes which lose their momentum and energy before termination. Note for example the larger, flatter leaves done with the brush oblique, creating "fish belly" strokes with one side straight, the other curved and weak. This holds true for the smaller leaves as well which al -

⁴⁴ The Wen bamboo measures 105.8x32.7cm, with a vertical-to-horizontal ratio of 3.2:1. *Spray of Bamboo* measures 106.2x32.7cm, with a vertical-to-horizontal ratio of 3.2:1. Cf: Wu Zhen's *B & Rock* measures 90.6x42.5cm, with a vertical-to-horizontal ratio of 2:1.

⁴⁵ Note how the Wen bamboo, rendered in five-leaf clusters, reveals little interest in the space behind, that is, in penetrating the *dimension* perpendicular to the picture plane.

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most all lose ink value toward the tip. The use of ink is fairly uniform: jet black for the leaves, grey for the stems and twigs.

The same can be said about the calligraphy (figs 144, 145). An integral part of the painting is a poem in seven-syllable metre which reads (fig.87):

*Grinding pine soot in the ceramic inkstone, flowing ink is made.
Angular are the rocky precipices, the mountain spirits weep.
The windblown tips cry out in dreams, the evening snow is cold,
Bedewed grain tips droop, the morning clouds are moist.
The Yundang⁴⁶ valley of giant bamboo is always filled with misty sleet,
Over the thousand qing of Weichuan River swamp bamboo⁴⁷ it's winds and rain.
There is nothing like placing this against [the bright]⁴⁸ window,
And versifying at length, playing with frozen green (of bamboo).
Mei daoren plays with ink where the evening breeze is pure, in the 6th lunar month
of summer in the gengyin year of the Zhizheng era (1350).*

As text, the poem echoes with the spirit of solitariness in adversity and stillness, the reader recognizes a familiar voice. Recalling impressions from Yuan texts cited in Section IIa3, the literary style and mental images of the poem appear to fit. They evoke a desolate, wintry, cloudy morning with winds, sleet and snow, and an atmosphere highly charged with misty vapours. Recalling the symbiotic relationship of poem and painting in *Idyll*, the motifs in *Bamboo and Rock* identified in Section II d, as well as the eulogy on Wu Zhen's bamboo painting by Sun Zib, the logical expectation would appear to be an image of weather-beaten bamboo perhaps set in a landscape with craggy rocks, standing desolate in a expansive, misty space.

The actual painting, however, presents a contrast to the verbal image. Of sharply etched brush strokes in dark ink bristling with extroverted vigour, it is of flourishing bamboo gracefully displayed in a void or an exercise of disporting calligraphic ink traces on blank paper. Rereading the last two lines one may discern a hint of rebellion against the

⁴⁶ The bamboo-top radical for *dang* is missing.

⁴⁷ *Weichuan qianmou*, the thousand *mou* of land (upon which swamp bamboo grow wild) along the Weichuan river, is a standard literary image. In this inscription the phrase reads *Weichuan qianqing*. One *qing* equals one hundred *mou* and constitutes quite an exaggeration of the swampland growing with bamboo. Moreover the change results in a tonal distortion as its apposite, *gu* from the prece ding line, forms a shift in tone : 2113 (or *ce-ping-ping-ce*), as would have *Weichuan qianmou* : 4113. As it is, the tones are now 4111 or *ce-ping-ping-ping* That is, euphonic.

⁴⁸ The fifth character of this seven-character line, (*ming*, bright?) which should have come at the top of column five, is missing.

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misty, solitary image of Wu Zhen's bamboo, and glimpse the personal interjections of the Ming artist.⁴⁹ The three mistakes committed in the course of transcribing 56 characters of the poem reveals the artist to be rather casual and easy going, clearly distinct from Wu Zhen who, as has been shown, was indeed fastidious and meticulous.

It may be submitted at this point that while the poem may be related to the literary style and imagery of Wu Zhen, the painting itself bears no relationship to the poem. Nor, indeed, does it bear relationship to fourteenth century bamboo painting.

Comparing *Spray of Bamboo* to the Freer *Bamboo in Wind*, it is seen that both paintings depict twin branches, the shorter one crossing over the longer (*Spray* in figs.142,144; *Wind* in figs.143,145, the two in 148). Leaves graduate in size from buds to full-grown; they emerge in singles, pairs or triplets, and are depicted frontally. The stems occasionally feature cursive brushwork in light ink where the brush has not been lifted between strokes. The only major difference between the two paintings lies in the treatment of stem-segments. *Wind* shows them spelled out more fully with horizontal strokes and a clear gap, while *Spray* depicts a tenderer plant with less pronounced segments and more cursive brushwork.

The calligraphy is similarly assured, swift and exuberant, stressing solids. Space would appear to function as "left-over," or a negative value. The *hangqi*, columnar momentum is strong: character-configuration easily fit one below the other, the stroke endings of one lead gracefully (mid-air) to the beginning of the following, the spaces between characters breathe naturally, changing size and shape in an organic fashion, forming an integral if negative part of the column. There can be little doubt that both works

⁴⁹ It is common practice to make variations on one's own poems, changing a few characters here and there to suit the appropriate occasion, without disturbing the internal rhyme and metre. This particular poem has a twin in multiple versions inscribed on paintings of pine trees, waterfalls, bamboo and prunus, etc. See Zhuang Shen, *Yuanji sihuajishi jiaoji* (critical collation of poetry by the four painting masters of the Yuan), Institute of Asian Studies, Hong Kong University, 1973: 91-2. While some of the variations may represent the author's twists on his own work, others may represent mistakes in transcription of someone else's poetry,

sometimes due to absent-mindedness as shown the case of the two instances above, others due to a lack of understanding of the original material, and sometimes due to phonetic confusion, where homophones are substituted.

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come not only from the same hand, but from the same period. Certain characters are identical both in configuration and in brushwielding, as in the signatory passage: Mei daoren, *Zhizheng gengyin, xia - yue*. In the texts (*Spray* fig.87, *Wind* fig.88), the same characters are virtually identical:

-*shi* (stone). *Spray* 1: 5[^]; *Wind* 2:4. Note same configuration, even same, blunted, cut-off exit of the *pie* stroke)

- Water radical treated as interrupted straight line, ending in minor hook.

- *feng* (wind, fig.148 *Spray* leftmost column, *Wind* in the first six columns).

Compared to the weighted, artless signature of Wu Zhen (fig. 97 a. *Idyll*, and b. *Bamboo and Rock*), the signature of the Ming artist (c.*Spray*, and d.*Wind*) is seen to be fluid, almost slick, and performed the same each time as in a memorized formula. The configuration of Prime examples, on the other hand, are shown to vary spontaneously as the occasion demands.

Some Wu Zhen Attributions by the Same Hand

Wind and *Spray* would appear to share some common features in motif-configurations and brush habits with *Spring Dawn* and the *Fishermen* handscrolls, that is, Hand A.

The signatures in *Spring Dawn* are identical in the bamboo paintings *Wind*, *Spray* as well as the Freer *Fishermen* handscroll (fig. 146 shows signatures of a.*Wind*, b. *Fishermen* in the Freer, c. *Spray* and d.*Spring Dawn*, Taipei), in configuration but also in brushwielding.

Though differing radically in subject matter, a comparison may still be made of the semi-cursive postscript of the *Fishermen* handscroll (fig. 156) with the calligraphy of *Bamboo in Wind* (fig.81. It can be seen that the same characters have identical configurations. Compare the configuration and brushwielding in the identical signature Mei daoren and the following characters:

wei (for) *Fishermen* 3:8, *Wind* 2:10[^],

shi (time) *Fishermen* 4:6[^], *Wind* 3:13;

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yu (at) *Fishermen* 4:7[^], *Wind* 1:14,

hua (to paint), *Fishermen* 5:4[^], *Wind* 1:11[^]

shi (to certify) *Fishermen* 5:6, *Wind* 3:6

Zhizheng shi...nian (10/12th year of Zhizheng) *Fishermen* 6:2[^]-3[^]-4[^], *Wind* 3:18ff

shu (to inscribe) *Fishermen* 7:3[^], *Wind* 3:2[^]

The brush habits in these works are identical. The signature⁵⁰ shows identical configuration and brushwielding, though it is here still less assured. Note the energetic upward swing of the diagonal linking the left and right elements of *Mei*, to bring the top of the righthand element notably higher than the top of the wood radical at left. This derives from genuine signatures in prime objects. However, in the case of Hand A, some personal idiosyncrasies distinguishable from prime objects⁵¹ and his own future imitators alike, include:

- No sense of positive *space* between left- and right-hand elements.
- The top of the *mu* element is open.
- Last stroke loops upward and outward fairly neatly confined within the body of the *mu* radical, closing off the bottom in an oblong before
- Linking stroke strikes down in a nearly dead vertical to enter the *dao* below.
- *Shou* element of *dao* is formed by writing a 3-shaped double curve onto the vertical linking stroke.
- *ximo* is less adroitly executed than in the presumed later works, but already the same brushwielding is apparent: fluid turns of the wrist where corners, such as those atop the *xi* and *mo* are graceful, continuous, with the wrist lifting at the turn to adjust the hairs at the brushtip to come down smoothly afterward, often without angles.
- There is no evident preference for the strict vertical, nor for the strict horizontal.
- There is no visible *se* (friction in the touch) in the *bichu* (encounter) between brush and material. Emphasis is on the contrary fluidity, grace, where the brush delights in

⁵⁰ See also fig.97. comparing Prime and Hand A. a. *Idyll*, b. *Bamboo and Rock* by Wu Zhen, and c. *Spray*, d. *Wind* by Hand A.

⁵¹ See for example his four signatures in fig.146, compared to prime signatures in fig.147, or indeed fig.97 where they are c. *Spray* and d. *Wind*, compared to prime signatures a. *Idyll* and b. *Bamboo and Rock*.

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continuous and sensuous contact with the silk or paper, doing slaloms as it were, in the twists and turns without losing contact with the paper.

-Strokes do not recoil from space in inward-directed energy. On the contrary, a marked sense of motion and outward-directedness animates the calligraphy, where even dots on the two words occupy extrinsic space, becoming conspicuous.

Fig.151 compares *qing-jiang-shang*, (a. *Idyll*, b. *Spring Dawn*, c. *Freer Fishermen scroll*, d. and e, *Autumn River*):

- *jiang* (river) in the title is written in three strokes, the last forming the Z-shaped *gong* element. Compared with the same character in Wu Zhen's (which are of the same stroke number and sequence), Wu's compelling inner gravitation to strict horizontals and symmetry, and Hand A's innate preference for precarious balance and movement become immediately apparent. In Wu's *jiang*, the thickened hook of the water-radical is balanced by the thick *gong* element. The *gong* is of the same width in both strokes, forming an inward directed box, with perfectly parallel and perfectly horizontal and vertical sides. This is not so for Hand A, whose *jiang* in the *Fishermen* handscrolls (Freer II:2, Shanghai XV:1) exhibit the same buoyancy and swift, springy step.

Spring Dawn and the *Fishermen* handscrolls

In these works several similarities emerge. Morphologically identical, there are also similarities in compositional features and brushwielding:

- Interrelationships of houses to hills, grasses to earth, foliage to trees, brushwork to painting surface, are morphologically identical.
- Architectural rendering in freehand. (*Spring Dawn* fig. 152, *Fishermen* fig.153)
- Raised bracketing reveals misreading of antique models where buildings with raised or exposed bracketing are drawn as if viewed from below, and show consistency in planes and interior spaces. These works are actually depicted from above, forming a contradiction in perspective..
- Lack of understanding of planes: A straight line is drawn across the western and southern eaves, flattening the whole space. (See in particular roofs with finials and raised bracketing in both works). This would appear to be a common "ill" in Ming architectural

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drawing (by the literati.) in comparison with literati architectural rendering In the Yuan such as *Twin Junipers* (fig. 129a), *Idyll* (fig. 129b), *Companions* (fig. 65, 67), etc. where the rendering is accurate.⁵²

- Interior floor planks, when shown, are inconsistent.
- Modelling strokes, *pimacun*, are done with thin, swift strokes piled on both in parallel and in criss-cross fashion.
- The tips of modelling strokes are often exposed as individual strokes, leaving large areas of surrounding blank painting surface.
- Blank painting surface is often untouched by wash.
- Brushwork, especially the dots, tend to be side by side, exposed and not intermixed.
- Dots of different tones are applied separately, clearly distinct from one another. They do not intermix to form a dense, solid group, but are seen one layer over the other, as flat planes.
- Foliage dots are applied with vigour and speed.
- Foliage dots do not conform to a given direction or angle of attack, but vary in shape and angle.
- They do not adhere to the form to identify discreet units, but are sprinkled overall like a layer.
- Parallel lines done freehand are askew.

This prolific and evidently original artist whose period of activity falls in the mid-to-late fifteenth century, and whose famous works with Wu Zhen signatures include the two dynamic ink bamboo paintings above, good copies of Yuan works like *Autumn Mountains*, original landscapes like *Spring Dawn* and figures-in landscape like the *Fishermen* handscrolls, engendered what was to become the standard Wu Zhen image for all time. Even today it would appear to be his works more than Wu's which grip the imagination of scholars and laymen alike. He became, as reflection demonstrates, the progenitor of the Wu Zhen Tradition from the mid Ming onward. He clearly had access to prime objects and

⁵² Professional artisan painting does not appear to suffer from the same deterioration in draughtsmanship as would appear to have afflicted Ming literati painting. On the whole, Ming temple architectural rendering would appear to be as accurate as in the Yuan. See the splendid banners of the Land and Water Rituals, preserved in Baoningsi Temple, Shanxi, op cit.

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studied them well, as his painting and calligraphy show. Layered mountains in scrolls like the *Fishermen* bear unmistakable though superficial resemblance to *Central Mountain*. His modelling reveals a hint of the *chiaroscuro* of prime objects, even though in his hands they have become simple contrasts in tonalities rather than descriptions of convexities and concavities. At no point however, does he allow a misunderstanding of the morphology in prime objects to impede his creative flow and cause awkwardnesses such as we have seen in passively produced forgeries of a more common sort such as *Dongting* and *Autumn River*, which, like much of Muromachi painting in Chinese Southern Song styles, are composites of ancient formulae whose structural principles were no longer relevant or understood.

Compared to these ordinary forgers who lacked both the intelligence to decode ancient structural groundrules, and the artistic creativity to offer convincing original inventions (in the name of ancient masters), Hand A was able to create his own variations based on familiarity with prime objects and a thorough grasp of contemporary tastes. Hand A's works, in fact, exist in the name of several Yuan masters, and none show any of the ill-fitting, unnatural awkwardnesses discussed above. All are marked with integrity and coherence, and are imbued with the verve and high spirit of his creative *persona*. His "Yuan paintings and calligraphies" are artistic creations, and do not suffer from the hesitant insecurity of duplicating little-understood styles. This spirited master would appear to have had the twin gifts of selecting from the past those aspects which appealed to his generation, and the originality to translate these aspects into his own compelling artistic language. Aside from what would appear as early essays in the Yuan mode such as *Spring Dawn*, his major pieces with Yuan signatures would appear to abandon the attempt to grapple with structural principles and give vent to his own artistic urges. These are refreshingly contemporary (mid-to late-fifteenth century), and evidently met the demands in Suzhou and other cultural centres where ink traces of Yuan *wenren*, through the turbulence of the Hongwu era, had already acquired iconic status. In the case of Wu Zhen, he succeeded possibly beyond his wildest dreams, since his style-image had effectively replaced that of

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the Master in the minds of admirers and forgers alike. His followers and imitators are legion, as we shall see below.

2. *Meizhu shuangqing* or *Twin Purities: Prunus and Bamboo* (fig.154).

The painting.

Mounted in handscroll format together with a painting of prunus blossom ascribed to the Yuan master Wang Mian (1335-1407), this picture resembles a pressed-leaf specimen. It is painted in two tonalities, without gradation. Ink contrasts light for stem with dark for foliage. The latter consists of six L-shaped pairs dispersed along stick-like stems. The drawing is stultified and repetitious. The leaf clusters consist of binary strokes set at angles slightly-less-than 90-degrees, one large and one small, the former twisting in wind with its tip separated from the main body, the pair supported from beneath by a smaller pair of strokes of roughly equal size deployed at smaller angles. The strokes are nearly uniform in shape. The stems are in uniformly pale ink, without joints, attached to each other at a 45-degree angle.

In brushwielding the work is executed throughout at the same slow, cautious pace devoid of energy or spirit. In its formulaic approach the painting resembles a page from a schoolboy's exercise book. This work has evidently failed to engender a notable following among Wu Zhen imitators or acceptance among scholars today.

The Artist's Inscription

The painting is inscribed on the same piece of paper with a poem by one unidentified Zeng Guang.⁵³

On another piece of paper immediately joined to the painting is the artist's own inscription in cursive script (figs. 155b [bottom part] or 196b, cols.3ff). The text is full of references to forgeries, including:

I [create] all around me painting and calligraphy, as I delight in viewing them and express my feelings through them. But busybodies today take them to the market place, dealing in genuine works and forgeries alike...

⁵³ See full entry in Volume Two, Catalogue,

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For an artist who died an unknown and whose works could not be found in his hometown six years after his death, the idea of forgeries being made in his name for money during his life-time would appear to be highly improbable. In this case, the transcription of the text in the catalogue alone should alert the art historian.

In style, the painting seems to owe little to the vivacious Hand A. Among photographic archives, this type of composition in the Wu Zhen corpus would appear to be fairly unique. In view of its general lack of character, revealing nothing of personal, regional or period style, it is impossible to estimate a reasonably secure date without undertaking a thorough, systematic analysis of bamboo-painting through the last three hundred years, the seventeenth century being the time the first collectors' seals are affixed. That is, if the seals are genuine, they belong to Bian Yongyu (1645-1712) and An Qi (c1683-1744+). Its entry into the Qianlong Collection is evidently beyond doubt, as a work by this title is recorded in his first catalogue *Shiqu baoji chubian*. From circumstantial, and untested, evidence or the collectors' seals then, the earliest ^{collection} date would be the seventeenth century.

The calligraphy (figs. 155a [text], bottom 155b. [acknowledgement] which is enlarged in fig. 196)⁵⁴

The artist's inscription in 12 taller columns of semi-cursive script is followed by an acknowledgement of occupying five columns (fig. 196). The last column to be added comprises date, signature, and seals. The writing becomes increasingly cursive and light in ink tone, and the vertical axes begin swaying toward the lower left in columns 6 (4 in photo) and 13-15. Aside from the first column which displays a continuous *hangqi* or columnar momentum with organic breathing spaces linking the characters, the whole can be said to be without notable *hangqi*.⁵⁵ It is poor calligraphy written in the style clearly unnatural to one. Nevertheless, several personal traits may be noted:

1. As a block, both the top and the bottom "lines" are ragged, not adhering to a consistent horizontal matrix.

⁵⁴ Unfortunately the first two columns of the text are missing from the photograph. They can be seen in fig. 72. Column numbers refer to the photo, not the actual inscription.

⁵⁵ This may be an indication that the first column might have been amply rehearsed and memorized on other pieces of paper before being transcribed onto the piece attached to the painting.

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2. Unnatural inter-columnar space: too wide.
3. The character-size changes without reason.
4. Individual vertical axes remain fairly stable, and vertical, but:
5. The position of each character along the column shifts from centre, to the right and to the left, creating an unsteady columnar vertical axis.
6. Dramatic contrast in dark and light ink, sprinkled throughout, like accents.
7. Fondness for dead parallels. Parallel strokes in horizontal or vertical (as in *lin*, forest) tend to be executed in dead parallel, so that the characters look printed.
8. Emphasized, bone-shaped major horizontal strokes (2:3, 3:3[^], 1[^], 7: 3, 8: 4[^]).
9. A rather unique trait of this artist is a lexicographic sensitivity which forms related compounds into notable pairs, and when of the same radical, they are rendered in identical construction, resulting in parallel angles of corresponding strokes. These pairs share a consistent axial alignment and stand out from preceding and following characters. They stand out moreover by means of contrasts from bracketing characters in size, inktone or script style. This is much as in the painting where not only major leaves, but minor ones are aligned in parallels and pairs. Some of the examples include:
 - 1: 6-7 *jianci* (gradually) are written loose and large, the right most element of *jian*, commonly written with a *jin* (catty) radical, is written in the *qian* form, anticipating an exact, enlarged duplication in the *ci* below.
 - 6: 3-4 *zhenyin* (genuine and forged), are written in especially light ink, in contrast to the dark characters above and below. The pair reappears in more cursive form (bottom photo 3: 1-2).
 - (bottom)1: 7-8 *yi Yue* (delighting in) are written in especially faint dry ink, contrasting with characters above and below.
 - (bottom) 3:1-2 *xingqing* (emotions) written with echoing heart radicals and a plumb vertical axis, in lighter ink and thinner strokes than *jin* below. This pair reappears in 15: 7-8.

Relation ship to the Companion Work

A postscript to the examination of this painting may be its relationship to its companion piece, the other "purity": *Ink Prunus* ascribed to Wu Zhen's close contemporary Wang Mian (1287-1359). The two blocks of inscriptions which precede the painting (fig.197), written in carefully articulated regular script, *kaishu*, reveals every personal trait identified above as typical of the maker of *Branch of Bamboo*. Only in *Prunus* the inter-columnar space is not unnaturally wide, but unnaturally narrow. This is an identical clue to the inscriber's intent to alter the natural rhythm of his own hand, in substituting that of someone else. Some specific parallels with the *Branch of Bamboo* inscription include (citing the first block with larger characters):

Characteristic no.8: Emphasized, bone-shaped horizontals (fig.197. 1:2, 2: 6,8, 3:5,9,11,4:6, 5: 5,9, 6:7, 8, 8: 5, 9: 5^ 10: 5^,etc). Comparing these horizontals to those in the bamboo piece(fig.155) it is seen that they all enter with the tip pointing to 11 o'clock which is then pressed down with a peculiar upward movement causing a slight swell at the stroke's leftmost tip. Next the brush is dragged across with a stiff wrist and no internal transformation, ending at the right with an awkward upward retraction of the brush tip, in conformance with the principle of *huwei*, "protected tail", in major horizontal strokes. The execution of these entrances and exits in both specimens reveal a similar awkwardness, a hesitancy and a deliberateness characteristic of one working in an unfamiliar mode.

Characteristic no. 9. Stressed lexicographic pairs include 1: 9-10 *qilin* (the fabulous deer); 7: 7-8 *legu* (partridge), 9: 5-6/7-8 (*xisou*, old man of stream/ *shanweng* old man of mountain), and so forth. (Several other pairs from previous section, in a more cursive vein, are not shown in photograph.)

Model for the Wu Zhen calligraphy

This seventeenth century (?)artist would appear not to have worked altogether in a void. Although highly uninspired and, even as a copyist, less than competent, it is possible to demonstrate that in the calligraphy at least, his model was primarily (though not exclusively) Hand A. Compare the *Branch of Bamboo* postscript (fig.155 bottom, fig.

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196) with the postscript of the Freer *Fishermen* handscroll (fig.156) also written in a fairly cursive hand, for some character-configurations.

-*hua* (to paint) *Purities* (see fig.72): 1:2; *Fishermen* (156) 2:8,5:4^,

-*xi* (treasure) *Purities* (f.72)2: 1^; *Fishermen* 1:2, 5:9,

-*bi* (brush) *Purities* 3:3 (f.155) 1:2^; *Fishermen* 2:3,

-*you* (to have) *Purities* (f.155)8: 2^; *Fishermen* 2:1^, 4: 8,

-*yu* (to meet) *Purities* (f.155)9:2^; *Fishermen* 4: 7^, and so forth.

There are no basic traits in brushwielding to link Hand A to the author of these twin purities, however. This author lacks Hand A's confidence, verve, resilience in the brush, and relatively natural breathing in *hangqi*. The difference between the type of creative Wu Zhen painting by Hand A, and a passive imitation by the present artist would appear to be basically one of innate gifts and of temperament. Unendowed in either, this late artist produces schoolboy exercise-like works.

It may be submitted, therefore, that both parts of *Twin Purities* (now separated by a piece of silk during a remounting in Qianlong's *atelier*), are by the same hand of a minor artisan. The imitation of Wang Mian's then-perceived image of regular *kaishu*, and of Wu Zhen's then-perceived image of cursive *caoshu* is uninspired and unconvincing in either case. As for this seventeenth century (?) artist's models in the Wu Zhen corpus, Hand A is the only recognizable prototype. This artist was evidently not familiar with works by Hand B. The artist of *Twin Purities* is here designated Hand A3.

III-b3 The *Mozhupu Ink Bamboo Manual*

Overview

In recent years this album has received a great deal of scholarly attention. Aside from presentation at conferences, it became the object of graduate research in Taiwan⁵⁶ and

⁵⁶ Xu Xiangling. *Yuandai mozhuhua zhi yanjiu* (Studies in Ink Bamboo Painting of the Yuan Dynasty). Unpublished thesis presented to the Department of History, National Taiwan University, Taipei, 1979.

the focus of a full doctoral dissertation in the United States.⁵⁷ A great deal of scholarship has gone into interpretative work, describing Wu Zhen's moods and poetic allusions, and the rise of ink bamboo manuals as a genre in the mid fourteenth century. No one, however, would appear to have taken the first step in the investigative process: that of ascertaining the date of execution of the manual, and the nature of its make-up. Having done so in the examination of the work, I have come to rather different conclusions and have prepared a detailed analysis of the album, in the process of which methodological approaches were extended to include a variety of hitherto untapped techniques. The considerable length of the study precludes inclusion here, and must await publication elsewhere. Below are the main points in summary form.

a. External Considerations: Problems Gleaned from the Catalogue.

As a matter of art-investigative principle, it would appear to be the more prudent road to examine art works directly, and not allow potential undue influence of names and labels. In this study of methodology, I have followed this practice so far. But a reversal of procedure may also be tried. In this case, information regarding the manual provided by the catalogue, *Gugong shuhualu*, if read before examination of the album direct, actually warrant concern in several respects.

i. Relation of Title to Album.

The "title" by Wang Yipeng (fl.1488-1505), consisting of three characters *Wanyucong* (Gathering of Myriad Jades, figs 157, 158), is spread over two leaves. The question arises: If Wang inscribed for an album, why did he not fit all three characters onto one, title, leaf? As it is, the present appearance is bizarre.⁵⁸ Evidence points to the title having been originally one single piece of paper, measuring approximately 38.0x106.2, something just a bit longer than Zhao Mengfu's *Autumn Colours*, for example, rather than its present twin-leaf form, in which one leaf is actually one centimetre longer than the other. See Catalogue in Volume Two for detailed description. The question arises as to the

⁵⁷ Sunmii Lee Han. *Wu Zhen's Mozhupu: Literati Painter's Manual on Ink Bamboo*. Unpublished dissertation, Princeton University, 1983.

⁵⁸ Examining the album in Taipei, the forlorn look of the last character, followed by signature matter, is quite remarkable. The reproduction of these two leaves in *Yuan sidajia* (no.210) was, logically, joined, as one, plaque-like strip.

relationship of title to work. Wang evidently wrote for a handscroll. Was it a different work? Or was *Mozhupu* originally a handscroll? In any event, the fact that it had been mounted as two leaves to the present album by the mid-17th century is attested to in Li Zhaoheng's record (see below). But what was Wang Yipeng looking at when he wrote the title (before 1505)?

Format. Several pairs of leaves in the *Mozhupu* album itself would appear to have been originally joined, as texts run across them in a contiguous fashion.⁵⁹ This is by no standard acceptable practice. Albums mounted with texts running over different leaves are usually collations of letters or fragments from handscrolls mounted *post-facto*. The *Mozhupu's* major claim to fame was that, according to the artist's inscriptions, it was made, over a forty-five day period, at the behest of a young lad name Fonu who "produced this paper album and asked me to make an ink bamboo album" (Leaf 5).

ii. Identity of Fonu. There has been no literary evidence to my knowledge, from the Yuan or Ming, which identifies Fonu, the central figure who appears through the twenty-two leaves doing calligraphy lessons in the style of Wang Xizhi, or reading the *Analects* or *Mengzi*, etc. suggesting a boy around ten or so. The earliest mention may be that by Li Zhaoheng (son of Li Rihua, active mid-seventeenth c), whose seals are on the leaves and who once wrote on another Wu Zhen attribution, *Four Friends*, that he owned "an album of twenty-four leaves which Daoren painted for his son Fonu" (the two extra leaves evidently being Wang Yipeng's "title".)

For three years (1361-4) Sun Zo had scoured Jiaxing for traces of Wu Zhen's painting, he made no mention of any Wu family, widow or of Fonu who would have developed into a young man in his early twenties. Early sources, clearly, do not recognize a Wu Zhen "family."

During his lifetime and for the rest of the Yuan, textual sources refer to Wu Zhen unanimously as Meihua daoren, Meidaoren, Daoren or, as Ni Zan did, *yinjun*, the Recluse Gentlemen. No mention with Buddhist connotations appear before mid-Ming. While it is not out of the question for a recluse to decide on a family and have a son at the age of sixty

⁵⁹ They are the two Preface Leaves (1,2; figs. 159,160), and Leaves 7-8.(figs.164 and 166.). See *Cataloguein Volume Two* for details and translations.

or so, to name him Fonu (Buddha Slave) seems jarringly out of place. For he would have been born in the late 1330s or early 1340s, when sources on Wu Zhen are unanimous with exclusively Daoist references.

If a man of the erudition and cultivation of Wu Zhen's calibre indeed had a son, who did indeed beg for an ink bamboo manual, this Fonu would appear to be precocious in art connoisseurship, (as Wu was then still an unknown) and certainly a lad of filial piety and cultivation. The absence of Fonu's own grateful or heartfelt reminiscences here may strike one as odd, especially since by the early fifteenth century the fashion in autobiographical writing had witnessed a marked increase.⁶⁰ For a man who had instigated and received such a "valuable" work, not to gloat or mourn about it at middle-age, may give us pause.

iii. **Content.** Considered from the viewpoint of an "ink bamboo manual" done for a young lad, it would be reasonable to expect one of two or three album types. One would be a didactic one, teaching the dos and don'ts of bamboo painting. An example may be the famous *Zhupu xianglu* by Li Kan (1245-1320), which describes various species in various attitudes and seasons and states of growth; in short, an encyclopaedia on the species. Or, one may expect a collection of small-format paintings using the bamboo to give moral precepts. The third possibility would be a collection of aesthetically pleasing ink bamboo paintings, presenting twenty different images (different species, states of growth, climes, etc.) with original internal variations. None of the above would appear to be, however, the case.

The inscriptions contain an assemblage of rehashed famous texts. The Preface consists of Su Shi's *Record of Reclining Bamboo of Yundang Valley* [painted by Wen Tong]. Considering that Li Kan's bamboo manual (Pref. 1299) used this very text as Preface, and that his manual was the first of its kind and greatly admired by all,⁶¹ Wu Zhen's use of the same text for the same purpose would have been most uninspired if not considered plagiarism of a sort.

⁶⁰ See tendencies to self-projection in discussing works by Wu Zhen already evident in writings of the Hongwu period, discussed in IIa3.

⁶¹ Zhao Mengfu regards it as "the most thorough treatise on the subject to appear in the last two hundred years." (*Songxuezhaiji*, j5:8-b. SBCKZB ed.)

In fact, however, the Preface of the *Mozhupu* and a text on Su Shi's painting of *Bamboo in Wind* (Leaf 5) comprise the most cohesive segments of the inscriptions. The rest are gathered bits of verse some of which are repeated in other leaves, fragments from *Zhuangzi*, notes on Cao Cao's intensity in friendship, etc. There is in these pages little writing which has to do with bamboo painting, the bamboo species, the artist himself, or the child-client: Fonu. There are many notes on the weather which, however, betray internal contraction. The literary tenor of either "copied", or "original passages" is of offensively poor quality. Already half a century ago, Yu Shaosong had questioned the authenticity of the manuals from a purely literary standpoint.⁶²

iv. Problem of Dating Individual Leaves

Most of the leaves are not only signed, profusely sealed, but dated as well. I have found no other album (save those mounted as such *post-facto*) where individual leaves are dated. The common practice would appear to be to write a postscript leaf, stating the occasion for the album's production, and the date of completion. Compare contemporary practice in handscrolls such as the Huang Gongwang *Fuchun* scroll where an inscription is affixed at completion after three or four years' off-and-on work, or even the Freer and Shanghai *Fishermen* scrolls ascribed to Wu Zhen (by Hand A), where a postscript is purported affixed several years later.⁶³ The dating of internal leaves of a set of pictures in an album seems unique to the "Wu Zhen" type ink bamboo manuals.

Moreover, in light of prime objects we have identified, and in consideration of taste, the repeated self-congratulatory tone reflected in the *Manual's* inscriptions is vulgar and offensive. However it has been evidently only literary scholars, but not art historians or collectors, who have questioned the literary calibre reflected in these leaves. Methodologically, it may be argued, textual examination has been nothing less than a shortcoming among historians of Chinese art, and it may be time to reconsider its critical

⁶² Commenting on Qian Fen, the 17th century collator of Wu Zhen's literary remains, *Mei Daoren yimo*, Yu writes, "...Unfortunately Zhongfang (Qian Fen) did not collect widely, and yet has gathered many spurious works, as for example the two spurious Bamboo Manuals, and the Scroll of Bamboo the inscriptions of which are all lifted from the *Zhupu* by Li Kan. How can Mei daoren be so shiftless as this!? [From this] we can easily imagine how [a great many of] the paintings [Qian saw and recorded] were spurious..." *Shuhua shulu jieti* (Pref. 1931): 11b.

⁶³ A parallel to the *Mozhupu* can be imagined if Huang signed and dated it each time a section was completed.

value in the examination of a *wenren* painter's works. The Chinese art historian working with literati paintings would appear to be obliged to give weight to textual studies along sinological lines.

v. Problem of Contradictory Information

Information provided in the inscriptions include irreconcilable "facts":

L1-2 Preface, written on the 1st day of the 5th lunar month, by the rainstreaked window.

L5: same day. "the monsoon rains have begun to cease (the weather is pure, gentle and agreeable.)"

L6. 13th day of 5th lunar month (time of the Drunken Bamboo Wine feast). "One day I painted a branch like this on a paper screen for someone. Fonu wanted me to write this poem in the manual, so I have inscribed it [as well]."

It was evidently on this very same day that "Wu Zhen" painted the *Bamboo in Wind* now in the Freer Gallery⁶⁴ as well as a long handscroll of ink bamboo now in Köln. That so many works purport to be from the same day in the same year, should alert us to need for closer scrutiny. (Visual studies follow below).

L13: 9th day of the 6th lunar month "...First sounds of the cicada. The clouds above are dispersed, the southern winds have come, clear and cool, the air is brisk as if I were at the Western Mountains....Fonu is ...reciting his *Menzi*"

L14 : same day. "...I am sitting solitary at my rain soaked window..."⁶⁵

L 19: "Old Mei plays with ink at the Eastern Guestroom of Duyu while drinking tea."

While this may be a convincing inscription on a painting for Duyu, one is hardly expected to believe that the seventy-year-old man walked around the countryside carrying an enormous album⁶⁶, like some piece of homework, to paint while out of home visiting friends.

⁶⁴ On this very day, too, Wu Zhen evidently painted the ink bamboo on silk now in the Köln museum. That so many late accretions reveal the "same date" is evidence for the psychology in forging, where it was evidently deemed safer to date a new production to a day for which there were known paintings in existence.

⁶⁵ Not only the weather, but the spirit seems to swing the full arc. Old Wu is either enjoying his child's voice, or feeling desolate, the sky is either brisk and clear or rain-soaked.

⁶⁶ In its present format its outer dimensions are more than 42x52 cm. In a previous mounting it had been folded down the middle, so the album would have been 42x26cm and twice as thick. It is in any case a heavy and cumbersome object to carry around.

vi. Transcription errors.

The writing abound with errors in transcription where ancient texts are transferred. A man of Wu Zhen's cultivation and proven taste is not likely to commit mistakes, some of which reveal an ear untrained to the subtleties of poetic rhyme schemes.⁶⁷ Moreover, the remarks are banal to the extreme, without the slightest inspiration. The tone of the inscriber, filling his personal remarks with the expletive *ye* (which I have rendered as the American *yeah!* to match its ego-thumping tone.). On the whole, the vulgarity of the work would seem outrageous, associated as it has been for nearly three centuries, with the name and character of Wu Zhen.

vii. Textual References to the Albums

The earliest reference to two manuals of ink bamboo ascribed to Wu Zhen would appear to be by Wen Jia (1501-83).⁶⁸ One may argue that it was only at this time that collection books began to be written and to proliferate. It would appear logical, however, that if the manuals *Mozhupu* and *Mozhuce* had indeed been created by Wu Zhen, and indeed had gained the widespread acceptance they evidently had today, Ming writers enamoured with Wu Zhen would have lost no time in mentioning the occasions at which they had studied them.

viii. Artistic Following.

Self-styled lovers beginning with Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming to Dong Qichang and Wang Yuanqi span virtually the whole of the literati era from the Ming through the Qing. There is to my knowledge no Ink Bamboo Manual or Album of this type by any of these masters, nor any mention of these albums, in their writing or inscribed on their painting of

⁶⁷ See Volume Two, *Catalogue*, errors in the respective leaves..

entry 13, where following translation, a section is devoted to

⁶⁸ In his *Lingshantang shuhuaqi* records of the collection of Yan Song (1480-1565). Then follow those of Li Rihua (1565-1635) *Tianzhitangji*. Yu Fengqing, *Yushi shuhua tibaji* (Pref.1633), Wang Keyu (b.1587), *Shanhuwanglu* (Pref. 1643), Qian Fen (mid-17th c), *Mei daoren yimo* (c. 1660s), Wu Qizhen (mid-17th c) *Shuhuaqi* (1677?), among others. See bibliography.

bamboo in any format. No one to my knoweldged produced ink albums like these "after the brush spirit of Meilao"

2. Internal Considerations: The Calligraphy, Painting and Seals.

The viewer, alerted by what he has read in the catalogue, may now begin a visual examination of the *Mozhupu*. The painting, as becomes immediately apparent, is of an offensively low calibre⁶⁹. The methodological problems are compounded.

The Calligraphy

Examination of the Preface (figs. 159,160), among the most carefully written out of all the leaves, reveals a hand incompatible with prime criteria as defined in Section IIe. Space prohibits detailed analysis here, but a few observations follow.

i. **Errors in the signature.** Leaves 3 and 5 are signed Meihuaren, Prunus Blossom Man (fig.181, two examples on the left). The omission of the *dao* in *daoren* is inconceivable for a man of known fastidiousness as Wu Zhen.

ii. **Tightness in configuration.** The selection assembled on fig.181 illustrate various forms of writing similar characters. From the right they are, Meilao (*xi*), *Meidaoren* (*ximo*), Meihualao, Meihuaren, Meihuaren. In different styles, (on different occasions?), in different ink densities, the configuration is equally tight. This tightness is structural: the configuration is not expansive, relaxed. The loops and doublings back turn on small angles, and the movement is clumsy

iii. **Weight and Speed.** The weight of the wrist is, however, light, and the ink glides over the relatively unsized paper in relative speed (lest too much seepage occurs). Comparisons with other hands follow.

⁶⁹ Here the objectivity of the scholar is sorely challenged, and efforts must be made to remain calm when contemplating the accretion around the person and art of Wu Zhen of a mentality that is so vulgar, with such low-calibre works. It is regrettable as it is significant that in spite of alleged scholarship, intelligent eyes have gone over these leaves repeatedly without, evidently, actually making contact with the stuff of the *Mozhupu*, or gleaning the mind of its manufacturer.

The Composition

i. **Internal Variation.** The composition does not present twenty variations, twenty original and mutually different images. The leaves in fact conform to seven basic formulae. Only the first illustration (Leaf 3, fig.161) is a one-of-a-kind work. I have mounted the photographs not in their alleged sequence but according to formulaic groups. The formulae include: a *Bamboo in Wind* type (figs 162,163, 166, 167)⁷⁰; a wispy, upright type (figs.164-5); a lush, drooping type, (one with cliff and moss dots, figs.168-171); a "precipice hanging bamboo" type (figs.172-3), one with new buds at the tip (figs.174-5), and one with thick trunks, seen only in section (some with soil and vegetation and bamboo shoots; figs.176-180).

The leaves are frontal and full-faced throughout. Large or small, exposed or covered with snow, the self-same leaf is drawn with a fairly upright and full brushstroke with monotonous regularity.

From structural analysis it can be seen that the painting is nearly all in the post-Ming, ideographic and calligraphic mode. Only one-and-a-half leaves reveal the probability of a Yuan model behind the composition. These are L18 (fig.180) and the left half of L14 (fig.168) where leaves turn back into deep space. A comparison of this detail (fig.188) with a comparable section of prime object *Bamboo and Rock* (fig.189), however, quickly dispels any suspicion of Yuan authorship. This is arrived at by examination of the brushwielding, the manner in which the brush moves across the paper, the level of ink seepage, the speed and wrist pressure, as well as the manner in which artistic intention is manifested in the brushwork. While Wu Zhen is seen to be painting, and each stem, is leaf, each joint mark, twig or dot is consciously generated and drawn, the artist of fig.188 is merely laying on brushwork. The repetitious and formulaic nature of the process is clear: jet black ink in full-stroked leaves, light ink in barely articulated strokes for stems. Brush considerations such as change of weight, tonality, etc. are not relevant to this hand.

⁷⁰ The four windblown versions could not be mounted as a group because L7-8 (figs.164,166) are mounted so as to show that they are part of a continuum, that is, originally from a handscroll).

ii. **The *Mozhupu* and Li Kan's *Zhupu xianglu***

Li Kan's *Zhupu xianglu* was evidently regarded as the major canon on the art for the first half of the fourteenth century⁷¹. It would be reasonable to assume that Wu Zhen's bamboo painting, would reflect those canons. Indeed, the prime object *Bamboo and Rock*, may be considered a demonstration of Li Kan's *zhayu*, first rain.⁷² The *Mozhupu*, on the other hand, may be regarded as a textbook illustration of all the habits which Li Kan considered to be "ills."⁷³

Stem and Segments:

-*chongtian zhuangdi* (rushing up to heaven and crashing into earth) where stems disappear beyond the page both top and bottom (L9,13,19,20: see figs 176-179).

-*Pianzhong pianqing*, (half weighted, half light), lack of balance between left and right clumps (L11,16 in figs. 174,175).

-*qianzhi houye* (stems in front and leaves behind) stresses structural relationship. It condemns placing leaves and stems in two separate layers, as it were, as in *jusheng zaiqian*, *jusheng zaihou* (all grown in front, all grown in back). This ill can hardly be isolated in the *Mozhupu* because physiographic relationships are not taken into account at all. The front-back relationship is occasionally indicated by rending a leaf in two separate strokes along side a stem, to suggest its position. But these are more indications than actual descriptions.

-*jianku jiannong* (half dried, half thick). The mixing of dried and unctuous ink in *Mozhupu* is also ubiquitous. Evidently these early fourteenth century considerations were no longer applicable in the following centuries.

-*junchang junduan* (equally long, or equally short). Segments should not be of equal length, but should, as in *Bamboo and Rock*, be seen to grow where each higher (later) segment is longer than the previous one. The *Mozhupu* shows stems not only of identical thickness, but their length varies arbitrarily, sometimes contrary to the pattern in nature. (See figs. 163, 166, 170, 172, 173, 174, 176, 177, 178,179). L 19 (fig.177), showing roots,

⁷¹ See note on Zhao Mengfu's appraisal above.

⁷² Illustrated at the end of *juan 2*.

⁷³ See *j.1*.

illustrates the unnatural manner in which an attempt has been made here to increase the lengths by graduated increments.

On the whole, the dead evenness of the stem-segment width would appear to be a give away of Ming date. For even good artists such as Hand A (fig 141), or even Wen Zhengming (fig.140), evidently had come to consider the drawing of the stem as a stroke of even width.

The joints

-buke qida, buke qixiao (must not be equally large or equally small). The terminus of one segment must not be of the same size as that of the next. One must cover or bracket the other, being its source. Nor must they leave a "moon-like gap" between them. These injunctions, minutely observed in *Bamboo and Rock*, would appear to have become irrelevant for the author of *Mozhupu*.

The Leaves. Here *Mozhupu* demonstrates every single "ill" condemned by Li Kan.

-Siliu (like willow-leaves. That is, thin, wispy, straight edged. See figs. 162-164, figs. 169, 172-3, 175, 176, 179, etc.).

-bingli (twin leaves in parallel. figs.162, 163, 166, 167, 168, 169, 172, 173, 175, 177, 178, 179).

-rucha (trifoliate leaves spread evenly on a single plane like pitchforks. Figs.161-163, 165, 168, 169, 174, 175, 176).

-rujing (criss-cross parallels like the character *jing*, well. Figs.166, 168, 170, 176).

-ru shouzhi, si qingting (like fingers of a hand, or a dragonfly. Five-leaved clusters stretched out on the same plane: Fig.165.)

In sum, it may be observed that Li Kan's cautions are all concerned with three-dimensional space. The danger of rending leaves of a single cluster as if they were on a single plane was clearly urgently felt by Li Kan, and keenly avoided by his younger contemporary, Wu Zhen. *Mozhupu* would appear to represent the perception of a different age: the Ming. Scholars with an undue attachment for the *Mozhupu* may argue that if Li Kan could describe these faults, they must have been made in the 13th-14th centuries as well. The reply to such a rational point would be,, "Had Wu Zhen committed all these

faults after they had been so clearly discussed, would he be considered an artist, let alone a Master? And, visually, if one insisted on perceiving the *Mozhupu* as a work of the mid-14th century, then the far more archaic *Bamboo and Rock* would have to be considered the work of a previous age, which would lead to an impossibility. It may be further noted, that while Li Kan and Wu Zhen would appear to employ five-leaf clusters, and spread them out into three-dimensional space⁷⁴, Ming artists on the whole appear to prefer three-leaf groups. But when four- or five-leaf clusters are attempted, as in Wen Zhengming's example (fig.140), though leaf shapes may change to represent foreshortening, as the two top leaves of his five-leaf group or, indeed, as *Mozhupu's* rare examples (figs. 180, 188) illustrate, in each instance a non-Yuan, non-physiographic handling is seen. For now these black forms are perceived, and performed, not as bamboo leaves, but as calligraphic strokes. They are drawn out on a single plane as strokes and have lost descriptive function, indeed perhaps even descriptive intent.

ii. Hand A and the *Mozhupu*

The foregoing section has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the *Mozhupu* is not by Wu Zhen, not a Yuan work, but that its genesis belongs some time in the Ming. That it has been accepted and revered for so long by collectors and scholars alike points to psychological factors the significance of which deserve a separate study. The task at hand is to ascertain the origin of the *Mozhupu*, its date and its artistic sources. At this point the relationship between the *Mozhupu* and the *Freer Bamboo in Wind* may deserve further investigation. Hand A (*Spray*, fig.142, *Wind*, fig.143, and 186) reveals a preference for "fish-belly"⁷⁵ type strokes for fatter leaves, done with an oblique brush. *Mozhupu's* brushwork is more centred throughout, as is seen in the calligraphy. This artist

⁷⁴ As indeed Shanxi artisan painters seemed to have preferred from at least the mid-14th century when working on the Yonglegong. That the five-leaf cluster has continued in artisan painting while being replaced by simpler forms in literati painting may also be worthy of note.

⁷⁵ Where one edge is more rounded than the other See fig.142, where the larger leaf on top has a straight upper edge and a rounded bottom edge, again in the "broken" leaf at the bottom. Fig.143: left fat leaf, and tip of one emerging from the bottom. Fig. 186: left one of the triad in the centre, and the pair bottom right).

evidently has had access to both prime objects and Hand A's works. But evidently did not notice differences.

Fig.182 illustrates debt to prime objects. a. shows Wu Zhen's writing of *gu* (because), with the typical recoil in the midst of the right-hand particle (see also *jing* in the name Zijing in the dedication of *Idyll*, Frontispiece, or fig 150, 2: 2). b. shows the same work as it appears in the *Mozhupu Preface*. c. shows six instances of the name Yuke in the *Mozhupu Preface*. While no original Wu Zhen model is available, the equilateral triangle of space formed by combining three dots (at the bottom of Yu and the first stroke of Ke) points to only one source: Wu Zhen. Cf. similar dot dispersal in fig.94, top col.1, or the *xia* (to make fall) 4:3[^] in the same plate. Elsewhere no such sensitivity to the positive value of space is evident in *Mozhupu*.

Fig. 183 shows debt to both Wu Zhen and Hand A. a shows Wu Zhen's *you* (to have), *zhu* (bamboo), and *yu* (to meet). b. shows Hand A's *zhu*, (bamboo), and *liang-shan yu-feng* (two mountains,[and] met winds). c.*Mozhupu*. There are both the space-occluding type of configuration for *you* (right side three), and one example of the open, space-expanding type (left) like Wu Zhen's. In *zhu*, the space-occluding type of Hand A is followed⁷⁶. In *yu*, compare Wu Zhen's natural tendency to plumb verticals and strict horizontals, and the remarkable sense of expanding space within the loops. These considerations were evidently not part of artistic consciousness in Ming, and absent in Hand A and *Mozhupu*. In *feng* (wind), the Freer Hand A model is used.⁷⁷

For the artist of *Mozhupu* (as indeed for any student or copyist, or forger), a model closer in time was easier to follow. The *Bamboo in Wind* in *Mozhupu* L5 (fig.162, 187) reveals close parallels to the Hand A version in the Freer.(figs 81,.186). While Hand A's brushwork is more resilient, more invigorated (and invigorating),that in *Mozhupu* is by comparison flabby and insipid.

⁷⁶There are also instances with *Mozhupu* exhibits the Wu Zhen configuration of *zhu* where the two elements are separated by open space.

⁷⁷ See also fig. 98 where a,Wu Zhen, b,Hand B of *Autumn River*, c. Hand A in *Spray* and d, *Mozhupu* illustrate the relatively more upright brush of the artist of the *Mozhupu*, as well as his slipshod and careless work.

In sum, the formulae provided by Hand A were easier to follow, as they too had reduced bamboo painting to bamboo writing. It was no longer a matter of painting leaves, stems, etc, but a matter of laying down particular calligraphy strokes. That may indeed be why each brush-motif is of the same weight. Note the move toward formulaic brushwork already prevalent in Hand A (186) which in comparison to Wu Zhen seems not only flat, but more mechanical. This becomes more pronounced in *Mozhupu* where the brushwork (figs. 187, 188) becomes even more superficial. There is less contact with the paper. The leaves are wiped on mechanically, and the stems drawn in a flat, uninspired manner. Compared to Wu Zhen, the distance has become unbridgeable. Hand A's Ming reductionist approach is brought to a new level in *Mozhupu*.

Fig.184 compares the character *yue* (month). a. Wu Zhen, b. Hand A (*Wind: wuyue* and *Spray: liuyue*) and various renderings by the hand of *Mozhupu*. Wu Zhen's artless and friction-full (*zho*) angularity, had not been appreciated or emulated by Hand A, who produced a more rounded second stroke. *Xia* is composed by Hand A in a smart, terse manner with the horizontals overhanging on the left, the box element veering toward the right, and the last three strokes at the bottom forming a neat lozenge, followed immediately (if a bit too close) by the *liu* or *wu* which nearly touches the *pie* stroke (of *xia*) above. This formula has been repeated in *Mozhupu* each time, down to the little tip-exposing hooks for the final strokes of *liu*. which, in Wu Zhen's hand, would probably have been less sharply articulated, and have been more recoiled, forming into little round dots. The flicking gestures of Hand A, almost entirely absent in Wu Zhen's calligraphy, have been perpetuated in *Mozhupu*.

In sum, the relationship of *Mozhupu* to the works of Hand A would make a textbook demonstration of what I have termed FUNCTIONAL AUTHENTICITY, the status acquired by a work (as have most of Hand A's creations) when accepted into major collection whenceforth it is admired and studied by future generations, students and forgers alike. Here Hand A's image has dominated the *Mozhupu*. It may be further observed that while Hand A in his creative inspiration departed often radically from the model, the author of *Mozhupu*, evidently less creative, stayed close to his models, both prime objects and

works with functional authenticity. As his greater preference has been demonstrated to be Hand A rather than Wu Zhen, he shall be identified as Hand A1.

iv. Problem of Seals

Each leaf in the *Mozhupu* is replete with seals. Closer examination reveals that those of the seventeenth century, collectors Li Zhaoheng, Song Luo, Li Zongwan and the unidentified Huang Mengshan are few in number per leaf, well carved, and affixed with great care and precision, with the seal paste cleanly impressed. On the other hand, those of Wu Zhen, and the collector Xiang Yuanbian (1525-1572), are numerous, repetitive, poorly carved, and carelessly impressed. This evidence strongly suggests that the second group, representing the earlier (fourteenth and sixteenth century) seals, are spurious. They were probably produced at the time of the album. That is, sometime in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and before entry into the Li collection. More on the seals appear in Appendices viii and ix.

III-b4. The *Mozhuce* Ink Bamboo Album (fig.190)

Various methodological considerations have been demonstrated in the *Mozhupu* above. Space prohibits delving into another lengthy work representing essentially similar methodological problems, such as the twenty-leaved *Mozhuce*, Leaf 6 of which is reproduced in fig. 190. This album requires essentially the same types of analyses performed above. For the present, only a summary treatment would appear to be indicated.

From visual examination it will be evident that *Mozhuce* is of late date, and that it bears a closer relationship to Ming painting than to prime objects. The art historian's task

would appear to be to identify its model(s) and to ascertain the nature and degree of the relationship.

The Format

Like *Mozhupu*, this had originally been mounted in a vertical format with the leaves folded down the middle, and has been subsequently remounted on full sheets.

Design of the Album

Eighteen leaves of ink bamboo⁷⁸ are followed by two leaves of postscript. Leaves 7 and 8 are unsigned and unsealed. All the rest are signed, some with addition poems inscribed in cursive script. L 12 describes the process of painting bamboo, and only one leaf, (L13, bears a date (1348). This may originally have been the last leaf among the illustrations. Although the visual formulae are even more limited, by dint of the plausibility of the textual (inscribed) material, the *Mozhuce* "behaves" more like an album or manual of ink bamboo than does the *Mozhupu*.

The Calligraphy

The calligraphy, like that of Hand B in *Autumn River* (fig.93b), reveals knowledge of prime objects or QUASI ORIGINALS, that is, close copies. Distant echoes of features of Wu Zhen's configurational habits appear here, including contrast in character-size, ink-tone, stroke-thickness, and some angularity in certain turns. The calligraphy maintains a fairly steady vertical central axis, and the horizontal axes tend to be fairly level. The artificiality in the shifts in character-size and ink tonalities, and the tightness in character-configuration, however, betray undue nervousness. Although (with two exceptions in regular script) *Mozhupu* features semi-cursive *xingshu*, and all leaves in *Mozhuce* are inscribed in the cursive *caoshu*, certain similarities in brushwielding indicate a close relationship.

A notable difference in configuration is in the signatory Mei. In *Mozhupu* the *mu* element is open above, while in *Mozhuce* it is closed. The exact nature of the relationship between these two albums awaits further study. For the moment, the task is confined to an assessment of the *Mozhuce's* date and stylistic affiliation or sources.

⁷⁸ The paintings are illustrated in *Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Paintings in the National Palace Museum* pp.38-39, detailed transcription in the *Gugong shuhualu* 6:17ff.

The poem is a *lüshi* quatrain about winter bamboo:

*Seductive as a flower before Spring,
Sinewy like a willow before winds,
Only this Gentleman,
Can be one's winter friend.*

The Composition

The painting is not of wintry bamboo, however. It depicts late summer bamboo with thick stems and bushy undergrowth. In concept it is not too far from L 20 in *Mozhupu* (fig.191). There is the same manner of drawing stem segments in equal widths⁷⁹, of writing the leaves in wipes of ink, in confused density. The joint configuration is slightly different: *Mozhupu* (Fig.191) places two strong black strokes on either side, adding one "twig" dot on one side. But *Mozhuce* (Fig. 190) has joined the two into one loose Z-like stroke. Both pictures show the "twig" dot mechanically applied at every single joint, in the same weight and speed and size.

On the whole, the *Mozhuce* is painted in two contrasting inktones, mechanically grey and black, and it is perhaps for this reason that Western scholars have not treated it seriously. Yet close examination reveals that in certain respects it is less dead than *Mozhupu*. For example, the ink in the segments is applied with more sensitivity for tactile values.

The Brushwork

In painting and brushwork, the resemblance to Hand A.1 is marked, especially as all the faults mentioned by Li Kan are committed. Two essential differences must be mentioned. *Mozhuce* features what might be called twin-tone bamboo painting, in that most leaves feature two sharply contrasting tones, in casual reference to relative positions in space. This is done however without any description or suggestion of intervening space. The effect is a superimposition of two layers of flattened bamboo branches, the dark group in front, the light one in back. Both are flat..

⁷⁹ As in the *Mozhuce*, it is evident that the most comfortable way for a forger to produce by the yard is to work in a manner with the least technical demands. In bamboo vocabulary, this type of leaf is of course, hallmark of summer effulgence. Hence, it would appear, the scholar must face a plethora of summer bamboo, (some even covered with snow) unrelated to the wintry poems contributing the calligraphy half of the works.

In sum, without further detailed personal examination, it is impossible at present to determine whether *Mozhuce* is an earlier product by the artist of *Mozhupu*, Hand A.1, or whether it is by a close associate such as a student or shop-partner, who would then be identified as Hand a.1-a, b.c, etc. It must be remembered that seventeenth century sources indicate the existence then of several bamboo manuals, scrolls and albums, including two for probably the same person, (one for Xingke, the other for Kexing) and several made on the same day.⁸⁰ There were also very long handscrolls. Certain fragments now surviving in various museums would suggest that there may have been a time (or several times) where an artisan shop was in operation which produced Wu Zhen bamboo paintings, as it were, by the yard. This fascinating topic awaits further study, however.

⁸⁰ Evidently inspired by the success of Wu Zhen ink bamboo manuals, Zhang Taijie of Baohuilou Collection fame (see J.Stanley-Baker, "Forgeries..." op. cit.) evidently commissioned more of the type, including twenty-leaf albums of landscapes and long handscrolls of ink bamboo dedicated Wei Su. Li Rihua saw the latter and recorded it in his diary *Weishuixuan riji(xia 7:10)*. He also saw an album with more than twenty leaves, :"*This is very new, I wonder where he (Wang Yushui) got it?*" (*Tianzhitang ji*). It is beyond doubt that as long as the market remained profitable, productions of Wu Zhen bamboo paintings continued to be made. Yu Fengqing and Wang Keyu both mention a long bamboo scroll made for the monk Songyan where Wu Zhen signs himself *shami*, acolyte. The *Mozhuce* in Taipei is dedicated to one *Xingke*. and dated to the 9th month of 1348. Wu Qizhen saw another bamboo manual made for Xingke in a large handscroll format dated to the 3rd month of 1350: "Ink and paper are like new, the painting freewheeling and dynamic, dripping with ink, as if alive..." he then warns, "In the Ming there was Zhan Zhonghe of Jiaying who painted most of the Wu Zhen forgeries. But they all lack the rounded brush tip vigour of this handscroll." The art historian is warned by such unchecked proliferation of bamboo!

For more on textual sources see Appendix xi.

Conclusion

The foregoing study is as much an examination of various methodologies for the study of Chinese painting history, as it is an exercise in their integration and implementation in the analysis of a specific group of problems. In the field today, there would appear to be remarkably little consensus regarding period style or personal style in spite of nearly a century of modern study. Distinguished scholars in Europe have even abandoned the study of literati (landscape) painting, because it has been felt that there is no hope for progress when we remain mired in so many forgeries.

From another perspective it may well be argued, should this not be reason enough for us to re-examine our collective tools of investigation and consider, if possible, a critical methodology which integrates the most effective aspects and forges a more reliable system of analysis? In the thesis the contributions to such a system made, aside from the West, by China and Japan, have been defined, and it has been found in actual implementation that they function like three legs of a stool which not only provide mutual checks and balances, are unsatisfactory when used alone, but which prove when used in concert to be remarkably solid.

In the case of Wu Zhen attributions in the National Palace Museum, extended direct examination has uncovered some shattering evidence. Many cherished "standard pieces" were found, under close examination, to be of considerably later date. This discovery opened the problem of the centuries of connoisseurship and admiration apparently lavished on the spurious works. Were most connoisseurs unobservant? Or were most encomia mere social flattery? The enormity of the gulf between prime objects and some of the worst of the attributed works too, would be enough to shake one's faith in the written word, label or inscription.

The examination of Wu Zhen attributions in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, was conducted from a psychological ground zero where the possibility of not identifying even a single genuine work had been accepted. There was moreover a deliberate avoidance of *a priori* definitions of Wu Zhen's motif-image or brush style, and each candidate was regarded as suspect until proven genuine. It was a deliberate test not only of long-

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held attributions, also of the integrated system of analysis. No amount of scepticism, however, could have prepared me for the radical nature of my findings.

At first, Yuan landscapes were identified which satisfied period style criteria for the fourteenth century as defined by archaeological monuments and *denseihin*. Next, contemporary sources on Wu Zhen were collated and a "profile" of the man and his art emerged which helped mark certain technical and expressive criteria, and identified among the Yuan landscapes the hand which might most reasonably be considered that of Wu Zhen. The other Yuan compositions revealed one to be by a contemporary working in the same style, and the other a close copy produced at a later date when certain technical facilities had been lost.

The three prime objects in landscapes were found to be *Twin Junipers* (the name of which had been carelessly changed to *Twin Pines*), *Fisherman's Idyll* (*Yufuyi*, whose name had been carelessly changed to *Old Fisherman* (*Yufutu*), and *Central Mountain*, a work whose name is meaningless in the context of the image. It had been cut and spuriously inscribed, where the mis-transcription of a single character rendered the work effectively six years older than its twin in style and vigour: *Fisherman's Idyll*. This was a sobering reminder of the fragility of works in Chinese collections. From these three prime landscapes a total of twelve personal graphological criteria were identified. These pertain not to external configuration or motif, but to intrinsic habits of the brush.

Next the methodology was used in reverse. The five works of ink bamboo (totalling some forty-odd images) were examined to determine if any might satisfy the personal graphological criteria, or brush-print defined. One work (*Bamboo and Rock* of 1347) was found to satisfy all twelve criteria and, significantly for the methodology, none of the others matched even a single one.

That is, of thirteen attributions examined, four prime objects were identified. Of the remaining nine works, two main Hands, as well as their imitators in turn, were identified. The interesting mutual relationships among various hands were defined. Of the four prime objects, one bore spurious artist's seals, and its inscription retouched beyond recognition

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for meaningful analysis, another had been drastically cropped, with spurious inscriptions and seals added. This threw light on the significance of spurious inscriptions or seals. They do not necessarily indicate a forged painting. But they do indicate some damage done to the painting which necessitated, in the minds of its owners, "evidence" of the authorship.

The problem of quality, being subjective, was deliberately eschewed in the exercise where analysis was based on structural morphology for period style and on graphological criteria in brushwielding for the individual hand. Only in cases where sheer ugliness and lack of taste were so overwhelming, were these mentioned to highlight the unobservant nature of professed connoisseurs throughout history. While five-inch photographs may conceal most blemishes, direct examination which for the art historian is as crucial as it is "non transferable," offers another dimension not only into breath-taking excellence, but to the degree of depravity revealed through the brushwork which has caused discerning Chinese connoisseurs to talk (and the less discerning to mouth the pieties) about the lofty and the vulgar.

Direct and repeated examination has afforded shattering testimony to enormity of subjective programming which would appear to pre-condition the activities of collectors, art historians, and forgers alike. For nothing other than colossal subjectivity could have allowed works of decidedly offensive vulgarity as *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting* and the *Mozhupu Ink Bamboo Manual* to be grouped with those of the technical, aesthetic and spiritual calibre of *Twin Junipers*, *Fisherman's Idyll*, *Central Mountains* or *Bamboo and Rock*. The discovery of the real Wu Zhen, buried for half a millennium beneath changing accretions, was as profoundly sobering. It called for a reconsideration of our methods of enquiry. How could such glaring discrepancies have remained unobserved by those who professing keen interest, not only for the past five centuries, but even today? Is this a problem touching on an insatiable need for cultural icons?

It would appear to be of some benefit to examine the problems of subjectivity, and of forgeries which, in China, are both a fact of life and on the other hand not tinged with the categorically negative associations accorded them in the West. The copying of masterpieces was and remains widely practised, and great works existed in numerous

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versions down through the centuries when copies of copies, and copies of copies of copies (of copies) served as models for ensuing generations. In this process various artistic side-ways were opened, and while many may be considered in their way creative, only a small percentage impinge upon the problem of forgery. By which I mean intent, at the time of production, to deceive.

The endemic problem of subjectivity, on the other hand, cannot be effectively treated without first, acknowledging its presence and, secondly, examining its causes and its various effects. This thesis has examined the nature and causes of subjectivity in traditional collection and connoisseurship. In the social fabric of traditional China, great value was attached to the collecting of specific names, and objects "for one's studio" (or cultural reputation), judging by the tenor of collection records and treatises we have at hand, would appear from the start to have been imbued with a high value of specifically social significance.

Even as recently as 1984, a distinguished museum director in Taipei opened an exhibition of works "By Shitao and Bada shanren" saying,

We have always exhibited this large work with pine trees as a masterpiece by Shitao. Recently the late-Zhang Daiqian confessed to being its maker. We still display it here today because, as far as we are concerned, Zhang Daiqian is Shitao.

This was declared in jest, but the remark was reported by the media. It would appear to typify a peculiarly Chinese situation where paintings and calligraphies, personalities and social one-upmanship, have long become inseparable. Even in the West, attachments to cherished notions of authorship was evidenced recently with the "loss" of the Rembrandt attribution *Man with the Golden Helmet* which elicited a full-page eulogy in TIME magazine. The writer insisted that he did not love the painting any the less but felt somehow that something of himself had been lost.

This confession comes close to the heart of subjectivity of the second, less spontaneous kind (discussed in I-b). In essence it is not the image that we gaze at, be it the *Man with the Golden Helmet* or *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting*, but reflections of ourselves. We seek in those works the image of ourselves communing with great souls like Rembrandt or Wu Zhen. It is we the consumers who have made Rembrandt and Wu Zhen

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into icons and, it would appear, we have become dupes of our own idolatry. We have never really examined the paintings as constructs of brushstrokes and pigment and painting surface, in the context of period and personal style.

It is my thesis that rather than a static, one-to-one, or unique relationship, a copy or a forgery and its direct or indirect model(s) are fragments of a fluid, complex and continuous process which has played and continues to play a central part in Chinese painting and calligraphy. For this reason it is not beholden upon the art historian to dismiss them altogether. Rather, I have argued, they constitute the stuff of Chinese art history and should be studied for their respective rôles as they enter the long stream of works which become attached to the names of great masters. I have defined distances from the prime image as EVOLVED, ALTERED, or ACCRUED, that is, invented outright. The fact of their acceptance by a collector or forger, renders them evidence for the new perception of the Master at their particular time. Forgeries acquire, once they entered major collections, what I have termed FUNCTIONAL AUTHENTICITY, as they in turn become models for later forgeries. This would seem to be particularly true for more distant masters, as their works by necessity are more subject to undetected accretions than works by more recent masters.

It has also become clear in this exercise that the "standard" image one arrives at of a master by means of a consensus reflecting the majority of extant images or styles, is by no means reliable. In the case of Wu Zhen, his "standard" image of jolly fishermen bobbing up and down busy waterways in convivial exchanges, or the jet-black, frontally conceived ink bamboo painted with energetic strokes, is not Wu Zhen's image but that of his fifteenth century *persona*. The solitary example of his bamboo, done in 1347, has been considered, if at all, as "atypical". This is strong evidence for guarding against reliance on majority images.

There has also been opportunity to conduct morphological analyses in texts. The manner in which certain expletives are used, by the master and by his impostor, reveal something of their respective personalities. Similarly, the nature of transcription errors, both in calligraphy and in textual transmission, constitutes a reflection on the inscriber.

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In the area of visual, stylistic analyses, the two blocks of calligraphy found in the prime objects have provided the opportunity to attempt an analysis on calligraphy incorporating western methods hitherto reserved exclusively for painting. Combining these with the Chinese method of following the energy flow, and the Japanese attention to space flow, it has been possible to define with some precision the graphology of Wu Zhen's calligraphy, as well as the ways in which all the hands represented mutually differ. It has also made clear that configuration, like pictorial motif, is only an indication of style while brushwielding and touch can identify the hand.

The appendices consider such diverse problems as silk widths and proportions in hanging scrolls which appear to be changing in the fourteenth century from broad to a more narrow format. One presents the actual dimensions of the leaves in the *Mozhupu Ink Bamboo Manual* whose original format represents a special problem in the study of "Wu Zhen factories" active in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Judging by the few works thus closely examined, the life of Wu Zhen's style-image following his death would appear to have enjoyed a burst of energetic flowering in the mid-to late fifteenth century and then to have suffered a radical decline by the sixteenth as increasingly inferior artisans came to lay claim to his name. In the main, what has been perceived since the fifteenth century as Wu Zhen Style is not that of the Master, but that of his fifteen-century contributor.

The study has clarified thorny issues on fourteenth and fifteenth century period styles in general. It has confirmed the Japanese notion of *Sô-Gen no kaiga*, or a continuity of basic perceptual principles which relates the Song and Yuan, principles which I have termed PHYSIOGRAPHIC. There would appear to be an unbridgeable gulf separating paintings from the Yuan, still physiographic, from those of the Ming even from the early fifteenth century, which I have termed IDEOGRAPHIC (see Section II-a1). Interestingly, a radical shift in perception is reflected in early Ming writings from the Hongwu onwards, which contrast markedly with those of earlier, Yuan, writers (II-a 3).

In conclusion, it must be said that this study has shaken some very fundamental notions on period and personal style. The methodology has been tested backwards and

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forewards and found to be solid. If any errors in judgment persist, they are due to aspects of subjectivity on the part of the investigator. In the case of Wu Zhen, the problem, once understood, emerged to be rather simple, as the first major pretender to his name did not emerge till a full century later, and thus offers glaring differences in period as well as personal style.

The enormity of problems associated with other Yuan masters, to begin with the fourteenth century, most of whom were being forged during their own life-times, can from this exercise only be guessed at. We have only uncovered the tip of the iceberg. Problems of Zhao Mengfu and, especially, the three great masters from Suzhou, will seem to the art historian as devastating as they will be in the long run exhilarating.

Appendix i Mi Fu's Perception of Dong-Ju, Li Cheng and its Japanese Parallels

What Mi perceived and admired as the quintessential qualities of Dong Yuan, Juran, as well as those of Li Cheng (his singular object of a love-hate ambivalence), would appear to be their natural (i.e. unstrained) sense of life which is manifested through effortless brushwork, and a pale, borderless use of ink. Examining his various remarks on these masters in his *Huashi* (History of Painting), this becomes self-evident:

Dong Yuan's works are mostly unassertive and as if made in heaven [free of artifice]. There were no works in this manner in the Tang. His works rank above those of (the Tang master, active later 8th century) Bi Hong. And none of the recent works ranked as Divine or placed in a lofty category can compare with them. His mountain peaks emerge and disappear, the clouds and mists reveal and conceal [the mountains]. He does not adorn his works with tricks of technical skill and takes entirely from nature. The colours of his mountain mists are dark [with dense] luxuriance [of the woods]; the branches are taut and sinewy, full of a sense of life. Streams and bridges, fishing boats [and nets], islets and sandy banks, all mingle in light and shade [forming] a veritable panorama of Jiangnan.

The stressed features are: lack of artifice, (i.e. no clearly visible brushwork which calls attention to the artist's techniques rather than the spirit of the painting as in Yuan); cosmic contrast of light and shadow, visibility and invisibility (not a contrast of brush strokes against paper as in Yuan); a prevalence of vapours and mists, low-lying hills and sandbanks. Such things are best rendered in wash. Covering such broad areas with a mass of brush-strokes as in Yuan use of *pimacun* or hemp fibre strokes, informs the scene with a sense of busy-ness which would have been at odds with Mi's idea of tranquillity, unassertiveness, and utter effortlessness, or in his works, "yipian Jiangnan" a slice, a plane, wafting with mists, and where visible and invisible, sandbanks, rounded jetties, are vaguely discernible. This tallies with Shen Gua's remarks on the impressionistic manner of Dong and Ju's painting, where standing near one cannot make out the forms, but from a distance everything falls into place. This indicates a high degree of cursoriness and abbreviation where, from a distance, with the help of the viewer's imagination, the scene is completed in all its details.¹ Of Juran he says:

"Juran followed Dong Yuan. There are many of his works about. His vapours and mists are pure and moist, his compositions mostly attain the quintessence of nature.

¹ On the study of perception from up close and from a distance, see the study by Sir Ernst Gombrich, "The Beholder's Share" in *Art and Illusion* (specifically pp161-169).

Juran's early works often had alum heads [but] his later works are unassertive and of a lofty flavour"

Again mists and vapours are stressed, implying a use of pale inkwash and brushlessness, and his early alum heads creating protrusions on what otherwise might have been of a plainer contour, is decried, and the plainer outlines of his later works are clearly praised. Of a portion of a Li Cheng painting of *Pine and Rocks*, he says:

The trunks are majestic pillars curving upwards, the branches luxuriant [with leaves], cast dense shadows. For knotholes he does not draw an ink circle but comes down with one large blob . He uses pale inkwash over the whole trunk, [and the entire effect] is as if heaven-made. On the opposite bank a rock is textured round and moist, rising upward straight to the top . The stroke [for this giant rock] begins at the water on the same level with a [smaller] boulder in the water. Beneath he uses pale inkwash on the water for balance, [and there are] beach rocks which go straight down into the water. [This is] not like the common imitations [where rocks are textured] with upright and slanted brushwork and where further there is no ground, and even less water...²

Here again it is the use of pale inkwash, and the avoidance of a trace of linear brushwork such as the drawing of a circle, which caught Mi Fu's critical eye. He admired the ability in these painters to capture a sense of life, and he took careful note of particulars be they gnarled trees, sandy banks or mountain peaks enveloped with drifting mists, noting with approval that they were all done as it were with the wipe of the brush, a wave of the hand. He abhorred the studiousness of hacks, the meticulousness of academicians, the strident striving for effects of the cultural parvenus, and the cluttered, busyness of images too full of details and visual motion.

Mi displayed his own superb brushwork in his calligraphy, and had no need to show off his trained hand in painting. Here, where he distinctly felt himself first of all a critic, then a collector, and only finally an artist, his interest was clearly amateur and experimental . He attempted to use the "techniques" of brushlessness and paleness of ink to invest his paintings with a sense of life, of unassertiveness (*pingdan*), that is, an aristocratic effortlessness or lack of striving. For a reconstruction of Mi's painting a method of triangulation may be used whereby his own remarks, remarks by contemporaries concerning his painting, and surviving attributions used with extreme caution, together

² The translation of this passage and that on Dong Yuan above differs in some significant respects from that in Bush and Shih, op cit: 213.

with those attributed to his son Mi Youren (also used with great caution) may provide a vague outline of his style. Professor Shimada had suggested the large *Misty Landscape* in the Freer Gallery of Art as a candidate for an approximation of the original Mi style.³ This work has been subjected to virtual complete retouching, and has acquired a radically different appearance from what it had once been. An idea of the Mi style requires the elimination of nearly all the horizontal so-called Mi-dots which cover the mountains, and many elements including the two obtrusive roof-tops which emerge behind low-slung houses atop the second layer of hills in the lower portion of the painting. These busy silhouettes represent the typical ideographic taste discussed in Part II, and may have been added any time after the fifteenth century.

Attributions to Mi Youren, in the Metropolitan Museum and in the Abe Collection, Osaka, also suggest a minimal use of brush strokes and a liberal use of pale inkwash. The Mi style, then, may be said to comprise in composition of the Jiangnan misty lake scenery, and in technique a preponderance of inkwash, amorphously applied, with very few distinct brushstrokes, and these only where they are unavoidable as in architectural details or tree trunks or the most abbreviated modelling of rocks.

Mi Fu's observations of the Dong-Ju and Li Cheng styles amply suggest that he saw such qualities and such techniques in works which he considered genuine, and that it was these attributes which he himself and his son after him emulated and developed. But three centuries later, after the great disruption, Zhao Mengfu perceived something entirely different in these two image-sources, and his distillation of them resulted in the typical stroke-filled styles which were to be the hallmarks of the Four Masters of the Yuan. As I have discussed in my study of the "Development of Brush-Modes in Song and Yuan", the wiggly lines seen in Zhao and Wang Meng are Zhao's refinement of the Li Cheng-Guo Xi style, and the straighter hemp-fibre strokes derive from the fourteenth century interpretation of the Dong-Ju style. Fourteenth century versions of the Mi style as seen in works associated with Gao Ranhui, for example, indicate a *linearisation* of the erstwhile amorphous mode. The Mi-dots were beginning to be *ranged in rows* (i.e. as line-strokes

³ Verbal communication.

made up of successive dots). By the fifteenth century the strokes increased and intensified, growing denser, so that by the seventeenth century Dong Qichang could discover intrinsic interest in piled up interweaving layers of brushwork, and lead painting to the quasi-abstract mode of the Four Wang. Zhao Mengfu's image of Dong-Ju and Li, I submit, was a fatal misunderstanding, if not betrayal, of Mi's original perception. But it was for his time one suited to scholasticism in painting, where one relies more on technical excellence than unfettered creativity. Mi's complete self-confidence, sense of play and abandon is replaced in the Yuan with studiousness, historicism and fastidiousness. These three characteristics were to grow in intensity through the next centuries. What remained of Mi's original thesis by the fourteenth century were only the empty shells of terminology: the hallowed names of Dong, Ju and Li, and slogans of naturalness and loftiness. But the reconstitution or renaissance of the best of the Five Dynasties Masters in the transcendent manner as described by Mi Fu could hardly have been more contrary to Mi's or for that matter Su Dongpo's, original perception. The misconceptions of the Yuan masters were perpetuated in the Ming and further rigidified by Dong Qichang so that Qing *wenren* painting in the seventeenth century became the quintessence of densely woven masses of brushstrokes if not downright pedantic endeavours in the guise of artistic creativity. The self-exiled imperial monks Bada Shanren (1626-1704) and Shitao (1642-1707) were pulling away from the piled stroke mode toward a loosening of the medium, imbuing their work with a spirit of fun and play, as well as more free-wheeling inkplay or colourplay traces without discernible outlines; but by then Chinese painting had already become too permeated with historicism, and allusions to the past were unavoidable even in the works of these two sublime blythe spirits. Ironically, finally aware of the *original* import of *yipin* and *wenren* painting, Japanese art had so developed by this time to enable Gyokushu to recognize that in Koetsu, Sotatsu and Korin, Japan had her answer to China's scholar painters. It is indeed worth positing here that because of their particular experience with Yamato-e and inkwash painting, these Japanese masters had truly, though unknowingly, identified with Mi's original spirit, and through different techniques and media, became his real heirs,

Appendix i Mi Fu's Perception and Japanese Parallel

bringing the full potential of his inkplay to a surprising and spectacular flowering. (Mi Fu himself could have wished for no more!)

Appendix ii, *SUIBOKUGA* and Problems of Song Yuan and Ming Models

While the basic implements, style-models and techniques developed during the birth of Yamato-e through the tenth and eleventh centuries derive directly from Tang China and indirectly via Korea, their manifestation in the hands of Japanese artists working on the Byôdô-in Buddhist chapel by 1053 clearly testify to an aesthetic preference for coloured painting done with graded or contrasting tonalities. Originally called Yamato-e (paintings of Japanese subjects, to contrast with Kara-e paintings of Chinese subjects), the essential features of this coloured style came in time to be identified with the Japanese manner of painting. It was subsequently revived in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries under the movement later known as Rimpa (a painting aesthetic developed by Kôetsu (1558-1637), his friend and collaborator Sôtatsu (d. 1643?), and continued by their follower Kôrin (1658-1716)⁴. Here the essentially lyrical, evocative Japanese sensibilities receive full expression in a highly developed use of ink or pigment in wash including the pooling technique known as *tarashikomi*. While in China mention continued to be made of a *mogu* (boneless or buried bone) technique ascribed to the Five Dynasties master of flowers and birds, Xu Xi, which obviates the use of contour lines and produces a petal or a single in a single stroke, it remained confined to such genres and rarely found expression after the thirteenth century in landscape painting. Comparing the two cultures from the fourteenth century onward, Japan's preference for graded wash is as clearly evident as China's increasing affinity for a dry, linear expression.⁵

⁴ For a detailed study of some basic issues in the formation of Yamato-e in Heian period, see the outstanding doctoral dissertation of Louisa MacDonald Read, *The Masculine and Feminine Modes of Heian Secular Painting and Their Relationship to Chinese Painting - a Redefinition of Yamato-e* (Stanford University, December, 1975). In my book on Japan art, I have tried to indicate the vitality and relevance of the native tradition, in contrast to the forced and unnatural quality of some of the enforcibly imported traditions, that is, styles by the command of the shogun rather than spontaneously selected by the artists. Anonymous works in the Yamato-e style on the whole are better composed, more free and lyrical, and in general more "successful" as works of art than even some of the signed works of the stroke-oriented or more linear *suibokuga* works in ink monochrome. See for example the "rightness", the ease and beauty in the series of anonymous Sun-and-Moon screens or Nichi-Getsu Byobu

⁵ On the "dry, linear style" which dominated the scene in seventeenth century China, see Fu Shen, "An Aspect of Mid Seventeenth Century Painting: The 'Dry Linear' Style and the Early Works of Daoji." *Proceedings, International Symposium on Ming Yimin*, Institute of Chinese Studies, Hong Kong, 1976. I have modified this view to include both a dense and a sparse linear style which is seen from the Japanese perspective in late-17th and early 18th century in my study on early Japanese *nanga*, "A Heterodox Chinese Painting Tradition in the Formation of Japanese *nanga*," *Proceedings, International Conference on Sinology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, 1980*.

The development of what may be called the Chinese branch of Japanese landscape painting, that is, the ink monochrome tradition in landscape painting, received an enormous boost during the Muromachi period when shogunal taste was extended from its earlier preference for the angular and linear styles associated with the Southern Song academic landscapists Ma Yuan and Xia Gui, to include the less linear and more amorphous modes associated in Japan with the thirteenth-century monk painters Yujian Rofen⁶ and Muqi Fachang.⁷ In both the linear, more clearly articulated styles, and in the amorphous styles, the use of inkwash in graded tonalities was a basic feature which in China had served a primarily descriptive function, but whose potential for expressive purposes did not escape the eye of Japanese artists. The evocative function of the cloud-form or *kumagata* motive developed to perfection in Heian times which I have elsewhere identified as emotive cloud⁸ found here its counterpart in ink. From the fourteenth-century onward, when Chinese painting among the literati sought an increasingly dry and linear expression, to the point of eschewing inkwash altogether, Japanese ink painting continued to develop the expressive possibilities of a poetic deployment of inkwash well into the seventeenth century. While the double six-fold screen painting of *Pine Forest* by the artist and theorist Hasegawa Tôhaku (1539-1610)⁹ may represent the *summa* of Japanese sensibilities in ink, and document the excellence and vitality of this mode in Japan, its artistic counterpart in China, works by the artist-theorist Dong Qichang and the early Qing masters of the Dong-Orthodoxy, clearly attest to a radical attrition of this mode.

⁶ Sometimes identified as Ying Yujian, a poet-painter active in the latter thirteenth century. For Suzuki Kei's most recent appraisal of the problems surrounding the identities of the various Yüjians, see Suzuki Kei, "Gyokkan Jakufun shikiron" in *Bijutsu kenkyû* 236, Sept.1964: 79-92.

⁷ For a detailed discussion of Chinese models in Japanese shogunal collections in the Muromachi period, their identification and subsequent influence on Japanese painting, see Richard Stanley-Baker's doctoral dissertation, *Mid-Muromachi Paintings of the Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang* (Princeton, 1979).

⁸ See my *Japanese Art*, Thames and Hudson World of Art Library series, 1984: 78-80, 129-130, etc.

⁹ *Ibid*:pl.106-7

Appendix iii Wu Zhen and the Kurokawa Landscape (fig.51)

Japanese scholars have raised the question of the relationship between the large hanging scroll, *Wintry Trees by a Lake* or *Hanlin chongding*, attributed to Dong Yuan now in the Kurokawa Collection, and Wu Zhen, citing records that Wu Zhen had once made a copy of a painting with such a title and attribution on the one hand, and on the other Wu's painting, *Fisherman's Idyll*, for comparison in structure and in brushwork.¹⁰ Similarities between the two works are indeed striking as we shall see below, and a definite relationship between the Kurokawa painting and Wu Zhen's later landscape style cannot be denied. It is not unreasonable to date Wu Zhen's experience with a Dong Yuan attribution, very probably the Kurokawa *Wintry Trees by a Lake*, to some time between 1328, the date of *Twin Junipers* and 1342, date of the *Fisherman's Idyll*.

Xia Wenyan's laconic entry on Wu Zhen has left vital clues about the artist's stylistic origins. He wrote that a. Wu made close (and excellent) copies of ancient masters and b. his own style seemed, toward the end of his life, to have become too abbreviated. This indicates that rather than accepting Zhao Mengfu's distillations of the ancient styles, Wu Zhen evidently chose to study them directly, using what sources might have become available in Jiaxing.¹¹ *Mei daoren yimo* (Writings attributed to Wu Zhen, collected and collated by the seventeenth century fellow Jiaxing man Qian Fen) contains a colophon to a copy of a Dong Yuan landscape made by Wu Zhen for a friend named Yuanyong:

Dong Yuan's Hanlin chongting shows hoary and powerful brushwork. His genuine works are seldom seen in the world. I have studied this painting and have copied it, attempting to grasp one-ten-thousandth [of its original spirit] to share it respectfully with friends. Yuanyong ought to use it as a model (zhubi).

¹⁰ Prof. Suzuki Kei cites textual references indicating that Wu Zhen had seen and copied a painting by this name ascribed to Dong Yuan. Suzuki further suggests that the Kurokawa painting ought to be investigated as to possible authorship by Wu Zhen (see his *Chûgoku kaigashi*, 2 vols. Tokyo, 1981, vol. 2:47, note 147.)

¹¹ The problem of ancient masters studied and copied by Wu Zhen lies outside this dissertation. It is of interest to reiterate the great interest shown by Yuan painters in masters of the 10th century, which seems to outweigh that in Song masters. Among colophons ascribed to Huang Gongwang, Ni Zan, Wu Zhen and Wang Meng, there are more references to masters of the Tang up to the Five Dynasties like Zhang Sengyao, Gu Kaizhi, Wang Wei and Guo Zhongshu than there are to 11th century men like Su Shi, Li Gonglin, Wen Tong or Mi Fu. The reliability of the Yuan men's poetic collectanea is likewise beyond the scope of the present study. Nevertheless they may reflect to some extent the relatively greater interest in pre-Song masters. The most recent, or Song, favourites were, of course, Dong Yuan, Li Cheng and Jing Hao.

The painting on which this colophon appears, however, is most probably an album leaf on paper, and not a large, twin-width silk painting as the Kurokawa work.

In composition and style, the landscape by this name now in the Kurokawa Institute is clearly not of Five Dynasties date, but there is little doubt that it is of the same set, if not the very one admired and studied by Wu Zhen, and one which has had a formative influence on Wu's own mature style in landscape painting. For we see that by 1342 he abandoned his erstwhile more washy, painterly style seen in *Twin Junipers* in favour of one with more emphasis on *pimacun* or hemb-fibre modelling brushstrokes. Several features of *Wintry Trees* appear also in *Fisherman's Idyll* of 1342:

1. The basically bi-partite scheme, of low-lying mountains across a watery expanse.
2. The use of bold, blunted wavy brush strokes in dense parallels for shimmering water in twilight (fig. 53)
3. The long, criss-cross and blunted *pimacun* enhanced by *chiaroscuro* in graded inkwash for the modelling of mountains.
4. In the far background, the large, wet dots and strokes in silhouette, forming distant trees, in a manner evocative of Mi School works.
5. The use of inkwash in highlighted mist, light, and shaded areas.
6. Dog-tooth sandy shoals in the fore- and background.
7. Attention to the highlighting of forms, with consistency in light source.
8. Weightedness of elements and of brushwork, both appearing to sink downwards.
9. Fastidiousness and internal order in the application of brushwork.

Without the benefit of direct, personal examination of the Kurokawa painting, enlarged photographic details nevertheless confirm that it reveals a different hand, different from that of Wu Zhen (figs 48 -50):

1. Wu Zhen's brushwork is more weighted
2. strokes are executed more slowly

3. The ~~shows~~ shows a greater consistency of brushwork in the application of strokes and dots, where they tend to be of the same size, face the same direction, and overlap.¹²

4. Wu's brushwork is in comparison more "polarized", tending to strict verticals and horizontals, delighting in their effect of vigour, order and clarity.

A more detailed discussion of the Kurokawa painting may therefore be in order.

a. Textual references to *Hanlin chongting* by Dong Yuan

While there is no record of a painting by Wu Zhen purporting to be a copy of Dong Yuan's *Hanlin chongting* painting on *silk*, there are records of a reduced copy of a painting by this name, on paper, being one of four album leaves. This was seen and recorded by the seventeenth century collector Wu Qizhen who considered it a very fine work, but noted as well its fresh and new quality:

An album of Four Leaves on Paper of Small Scenes by Mei Daoren::

Paper and ink rather new. One is Landscape of Nanling, inscribed with a quatrain of seven syllables followed by a 14-character inscription which reads: "Old Mei playfully made [this]. Being in the 9th lunar month of the kuiji year of the Zhizheng era (1353). He used two seals reading Meihua-an, and Yimei. But I have never seen the Yimei seal before. The second is Village in Autumn Leaves (Hongyecun) on which is inscribed one ci poem and inscribed with four characters: Meilao ximo. The third is Hanlin chongting which is inscribed with 39 characters saying, "Dong Yuan's Hanlin chongting shows hoary and powerful brushwork. His genuine works are seldom seen in the world. I have studied this painting and have copied it, attempting to grasp one-ten-thousandth [of its original spirit] to share it respectfully with friends. Yuanyong ought to use it as a model (zhubi). Old Mei bows his head...¹³

This may, or may not, be the original of the inscription copied by Qian Fen in his compilation of Wu Zhen's writings, *Mei Daoren yimo*, in which the last phrase, "Old Mei bows his head" is missing. However, in view of the fact that the rest of the text is identical the probability that it is the same leaf is strong.

¹² Photographic evidence on the Dong Yuan detail indicate much retouching, including the black, roundish moss dots sprinkled onto the earthen banks. While the brushwork in the original is dense and overlaid, the moss dots are sprinkled on side by side, indicative of a later perception and a misunderstanding of Song and early Yuan brush usage in this regard. Similar instances of retouching is on the trees, particularly the bare one to the right of the path, where the trunk has been reinforced with areas of moss, and whose dead branches, originally reaching backward into space, are now darkened and brought forward. Comparison with Wu Zhen is made with bits of the original brushwork, seen in the bulrushes, the trees on the left of the path, and in the twigs.

¹³ Wu Qizhen. *Shuhuaqi*. (a record of calligraphies and paintings seen, completed c.1677, 6 juan. Facsimile reproduction of Qianlong edition. Taipei Wenshizhe, 1971). j.6: 623ff

Appendix iii The Kurokawa Landscape and Wu Zhen

It is also probable that the album which Wu Qizhen in around 1677 encountered as one of only four leaves, was related in some way to an album of twelve leaves that had been examined and recorded in detail by the scholar and painter Li Rihua (1565-1635), in his diary on the third day of the eleventh lunar month in 1610, the 38th year of the Wanli reign. In Li's record, the phrase "Old Mei bows his head" is likewise missing. But it does appear on leaf 5, following dedication to one Silai, and on the second Leaf 7 where it is not dedicated to anyone and the phrase betrays problems of authenticity.¹⁴ The leaf order differs as follows:

<u>Leaf #</u>	<u>1610: Li Rihua</u>	<u>-1677: Wu Qizhen</u>
1	Poetic ideas on Nanling Water scene	Nanling water scene
2	Dong Yuan <i>Hanlin chongting</i>	Village in Autumn (Red-leaves)
3	Cliff Bamboo by Water'd edge	<i>Hanlin chongtingtu</i>
4	Branch of Bamboo	Wild Bamboo, poems in ancient rhyme
5	Cliff-hanging bamboo (1343 for Silai)	
6	Branch of Bamboo ("When Yuke paints bamboo..")	
7	Bamboo in Wind ("I love the clear evening breeze...")	
7 ¹⁵	Bamboo (1344. Thinking back on our first meeting by the Wushui River...)	
8	Winter Vegetables	
8	Bamboo Shoots	
9	Pine Branch	
10	Fukienese Orchids ¹⁶	

Unfortunately neither Li nor Wu describe the album leaf, so that its relationship to the Kurokawa painting cannot be assessed. However, in the Hongwu period two centuries

¹⁴ Likewise in the first Leaf 8, the inscription ends with "In response to request I have painted and inscribed this" (*chengsuo jiu hua bingtiye*), without naming the seeker or buyer. On this see the SKTY bibliographers who express grave misgivings on the literary and logical tone in many inscriptions attributed to Wu Zhen.

¹⁵ Li Rihua registered a total of 12 leaves. However he named Nos 7 and 8 twice, so that the twelfth leaf reads as the tenth. See his *Weihuixuan riji*, 8 jua. The diary covers the seven years between the 37th year of Wanli, beginning with the New Year of 1609, and ending with the entry dated the 4th day of the 12th lunar month of the 44th year of Wanli which runs into early 1617. The text may be found in the *xiaoyuan congshu* edition which is abbreviated, and in the *Jiaye congshu* edition which appears to be the full original version.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, j.2; *Jiayetang* edition:69aff

earlier, the writer Bei Qiong had seen a painting by the same title and attribution and has described it in detail as follows:

Wintry Trees by a Lake by Dong Yuan:

No master under heaven [can match] Dong Yuan. Followers in droves struggle hard to [imitate his] waters and rocks. Of the myriad [paintings of the] misty mountains of Baling (Lake district in Hunan), I have only seen one genuine example in Huainan now that head is white.

*Rocks in disarray on the level hill are clean without any earth,
Pine roots break through the rocks and coil like dragons and tigers,
[Trees] are bent over from hugging frosts and snows for a thousand years.
In the dense forests are hidden the winds and rains of six months.
The deserted village on the river has no entrance.*

Misty are the distant hills, beautiful are the moist bamboo.

At dusk the fishermen are all returned

like plovers, the little skiffs rush homeward on the tides.

I used to look often at paintings in the Xiqing Studio [but]

This work by Nantang [Dong Yuan] is worth a thousand taels of gold.

Shifting in my seat I see the marvellous scene is amongst the clouds,

As the moon emerged, gibbons cry through the night.

In my wanderings I have not yet sailed on the Wusong River,

Now I'm made to yearn for Jiangnan (and think)

How to buy a [modest plot of] land, build a quiet retreat,

Opening my window to the marvellous scenery

And let in the pure breeze day after day.¹⁷

When I stayed with The Hon. Shao Yungu in Yunjian, we used to admire his paintings in his Xiqing Studio. And Dong Yuan's Hanlin chongting was the first [masterpiece] Yungu used to carry it about his person coming and going, reluctant to be separated from it. He had asked me to inscribe it many times but I never had the time. Ten years later at Zhongdu his son Lin brought it to me saying, "My late father often said that this scroll must be graced with your extraordinary writing, as a complement to its immortality. I deign to repeat his request." I therefore inscribed the fu to its left, but regret that Yungu has already died and that it is now too late to see him. How can this compare to our feelings of the present and by gone days! ¹⁸

From the *fu* poem we learn something of the appearance and mood of the painting.

From the following notes we learn of the provenance of the work and the fact that Bei had inscribed the whole text to *its left*. The position of such a long text suggests that the painting was a handscroll, to the left of which there is usually ample space for long colophons. We do not know whether the handscroll was on silk or paper. In any case, Bei's encomium was not recorded by either Li Rihua or by Wu Qizhen. Now there are three different works associated with Dong Yuan, with the same title. Although they are clearly different, their mutual relationship is beyond the present investigation. While the

¹⁷ Bei Qiong. *Qingjiang Bei Xiansheng shiji*, op cit j.4. The last two lines are of a different metre and may have been mistranscribed.

¹⁸ Ibid

"Wu Zhen album-leaf copy" appears in texts only in the seventeenth century, and provides no clue regarding the composition, we do have important evidence in the *fu* by Bei Qiong which registers a painting which was painted before the late fourteenth century. Bei Qiong was evidently much sought after as a worthy writer of colophons. His poetry collection include many for paintings by celebrated Yuan masters like Zhao Mengfu, Zhao Yong, Wang Meng, Ni Zan as well as the one by Wu Zhen (see Chapter One). Paintings thought to be by Song masters include names like Guo Zhongshu, Dong Yuan and Ma Yuan, among others. Bei's hometown was Jiaxing, but seems to have spent much time in Suzhou where he studied poetry with Yang Weizhen and came across so many works by the Yuan masters who had lived there.

Bei's encomium describes a painting which uses a great deal of wash in a depiction of a misty Jiangnan scene. It is however a different composition from the Kurokawa painting of the same title and attribution. The painting Bei saw features a group of rocks without any earth, from which gnarled pine trees, bent with age, stretch roots around the stones (reminiscent of Southern Song academy motifs). There is a water expanse, at one end of which there is a desolate village with no visible path; all the fishing boats have returned and are moored there. There are perhaps a few stragglers rushing homeward on the lake now shimmering with moonlight. Clouds part above to illumine the largely cloudy and misty scene below. Clearly, the Kurokawa painting cannot have been a "copy by Wu Zhen" of the one Bei saw.

Features which relate to the Kurokawa painting include the village without entrance, and the moored fishing skiffs in the upper right, and the misty night scene in the background, illumined by moonlight. But there is in the Kurokawa work no rocky section with gnarled roots and bent-over pines. There is not a rocky boulder in sight, nor a pine tree.

How does the Kurokawa painting relate to the Bei Qiong description? First of all, Bei saw a handscroll which in the late fourteenth century was considered a painting by Dong Yuan. This tells us nothing of its original provenance and date of execution. From textual evidence alone we can go no further than to clarify the fact that Bei Qiong's

description is not of the Kurokawa painting. And, from the lack of description by the 17th century writers, it cannot be established that the album leaf on paper relates to the Kurokawa painting in any way. What transpires is the great allure held by the name *Hanlin chongting* by *Dong Yuan* for paintings in various sizes and formats between the late fourteenth and the late seventeenth centuries. Its monetary value could not have been modest. These are important issues beyond the scope of the present investigation.

b. The Kurokawa Painting

The dating of the Kurokawa painting deserves in depth examination which must be conducted from close-up. From photographs alone the following observations can be made:

1. It is a copy, and not an original. This has been observed by Japanese scholars and can be demonstrated in the copyist's errors:

- The landing pier (left) by the water's edge, is scaled more like a footstool (fig.52).
- The path leading from the landing toward the dwelling is too low. In reality such depths would have been below water-level and have been submerged.
- There is ambiguity and misunderstanding of the interrelationship between layered mountains in the background group and has resulted in poor definition: the counter line and modelling strokes contradict each other.
- Misreading of the two trees on the foreground knoll (fig.54). They have been joined as a single tree in the trunk.
- The farthest tree has been drawn to loop forward half way up to emerge in front of its neighbour.
- And many others.

In considering the probable appearance, and the date of execution, of the original painting attributed to *Dong Yuan* of which the Kurokawa work is a studious if not perfect copy, it may be suggested that it may have been one of several panels which together

comprised a fairly large, horizontal composition,¹⁹ resembling in appearance the Jiangnan type handscrolls then associated with Dong Yuan, such as the *Xiajing shankou daidutujuan* (Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of the Mountains in Summer) now in the Palace Museum, Beijing which, too, is a copy. That is, the Beijing and the Kurokawa paintings share in their models, sources relating to Dong Yuan around the time of Fan Kuan's *Travellers on a Mountain Path*, in the early eleventh century. They represent a period considerably later than that of Dong Yuan's period of activity, whose perception of space and mass, and morphology are reflected in the *Early Snow on the River* by Zhao Gan, Dong Yuan's associate (National Palace Museum, Taipei). There are in the Kurokawa painting many fine-line figures sipping tea within the thatched hut, or hurrying along the sunken path carrying implements²⁰ whose dwarfed scale parallel those in the Fan Kuan painting, as does the essentially tri-partite conception of the painting, and the more adroit mastery of atmospheric mists.

The date of execution of the Kurokawa copy lies before the Yuan, before a continuous and consistent groundplane, and after the painting of the original in the early eleventh century. And, in view of Wu Zhen's change of style after his 1328 *Twin Junipers*, and in spite of the fact that it had not been seen by Bei Qiong, the Kurokawa painting or a painting very much like it, or part of the same series, or its original, was seen and studied by Wu Zhen.

The Kurokawa painting bears imperial seals which, if genuine, testify to the work's existence in the thirteenth century and after. They include the Southern Song imperial collection seal, Qixidianbao (Treasure of the Qixidian Hall, in use between the years 1233-1264) and the Yuan Imperial Collection seal, Xuanwengebao (Treasure of the Xuanwenge Hall, used in the year 1340-1341). For studies on the seals, see Fu Shen investigation of

¹⁹ Compare the Juran attribution in the Cleveland Museum of Art as part of a six-panel panorama, for which Waikam Ho has made a convincing argument in his discussion of the work in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*. Cleveland, 1980:15ff. In the eleventh century the multi-panel wall-size panorama landscapes were evidently in fashion. The Xuanhe catalogue records two series of six-panel landscapes attributed to Juran, and Su Che writes of a series of twelve-panel landscapes by Guo Xi which he and his brother had seen. There were in the Jade Hall of the Academy or Xueshiyuan multi-panelled fixed screen paintings, for which see discussion by Ogawa Hiromitsu in *Chûgoku kaigashi ronshû* (Festschrift in Honour of Prof. Suzuki Kei, Tokyo University, 1981:23-86).

²⁰ In an error of copying, the figures on the path are drawn facing right and the front one is evidently walking at all speed into the deep embankment.

Appendix iii The Kurokawa Landscape and Wu Zhen

the Yuan imperial collection, *Yuandai huangshi shuhua shoucangshilue* (Brief history of the collection of calligraphies and paintings by the Yuan imperial household), Taipei, 1976; Chaing I-han, "Yuan Court Collections of Painting and Calligraphy", *The National Palace Museum Quarterly* vol.XIV nos 2,3 (Winter, 1979 and Spring, 1980). For previous discussions of the *Wintry Trees* in the Kurokawa Collection, see Richard M. Barnhart, "Marriage of the Lord of the River": A Lost Landscape by Dong Yuan, *Artibus Asiae supplementum* XXVII, Ascona, 1970, and Richard Barnhart, Yoshitaka Iriya and Nakata Yûjirô, *Tô Gen, Kyonen* (Dong Yuan, Juran) in *Bunjinga suihen* (Essence of Chinese and Japanese Southern School Painting) vol.II, Tokyo, 1977.

Appendix iv Prime Objects, *Dongting Yuyintu*
and the Fishermen Scrolls

A. The creation and source for the *Fishermen* handscrolls

Without the benefit of first-hand direct study, it is possible nevertheless to form an opinion on the basis of photographic evidence, of the structural morphology of the *Fishermen* handscrolls ascribed to Wu Zhen now in the Freer Gallery of Art and Shanghai Museum. In this space they are discussed briefly regarding their creation, their relationship to the Prime Object *Zhongshantu*, and the stylistic accretions added onto the *Dongting Yuyintu*.

From the composition it is clear they are both of the same period and personal style, coming from the Suzhou-literati-dominated ambiance of mid-Ming, made sometimes during the lifetime of Shen Zhou (1427-1509). In perception it is ideographic: Natural elements are not described, but borrowed to serve as vehicle for the display of brushwork. There is no volume to the boats, figures, hills, trees, grasses and houses, nor is there substantiveness to the water or life to the skies. It is simply black brushwork against white paper.

In structural morphology the interrelationship of elements no longer adhere to nature's principles but stress man's perception: i.e. men buildings and boats are of greater interest and significance than substantive mountains and breathing waters. The scrolls are clearly made much later than the fragment attributed to Dai Jin showing a fisherman resting on his steering oar, tucked behind a rock, now in the Fujita Museum (fig.118). Works of this type and from this early Ming date may well have served as model. Compare for example a vignette in the Freer (fig.119). Next to the Dai Jin fragment (fig.118), the Freer (and by association the Shanghai) handscrolls reveal a later morphological perception. They lack the cohesion which binds the composition together, the gravity which weighs elements down to the ground, that is, the relatively descriptive intent. Nor is the morphology of the Freer work an organic one. Rather, pictorial elements are simply placed side by side in lateral fashion across the paper. There is no interest in spatial interrelationship, in volume or in weight. Elements do not grow out of the earth or sink into the water. They would

appear to have been perceived as aspects of brushwork on paper. This causes dots and strokes, for example, to leap into the blank areas without adhesion.

In **expression** the handscrolls are extroverted, convivial and socially oriented: grinning men gesticulating noisily at each other, waving at the viewer, and large prominent manor houses burgeon with wealth-consciousness.

In **brushwork** there is the lightness of a brush simply gliding on paper, of single-layer brush-swipes, and none of the deep layering sunk into silk or paper which fuse pigment and fabric, as had been common to painting up to Ming times. Not only pictorial elements, but the brushwork itself is detached. Moss dots fly off the ground, leaves drift away from trees, etc. To base our perception of Yuan painting in general and Wu Zhen's style image in particular on these handscrolls has accounted for the lack of clarity in our understanding of the dramatic transition in perception which took place toward the end of the fourteenth century. For it was in the Hongwu era that brush consciousness replaced descriptiveness as focus. A new, script-like approach in painting endowed the erstwhile humble term ink-play, *ximo*, with literal value.

In **quality** the handscrolls appear highly competent. They have the air of original works, and not of copies. There is a sureness which is beholden to no one. There is no instance of the awkwardness of scale as in *Hermit Fisherman on the Autumn River* or as between the added fishing boat and the original reeds in *Hermit Fisherman on Lake Dongting*, nor the illogical confusion of houses, bridges and lack of paths and direction of *Spring Dawn on a Clear River*, consciously archaized works afflicted with hesitations and marred by the unsure hand of second-rate imitators. In the *Fishermen* handscrolls we behold the work of a first rate artist joyfully *creating* his Wu Zhen pictures. He was not imitating anything. In this case the purpose is an artistic or sporting one, and the result a different category of painting from the other inferior imitations prompted by greed.

But this artist could not have lived in the fourteenth century. His works lack all the signs of a physiographic perception and are entirely ideographic. For works of a comparable date we need only compare the album of scenes of *Tiger Hill* associated with

Shen Zhou now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 15).²¹ This album provides a clear counterpart and date to the handscrolls. The scholars and monks on land in the album leaves match the fishermen on water in expression, perception, structural morphology and in the manner of utilizing brushwork. Similarly, the morphology of the houses in their cluttered orientation link the two artists to the same period and artistic milieu. Although the finer features of style point to distinct personalities, the period and School features are identical.

Borrowed weight from historical allusions

The two handscrolls bear pretentious references to past worthies. The Shanghai handscroll is entitled "Fishermen picture, written by *jinshi* Liu Zongyuan (Tang poet, 785-805)," and the Freer one, "In Imitation of (tenth century artist) Jing Hao's Fishermen's Bliss." The Tang poet and the Five Dynasties painter are evoked to lend an extra measure of weight to the scrolls, to add onto the name of Wu Zhen something even more antique. But there is in fact no basis for either claim.

The reference to Jing Hao should not go unchallenged, as the painting in both versions is clearly derived from the Dong-Ju tradition as it was perceived in the early Ming. The style of Jing Hao on the other hand had been perceived in the fourteenth century as that of an angular type of brushwielding used in the rendering of craggy, jagged rocky peaks. The style of Jing was associated with Guan Tong. It will be recalled that at a time when most literati painters followed the hemp-fibre stroke style of Dong and Ju, Ni Zan alone created a distinctive brush-mode made using the brush at an oblique angle and with the weight on the belly, turning the strokes into L-shaped angles. This, Ni claimed, was based on the brush style of Jing and Guan, and became known as the *zhedai* or folded sash

²¹ When citing untested works, it is assumed that the work is by the author or in his manner and of a later date. That is, the Cleveland album has all the characteristics of being an original work, without the awkwardness of ill-fitting parts, thoughtless repetition of forms and brushwork so typical of poor imitations. But until it has been identified as prime object from close-up study, it is treated here as either a representative of mid-15th century Suzhou painting, by Shen Zhou, or a slightly later creation thereof by an artist with first-rate brushwork and a perception of Shen Zhou's style which is bold and confident so that his works have the air of originals. He is an artist as confident of his painting by whatever name, as the one who painted the *Fishermen* scrolls attributed to Wu Zhen. This is not to say that they are the same man. Rather, that they are of the same period, and of the same general ideographic and social *Weltanschauung*. That is, we are comparing handscrolls by a man active in Shen Zhou's time and probably of his class, with album leaves probably by Shen Zhou. The reference date is the second half of the fifteenth century.

stroke. That is, while Jing Hao's actual style-image was not known, by the fourteenth century it had become perceived among artists and collectors as something angular both in the rock configuration and in the brushwork. It was contrasted to the soft, rounded brush-work of the southern, earthen tradition of Dong Yuan and Juran.²² This brush-mode had become so commonplace by the time of Shen Zhou that it was simply wiped on without further artistic deliberation. The association with Jing Hao in the *Fishermen* scrolls simply cannot stand. Neither scroll is "in imitation of the style of Jing Hao." Yet its perpetrator clearly felt that the name of Wu Zhen would override any possible objections.

The attribution to Liu Zongyuan is equally far-fetched. Among the many late Ming and Qing viewers of these scrolls, the discerning and scholarly Wu Sheng (late 17th c-early 18th c) wrote (about the Shanghai version) in *Daguanlu* (Record of Great Viewings, pref. 1712):

*White paper... In the scroll there is the Fishermen piece which is inscribed as having been written by Liu Zongyuan. I have searched thoroughly through [Liu's collected works] Liuzhouji but have not found this text. How very bizarre! I wonder from what source Zhonggui (Wu Zhen) had copied it. And yet Zhonggui did not even sign his own name either. How very strange! Could it be that Wu) Meiweng had written [the preface text] himself and borrowed the name [of Liu] in an act of cunning deception?*²³

This bit of literary scholarship alerts the art historian to the probability of problems. Aside from strikingly similar methods of composition, calligraphy and brushwielding,²⁴ it is clear that the compositions stem from a single source, and there is a strong likelihood that the two scrolls were made by the same fifteenth century artist. The reinforcing evidence rests on the fact that both handscrolls bear what may be termed outrageous historical allusions, one to Jing Hao a painting style antithetical to his lineage, and the other to Liu Zongyuan a text not found in his collected works. Both errors reflect the same aim and the same problem of the artist: the aim to borrow historical personages to upgrade his

²² For this reason Ni Zan's brush-mode was so outstanding, for he had managed to produce with this angular brush-wielding a most rounded, gentle overall effect which was still southern in feel.

²³ Wu Sheng. *Daguanlu*. National Central Library facsimile version, *juan* 17:75b-77a

²⁴ These observations are made from a study of the photographs alone. I have not studied either scroll in person. I do have excellent slides and photographic enlargements of the Freer scroll, but lack even these of the Shanghai scroll for the study of which I have had to rely on the very unsatisfactory facsimile reproduction by Shangwu yinshuguan.

Wu Zhen paintings, and his imprecise knowledge of Tang literature and calligraphy, or of Five Dynasties painting.

Could the two scrolls have a common creator? Could they have a common genesis? The answer may lie in an early Yuan text. In *Yunyan guoyanlu*, Zhou Mi lists under the art works he had viewed in the collection of a Mr. You,

*Two paintings by Jing Hao of Fishermen's Bliss, each inscribed with several hundred characters of the Fishermen's ci (lyrics), resembling Liu style.*²⁵

Here we find the common source. The phrase *lei Liu ti*, resembling Liu style, refers to the *shu yufuci shubaizi* (inscribed with several hundred characters of the Fishermen's *ci*). This may refer either to the style of the calligraphy, *shu*, in which case Liu can only be the Tang calligrapher Liu Gongquan (778-865).²⁶ Or it may refer to the style of the lyrics, *yuefu* or *ci*, in which case Liu is the Tang poet Liu Zongyuan (785-805). Both men's surname, Liu, is the less common character for willow. For the Tang scholar Wen Tingyun, compiler of the *Jinlianji* (Collected Writings of the Golden Book Satchel) which includes the fifteen original²⁷ stanzas of *Fishermen's Lyrics* or *Yufuci* usually ascribed to the Tang recluse and poet Zhang Zhihe, remarked that the lyrics may have been authored by the worthies, singing companions of Zhang Zhihe "or perhaps written by Liu Zongyuan of Nanzhō."²⁸ However, the lyrics were never published under Liu's name. Since the calligraphy of neither *Fishermen* scroll bears resemblance to the Liu Gongquan style, it is clear that the Ming artist was thinking of Liu Zongyuan as the author of the lyrics.²⁹

²⁵ Zhou Mi. *Yunyan guoyanlu*, 2 juan. YSCB vol.17,no. 152. j.1:54.

²⁶ By the early 12th century, his examples in the Huizong imperial collection the catalogue of which, *Xuanhe shupu* is dated to around 1120, included five works in the regular, formal script or *zhengshu* and five in the semi-cursive script or *xingshu*.

²⁷ For a discussion of Zhang Zhihe's original lyrics in comparison with those inscribed in the *Fishermen* handscrolls under the name of Wu Zhen, see Chen Jingguang, op cit : 143.

²⁸ Wen Tingyun. *Jinlianji*, 7 juan, *bieji*, 1 juan, based on Cao Yuanzhong manuscript of the Ming reprinted in *Wu Tangrenji* (Collected Writing of Five Tang Masters, Mao Jin compiler) published in Shanghai, Yixue shuju, based on the Xiguge version.

²⁹ Although Liu Zongyuan also excelled in calligraphy and in his lifetime was emulated by aspiring calligraphers from the Hunan-Hubei areas, he was more renowned for his scholarship and writings. His calligraphy works were not represented in the *Xuanhe* collection. I.e. in the minds of early 12th century writers, the Tang calligrapher named Liu was undoubtedly Liu Gongquan and the Tang writer Liu was Liu Zongyuan. Zhou Mi's "*lei Liu ti*" confused no one. By the 15th century when the fishermen scrolls were painted, Liu Zongyuan stood almost solely for letters and not for calligraphy.

What were the two paintings which Zhou Mi had thought were by Jing Hao? Each was of "*Bliss of Fishermen*, and each was inscribed with several hundred characters which (in literary style) resembled Liu (Zongyuan)." The Zhang Zhihe lyrics which are inscribed with minor variations in the fishing vignettes in the two handscrolls comprise sixteen stanzas of 7, 7, 3, 3, 7 characters each, totalling 432 characters in all. But concerning the purported model paintings, the Jing Hao scrolls, Zhou Mi was remarkably laconic, clearly unimpressed. He did not note whether the paintings were on silk or paper, with or without colours, or anything of their quality or expression. We know only that he saw two scrolls of the same subject, associated with Liu and Jing. But judging on the basis of the long texts, they may well have been handscrolls. It is beyond the scope of the present study to ascertain the nature and appearance of the two scrolls seen by Zhou Mi as works of Jing Hao, at the home of Mr. You. It is significant only to note here that Zhou Mi saw what he thought were paintings by Jing Hao, depicting joys of fishermen, and whose inscription was related either in calligraphy style to Liu Gongquan, or the lyrics to Liu Zongyuan in literary flavour. This brief entry, it is submitted, was exploited by our Ming artist who made of the information two immortal handscrolls which have been known and admired for the next five centuries as masterpieces representing the best, or friendlier side, of Wu Zhen.

It is highly probable that this artist whom we have met already in *Section III b.1* on bamboo, simply wrote a preface to the somewhat altered Zhang lyrics on one scroll and entitled it, "*Fishermen picture, written by jinshi Liu Zongyuan*," and named the other scroll "*In Imitation of Jing Hao's Fishermen's Bliss*." This way, both scrolls seen by Zhou Mi would appear to be accounted for, or preserved, by Wu Zhen. This sort of freewheeling tomfoolery was a result of characteristic absent-mindedness of its author in the midst of trivial and playful pursuits.³⁰ In the fifteenth century when Wu Zhen had become far more famous than his few surviving works warranted, that is, when his stature had reached the iconic and his works the reliquary status, paintings as contemporary in feeling and as attractive to Ming eyes as these handscrolls were welcome addition to his growing image (and oeuvre!) and, evidently, met with little or no resistance on the part of the collector.

³⁰ See the section on bamboo painting.

Typological Accretion

It is submitted that the image type consisting of jolly fisherman punting, fishing, napping or netting fish is a fabrication of the fifteenth century which has been attached to the name and image of Wu Zhen. That is, from the point of view of Wu Zhen, the original painter and his original prime objects, the *fishermen* handscrolls now in Shanghai and Washington, D.C. are typological accretions. These new image types have accrued around his name much as has the genre of manuals of ink bamboo, in album or scroll format discussed in

B. *Zhongshantu* and the Handscrolls

In the post-face to the Freer version dated to 1352, the artist notes that the painting had been done a decade previously, that is, in 1342, the year of *Fishermen's Idyll*. In Section II I have noted the relationship between this large painting on silk and the small fragment on paper now called *Zhongshantu* or *Central Mountain*, arguing that the two works are too close in brushwielding, in wrist pressure and general configuration of strokes to have been painted six years apart, and that the apparent discrepancy in dates is due to transcription error of a single character in the reign year. I have argued that *Central Mountain* was the central, mountain portion of a handscroll which has suffered damage at the bottom, and to both sides of the fragment.

Here I would like to discuss a probable relationship between the original handscroll which contained the *Central Mountain* fragment, and the *Fishermen's Bliss* handscrolls. Considering the general compositional resemblance in the mountain structure with layered earthen peaks featured in all three works, a case may be presented here

- that the Ming artist owned an original Wu Zhen handscroll which bore an artist's post face declaring that it had been painted in 1342.
- that this handscroll contained the fragment known as *Zhongshantu* or *Central Mountain*.
- that the handscroll featured mountains, trees and waters arranged as we see them in Wu's paintings, strongly affected by a light source.

- that it did not feature fishermen of the type seen in the attributed handscrolls, but that perhaps somewhere in its length there may have been one or two very small boats of the size and relative and insignificance as those in Huang Gongwang's *Fuchun* scroll.
- that our Ming artist, affected by the recluse-turned-fisherman view of Yuan hermits current in Ming perception, decided to supply the world with Wu Zhen handscrolls of such fashionable motifs and, not finding them in the original, used Ma-Xia school works such as the Dai Jin fragment for models. Thus he added lively and contemporary human interest to an otherwise too introverted Wu Zhen lake handscroll featuring layered mountains with moss dots in dark and light ink.

Since Xia Wenyuan had written that Wu Zhen often made copies of ancient masterpieces, it would have been most appropriate for the world to find Wu Zhen working after the manner of great 10th century masters. And in Zhou Mi's text our Ming artist found titles suitable for Ming tastes in Yuan painting: *Fishermen's Bliss*, a romantic allusion to a Yuan type of eremitism no longer correctly understood since the Hongwu period. And the name of Jing Hao, whose style-image stood in contrast to that of the Dong-Ju style of Wu Zhen, did not bother our inventive and creative Ming artist. Basing his creations on the Wu Zhen works in his possession, featuring clearly Dong-Ju derived mountain structure and brush-motifs, he proceeded to create more colourful, more lively vignettes to his own, and other Ming collectors' liking, and finished with the two celebrated handscrolls. To help with authentication, he transferred Wu Zhen's original postface onto the Freer scroll, thus revealing the date of its *model* was 1342, the year of *Fisherman's Idyll*. It is submitted here that the model on which our Ming artist *loosely based* his fishermen paintings was a handscroll painted by Wu Zhen in 1342 which contained the fragment now called *Central Mountain* or *Zhongshantu*..

C. *Dongting yuyintu* and the *Fishermen* scrolls

The *Dongting* painting, as argued in Section III, was originally a minor work in the corpus of early Ming stylistic evolutions in the Sheng Mo tradition. Its left side had been damaged and removed and, about a century subsequently, inscriptions alleging to be Wu

Zhen's were added. These, it has been argued, are based in text and in calligraphy style on the fishermen's lyrics which our mid-Ming artist had inscribed in his *Fishermen* handscrolls.

Here I wish to reconstruct the stages in which *Dongting* received its present appearance:

- that in the early 15th century, a Sheng Mou School landscape was painted by a minor artist. it had no fisherman's boat or inscription on top, but only a signature at the left edge, below the tree. (See reconstruction fig. 220).
- that in the mid-15th century our brilliant artist created his two Wu Zhen fishermen hand - scrolls, among others. The handscrolls received wide acclaim.
- that in the late 15th century or early 16th century the Sheng Mou School picture suffered damage on its left side and the signature portion had to be removed.
- that at this time the mounter, familiar with the "Wu Zhen Fishermen handscrolls," came up with the idea of changing this no longer so valuable Sheng Mou type work into a Wu Zhen painting, Wu having by then risen considerably in esteem and in price.
- that using the *Fishermen* handscrolls as models, artists of the mounter's shop copied the first, the *Dongting* stanza onto the hanging scroll to make it look like Wu Zhen, and made a variation from one of the fishermen-in-boat vignettes. The artistry of the workshop was sufficiently poor to betray the many instances of hesitation in the calligraphy, and the fatal misunderstanding of differences between a fishing reel and a punting pole. But about the waxy nature of the old paper which no longer readily absorbed ink, they could do nothing.
- that the survival of this much transformed painting is due, again, to the iconic status of Wu Zhen, the dearth of and great demand/price for his works and the power of hearsay in traditional connoisseurship.

Appendix v Proportions and Silk-Widths

Examining the proportions of surviving monuments of Song, Yuan and Ming painting, there would appear to be a steady reduction in width, that is, a changing proportion between vertical and horizontal. From the broad murals and wall hangings on silk of early Song, the format of hanging scrolls would appear to have evolved gradually to the slender, narrow landscapes on paper fashionable by the Ming. Tenth and eleventh century wall hangings were often designed for grand halls and vestibules,³¹ and were so painted to withstand viewing from a considerable distance. From Huizong's time onward, with the new interest in fine drawing and more intimate formats such as album leaves, fans and handscrolls, through the Southern Song to Yuan, a shift in brushwork can be discerned which accompanies the change in format and the change in preference from silk to paper, becoming increasingly more refined. The three go hand in hand, as closer viewing renders the brushwork more visible, and raises its interest in the eye of the beholder, himself usually a brush-wielder as well. And as brush flavour is better displayed on paper, silk, and the use of layered wash, gradually gave way to paper and increasingly dry use of ink. Individual strokes, therefore, become increasingly evident, and increasingly important. Hanging scrolls seem to reflect the shifting aesthetics, and would appear to function increasingly as works to be savoured in an intimate, rather than a formal or distant setting.

As an exercise I have calculated the ratios (vertical to horizontal, as N to 1) of all the hanging scrolls registered in the *Gugong shuhualu* j.5, regardless of authenticity, and have found a shift in proportion from an average of somewhere under 2:1 in Song to a clear preference for 2+:1 beginning with Zhao Mengfu and Guan Daosheng, and Zhao progeny including Wang Meng. The slenderizing and elongation of the Zhaos would appear to be rather abrupt within the context of works listed in the SHL, but the problem of precedents lies well outside the present study. For the moment it would appear that the Zhaos' choice

³¹ For an account of the Jade Hall in the Xueshiyuan Examination Hall in the eleventh century, see Ogawa Hiromitsu, "*Inchû no meiga* (famous paintings in the Xueshiyuan)" in *Chûgoku kaigashi ronshû*:23

was a conscious and deliberate one rather than an inherited one, as their proportion does not appear to have had an immediate following and remained isolated examples till the end of the fourteenth century. With the advent of the Wen Zhengming School the ratio developed to an extreme of 3:1, even 4:1 in the 16th century.

A further consideration in this regard is the number of widths of silk needed in early paintings for the broad panels used in screens or wall hangings. It is curious that this point has not been noted by most collectors in the past when it would appear to be rather a crucial external factor in the authentication of early works. It is beyond our scope here to investigate the changing loom-sizes.³² Brief mention may however be made of the *Zuren yizhi* (Traditional Methods of the Carpenter) by Xue Jingshi (fl. early Yuan). In his rather detailed record Xue states that the *lōjizu* loom, which produced fine silks, had a length of seven to eight *chi* and a width of two *chi* four *cun* to eight *cun*, or equivalent of circa 79cm to 92cm.³³ This conversion is subject to adjustment pending more precise evidence on linear measurements of the 1300s. But it would seem safe to assume that the widths did not exceed 100cm, certain not 120cm. Paintings with a width exceeding 100cm, therefore, would seem to have required at least two widths, and when broader, three or more widths for a single work.

These observations are not made in order to set down hard and fast rules regarding authenticity of early works on silk, but are offered as a general reference. It would be more than likely that many forgers were quite aware of this factor. Therefore it would be extremely dangerous to assume that all Song and Yuan attributions exceeding 100cm in width on two widths of silk are genuine.³⁴ On the other hand, it may help to weed out late imitations and identify QUASI ORIGINALS.³⁵

³² This must await the volume on *Textile Technology*, vol IV, Part 31 in the series *Science and Civilization in China* under the direction of Dr. Joseph Needham.

³³ Conversion based on Chen Xiaozhong, et al. *Zongguo gudaidi keji* (Science and Technology in Ancient China), Taipei, 1982:637ff.

³⁴ This would be the same as declaring all Song attributions with a Song or Yuan Imperial seal as genuine - without first having ascertained the authenticity of the seals.

³⁵ As for instance the *Shuangpu guiyu* (Fisherman Returning from the Frosty Shoals) in the Palŕe Museum, Taipei which measures no less than 144 cm across, and is on a single width of very new-looking silk. Structural analysis conducted from photographs alone would have declared the work a typical Yuan creation. It was only direct examination which revealed the pristine condition of the silk, its bright olive-yellow shiny colour, and its stunning single width.

Appendix v Proportions and Silk-Widths

A further consideration is the perennial problem of cropping, a fate which Chinese paintings with a long history would seem bound to encounter at one time or another. Treasured works when damaged enough to warrant major repair, may have one or more sides reduced from a few to many centimetres. Or when most of the work is damaged, only the relatively well preserved portion is saved, and remounted into a different, smaller format. Thus, part of a screen may end up as a single hanging scroll, and part of a hanging scroll may become an album leaf or fan painting. For this reason, attributions with early dates and a narrow format may not necessarily be forgeries, as they may have lost width on one side. Paintings selected are from the Palace Museum, Taipei except where otherwise indicated. Attributions are listed as given in catalogues except with works subjected to examination in this study. It should be stressed that proportions and measurements may not be in accord with their original condition. Works with an asterisk indicate two or more silk widths. The table lists present widths, followed by a number designating the vertical-to-horizontal ratio. As the horizontal value is set at 1, only the vertical ratio is given.

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>ARTIST</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>WIDTH</u>	
<u>PROPORTION</u>					
N. Song	Anonymous	Deer in Autumn Grove, a	S	63.8	1.85
		Deer in Autumn Grove, b	S	64.6	1.83
	Fan Kuan	Travellers in Autumn Mts*	S	103.3	1.99
	Guo Xi	Early Spring*	S	108.1	1.46
	Anonymous	Mother Hen and Brood	P	33.0	1.26
	Li Tang	Wind Mountain Pines*	S	139.8	1.34
	Su Hanchen	Children in Garden*	S	108.7	1.81
	Li Cheng	A Winter Forest*	S	104.0	1.73
	Dong Yuan	Wintry Trees* (Kurokawa)	S	115.4	1.53
	Huizong	A Literary Gathering*	S	123.9	1.48
S. Song	Chen Juzhong	Wenji Returns to China*	S	107.7	1.36
	Anonymous	Lotus & Waterfowl* (Tokyo)	S	90.9	1.65
Yuan	Zhao Mengfu	Old Tree, Bamboo and Rock	S	48.2	2.06

Appendix v Proportions and Silk-Widths

	Scattered Trees and Rocks	P	28.3	1.91
Guan Daosheng	Bamboo and Rock	P	28.8	3.03
Zhao Yong	Picking Water Chestnuts	P	35.1	3.06
Zhao Lin	Evaluating a Horse	P	30.1	3.17
Wang Meng	Spring Ploughing	P	37.2	3.35
	Fisher on Flower Stream	P	56.7	2.18
	Dwelling in Qingbian Mtns	P	42.2	3.34
Fang Yai	Ink Bamboo	P	36.6	3.14
Li Shixing	Bamboo, Rocks & Pine*	S	106.4	1.70
Gu An	Bamboo and Rock	S	53.0	2.30
Li Rongjin	The Han Palace*	S	108.7	1.44
Zhu Shuchong	Autumn Mountains	P	26.4	2.63
Dai Chun	Mount Lu	P	50.9	2.30
Cao Zhibo	Mountains After Snow	P	56.4	2.29
	Twin Pines	S	57.4	2.23
"Juran"	Autumn Mountains*	S	103.8	1.45
	Cherished Companions*	S	101.0	1.67
Wu Zhen	Twin Junipers*	S	111.4	1.61
	Fisherman's Idyll*	S	95.6	1.84
	Bamboo and Rock	P	42.5	2.13
"Wu Zhen"	Spray of Bamboo	P	32.7	3.24
	Bamboo in Wind (Freer)	P	32.8	3.34
	Spring Dawn*	S	100.6	1.14
	Fisher of Lake Dongting	P	57.6	2.49
	Fisher on Autumn Rivr	S	88.5	2.13
Fang Congyi	Divine Mntns and Woods	P	55.7	2.15
Chen Ruyan	Woodsmen/Lofu (Clvld)	S	53.3	1.98
	The Jing River	S	52.7	2.45
Xu Ben	Mountains of Shu	P	27.3	2.42

Appendix v Proportions and Silk-Widths

Ni Zan	Rustic Thghts (Crawford)	P	97.5	1.42	
	Woods After Rain	P	37.6	1.68	
	Rongxi Studio	P	35.5	2.10	
Ming	Wang Fu	Tree,Bamboo , Rock	P	34.5	2.26
	Xia Chang	Bamboo in Wind	P	43.3	3.17
	Shen Zhou	Night Vigil	P	21.8	3.88
	Wen Zhengming	Spring in Jiangnan	P	30.0	3.53
		Old Trees by Waterfall	S	59.3	3.27
		Walking w Staff	P	25.1	4.25
	Chen Shun	Peonies	P	33.3	66.6
Qian Gu	Snow South of City	P	26.5	4.40	
Lu Zhi	Fisher on Flower Stream	P	26.8	4.44	

It may become evident from the above that authenticity aside, the format of hanging scrolls whether on silk or paper, is seen to shift from broad to narrow, and the ratios show a steady increase, indicating steady attenuation of the format. The average width of circa 100cm or Northern Song would appear to have been reduced by the Ming to circa 25cm or one quarter its original measurement. The intimate interrelationship of the format with the cultural ambiance, changes in interior architecture of the respective periods would appear to justify further serious study in future.

Appendix vi. Measurement and Condition of *Mozhupu* Leaves

Following are measurements in centimetres recorded in *Gugong shuhualu* and *Yuan sidajia* published by the National Palace Museum, Taipei, and the actual measurements of the leaves in the *Mozhupu Ink Bamboo Manual* as found in facsimile reproductions by Nigensha Ltd. of Tokyo, which match the dimensions of the originals. Dimensions given by the museum are on the left, actual dimensions on the right.

<u>Leaf</u>	<u>Catalogue entry</u>	<u>Actual dimension (vertical x horizontal)</u>	
Title	Both leaves: 38.0 x 53.1	<i>Wangu:</i>	38.0 x 52.9
		<i>cong</i>	38.0 x 51.2
Preface	Both leaves: 41.4 x 51.5	1*#	41.3 x 51.7
		2*#	41.3 x 52.2
Illustrations	All leaves: 40.3 x 52.0	3*	40.4 x 51.8
		4*	41.8 x 52.1
		5* ³⁶	40.2 x 51.9
		6*	40.3 x 52.1
		7*#	40.6 x 52.0
		8*#	40.6 x 51.8
		9*# ³⁷	40.8 x 51.9
		10 ³⁸	40.3 x 51.9
		11*	40.6 x 52.3
		12	40.4 x 51.9
		13*#	40.8 x 52.6
		14*#	40.2 x 51.1
		15	39.6 x 51.3

³⁶Paper of a markedly lighter, pinkish tone.

³⁷Lighter, creamier paper with its own original backing, upon which the original brushwork intrudes. I.e. this leaf had been patched and repaired prior to the painting.

³⁸Paper condition perfect. No backing or repairs visible. Unique example.

Appendix vi. Measurement and condition report of *Mozhupu*

16	40.3 x 51.9
17 ³⁹	40.0 x 50.8
18 ⁴⁰	40.5 x 52.1
19 ⁴¹	40.4 x 51.8
20* ⁴²	41.3 x 52.2
21	40.2 x 51.1
22	40.3 x 51.3

* The backing paper of a dark buff colour is visible across the top and sides, sometimes also across the bottom, to fill out dimensions of original. Most sheets are damaged along the upper left, leaving a ragged edge.

Retouching at top or bottom, in calligraphy or in painting, crosses over into the buff-coloured backing paper.

³⁹Creamier paper. There is a paper seam or joint (3.1cm from the left). Paper seams are unnecessary for albums, but indispensable for handscrolls.

⁴⁰Same paper as Leaf 17. Perfect condition save for upper right hand corner where a ragged edge reveals a backing paper that is more olive in tone than those backing other leaves.

⁴¹Paper similar to Leaf 17. Perfect condition save for upper left hand corner where ragged edge reveals buff coloured backing paper.

⁴²Retouching at top and bottom. Ragged upper lefthand edge. The extra backing causes the extra size.

Appendix vii The Problem of "Copies After Wu Zhen"

Paintings described as a "copy of Title N by Master X" in the artist's inscription would appear to be outnumbered only by works more freely rendered "after the brush spirit of Master X." While the latter reveal more of Master Y, author of the free variation on a theme as it were, of composition N, the self-declared close copies have been treasured by collectors as having both the splendour of Lost Masterpiece N by the very ancient Master X, and the admirable brushwork of the less ancient Master Y. Psychologically such works afford a triple union, linking two great masters of distant periods to the present owner or viewer.

For the art historian, however, implicit assumptions of direct links in each case between Masters X and Y, would appear to be highly imprudent. Consider for example the common practice of regarding works in 20th century collections as "Tang tracing copies of Wang Xizhi" and thereby declaring a direct image transference between the present survival and an original image of sixteen centuries' vintage. The art historian, it would seem, must attempt to distinguish the parts in the painting which are Master Y's EVOLUTIONS or ALTERATIONS on the style or composition of Master X, and which parts are more faithful duplications, which I have termed QUASI ORIGINAL. Moreover, he must determine the nature of the model which Master Y believed to be the hand of Master X.

Yao Shou's *Copy of Zhao Mengfu's Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River*, now lost, which he painted in 1476 (fig.193), compared to Zhao Mengfu's *East Mount Dongting* (fig.192), demonstrates shifts in structural morphology between the early fourteenth and mid fifteenth centuries and illustrate what I have termed EVOLUTION, where basic structural morphology has evolved into new perceptual principles, principles so basic to Yao's vision that he translated them even into a close copy:

-The groundplane takes a Z-shaped double bend. The foreground is seen from above, while the background is seen from below. In the Yuan painting the entire scene is viewed from the same, elevated viewpoint.

Appendix vii Problem of "Copies After Wu Zhen"

-The background mountains in the Yuan work reveal a continuous path (slightly cropped on the right?) which leads now seen, now hidden, from the water into deep distance. The comparable section in the Ming work, seen from beneath, does not show paths.

-The background mountains in the Yuan work do not block or delimit the horizon. Behind them are, to the left, far distant low-lying hills and to the right even further, hoary peaks shrouded in mist. In the Ming landscape, the background mountains serve to screen off the picture, forming a vertical terminus for the horizon.

-The scale undergoes radical transformation, reflecting the basic shift in values. In the Yuan work all is subsumed under the larger landscape, the reverberation of hills and breathing of the waters (shimmering in dark and light done in dense and sparsely grouped wavy lines), in Ming it would appear that, as in the Renaissance, it is the individual items which are of foremost interest. These are now brought forward and enlarged. Note the out-sized boat and fisherman. Also, the foreground trees do not bracket the water but occlude it, and the intervening space becomes white paper. Had the boat in the Yuan work been as close to the foreground as the Ming work, structural evidence of the time would indicate that it would not have assumed the same relative value in context of the foreground repoussoir and trees. Cf. *Idyll*.

An interesting example of evolving perception of models is Liu Jue's copy of Wu Zhen's landscape (fig.194). Compared to Yao Shou's evolved, even more altered, transformation of Zhao's landscape, Liu's would appear to be a fairly close copy which, on the whole could serve, if all prime objects were lost, as a QUASI ORIGINAL. It is only in minor details that we see ALTERATIONS, that is unwitting changes in morphology, caused by a loss of understanding of the model:

-Subtle flattenings in spatial perception have crept into the cascades (left centre and right). They do not flow close to the ground (see *Twin Junipers*, fig.39a), meandering in a physiographic or realistic manner, but have become black calligraphy strokes in the middle of white spaces.

-The trees on the high peaks are slightly outsized.

-Those emerging from clouds to the right are too clearly articulated and have failed to indicate their ground level⁴³

-The right side is flattened by the decorative clouds and the vertical cascade, rendered in the same frontal manner as Hand B in *Autumn River* (figs.120c, 121).

These might indicate some of the adjustments the art historian makes when examining a close copy.

In case of the album after great ancient masterpieces, most of which are lost, *Xiaozhong xianda* (Great works manifested in reduced copies) by Wang Shimin (or Wang Jian) with Dong Qichang inscriptions on each facing leaf, two examples of "copies after Wu Zhen" (figs. 195a, 195b) may be reviewed briefly here to demonstrate the methodological problem concerning the model for Wang. And the models behind *those* models.

Fig.195a, is a copy in ink on silk of *Guanshan qiuji*, (Clearing in the Autumn Mountains) ascribed to Wu Zhen. In structural morphology the parallels with Liu Jue's copy of a Wu Zhen landscape are marked. The layered mountains rising behind each other in zigzag formation are seen from an elevated perspective, throughout, and the concavities enhanced by a use of *chiaroscuro*. It is possible to determine the volumetric or physiographic rendering in the model. The compositional type is related to that behind another Jiangnan, Juran-related Yuan landscape, *Qiushantu*, which is now preserved in a close copy by Hand A (fig.60, or fig.10).

Some post-Yuan features in Fig.195a include the cascade (right side) which, in especially the top part, has been rendered relatively flat and thoroughly visible like a mountain path, and not twisting and is flanked with shrubbery as streams. Another late feature is the insertion of "floating houses" in between peaks, without describing their real space (centre). This is seen in Dai Jin and Shen Zhou, and imitations of Yuan paintings. Whether this flattening derives from Wang himself, or from his model, is a moot point.

The prevalence of sumptuous mansions may be noted with a question mark regarding sources. They are tucked down discreetly beneath mountain crags (lower left) and

⁴³Cf. the *Hua Mountain* album leaves by Wang Lü, of the Hongwu era. Cf. Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, pls.1-2.

beneath trees. But their actual space, like the group of huts in the centre, is not described. On the whole, however, it would appear that the *model* for Wang's fig. 195a, was a 14th century composition.

The same cannot be said for fig.195b, however. The model behind this unnamed landscape after Wu Zhen could not have been of Yuan origin due to its Ming structural morphology. Like the Yao Shou copy (fig.193), and *Spring Dawn* by Hand A (fig.126, or fig11), the model reveals a zig-zag bend in the recession, where the foreground is viewed from a relatively elevated vantage point but the mid-background mountains are seen head on and from a lowered vantage point. There is altogether less physiographic resonance, and the scale exhibits an interest in individual elements over one in the totality of the landscape, a feature still preserved in 195a. Note the enlarged boat, and the protruding manors to the right, the enlarged T-dots for "distant trees". The vocabulary, again, recalls *Autumn Mountains* (fig.60 or 10) with the meandering path, the pair of deciduous trees bent over the water, under which a boat moors. The morphological transition between *Autumn Mountains* and *Spring Dawn* (Figs. 10 and 11) would appear to have been duplicated in the two so-called Wu Zhen models for Wang Shimin's figs. 195a and b respectively. That is, while *Guanshan qiuji* was probably modelled after either a prime object or a quasi-original of the early Ming, the second unnamed landscape was clearly a copy of a Ming ALTERATION. This latter model was not, like *Spring Dawn*, a freewheeling creation of the ACCRETION type which is quite removed from both the Yuan and from Wu Zhen, but an evolutionary copy of a Yuan model, done with some care, though not line-by-line, scale-for-scale.

Allowing for the morphological transformation which a seventeenth century perception brings to an old painting like Fan Kuan's *Travellers in Autumn Mountains*, and allowing for an otherwise fairly truthful copy, the model behind 195b represents for the art historian a useful record of Ming perceptions of Yuan. The handling of the mountains and trees may be termed a Ming EVOLUTION of the Yuan-designated Yuan style, while its large boat and water-occluding tree may be termed Ming ALTERATIONS, and the manors to the left a Ming ACCRETION. In sum, what Dong Qichang and Wang Shimin (or Jian?)

Appendix vii Problem of "Copies After Wu Zhen"

considered to be paintings from the hand of Wu Zhen were probably neither of them prime objects, but bear each a particular set of relationships to the prime object which indicates its structural and stylistic distance.

Appendix viii The Problem of Wu Zhen Seals (fig.198)

Time and space prohibit a full investigation into the art and technique of seal carving and the analyses of seal pastes through the centuries. However, it would seem justifiable to introduce here a few observations on some of the seals attributed to Wu Zhen which have been impressed on the works examined. The standard pair of seals are, top, square relief : Meihua'an, and bottom, square intaglio, Jiaying Wu Zhen Zhonggui shuhuai. The photographs in fig.198 are not to scale either with regard to actual size, or in mutual relationship. In actual size they are all nearly identical size, although, as can be seen, no two are the same.

1. Seals impressed with calligraphy identified (in Section IIe) as that from Wu Zhen's hand are a. *Idyll* and b. *Bamboo and Rock*.⁴⁴ It may be reasonable to assume that these two pairs of seals were used by Wu Zhen himself. A major change in the second set is the central character of the bottom nine-character seal, *zhong*. In the *Idyll* seal, the first stroke overlaps the second. In the *Bamboo and Rock* seal, the reverse is true.⁴⁵ Moreover, the carving of the intaglio is much more rounded. Lastly, there is a slight dent in the left side. In the top seal, two openings along the border are subject for copy as well: one is above the Mei, the other is to the left of -an. We may term these Wu Zhen's early and late set of seals, or his silk and paper seals.

Seal set c. is that used in *Spring Dawn*. The bottom 9-character seal features the Zhong like Wu Zhen's earlier or silk seal. But it is not identical however.

Seal set d., *Spray of Bamboo*, would appear to be fairly close copies of prime set, set b. The fractures along the borders of Meihua'an includes the slight hook inward along the left border, and the dent along the edge of the bottom seal, as well as the reversed stroke sequence in Zhong, reveal close study of the model. But the interior shapes of the elements are different, and the carving of the intaglio is harsh and angular in comparison.

⁴⁴In this exercise I have omitted the less common seals such as Qulu, which features in *Mozhupu* and which has been added onto *Twin Junipers* after 1742.

⁴⁵ Seal characters enjoy a leeway in character configuration and stroke-sequence not permitted other scripts.

Seal set e. *Hermit Fisherman on an Autumn River* would appear not to be closely related to prime examples either in configuration or in carving.

Seal set f. *Mozhupu*, would appear to be modelled on set d. of *Spray*, and prime set b There are the same sets of fractures and dents, but not exactly in the same places, nor of the same relative size. The Zhong is in reversed stroke sequence, but the angle is cut very sharp.

Seal set g. is from *Autumn Mountains*. It is in bright red seal paste; the carving is whole, without any fractures or "worn spots."

Seal set h. *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting*, like that of e. *Autumn River*, would appear to be less observant of prime examples or Hand A. The Zhong is of the latter or paper type.

Seal set i. *Central Mountain*. Spurious seal on genuine painting, this set represents yet another variation of the latter or paper set.

Appendix ix The Problem of Xiang Yuanbian Seals on Major Paintings

Over the past years several scholars have paid considerable attention to the problem of Xiang Yuanbian seals. These have been recently summarised in the master's thesis of Chung Eun-Suk.⁴⁶

Her work has benefitted from the experience and material help of Na Zhiliang of the National Palace museum and her thesis supervisor, who has over the years gathered invaluable material on the problem of the Xiang seals.

Ms. Chung gives a succinct and comprehensive outline of the Xiang genealogy beginning with Yuanbian's great grandfather, filling the chart to include three generations of each of Yuanbian's two uncle as well as his own father down to the children of each of Yuanbian's six sons. Xiang Yuanbian himself did not attend the *jinshi* examinations as had his brothers but began collecting from his sixteenth year, and managing his family's properties. In other words he was not a scholar but a financial expert and an art collector and dealer. His calligraphy collection of important pieces was given numerical codes,

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Chinese Culture University degree, 1983, and published in the Wenshizhe company's *Yishu congkan* series as *Xiang Yuanbian zhi shuhua shoucang yu yishu* (Xiang Yuanbian's art collections and his art), Taipei, 1983.

Ms. Chung put together a great deal of information hitherto not under one cover. It is a labour of love which took four instead of the usual two years to complete. For the massive details the field should be most grateful. Earlier studies include,

Stephen W Bushell, *Chinese Porcelain, Sixteenth Century Coloured Illustrations with the Chinese Manuscript Text by Xiang Yuanbian*, 1908;

Michael Burdeley. "The Tribulations of Xiang Yuanbian's Album" in his *The Chinese Collector Through the Centuries: From the Han to the 20th Century*, Tokyo, 1966

Na Zhiliang, "Xiang Zijing jiqi yinzhang" (Xiang Yuanbian and his seals), Taipei Dalu Zazhi, Vol 13.8:258, and

Wen Tongwen, a. "Xiang Yuanbian qianwen bianhao shuhua mukao" (Study of the cataloguing system based on the Thousand-Word Classic) Taipei, *Dongwu daxue yishushi jikan* 9:155, 1979

Wen Tongwen, b. "Xian Yuanbian mingxia Jiaochuang jiulu bianwei tanyuan" (An investigation into the authenticity and sources for the book, *Nine Records by the Bamboo Window* attributed to Xiang Yuanbian).

Huang Junshi, "Xiang Yuanbian yu Suzhou huajia" (Xiang and Suzhou painters), University of Kansas, 1981 To this list I would like to add:

Zhang Heng (Congyu). *Zenyang Jianding Shuhua* (How to authentic calligraphy and painting), notes from lectures delivered at the Central Academy of Arts published in H.K. (n.d.), which includes a section on the problem of collectors' seals (p.14) and six pairs of Xiang Yuanbian true/false seals in the illustrations, however without exegesis.

while the major paintings were catalogued along the character sequence of the *Qiqnziwen* or the *Thousand-character-treatise*. Ms. Chung gives several lists of the Xiang collections including one listing those works so ordered which were recorded in ancient or contemporary collection catalogues. The publishers have kindly reproduced all the Xiang Yuanbian seals in their original size, in red, in a separate section of the book. There are sections on Xiang's own artistic creativity, on his social circle and fellow collectors and connoisseurs as well as Suzhou artists with whom he was close. Then there are handy lists of collection seals used by Xiang Yuanbian and Xiang Shengmuo as culled from extant and literary sources. A section is devoted to his various methods of cataloguing painting and calligraphy. Then follows a section which reconstructs Xiang Yuanbian-related art works in separate lists of calligraphy, painting, collective scrolls or albums, ink rubbings, and works in the Gugong collection bearing his seals. There is also a section of works on which a purchasing price had been affixed by Xiang, divided into calligraphy and painting. For this vast and complex indexing Ms. Chung relied on ancient and contemporary written sources, and has listed every entry in its categorical, chronological and personal order, without however considering the probability of the work or seals' authenticity. This, however, is beyond the expectation of a preliminary vast survey of this sort.

It is for this same reason, however, that the relatively inexperienced student must exercise some caution and keep the following points in mind:

1. Ms. Chung mentions only six works in the Palace Museum collection which bear "forged Xiang seals", and this is quoting from previous cataloguers of the Palace collection in the *Gugong shuhualu*. She has not made a personal visual investigation of the seals.

2. Beyond these already acknowledged forgeries she does not discuss the problem of forging Xiang seals, or the obvious benefits for forging them. Therefore, while there are many lists in this book detailing the manner of Xiang's collecting and the works which have ostensibly passed through his hands, the "fish eyes" have not yet been sorted from the "pearls" and we cannot say with certainty that any work in some of these lists had been in Xiang's collection.

3. Although the seals are reproduced at some effort, their provenance is not listed,⁴⁷ rendering their value virtually nil in terms of authenticity (of the seals). This is reprehensible as nearly fifty years ago C.C. Wang and Victoria Contag have demonstrated the crucial role of such notation.⁴⁸

4. Although reproduced in the original size, they are reproduced all in the same printer's red, rather than the various shades and tones of red of the original seal paste colours, something which can be significantly revealing.

5. A further annoyance is the lack of correlation with the numbers given by the Wang and Contag, and those in Na Zhiliang's multi-volume compilation, necessitating for the serious researcher time-consuming search through the two works for a comparison.

I find most useful the lists of works on which there are Xiang register marks, in numerals or *qianziwen* characters. For these are more likely to have been truly part of Xiang's collection, and the seals on these works have been used as the "standard" in my research.

Here it may be noted that the registered works, judging by those still extant, are all of very high quality, revealing Xiang to have had if not academic prestige, certainly a very keen eye and refined taste, something which Dong Qichang noted on several occasions.⁴⁹ The paintings with *Qianziwen* register marks include among the 79 works Chung discovered (numbering up to the 975th character of the text), the Red Cliff (registered as *ji*, character no. 707) by Wu Zongwuan of the Jin dynasty and Zhao Mengfu's Autumn Colours on the Qiao and Hua Mountains (registered as *qi*, character no.702) in the Palace Museum. Being only five characters apart they may have been collected in the same period in Xiang's life. It must be noted here that of the 79 works discovered of the original (at least) thousand, Wu Zhen was not represented. This does not mean that Wu Zhen was

⁴⁷ This has been the principal and major drawback of the six-volume *Signatures and Seals of Artists, Connoisseurs and Collectors on Painting and Calligraphy since the Tsin Dynasty* compiled by Na Zhiliang, published by Cafa in Hong Kong, 1964.

⁴⁸ See Wang and Contag, *Seals of Chinese Collectors of the Ming and Qing Periods*, (Shanghai, 1940), enlarged edition, Hong Kong, 1964.

⁴⁹ See Chung, *op cit.* chapter Two.

not represented in the 900 other works so registered. But it does throw into some question the various Wu Zhen attributions bearing Xiang seals.

As Ms. Chung herself was careful to point out, Xiang's collection or sales records have not survived, and there may have been other methods of recording works which passed through his hands. But if we were to study extant paintings, comparing the non-registered works which constitute the vast majority of Chung's Grand Total list, with those extant works bearing the registry marks, it soon becomes clear that there is a measurable and significant difference in quality of the painting. The vast majority of the former include problematic attributions whereas those with registry marks are among the world's finest Chinese paintings.

It may be significant that on Wu Zhen's Primary Objects there are no Xiang seals, and that all his accretions bear them - but all without registration marks. This would suggest that Xiang did not come across the few prime objects which have survived, and that he would certainly not have collected the accretions, comparing their quality with his registered works. A possibility exists that Xiang did not bother to register works he collected for sale only, considering them of a lower order. This, in the case of the genuine works by Wu Zhen who has here been established as a truly major painter, would not have applied, especially since Wu had been a fellow townsman of Xiang, from Jiaying. However, accretions bearing the Wu Zhen name, being of an inferior artistic order, may very likely have come into Xiang's hands, but considering Xiang's highly discerning eye, would not have merited his registry mark.

Logic alone does not make a case, however, and we may proceed now to some seal comparisons.

I propose to compare the more reliable Xiang seals as found on a registered painting such as the *Red Cliff* (registered under the character *ji*) and, as a test, those impressed in the *Mozhupu Ink Bamboo Manual* which has over its 22 leaves some 20 different seals in over 100 impressions, with some duplications per leaf. Fig. 199 illustrates selected seals photographed from actual-size facsimile reproductions of both works, with relevant examples, side by side. Here while the photographs are not to scale, the mutual

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relationships between the seals are to scale, and illustrate on the one hand the common practice of reproducing seals to the original size and, on the other, the failure on the part of imitators to achieve its exact configuration, and reproduce the knifework quality.

When examining the "same" seal in one of the registered works against *Mozhupu* or an equality inferior specimen as *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting*, it becomes clear that the carving, placement and impressions are notably inferior in the Wu Zhen attributions. As an indication of the methodological problem with seals, I will reproduce below only a few of the "same" seals which it has been convenient to photograph in close proximity from the admirable life-size reproductions by Nigensha Ltd. for comparison. It is not an exhaustive study but the tip of what may be an immense iceberg, and rich material for urgently needed further investigations. Below is a chart of the seals, numbered as they appear in the most numerous example, the *Mozhupu*, with their possible correspondences in the other works:

Mozhupu	Dongting	Red Cliff	Autmn Colrs
1. Tianlaige	v	v	v
2. Xiang shuzi	v	v	v
3. gongbao shijia	-	-	-
4. Molinzi	v	v	-
5. zisun shichang	v	v	v
6. shenpin	-	v	v
7. Xiang Yuanbianyin	v	v	v
8. Xiang Zijingjia zhencang	v	v	v
9. Zijing fuyin	v	v	-
10. Molin biwan	-	-	v
11. Molin shanren	v	v	v
12. Xiang Molinfu biji zhiyin	v	v	v
13. Xiang Molin jianshangzhang	v	v	v
14. tuimi	-	-	v
15. zisun yongbao	v	v	v

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16. Zijing	-	v	v
17. Ji'ao	v	v	v
18. Roshui xuan	-	-	-
19. Zuili Xiangshijia baowan	-	v	v
20. shenyou xinshang	v	v	v

The thirteen Xiang seals in *Dongting* are all represented here. But many on the two registered works are not. It is interesting to note that 3, *gongbao shijia* and 18, *Roshuxuan* are not impressed on what I would submit as works actually in Xiang collection, the *Red Cliff* and the *Zhao Mengfu* handscrolls. This is not a comprehensive survey, and I have not included reference numbers to Wang and Na. The focus of this exercise is not a catalogue, but a critical comparison of seals which purport to be genuine. Xiang Yuanbian's seals number between 60 and 70 different ones. The wording is different and shapes are different. It is reasonable to assume that in such a case a man will not have an "identical" duplicate of his own seals made, but would rather commission a new one, where changes are freely made, such as in Wu Zhen's 9-character seal on paper (see Appendix viii) there being no need for him to imitate, as it were, himself. Therefore I submit that when two seals which appear to be the same but in fact show differences, that an assumption of imitation to deceive must be made.

In a modest exercise comparing "identical" seals from four scrolls, two of high quality and with Xiang registration marks, and two of middling to low quality without Xiang registration marks, I have found that while those of the registered works are truly identical, of visibly high quality in carving and impressed with care as to placement in the overall composition and in fullness of impression, the same cannot be said for the two unregistered works. There is good reason to assume that the latter were forged seals. See figure 199 for a comparison of Xiang seals from his famous *Red Cliff* scroll and those from the *Mozhupu*, taken from facisimile reproductions keeping the original size. These photographs therefore show to true relative scale. The poor quality of the *Mozhpu* seals next to those on the *Red Cliff* is indisputable. The relationship between the thirteen seals

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affixed in the *Hermit Fisherman of Lake Dongting* and those in the *Mozhupu* , open new
areas for study which lie beyond the present task.

Addendum

Due to technical malfunction, a portion of the text regarding periodicity in bamboo painting became lost from the file during printout.

In essence, reference is made to archaeological monuments of bamboo painting in the temple murals and banners. Three examples are compared, all of the five-leaf cluster variety, and note is made of the subtle shift in tilt of groundplane, becoming increasingly higher, flush to the painting surface, in Ming.

Fig.138a, illustrates the earliest example, in Yonglegong, completed in 1358.

Fig.138b, is that of the Baoningsi Temple, completed in the mid-fifteenth century. The top line of the leaf is now less curved, making the leaf more frontal. The difference lies in the little curve toward the tip, seen in the Yonglegong example.

In fig.139, we see the final completion of frontality. This is from the silk banners preserved in the Dongyu Jiyimiao Temple in Shanxi, with a date of 1508.