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Santa Barbara

Local Landscapes: Fa Ruozen (1613–1696) and the Making of Conquest Identities
in Early Qing China

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History of Art and Architecture

by

Henning von Mirbach

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Local Landscapes: Fa Ruozhen (1613–1696) and the Making of Conquest Identities
in Early Qing China

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by

Henning von Mirbach

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ABSTRACT

Local Landscapes: Fa Ruozen (1613–1696) and the Making of Conquest Identities in Early Qing China

by

Henning von Mirbach

This dissertation recovers the Qing “collaborator” and painter Fa Ruozen (1613–1696), a literati from Shandong province. Through Fa, it problematizes traditional scholarly approaches that privilege accounts of “national” memories produced by Ming loyalists and foregrounds instead what united artists from both sides of the political spectrum, namely the widespread turn to picturing the locale and its capacity to serve as a site of personal and collective memory key to individual and group identity formation.

Following the establishment of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), commemorative landscape paintings took pride of place in artists’ oeuvres. In the 1660s, the new regime executed over seventy literati for recording their memories of the fallen Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

Known as the Ming History Case, this brutal episode gave additional weight and urgency to the act of recording memories. The dissertation contends that Fa Ruozen responded to the traumatic dynastic change and imperial censorship by turning to the well-established genre of commemorative landscape painting. For instance, he painted a series of cloudy mountains

that commemorated his parents. He employed seriality as a strategy to create place-based memories rooted not in the built environment but in natural landscape. By repeating specific natural features across paintings, Fa Ruozhen imbued local landscapes with recollections of family, friends, and cultural history. Where imperial commissions celebrated national events, designed to consolidate Manchu rulership, Fa's artistic practice aimed at reconstructing collective literati identities of the conquest generation by elevating memories of friends and family.

Strikingly, the same strategies are evident in the landscapes of painters who are usually seen as the ethical antithesis to early Qing officials: those who remained loyal to the Ming dynasty such as the artist Xu Fang (1622–1694). The dissertation argues that the commemorative landscapes of the early Qing became a vibrant site for the negotiation of conquest identities. They provided a medium for artists to construct continuities across political and dynastic divides, pointing to the vitality of the genre in a period of rapid transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

Born under the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Fa Ruozhen 法若真 (1613–1696) was a painter, calligrapher, and poet who lived into the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Like anybody else of the conquest generation, he experienced the upheavals of the dynastic transition, but unlike most artists of his time, he chose to work for the new Qing government.¹ Fa hailed from a literati family in Jiaozhou 膠州 in eastern Shandong province (fig. I.1). His father served as a minor official during the Ming dynasty and was stationed in Suzhou when the Ming fell. After the fall of the Ming, the father did not join the Qing administration, but Fa Ruozhen took and passed the imperial exams in 1646, setting himself up for a successful career in public service. This ended abruptly in 1669 when he was fired over a financial scandal that also brought down his colleague and friend Zhou Liangong 周亮工 (1612–1672). For the following ten years, Fa tried unsuccessfully to be re-employed by the state. During that time, he painted his earliest surviving works. Invited to participate in the Outstanding Scholars of Vast Learning (*boxue hongci* 博學鴻詞) examination of 1679, he did not take the exam because of poor health and an ill foot and instead chose to move back to his native Jiaozhou where he lived until his death in 1696.

¹ The term conquest generation, first introduced by historian Lynn A. Struve, is now largely accepted to designate the cohort of literati born between 1610 and 1630 who came of age during the tumultuous years of the late Ming and the early Qing; see Lynn A. Struve, “Chimerical Early Modernity: The Case of ‘Conquest Generation’ Memoirs,” in Lynn A. Struve, ed. *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 335-380, esp. 347-352.

In Europe and America, Fa Ruozen is primarily known for a distinctive style of landscape painting that foregrounds mountains bathed in mists, of which his hanging scroll *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* (*Yunyan diezhang tu* 雲煙疊嶂圖) in the collection of the Östasiatiska Museet in Stockholm is his best known work (fig. I.2). Art historian James Cahill had discussed Fa Ruozen's work in a presentation given at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1978.² Later, the painting was exhibited in the landmark exhibition *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555–1636*, held at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1992-1993, thus bringing Fa Ruozen to the attention of a larger audience.³

I first encountered the work in Zhang Hongxing's exhibition *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting 700–1900*, held in 2013-2014 at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.⁴ Installed between *Landscapes in the Manner of Old Masters* (*Fanggu shanshui tu ping* 仿古山水圖屏) by Wang Jian 王鑾 (1598–1677) on the right and *Bamboo and Rocks* (*Zhushi tu* 竹石圖) by Zheng Xie 鄭燮 (1693–1765) on the left, Fa's painting could not have stood out more prominently (figs. I.3 and I.4).⁵ Wang Jian's series of landscapes, with their learned and repetitive use of the brush, coupled with his occasional use of strong colors, represented seventeenth-century ideals of orthodoxy in painting. With its scarce and expressive

² James Cahill, "Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen," paper presented at the Cleveland Museum in 1978; see <http://jamescahill.info/the-writings-of-james-cahill/cahill-lectures-and-papers/222-clp-4-1978-qawkwardness-and-imagery-in-the-landscapes-of-fa-jo-chenq-cleveland-art-museum> (last accessed Oct. 3, 2022).

³ See Wai-kam Ho, ed., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555–1636* (Kansas City, MO: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1992), 1: 407.

⁴ Zhang Hongxing, ed. *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting, 700-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2013), 303.

⁵ Wang Jian's series of hanging scrolls and Zheng Xie's *Bamboo and Rock* are illustrated *ibid.*, 284-287 & 314.

brushwork, on the other hand, Zheng Xie's *Bamboo and Rocks* represented individualistic painting trends that had started in the seventeenth and continued into the eighteenth century. Installed in between, Fa's overwhelming hanging scroll naturally took a middle position. With its brushwork, the painting distantly recalls previous masters, but at the same time, Fa's approach to composition, his brushwork's overwhelming vitality, and the incredibly fluid and transforming appearance of mountain masses are testimony to a unique and very personal painting style. While many seventeenth-century painters aimed to create strange or original (*qi* 奇) landscapes, a quality that art historian Shih Shou-ch'ien 石守謙 regards as the defining quality of the period's painting style, Fa's ability to make rocks appear as if they were transforming into clouds stands out even by the period's standards.⁶ This quality earned him the qualification by earlier Chinese critics to have formed a "school of his own" (*ziqu chengjia* 自取成家).⁷

Apart from the painting's vision of transformation, the second most captivating aspect of *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* is its abstractness. The painting displays nature only. There is no recluse, no literatus, no donkey rider, and no woodcutter to be encountered. Even traces of human presence, such as a hut, a temple, a boat, or even a simple pathway are absent in this transforming vision of nature. In fact, a closer look reveals that this idiosyncratic feature singles Fa Ruozhen's oeuvre out even among the more abstract painters of his time, such as Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636), who methodologically constructed

⁶ Shih Shou-ch'ien 石守謙, *Shanming guying: Zhongguo shanshui hua he guanzhong de lishi* 山鳴谷應中國山水畫和觀眾的歷史 (Taipei: Shitou, 2017), 258.

⁷ Fei Jingyu 費經虞, *Yalun* 雅倫, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995) [hereafter: *XXSKQS*], 1697: 298.

his landscapes out of modules and whose work displays only the “most minimal adherence to natural appearances.”⁸ While Dong’s landscapes are also devoid of humans, Fa went beyond Dong’s emptiness and, with the exception of some works, systematically omitted every trace of human presence. This emptiness and abstractness present a particular challenge for the interpretation of Fa’s work.

Fa’s mature brush idiom, achieved in the late 1680s, with an emphasis on heavier types of brushwork and darker ink tonalities, contrasts to the lighter and more refined types of brushwork propagated in Nanjing by artists such as Fan Qi 樊圻 (1616–1694) and Ye Xin 葉欣 (fl. ca. 1640–ca. 1670), and among artists of the so-called Anhui school working in idioms derived from the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) painter Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301–1374).⁹ Although Fa’s strong dark-light contrasts resonate with the work of Gong Xian 龔賢 (1619–1689), Fa’s brushwork indicates a distinct personal, and maybe northern idiom. Since the Five Dynasties period (907–960), landscape painting had conceptually been separated into northern and southern styles. That ideas about regional identities expressed through brushwork still carried currency in the late Ming and early Qing dynasty is exemplified with a remark by Tang Zhiqi 唐志契 (1579–1651) who, in his *Delicate Remarks on Matters of Painting* (*Huishi weiyan* 繪事微言), commented that “paintings resulted from regional

⁸ Chin-Sung Chang, “Wang Hui: The Evolution of a Master Landscapist,” in Maxwell K. Hearn, ed., *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632–1717)* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 102.

⁹ On the popularity in Nanjing of the light painting style associated with Fan Qi and Ye Xin, see Shih Shou-ch’ien 石守謙, *Cong fengge dao huayi: fansi Zhongguo meishu shi* 從風格到畫意——反思中國美術史 (Taipei: Shitou, 2010), 311.

differences” 畫以地異。¹⁰ Fa’s brushwork, which is reminiscent of the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) master Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1020–ca. 1090), who also hailed from the north, may therefore be a deliberate artistic choice to express a distinct northern identity.¹¹

Fa Ruozhen is known as a painter of landscapes and the overwhelming majority of his works are landscape paintings. However, his art is much more diverse than is generally known. His oeuvre encompassed paintings of cranes for which he was lauded by leading Qing officials (see Chapter Two). He also painted flower-and-rock paintings as well as portraits (see Chapter Four). Most of his paintings appear to have remained in Shandong until the end of the Qing dynasty; subsequently, they were sold within and outside of China. It is likely that many of his paintings were lost in the turbulences that roiled China during the twentieth century.

The dissertation’s larger scope

The dissertation reconstructs Fa Ruozhen’s life and contextualizes his work based on historical records. It also aims to rectify some misconceptions commonly found especially in the English literature on the artist. For this, I draw on several sources that are directly related to Fa. First, several primary sources exist that contain his writings. There is his *Brief*

¹⁰ Tang Zhiqi 唐志契, *Huishi weiyán 繪事微言*, in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu 中國書畫全書* (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1992), 4: 60.

¹¹ Despite the fact that he was born in Henan, Guo Xi is today often counted as a painter from Shandong; see, for example, James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982), 5. This association is probably due to the fact that Guo Xi is counted as a follower of Li Cheng 李成 (919–967), who hailed from Qingzhou in today’s Shandong Province.

Account of the Life of Yellow Hill (Huangshan nianlüe 黃山年略) which contains an autobiographical account ordered by year.¹² In addition, there is his poetry collection *The Retained Poetry from Yellow Hill (Huangshan shiliu 黃山詩留)*.¹³ There is also a collection of writings which has only recently been published, Fa's *Collected Works from Yellow Hill (Huangshan ji 黃山集)*.¹⁴ Secondary scholarship on Fa Ruozhen is rare. In addition to James Cahill's aforementioned paper, Fa's biography has been recently established,¹⁵ and two Chinese master's theses have been written on his poetry.¹⁶ In 2018, a master's thesis on Fa's landscape painting was written in Taiwan.¹⁷

Although Fa Ruozhen is the focus of this dissertation, its scope is larger, as it attempts to rethink the art of landscape painting of the “liminal moment” of the early period of the Kangxi 康熙 reign (1661–1722), that is the 1660s to 1690s.¹⁸ Previous scholarship has

¹² Fa Ruozhen 法若真, *Huangshan nianlüe 黃山年略*, in *Beijing tushuguan cang zhenben nianpu congkan 北京圖書館藏珍本年譜叢刊* (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999) [hereafter *BJTSGCZBNP*], 72: 639-741.

¹³ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan shiliu 黃山詩留*, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu: jibu 四庫全書存目叢書: 集部* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997) [hereafter *SKCM-ji*], 212: 198-688.

¹⁴ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan ji 黃山集*, in *Qingdai shiwen ji zhenben congkan 清代詩文集珍本叢刊* (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2017) [hereafter *QDSWJZBCK*], 60: 399-557 and 61: 1-140.

¹⁵ Pei Zhe 裴喆, “Fa Ruozhen nianpu jianbian” 法若真年譜簡編, *Nanyang shifan xueyuan bao (shehui kexue ban) 南陽師範學院報(社會科學版)* 8, no. 11 (2009): 76-83.

¹⁶ Li Xiaoqian 李曉倩, “Fa Ruozhen shige yanjiu” 法若真詩歌研究 (MA thesis, Liaoning daxue, 2013); Liu Wan 劉婉, “Qingdai huizu shiren Fa Ruozhen shenshi jiaoyou jiqi ‘Huangshan shiliu’ yanjiu” 清代回族詩人法若真身世交遊及其《黃山詩留》研究 (MA thesis, Xi’nan minzu daxue, 2017).

¹⁷ Shi Weicheng 史偉成, “Fa Ruozhen (1613-1696) de shanshuihua yanjiu” 法若真 (1613-1696) 的山水畫研究 (MA thesis, Guoli zhongyang daxue, 2018).

¹⁸ The term is used by Wu Hung to describe the odd temporality between two successive dynasties, nominally justified by the transfer of the Mandate of Heaven, before the transition has been fully recognized and acquiesced; see Wu Hung, *Chinese Art and Dynastic Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022), 231.

primarily looked at the landscape paintings of that period from the perspective of the so-called Ming loyalists or “left-over subjects” (*yimin* 遺民). Their landscapes have been read as expressions of mourning about the fall of the Ming dynasty. Alternatively, they have been interpreted as a form of subtle protest against the establishment of the new Qing dynasty by foreigners, the Manchus. Such studies have inquired about the meaning of landscapes that mediate the relationship of individual artists to the Ming and to the Qing dynasty, a relationship which Jonathan Hay terms the artist’s “subjecthood.”¹⁹ Such interpretations are situated on what is called hereafter the national level of interpretative possibilities.

To employ terms like “nation” or “national” in the context of seventeenth-century China is not unproblematic. Scholarship has sufficiently elaborated on the idea of the nation-state and tends to posit it as a term thoroughly connected with the advent of modernity, or in the case of China in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Drawing attention to the difficulty to define the term nation, historian Prasenjit Duara writes:

[History] allows the nation-state to see itself as a unique form of community which finds its place in the oppositions between tradition and modernity, hierarchy and equality, empire and nation. Within this schema, the nation appears as the newly realized, sovereign subject of History embodying a moral and political force that has overcome dynasties, aristocracies, and ruling priests and mandarins, who are seen to represent merely themselves historically.²⁰

¹⁹ Jonathan Hay, “Posttraumatic Art: Painting by Remnant Subjects of the Ming,” in Peter C. Sturman and Susan S. Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China* (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2012), 78.

²⁰ Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4.

Because of the term's connotation with processes of modernization, intellectual historians have worked to distinguish the modern nation from ancient empires.²¹ Consequently, historians of late imperial China choose instead to speak of the Ming and the Qing empires or states.²² However, since the English language lacks an adjective to sufficiently differentiate between state and nation and only offers the adjective "national" (contrary to, for example, German, which distinguishes *national* and *staatlich*, and French, which distinguishes *national* and *étatique*), the term national level is used to denote the dialectical relationship of the artist with the state.

The national level has proven to be a preferred framework of analysis in the history of Chinese painting. The extent to which it has permeated the interpretation of painting is perhaps best exemplified with a juxtaposition of two landscape paintings of extraordinary pictorial instability. A trend in seventeenth-century painting, artists often created unstable compositions in which rocks sit precariously on mountain tops that threaten to topple over. Such paintings certainly conveyed the period's taste for the strange and novel (*qi*). At the end of the Ming dynasty, Wu Bin 吳彬 (1573–1620) had painted *A Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines* (*Qianyan wanhe tu* 千岩萬壑圖), which exemplifies the surging interest in pictorially instable compositions (fig. I.5). Beyond that, however, a painting like *A Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines* is also believed to express thoughts about the self and

²¹ See, for example, Ge Zhaoguang, "L'Empire-Monde fantasmé," translated from Chinese into French by Philippe Uguen, in Anne Cheng, ed., *Penser en Chine* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2021), 94.

²² For the recent scholarly intervention by Timothy Brook who used to employ the term empire, but now prefers to speak of the "Great Ming State" (*Da Ming* 大明) and the "Great Qing State" (*Da Qing* 大清), a terminology that he situates in a historical continuity derived from the Yuan dynasty, see Timothy Brook, *Great State: China and the World* (New York: Harper, 2020).

the state. James Cahill has explained Wu Bin's images of instability to reflect a sense of the politically turbulent times of the late Ming, and this despite the fact that Wu Bin was a court painter and thus worked for the court.²³ Painting approximately seventy years after Wu Bin, Fa Ruozhen made *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains*, which presents a highly unstable composition as well. Here, mountain masses do not seem to topple over but appear to dissolve into clouds (fig. I.2). But while Fa's painting was also done during a period in which the Kangxi emperor still aimed to establish his authority, James Cahill has focused on the painting's cloud imagery and read it as an auspicious and Qing-celebratory sign based on the fact that Fa had chosen collaboration over resistance.²⁴ In one instance, Cahill read a late Ming unstable composition as a reflection of political insecurity; in the other, he interpreted an early Qing unstable composition as celebrating the state. Such seemingly contradictory findings exemplify to what extent the national level has been reified as the unexamined analytical framework to interpret paintings.

In the context of the Ming-Qing transition, the national level as an attractive analytical framework has been adopted because it figures prominently in the surviving literary sources of the Ming loyalists. Literary historian Philip A. Kafalas, for example, noted about the famous writer and Ming loyalist Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1648?) that in his preface to *Dream Reminiscences of Tao'an* (*Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶), Zhang "often gives the impression that the choice was simply between suicide and a dreadful, dangerous, and barren existence beyond the reach of Manchu authorities, branded with the stigma of not having died with the

²³ James Cahill, *The Distant Mountains: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Dynasty, 1570–1644* (New York: Weatherhill, 1982), 179–180.

²⁴ Cahill, "Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen."

last Ming emperor.”²⁵ The deeds committed, the language employed, and the ideas expressed in the writings of Ming loyalists led historian Ho Koon-piu 何冠彪 to title his book *Life and Death: The Choice of Ming Dynasty Scholars*.²⁶ And literary historian Wai-ye Li has noted how the writings of Ming loyalists and survivors are permeated with distinctions between “Chinese” and “barbarians” which again shows how literati of the conquest generation defined themselves in relation to the state.²⁷ Certainly, the appeal to adopt the national level as an analytical framework and to center scholarly accounts on the loyalty to an indigenous dynasty and on the opposition to a repressive, foreign invader is tied to the strong convictions and beliefs that are articulated in these post-1644 writings and that are also reflected in many artworks of the time.²⁸ In art history, scholarly inquiry for the last fifty years has equally focused on the issue of Ming loyalism. Perhaps one of the most prominent paintings in that regard is *Self-Portrait in Red Landscape* (*Zhuse zihuaxiang tu* 朱色自畫像圖) from 1644 by Xiang Shengmo 項聖謨 (1597–1658) (fig. I.6). With its red landscape, the image is probably one of the most famous expressions of loyalty towards the land of the fallen Ming dynasty. Since the imperial family bore the surname Zhu 朱, a

²⁵ Philip A. Kafalas, *In Limpid Dreams: Nostalgia and Zhang Dai's Reminiscences of the Ming* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2007), 22.

²⁶ Ho Koon-piu 何冠彪, *Sheng yu si: Ming ji shidafu de jueze* 生與死——明季士大夫的抉擇 (Taipei: Lianjing, 1997).

²⁷ Wai-ye Li, “Introduction,” in Wilt L. Idema, Wai-ye Li, Ellen Widmer, eds., *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 2-3.

²⁸ Such accounts are also closely mirrored in the study of Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) painting. After the fall of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), the Mongols took over China and established the Yuan dynasty (1271/79–1368). Painting of that period is also often read against the political backdrop of dynastic change and artistic resistance. Zheng Sixiao's 鄭思肖 (1241–1318) rootless *Ink Orchid*, signed with his style name “South-facing Old Man” (*Suonan weng* 所南翁), is the prime example for such a reading; for a reproduction and recent discussion of the work, see Wu Hung, *Chinese Art and Dynastic Time*, 233-4.

character which also translates into “red” and/or “cinnabar,” the implication is that the painting depicts the land of the Ming.²⁹

A critical review of the historiography of early Qing landscape studies, however, reveals that the field has focused nearly exclusively on the art of the Ming loyalists and on the art of resistance. The result is a glaring lack of scholarly attention paid to painters who cooperated with the Qing dynasty or who became, for lack of a better word, “Qing collaborators.” The art and collecting activities of some, such as Wang Duo 王鐸 (1592–1652), Cheng Zhengkui 程正揆 (ca. 1604–1670), and Zhou Lianggong, have attracted significant study.³⁰

Nevertheless, such studies are relatively few in comparison to the work done on loyalists, and also focus on questions of subjecthood and how the artists and collectors used art to negotiate their relationship with the new Qing state, thus again using the national framework of analysis. It is worth asking which values underlay this kind of analysis and which ideologies have shaped the reading of early Qing landscape painting to such a powerful degree.

²⁹ For such readings, see the catalogue entry by Cai Yixuan 蔡宜璇 in *Yuemu: Zhongguo wanqi shuhua* 悅目——中國晚期書畫 (Taipei: Shitou, 2001), 2: 70; the catalogue entry by Seokwon Choi in Sturman and Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse*, 168; Wu Hung, *Chinese Art and Dynastic Time*, 235-237.

³⁰ Alan Atkinson, “New Songs for Old Tunes: The Life and Art of Wang Duo” (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1997); Hongnam Kim, “The Dream Journey in Chinese Landscape Art: Zong Bing to Cheng Zhengkui,” *Asian Art* 3, no. 4 (1990): 11-29; Hongnam Kim, “Chou Liang-kung and his ‘Tu-Hua-Lu’ (Lives of Painters): Patron, Critic and Painters in Seventeenth-Century China (PhD diss., Yale University, 1985) and Hongnam Kim, *The Life of a Patron: Zhou Lianggong (1612–1672)* (New York, N.Y.: China Institute in America, 1996); Qianshen Bai, *Fu Shan’s World: The Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003).

It seems to me that two discourses—one Western on the romantic image of the resisting artist, and one Chinese on loyalty (*zhong* 忠) and political integrity (*qijie* 氣節)—have joined hands and contributed to the formation of this scholarly emphasis on, or academic obsession with, the *yimin*. As an academic discipline, Chinese art history was constituted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and reinvigorated after the Second World War (1939–1945). Crucially, the discipline was shaped by art historians trained in countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and notably the United States.³¹ In Western societies, developments since the eighteenth century saw the rejection and replacement of imitative (Lat.: *imitatio*) art by “creative” or “inventive” (Lat.: *inventio*) art that purposefully contravened existing rules in order to satisfy desires for the new.³² Art historians and sociologists alike have tried to explain the role of the artist and his or her special role in society since the early modern period. Peter Burke, for example, has argued that Renaissance artists were representatives of a new sense of individuality that was characteristic for early modern societies and actors.³³ Norbert Elias has contended that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s (1756–1791) subjective independence from societal norms ultimately resulted in the composer’s failure since Austrian society was not ready for such developments.³⁴ Out of such conceptions of novelty developed the romantic idea of the artist

³¹ For a brief account of the development of Chinese art history as an academic discipline, see Wu Hung, *Chinese Art and Dynastic Time*, 1-4. For a study of the often neglected impact of Japanese scholarship of the 1920s on the formation of Chinese art history as an academic discipline as practiced in China, see Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, “The Japanese Impact on the Republican Art World: The Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field,” *Twentieth-Century China* 32, no. 1 (Nov. 2006): 17-26.

³² For a succinct account of the historical development of the “field of art” in Western societies from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century onwards, see Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Erfindung der Kreativität: Zum Prozess gesellschaftlicher Ästhetisierung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2019), 54-89.

³³ Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

³⁴ Norbert Elias, *Mozart: Zur Soziologie eines Genies* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991).

as a social actor who is situated and acts in opposition to existing mainstream society.³⁵

Historians of Chinese art who had been trained in what is broadly referred to as the West must have held an underlying esteem for artists who created art in opposition to hegemonic power structures.

In addition to this unspoken acknowledgment of and esteem for artists who “spoke truth to power,” Chinese art history was also shaped by discourses inherent to China itself. Already under the lead of the Qianlong 乾隆 emperor (r. 1735–1796), attempts had started to denigrate so-called “turncoats” or “twice-serving ministers” (*erchen* 貳臣) of the early Qing such as the prominent poet and Ming and Qing official Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664).³⁶ The pervasive late-imperial “culture of loyalty” on which such attempts could build and which, in turn, continued to be promoted by Qianlong, perpetuated century-old political ideals of integrity and loyalty.³⁷ Concepts of loyalty and political integrity continued to have societal relevance in the early twentieth century and were taken up by Republican era (1912–/1949) painters and art critics alike. Confronted in their own times with great political instability both internally—the abolition of the imperial system and a foreign dynasty, and externally—the encroachment on Chinese territory by foreign powers, artists like Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 (1864–1955), for example, used references to both Song and

³⁵ See, for example, Wolfgang Ruppert, *Der modern Künstler: Zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte in der kulturellen Moderne im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), 232-33.

³⁶ Lynn A. Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict, 1619–1683: A Historiography and Source Guide* (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 1998), 61.

³⁷ For the late imperial culture of loyalty and its advent, see Chiung-yun Evelyn Liu, “Embodied Virtue: How was Loyalty Edited and Performed in Late Imperial China,” in Wai-ye Li and Yuri Pines, eds., *Keywords in Chinese Culture* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2019), 219-267.

Ming dynasty loyalists as a way to reflect on the work of “Chinese patriots who had worked to rid the country of the alien Manchu-Qing.”³⁸ Curiously, the role of the mid seventeenth-century loyalists was therefore elevated in terms not unlike that of the modern artist in the West: albeit predicated on different ideals, artists were praised for their ability to speak out, criticize, or distance themselves from the current political hegemonic structures.³⁹

After the Chinese Civil War (mostly 1927–1937 and 1945–1949) and the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 by Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976) and the Communist forces, many intellectuals and art collectors left China and emigrated to Taiwan under the control of the Kuomintang (Guomindang 國民黨) nationalist forces, British-controlled Hong Kong, or the United States of America. At a time when the cultural policies of the newly founded People’s Republic dictated the making of new art that utilized “folk styles” that “capture[d] the customs of the masses,” it must be suspected that processes of self-identification with their seventeenth-century peers, who had survived a comparable situation of regime change and intellectual persecution, resonated with some mid-twentieth century Chinese intellectuals.⁴⁰ Wang Shijie 王世杰 (1891–1981), chairman of the

³⁸ Claire Robert, “The Dark Side of the Mountain: Huang Binhong (1865–1955) and Artistic Continuity in Twentieth-Century China” (PhD diss., Australia National University, 2005), 82. For a study on the relevance of seventeenth-century *yimin* painting for projects of artistic renewal within the context of international art competition and the building of a nation-state in early Republican China, see Yanfei Zhu, “Transnational Canon Formation: The Rediscovery of Ming *Yimin* Ink Painting in Modern China, 1900–1949” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2013); see also Craig Clunas, *Chinese Painting and its Audiences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 176-182.

³⁹ Accordingly, Yanfei Zhu defines as *yimin* those “who express their loyalty to the previous regime by committing suicide, fighting against the new establishment, or retreating from society as to avoid serving the new government”; see *ibid.*, 3 with further references.

⁴⁰ For the translation of the directive of the People’s Republic’s Ministry of Culture, issued on Nov. 26, 1949, see Clunas, *Chinese Painting and its Audiences*, 206-207.

Executive Committee in the Republic of China installed after 1949 on Taiwan, wrote in the preface to an exhibition catalogue that accompanied the 1961-1962 exhibition of Chinese art in the US:

Moreover, I also feel strongly that, in these troubled times of ours a fuller understanding of Chinese art and culture by the American people, on whose shoulders rests largely the future of the free world, assumes a new significance. This exhibition may also serve as a reminder that the free Chinese are fighting to save their cultural heritage as much as to recover lost territories.⁴¹

This quote shows that art was understood as a means to resist the changes occurring in the PRC. Although Chinese scholars and collectors such as Wen C. Fong and C.C. Wang in their scholarly work were mostly interested in the history of painting from the Song and Yuan dynasties, their intellectual leanings and values must have informed the work of the following generation of art historians, who finally extended scholarly inquiry into the late imperial period and thus also into the seventeenth century.⁴² Jerome Silbergeld, in 1974 writing the first PhD dissertation in English on Gong Xian, for example evaluated the artist's work in the following words: "In this case, the landscape seems not only to reflect the troubled uncertainties of the artist and his times but, at least on occasion, seems to be a medium of outspoken political protest."⁴³

⁴¹ Quoted in Clunas, *Chinese Painting and its Audiences*, 214.

⁴² Until the 1970s, art historians were primarily interested in the paintings of the Song and Yuan dynasty. Only in the late 1960s and early 1970s, scholars started to research the art of the *yimin*. Early attempts focused here on the tracing of stylistic developments; see, for example, James Cahill, "The Early Styles of Kung Hsien," *Oriental Art* 16 (Spring 1970): 51-71.

⁴³ Jerome L. Silbergeld, "Political Symbolism in the Landscape Painting and Poetry of Kung Hsien, c. 1620–1689 (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1974), 4.

The focus on Ming loyalism is not a feature of Western scholarship alone and has permeated studies of seventeenth-century painting in Chinese scholarship, too.⁴⁴ Recent scholarly preoccupation with the topic include a catalogue on the art of Ming loyalists published in Hong Kong,⁴⁵ and an exhibition on the Four Monk painters and loyalist Hongren 弘仁 (1610–1664), Kuncan 髡殘 (1612–ca. 1675), Bada Shanren 八大山人 (1626–1705), and Shitao 石濤 (1642–1707) held in Beijing, which was accompanied by an extraordinarily beautiful eight-volume catalogue at the astronomical price of nearly 10,000 RMB (ca. 1,400 USD).⁴⁶ Such efforts (and monetary value attached to it) show that the *yimin* discourse remains pervasive and continues to attract scholarly attention. It appears that neither Western scholars with their prevalent focus on opposing artists, nor Chinese scholars with their focus on loyalty have stakes in going beyond the rehearsed framework on Ming loyalism. Studies of the art of “Qing cooperators” such as Wang Duo or Fa Ruozhen validate explanatory reflexes that neatly compartmentalize who was on which side of history.

At the heart of this dissertation, however, is the attempt to go beyond this narrative. This is not to say that the national level of analysis is erroneous or should be discarded –

⁴⁴ E.g., Lü Xiao 呂曉, *Biyi Jinling: Erge yimin yishu jiazhu de shanshui yonghuai* 筆憶金陵——二個遺民藝術家家族的山水詠懷 (Taipei, Shitou: 2010); Fu Yanghua 付陽華, “Yidai zhiji de ziwo shuxie: Xiang Shengmo Zhuse shanshui zixie xiaoxiang tu de shenfen jiangou yu neizai jiaolü” 易代之際的自我書寫——項聖謨《朱色山水自寫小像圖》的身份建構與內在焦慮, *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 6 (2020): 127-138.

⁴⁵ Xianggang yishuguan 香港藝術館, ed., *Zhile lou cang Zhongguo shuhua: Ming yimin* 至樂樓藏中國書畫——明遺民 (Xianggang: Kangle ji wenhua shiwu shu, 2019).

⁴⁶ Guggong bowuyuan 故宮博物院, ed., *Gugong cang siseng shuhua quanji* 故宮藏四僧書畫全集 (Beijing: Gugong chubanshe, 2017). The *Exhibition of Paintings and Calligraphies of the Four Monks Collected by the Palace Museum* was held from May, 6 through June 28, 2017, at the Palace Museum in Beijing.

generations of scholars have produced excellent scholarship that remains to be very helpful for understanding the art of the early Qing. As Chapter One shows, the relationship of artists to the state mattered also to somebody like Fa Ruozhen. However, Chapters Two, Three, and Four are not concerned with this question and attempt to uncover layers of meaning that are tied to personal and collective memories that aimed to express a sense of the self that can be separated from the issue of subjecthood, so pressing for nearly every survivor of the Ming-Qing transition.

Methodology

In order to uncover layers of meaning that are tied to personal and collective memories, the dissertation adopts two methodological approaches. First, by turning attention to the local level, I try to reveal how an artist's relation to local places can uncover his relationship with family (Chapter Three) and friends (Chapter Four). The term local level, with which Chapters Two, Three, and Four operate, is used to designate a social world that can be located at concrete places and/or sites.⁴⁷ It is a term that denotes the embeddedness of an individual in the networks and daily occurrences at a particular, denotable locality.⁴⁸ The national and the local then operate as opposing worlds or frameworks, but attention should be drawn right away to the fact that the national is more abstract in its scope and designates

⁴⁷ Places are considered to be constitutive for spaces “as centers of human meaning” while spaces provide “a situational context for places, but derive[] [their] meanings from particular places”; see Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Place, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford, Berg, 1994), 14-15.

⁴⁸ Such an understanding of the “local” that encompasses “personal relationships, political commitments and a [particular] place” is also articulated in Julia Silverman and Mary McNeil, “Introduction to ‘Art History and the Local,’” *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2022), <https://doi.org/10.24926/24716839.13157> (last accessed Nov. 17, 2022).

the relationship of an individual with the state while the local points to an embeddedness in concrete places and sites that carry significance for the individual since cultural and personal identities are often “bound up with place.”⁴⁹

Second, the dissertation deliberately centers Fa Ruozhen, an artist who chose to collaborate with the Qing, rather than rehearsing more prominently and more well-researched artists. I was first interested in writing a dissertation on the art of the collaborators. However, this would have meant to continue the traditional binary that separates artists into the two categories of collaborators and loyalists. Therefore, the comparison of Fa’s work to that of Xu Fang 徐枋 (1622–1694), also relatively little studied, seemed promising. Xu Fang— together with the writers Shen Shoumin 沈壽民 (1607–1675) and Chao Mingsheng 巢鳴盛 (1611–1680)—is historically known as one of the “three *yimin* within the realm” (*hainei san yimin* 海內三遺民).⁵⁰ His dedication to the Ming cause, out of which resulted his commitment to being a recluse, can be gauged from the preface to his literary collection in which he wrote: “And within the last forty years, the first twenty years I did not enter the city and the market, and the latter twenty years, I did not leave my house and courtyard” 而此四十年中，前二十年不入城市，後二十年不出戶庭。⁵¹ Xu Fang styled himself and is commemorated as one of the persons of integrity of the Ming-Qing transition who remained steadfast to his conviction of remaining loyal to the fallen Ming.

⁴⁹ Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, 15.

⁵⁰ Qin Zuyong 秦祖永, *Tongyin lunhua* 桐陰論畫, in *XXSKQS* 1085: 307.

⁵¹ Xu Fang 徐枋, *Juyitang ji* 居易堂集 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009), 2.

A comparison of Xu Fang's work with that of Fa Ruozen offers the possibility to explore how traditional interpretative horizons, predicated on the distinction of collaborator and loyalist, have oversimplified the analysis of post-1644 painting. Chapters Two, Three, and Four therefore attempt to demonstrate how the works of Fa Ruozen and Xu Fang, despite their differences, have much in common and speak to shared issues and themes that transcend the traditional collaborator-loyalist dichotomy. A comparative analysis of their works aims to show how the adoption of the local level as a frame of analysis can help to see post-1644 landscape painting independent from issues of loyalty and collaboration. Both Fa and Xu addressed similar memories of family members and of the shared historical past in their landscape paintings and their paintings were used to perpetuate these memories. Beyond the perpetuation of memories, however, their works aimed to articulate ideas about the self and what it meant to be a literatus. Their works therefore speak to the broader concerns of a community of scholars of the conquest generation who sought to reconstitute literati communities in the early Qing. Such processes of the reconstitution of literati community have been recognized in the fields of literature and history, but have largely gone unnoticed in art history.⁵²

⁵² For previous scholarship on these dynamics, notably in a transregionally operating scholarly community, see Tobie Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Ying Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics: Masculine Morality in Seventeenth-Century China* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2017); Xiaoqiao Ling, *Feeling the Past in Seventeenth-Century China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019). A notable art historical exception is Bai, *Fu Shan's World*.

Local level, local landscapes, and the thorny question of representation

In order to foreground artists' local experiences and memories, this dissertation is concerned with pictures of particular places. In Chinese painting studies, this is a thorny question since matters of representation and realistic depiction were not considered important. Literati landscape painting from the Five Dynasties period onwards was not conceived as a representation of the phenomenal world, but rather as the embodiment of an artist's mind, character, and world of thought.⁵³ Ever since, the realistic representation of places was more the domain of professional painters and not looked upon favorably by literati painters. Even for the eminent Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) master Huang Gongwang 黃公望 (1269–1354), on whom the actual scenery of the Fuchun Mountains (Fuchun shan 富春山) had a profound impact, the goal was not, in the words of Peter Sturman, “a re-creation of the visually perceptive world” when he painted his famous masterpiece *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* (*Fuchun shanju tu* 富春山居圖).⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the history of landscape painting in China cannot be dissociated from the importance of specific places for artists. There developed several traditions in which places lay at the heart of painting. During the Tang dynasty (618–907), the poet and painter Wang Wei 王維 (701–761) had started a tradition of painting pictures of estates which Richard

⁵³ Famous is the argument, captured in Jing Hao's 荆浩 (c. 855–915) *Note of the Art of Brush* (*Bifa ji* 筆法記), between a painter and an old man who advised the painter to look beyond the external form or “outward appearance” of objects and to grasp their “inner reality”; see Kiyohiko Munakata and Yoko H. Munakata, “Ching Hao's ‘Pi-fa-chi’: A Note on the Art of Brush,” in *Artibus Asiae, Supplementum 31* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1974), 11-16.

⁵⁴ Peter C. Sturman, “Landscape,” in Martin J. Powers and Katherine R. Tsiang, eds., *A Companion to Chinese Art* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2016), 178.

Vinograd has called “landscapes of property” in his study of Wang Meng 王蒙 (1308–1385).⁵⁵ In the early Ming, the travels to Mount Hua (Hua shan 華山), Shaanxi province, impressed Wang Lü 王履 (1332–ca. 1383) to such an extent that he created an album of images of the mountain that stands at the beginning of a tradition of making travel paintings.⁵⁶ This trend developed into a fashion in which works that commemorate trips to actual places increased in popularity over the course of the Ming dynasty and continued to be produced in the Qing.⁵⁷ Also during the Ming, literati painters in Suzhou 蘇州, Jiangsu province, such as Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427–1509) and Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559) started to mediate their experiences of their home region and of concrete places in their paintings.⁵⁸

While literati painters during the Ming dynasty worked on a large range of subject matters in a variety of styles, the art historical intervention of Dong Qichang resulted in a relative narrowing of possibilities for seventeenth-century artists. Formulating his vision of a Southern and Northern School of painting and advising artists to follow the orthodox and scholarly styles of the Southern School, later painters had to struggle with the style-

⁵⁵ Richard Vinograd, “Family Properties: Personal Context and Cultural Pattern in Wang Meng’s ‘Pian Mountains’ of 1366,” *Ars Orientalis* 13 (1982): 1-29.

⁵⁶ Kathlyn M. Liscomb, *Learning from Mount Hua: A Chinese Physician’s Illustrated Travel Record and Painting Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ Li-Tsui Flora Fu, *Framing Famous Mountains: Grand Tour and Mingshan Paintings in Sixteenth-Century China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2009).

⁵⁸ E.g., Jen-Mei Ma, “Shen Chou’s Topographical Landscape” (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1990); Lihong Liu, “Path, Place, and Pace in mid-Ming Suzhou Landscape Painting,” *RES* 67/68 (2016/2017): 207-224; Shih Shou-ch’ien 石守謙, “Jiajing xinzheng yu Wen Zhengming huafeng zhi zhuanbian” 嘉靖新政與文徵明畫風之轉變, in *Fengge yu shibian: Zhongguo huihuashi lunji* 風格與世變：中國繪畫史論集 (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 1996), 263-297.

consciousness of their time if they wanted to be perceived as literati painters. The imitation of historical styles (*fanggu* 仿古) became an important subject matter for many. Other painting subjects such as the depiction of particular places did not fit easily into this schemata and are often considered to occupy a less important place in the work of artists. Tellingly, for example, is the fact that Dong Qichang only once openly claimed to paint the landscapes of actual places—the Yan 燕 (today’s Beijing) and Wu 吳 (today’s Suzhou) regions—and this right at the beginning of his career as a painter.⁵⁹ Peter Sturman observed: “Whatever relevance Dong Qichang perceived in the topography of actual landscape to his painting, it played a decidedly secondary role to the subtleties he perceived in the landscape paintings of earlier masters.”⁶⁰

The bias against the representational character of landscape painting limited artists in their artistic preoccupations. While scarce, Xu Fang’s surviving oeuvre exemplifies this dilemma well. Following the precepts of Dong Qichang, Xu Fang’s style-conscious concerns can be illustrated with his *Landscape in the Manner of Beiyuan* (*Fang Beiyuan shanshui tu* 仿北苑山水圖) which the artist painted in 1685 (cf. fig. I.7). Claiming to follow the style of Dong Yuan 董源 (ca. 934–ca. 962), Xu Fang also adopted the characteristic texture strokes of Huang Gongwang for rendering his mountains. Most prominently used by another follower of Dong Qichang, Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715), Xu Fang’s composition also

⁵⁹ For an illustration of the album *Eight Views of Yan and Wu* (*Yan-Wu bajing tu* 燕吳八景圖), see Shanghai bowuguan 上海博物館, ed., *Danqing baofa: Dong Qichang shuhua yishu* 丹青寶符——董其昌書畫藝術 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2019), 82-85.

⁶⁰ Sturman, “Landscape,” 190.

incorporated a “dragon vein” (*longmai* 龍脈), a compositional device that connects the peaks of mountains in a S-curve.⁶¹ Such art-historically conscious paintings were also popular among collectors. A rare letter written by Xu Fang provides evidence how such images were sought after (fig. I.8):

You, my elder, have previously repeatedly said that Mr. Shi Meici desired to acquire this album; my younger cousin Wu Youqing also delivered the same message in his letter. Therefore, I am letting it go. However, for this album I have to have 12 taels. I never ask for an inflated price for my paintings. If there are others who want my paintings, I am afraid that I would not be able to fulfil their wishes in short time. To be continued, to be continued. Bowing in respect, yours [Xu] Fang.

舍甥吳商志所求畫冊十二幅，非一時所作。必待興會既到，精心殫力，盡致極工而出之，實拙筆所未易得者也。前吾丈再三云，施眉嗣兄欲購拙冊，又家表弟吳幼青札來亦復云然，故割愛馳去。此冊必要精金十二金，僕畫從不索虛價也。若另要求畫，恐一時未能猝成也。不盡，不盡。教枋頓首。

The letter also contains a price list that spells out the completeness of art-historical styles contained in the album:

Dear respectful Daoist Gongcai, I am sending you a painting album with twelve leaves, and hope you can check it one by one. I will send two leaves with colophons later, please accept my reverences again.

First leaf: in imitation of Guan Tong; second leaf: in imitation of Huichong; third leaf: in imitation of Dong Yuan; fourth leaf: in imitation of Juran; fifth leaf: in imitation of Yingqiu [Li Cheng]; sixth leaf: in imitation of Yuanhui [Mi Youren]; seventh leaf: in imitation of [Xu] Daoning; eight leaf: in imitation of Zhongli [Fan

⁶¹ Wang Yuanqi wrote: “The dragon vein within a [landscape] painting [comes in different forms]; [it can be] expanding, tapering, ascending, or descending. All these styles matured in the past yet have not been written down. ... A dragon vein is the source of a painting’s momentum (*qishi*). ... Therefore, if the dragon veins are arbitrarily twisted, faults will appear [in the painting]. If the expanding and tapering [of dragon veins] are cramped and unsound, faults will appear. If the ascending and descending are ponderous and fragmentary, faults will appear.” 畫中龍脈，開合起伏，古法雖備，未經標出。... 處龍脈為畫中氣勢，... 故強扭龍脈則生病，開合逼塞淺露則生病，起伏呆重漏缺則生病; see Wang Yuanqi 王原祁, *Yuchuang manbi* 雨窗漫筆, in *XXSKQS* 1066: 210.

Kuan]; ninth leaf: in imitation of Longmian [Li Gonglin]; tenth leaf: in imitation of Xuesong [Zhao Mengfu⁶²], eleventh leaf: in imitation of Yunlin [Ni Zan]; twelfth leaf: in imitation of Dachi [Huang Gongwang]. [The album] is preceded and followed by two leaves with inscriptions.

公案道翁親丈。付去畫冊十二幅，乞一一點明，尚有題跋二幅。未付，又拜。

做關仝一、做惠崇二、做董元三、做巨然四、做營丘五、做元暉六、做道寧七、做中立八、做龍眠九、做雪松十、做雲林十一、做大癡十二。前後題跋另二幅。

Xu's letter and price list demonstrate that paintings in the style of ancient masters were sought after. Nevertheless, despite the pervasive influence of ideas surrounding the imitation of ancient styles articulated by Dong Qichang, painters of the seventeenth century continued to explore dimensions of place as well. For Xu Fang, for example, painting in ancient styles could also be a means to his professed aim to paint the landscapes of the Jiangnan 江南 (comprising parts of today's Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui provinces) area:

Usually, I like to paint after Jing Hao, Guan Tong, Dong Yuan and Juran. However, in imitating [masters such as] Jing Hao and Guan Tong, I only follow their brush techniques and styles [*fenggu*].⁶³ But when it comes to the compositional layout, placing of pictorial elements, establishing themes, and selecting scenes, I actually follow the mountains and waters of the Jiangnan area.

余平居作畫好仿荆關董巨，然學荆關者惟師其筆法風骨耳，至於分布位置，命意取景，則居然江南山水也。⁶⁴

⁶² Zhao Mengfu's sobriquet is Songxue, but since the original text reads Xuesong, I transcribe it accordingly.

⁶³ *Fenggu*, lit. "wind and bone," a term in traditional criticism pertaining to poetry from the Jian'an 建安 period (196–220). Because it occurs in Xu Fang's text in the context of painting and in combination with brush methods (*bifa*), I have opted to translate the term as "style." Literary historian Fusheng Wu has translated the term as "affective power"; see Fusheng Wu, *Written at Imperial Command: Panegyric Poetry in Early Medieval China* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 224FN28. On the "Seven Masters of the Jian'an Period," see Knechtges's entry in David R. Knechtges and Taping Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1: 428-431.

⁶⁴ Xu Fang, "Ti hua" 題畫, *Juyitang ji*, 271.

In this paragraph, Xu Fang sets out to explain that he is painting in the styles of ancient masters before elaborating that these styles serve to render his actual painting subject: the landscapes (or “mountains and water”) of his local Jiangnan area. Xu Fang thus recognized that artistic style was only one aspect of painting and that it could be meaningfully employed for the rendition of a painting’s subject. In his desire to capture the landscapes that surrounded him, Xu Fang was not alone. A particularly well-developed interest for making paintings that correlated to place can be found among artists active in the two interconnected painting centers or schools of Nanjing 南京 (Jiangsu province) and the Yellow Mountains (Huangshan 黃山, Anhui province).⁶⁵ In response to the works of seventeenth-century painters, art historian James Cahill has therefore distinguished different genres of seventeenth-century landscape painting and differentiated between *fanggu* paintings and topographical paintings.⁶⁶

But while some seventeenth-century paintings are clearly topographical, such as *Qingliang Terrace* (*Qingliang tai tu* 清涼臺圖) by Shitao 石濤 (1642–1707) which contains recognizable representational elements such as the ancient city wall (*shicheng* 石城) of Nanjing (cf. fig. I.9), others require a careful reconstruction of their place-relatedness and cannot be called topographical, or “true-view paintings” (*shijing tu* 實景圖). Especially

⁶⁵ For Nanjing, see Richard Vinograd, “Fan Ch’i (1616-after 1694): Place-Making and the Semiotics of Sight in Seventeenth-Century Nanching,” *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立台灣大學美術史研究集刊 14 (2003): 129-157; for the Yellow Mountains, see James Cahill, *et al.*, *Shadows of Mt. Huang: Chinese Painting and Printing of the Anhui School* (Berkeley, CA: University Art Museum, 1981).

⁶⁶ Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 5.

Chapter Two is concerned with a reconstruction of the elusive place-relatedness in the work of Fa Ruozhen and argues for the power of a repeatedly painted composition to evoke a place without necessarily representing it.

Why local landscapes matter

Although conscious of the dangers of over-simplification, I opt deliberately for a focus of landscapes of local places for the simple reason that any cultural expression occurring after the Manchu conquest operated in a highly politicized environment in which the literati were put to the test. As art historian Fu Yanghua 付陽華 writes, contrary to travel records, images of “home mountains” (*jiashan* 家山) during the Ming-Qing transition carried more dense emotions and significance and were able to express the “sorrow about the fallen homeland” (*shuli zhi si* 黍離之思).⁶⁷ Although this interpretation again aims for an interpretative analysis on the national level, it indicates the importance of local landscapes in the early Qing. Historian Lynn A. Struve has observed that in the early Qing, place assumed “importance not as scene but as *locale*” in which authors of memoirs fused “their personal identities with their home areas.”⁶⁸ The “expansion of gentry society at the local level” in the late Ming, which Timothy Brook observed, meant that the locales were important centers

⁶⁷ Fu Yanghua 付陽華, “‘Jianshang caotang tu’: Ming yimin de shijing shanshui” 《澗上草堂圖》——明遺民的實景山水, *Zhongguo shuhua* 中國書畫 (September 2015): 9. A literal translation of *shuli zi si* would read “sorrow [upon seeing] lush millet [in front of] former palaces”; this is an allusion to the poem “The Wine-Millet Bends” of the “Airs of the Royal Domain”; see Ma Chiying 馬持盈, annot., and Wang Yunwu 王雲五, ed., *Shijing jinzhū jinshi* 詩經今註今釋 (Xinbei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 2017), 107-108; for an English translation, see Arthur Waley and Joseph R. Allen, trans., *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 56-57.

⁶⁸ Struve, “Chimerical Early Modernity,” 354.

for the constitution of identity.⁶⁹ This has more recently also been described by historian Peter Bol in his study of the “localist turn” in the late Ming.⁷⁰ In this dissertation, I want to trace the issue of the impact of the local on an art historical level by focusing on Fa Ruozen and by making comparisons with Xu Fang and examine the significance of artists’ ties to their locales at a time of socio-political collapse and slow reconstitution.

A central argument of this dissertation is that the landscapes of home mattered to artists like Fa Ruozen and Xu Fang because they allowed to formulate personal and shared memories that Fa and Xu, in their own ways, aimed to preserve in order to shape their own literati identity and to transmit these in order to maintain literati identity for the following generation. Fa Ruozen’s and Xu Fang’s paintings thus speak to a desire not only to express themselves and formulate their own identities, but also to function as tools for constructing communities. What communities exactly are is a highly debated question in sociology, but most scholars agree on three elements: a common social class (“social structure”), spatial connection (“space”), and shared interests or values (“sentiments”).⁷¹ In the cases of Fa and Xu, we find two literati artists who were strongly rooted in their respective home regions and who, in their works, spoke to interests shared by the men of their time. Based on individual and shared memories, their works appear to me to have served as tools to

⁶⁹ Timothy Brook, *Geographical Sources of Ming and Qing China* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988), 53; see also Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 185-226.

⁷⁰ Peter Kees Bol, “The ‘Localist Turn’ and ‘Local Identity’ in Later Imperial China” *Late Imperial China* 24, no. 2 (Dec. 2003): 3-6; in contrast to Brook, Bol described the localist turn at the end of the Ming without making much observation on the question of continuity into the early Qing.

⁷¹ Christopher D. Campell, “Social Structure, Space, and Sentiment: Searching for Common Ground in Sociological Conceptions and Community,” *Community Structure and Dynamics at the Dawn of the New Millennium* 10 (2000): 21-57.

reconstitute literati communities after these had been severely damaged during the Ming-Qing transition. Indeed, Xu Fang wrote about the potential of paintings to function as tools for family formation:

It is natural that descendants are bound to hold on to what has been transmitted to them from their ancestors. How much more can calligraphies and famous paintings, moreover, function as family anecdotes; trees and rocks [in a garden] can hardly compare with this.

然若子孫固守其前人之所傳，則自當爾，況法書名畫足為家世故實者，又非樹石之比也。⁷²

While the “famous paintings” (*minghua*) that Xu mentioned may primarily designate famous paintings of the past, he may also have thought about his own works which he transmitted to his descendants. Xu Fang must have understood his paintings to be able to tell stories about collective and personal memories that he aimed to preserve and transmit. What kind of memories Xu and Fa specifically aimed to capture and to transmit is the subject of the following chapters.

⁷² Xu Fang made these remarks in 1681 in an essay that he composed at the occasion of the recovery of an album of ten views of Mount Dengwei which he had painted in 1657; see Xu Fang, “Dengwei huace fuhuan ji” 鄧尉畫冊復還記, *Juyitang ji*, 198.

CHAPTER ONE

The National Frame: Politics of Landscape Painting in the Early Qing

In the seventh month of the *dingwei* 丁未 year (August 19–September 17, 1667), Fa Ruozhen wrote a long scroll of calligraphy entitled *Discourse on Painting* (*Huashuo* 畫說) for his friend Xing Shixi 邢師皙 (style name: Mingshi 命石; sobriquet: Niantai 年臺, fl. ca. 1660s), the grandson of the famous late-Ming calligrapher and Shandong-native Xing Tong 邢侗 (1551–1612) (fig. 1.1). The three-and-a-half meter long handscroll is written in running script (*xingshu* 行書) followed by a poem in hybrid script combining elements of standard (*kaishu* 楷書) and running elements with an archaistic flavor reminiscent of the style of Zhong You 鐘繇 (151–230). Both scripts reveal the stylistic impact of Wang Duo, the leading figure in northern calligraphy circles of the time, on Fa Ruozhen.¹ Wang Duo

¹ Ni Tao 倪濤 (ca. 1669–ca. 1752) explained the preeminence of Wang Duo among calligraphers in the north in the following terms: “Students of calligraphy in the five provinces of Beijing, Shandong, Xi [Shanxi], Qin [Shaanxi], and Yu [Henan] all followed [Wang Duo] and took him as their leader. Shuangbai [Wang Tingbi 王廷璧, 1652 *jinshi*] said: “When it comes to the charm of the unhinged, detached, exquisite, and delicate [calligraphy] of the Jin and [Northern] Wei dynasties, how can those ordinary men have knowledge about it, truly [only] those studying in the north do!” Juesi’s [Wang Duo] characters appear to use force, yet there are those who necessarily miss-recognize his methods as ‘forceful strokes of the brush’ (*tiehua yingou*) and therefore the magic manner [of his writing] is extremely large. Among painters, there have been those from the south and those from the north; this did not use to be the case for calligraphers. Yet coming to our own days, it is true that there is a difference between those in the south and those in the north. Wang Shuangbai said: “Juesi was from Henan, throughout the empire he was both known as a calligrapher and as a respected official, ..., therefore people of the northern five provinces all promoted Juesi as their [Wang] Xi[zhi] and [Wang] Xian[zhi]...” 北京及山東西秦豫五省，凡學書者，以為宗主。雙白曰：「晉魏瀟疏工秀之致，彼中人何能知之，洵北方之學哉！」覺斯字一味用力，彼必誤認鐵畫銀鉤諸法，所以魔氣甚大。畫家有南北派，書家不然，然在今日，則誠有南北之異。王雙白曰：「覺斯、河南人，橫得書家重名，又為尊官，故彼中之嚮往者眾耳，所以北方五省之人，推覺斯為義獻。。。。」；see Ni Tao 倪濤, “Ni Sumen shufa lun” 倪蘇門書法論, *Liuyi zhi yilu* 六藝之一錄, in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書 (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2015) [hereafter: *QDSKQS*], 855: 616. Peng Sunyi 彭孫貽 (1615–1673) in his “Song on

and Fa Ruozhen were closely acquainted since 1646.² Now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, *Discourse on Painting* has previously only been translated in the most cursory manner.³ It is an important autograph that says much about attempts to use painting as a means to fashion the identity of an early Qing official who was faced with the socio-political volatility of the early days of Manchu rule in the 1650s and 1660s.⁴ The text reveals deep-seated anxieties about physical survival and bodily integrity in the context of imperial court policies. In his *Discourse on Painting*, Fa Ruozhen positions the art of painting as an appropriate tool to mitigate these risks and provides fascinating insights into the role of painting as a medium utilized for self-positioning in early Qing China.

Discourse on Painting

Fa's *Discourse on Painting* is written in the form of a fictive conversation not so much on the topic of painting but on the reasons that led to becoming a painter. The scroll's title could therefore also be translated as *Discourse on Becoming a Painter*. Fa's text reads:

the Cursive Script by Wang Duo” also noted Wang Duo’s preeminence in the north: “Calligraphy from the Jiangnan area promotes Dong Zongbo [Dong Qichang]; authentic lines of his are charming, yet lack style. They are not like those of Li Daiwen [d. 1645] from Songjiang, whose elegant bones are glittering and dance like flying white. In the north, however, there is only one who can be named: Wang Juesi [Wang Duo], his authentic traces [of the brush] cannot, when stumbled upon, be trusted; half of them are fake” 江南書推董宗伯，真行姿媚少風格。不如同郡李待問，秀骨珊珊舞飛白。北方盡稱王覺斯，真跡未逢信半疑；see Peng Sunyi 彭孫貽, “Wang xueshi caoshu ge” 王學士草書歌, *Mingzhai ji* 茗齋集, in *Sibu congkan guangbian* 四部叢刊廣編 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1981), 47: 512.

² For a detailed discussion of the relationship of Wang Duo and Fa Ruozhen, see Chapter Two.

³ Cahill, “Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen.”

⁴ The text of *Discourse on Painting* is otherwise unrecorded in Fa Ruozhen’s surviving writings.

Someone said to the painter: “Sir, are you the one who is most skilled under heaven?” The painter replied saying, “No, painters are not the most skilled people under Heaven. One must be the clumsiest one under Heaven; only then can one take up this business.” Those under Heaven who are the most skilled are placed above high-ranking officials at court. These people establish the protection of the country and shoulder the heavy burden of [assuring] safety under Heaven. If they seek benefits for their lives, then it will bring disgrace on them. They hide their conduct under persecution and torture. Therefore, the august of the court [e.g., the emperor] and the countless commoners will not notice their activities. They control chaos, make changes, end dying, and revive life; they mingle with officials and concubines and secretly build up their fame. These, then, are the most skillful people under Heaven.

或謂畫者曰：「先生其天下之至工者乎？」畫者曰：「否，此非天下之所謂工者也，其必天下之至拙者而後事此也。」天下之至工者，位公卿之上，樹社稷之衛，而任天下安危之重。苟利於生，則辱其身，隱其行於刀俎鼎鑊之下，為朝廷之尊、天下人民之眾莫識其動靜。治亂頓易，既死復生，殺於臣妾，陰蓄身名，此則天下之至工者也。

After this, there are bowing high officials who cozy up to and assist [their ruler]. To the presented scholars of writing and morality, these high officials each give an evaluation (*duanchang*) and then they expel them—sometimes far and sometimes close, sometimes the scholars die and sometimes they survive. After this, the high officials will have pleased what they were wishing for in order to raise their own accomplishments and fame. The scholars generally [have worked so hard so that] their bodies die and it will even bring disaster to their dead bodies. Once they are dead, promiscuous and illicit behavior in their inner quarters will rise and ridicule [will rise], and they will be food given to the mole crickets, yet they still do not regret their behavior. Therefore, they can also be called skillful people under Heaven.

其次，傴僂公卿，煬締翊翼，舉文章道德之士，各予一短長而去⁵之，或遠或近，或死或生，而後快其所欲，以自振其功名。士凡天殛其軀，殃其尸，身一死而墻茨興譏，食委蛄蟪，而猶未之悔也，亦可謂天下之工者矣。

Following this, there are those [officials] with stable hereditary benefits who associate with the well-known scholars under Heaven in order to protect themselves. However, those well-known scholars under Heaven cannot see through their tricks, moreover they see them as heroic personalities from Yan and Zhao.⁶ They all assist them and are willing to be used by them. By stealing others' fame and appropriating others' talents, [this group of officials] harm the country's rules of law and treat the

⁵ *Qu* 去, should be read as *qu* 驅, to expel.

⁶ Yan 燕 and Zhao 趙, historic Eastern Zhou period (770–256 BCE) states centered around modern-day Beijing, Shanxi province and Hebei province. Here used to denote the capital Beijing.

life of the people like grass and straw [e.g.: held others' lives cheap]. They fish profits with grouped fishnets and transport money with carriages and sedans and with boats and camels. The borders of their fields are connected with each other, and their houses are painted with clouds of spices. Their children and servants go [around the world] with light steps; they are dressed in colorful embroideries and they use decorated leather gear. They are flamboyant as if they are from haughty families. Their followers lack drinks and food and therefore make noises and call [upon them], bow respectfully and hasten [towards them]. As for the common people and their old friends and those who, in the past, were willing to be used by them: once they had obtained admittance to step into the interior of their gates, they worshiped them, and besides coughing, they will not give them disobedience. These officials can also be called skillful people under Heaven.

其次世祿術術，結天下知名之士以自衛，而天下之士不察其術，且目之為燕、趙豪傑，皆左右之，心樂為其所用。盜其名，竊其器，以壞國家之法度，草菅生民，漁牟組罟，輦貝輿金，舟載駝伏，田連阡陌，屋塗雲椒，子弟倉頭翩躚，錦翠鞞鏤，光瑩驕族，黨徒窮乏飲食，噉叫俯仰趨蹌，即布衣故舊，昔之樂為所用者，得一納屨於門內，而猶辟易，而馨咳之餘，將莫之予違也，亦可謂天下之工者矣。

The *Discourse*'s first part is a ranking of “skillful” people in the world: while the first category of skillful administrators is here genuinely positively connotated with their ability to bring about peace and conduct their business in a restrained fashion that is not necessarily recognizable to everybody, the following two categories of skillful officials carry decidedly negative overtones and are portrayed as scrupulous men who are always looking out for their own advantage. After this, the *Discourse* changes its topic and turns its attention to “the painter” who appears to be the frustrated Fa Ruozhen himself:

The painter had pursued what can be called skillful under Heaven, but he could not attain that category. Therefore, he returned to the things under Heaven that are useless but he himself sees their skillfulness. Therefore, he left for reading books. Although he is skillful in reading books, the study of the Six Classics is not enough to be esteemed by those under Heaven.⁷ Therefore, he left for studying poetry. And

⁷ The Six Classics (Liujing 六經) comprise the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), the *Book of Documents* (*Shujing* 書經), the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經), the *Book of Rituals* (*Liji* 禮記), the *Book of Music* (*Yueji* 樂

although he is skillful at poetry, he dared not finish reading the verses (*shi*) of the “Lesser Elegantiae.”⁸ Therefore, he left for studying painting.

求天下之所謂工者，未可與幾也。而天下之事復無所用而自見其工，則去而讀書。書雖工，而《六經》之學不足重於天下，則去而學詩。詩雖工，而《小雅》之什不敢讀及於終篇，則去而學畫。

Light and dark [qualities of] ink, superior and inferior [qualities of] brushes, fine and low [qualities of] paper, the warm and cold [qualities of] the seasons – all of these cannot be [systematically] assessed, but they can all be expressed through painting. What is more is that people under Heaven have never heard of [a painter] who has been exiled. This is truly how the artless people under Heaven conceal themselves in the techniques of the craftsman-painter. The painter then sighed and said: “Even if I cannot paint skillfully, it also avoids that I am [killed] by the axe. Like this I will also be able to age [naturally].”

墨之淺深，筆之良楛，紙之貴賤，時之寒暑，皆未可較，而皆可以畫稱之。而天下之人亦未聞有過謫者。此誠天下之拙人而藏其身於畫工之術者也。畫者乃喟然曰：「畫不工，其亦免於斧鑕乎，吾亦可以老矣。」

Thus, he shouldered his paintings and went to present them to Mr. Xing [Shixi] from Shandong. Mr. Xing is a grandson of the former Grand Servant, his excellence Ziyuan [Xing Tong]. Ziyuan’s calligraphy and painting were foremost among those under Heaven, but only fifty years after his death, Mr. Xing also thinks about hiding his skillfulness in Chang’an.⁹ He must be the most artless under Heaven without a place to use his skillfulness. He must be without a place to use his skillfulness and therefore can avoid demotion. He must also be [a person] who, through painting, ages naturally and therefore keeps intact the excellence of one who is artless. Alas! May Mr. Xing not discard my clumsiness and replace it with what people under Heaven consider skillful, so that me and Mr. Xing may share clumsiness.

乃負其畫而見山東邢生。邢生者，前太僕子願先生之孫也。子願以書畫甲天下，亡之後纔五十餘年，邢生亦思隱其工於長安。其必天下之至拙而無所用其

記), and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), each representing a particular style of literature and a particular field of ritual activity.

⁸ The “Lesser Elegantiae” (“Xiaoya” 小雅) is a section of seventy-four poems in the *Book of Songs*. Arthur Waley and Joseph R. Allen have identified this as the section most preoccupied with clan allegiances as well as other mechanisms for the maintenance of political and social order. According to Waley and Allen, “feudal obligations to the royal house [of the Zhou] engendered some of the most powerful political laments in the collection, such as in ‘Bringing Out the Carts’ and ‘Diminutive’”; see Waley and Allen, trans., *The Book of Songs*, 131. By mentioning the “Lesser Elegantiae” in his text, Fa Ruozhen expresses himself political lament.

⁹ A general reference to the capital Beijing.

工者也。其必無所用其工而可避其過謫者也。其必亦以畫自老而全其至拙之良者也。嗚呼！邢生其勿去吾拙以易天下之所工，吾與邢生其庶幾共之。¹⁰

The *Discourse*'s second part reveals that for Fa Ruozhen, painting stood in a direct causal relationship with political frustration: only after having failed in many other stations of higher social standing in life, the painter finally chooses to paint. Towards the end, the reader is presented with the benefits that arise from being a painter. Presumably because of the low social visibility that came with this occupation, execution at the government's hands could be avoided. In essence, Fa Ruozhen complained about a failed life in officialdom as well as the dangers of such a professional life. It is an important document to understand the function of painting in the early Qing as a refugium for individual expression, a tool for navigating life-decisions made after the collapse of the Ming in 1644, and a medium utilized for self-positioning. It offers an understanding on how Fa positioned himself both vertically in relation to the court and horizontally to his literati peers and sought to convey the image of a morally acting man.

For Fa, painting was situated beyond the end of the skillfulness-scale that he had drawn up, ranging from the highest to the lower officials at court. Painting, instead, was suitable for a clumsy, inept, or artless (*zhuo*) person. Having pursued skillfulness—that is, officialdom—the painter turns to painting as a way to navigate the pitfalls of an official's life. Predicating his discussion on the binary of the clumsy, inept, or artless on the one hand, and the skillful (*gong* 工) on the other, Fa Ruozhen referred to the “Biography of Dongfang Shuo”

¹⁰ I am grateful for the help of Prof. Xue Longchun 薛龍春 at Zhejiang University who helped to identify certain characters in this scroll.

(“Dongfang Shuo zhuan” 東方朔傳) included in the *Book of Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書) in which the historian Ban Gu 班固 (32–92 CE) had associated skillfulness (*gong*) with political cooperation and “dubious moral overtones” and clumsiness with disinterest, retirement, and reclusion:

[Dongfang] criticized Bo Yi and Shu Qi and applauded Hui of Liuxia. He cautioned his son that getting by is the most important thing. To starve on Shouyang Mountain like Bo Yi and Shu Qi he considered clumsy (*zhuo*), to serve like Laozi as a ‘clerk-at-the-foot-of-the-pillar’ in the palace he considered skillful (*gong*). ‘Eat your fill, walk in safety, work for the government instead of down on the farm, stay in the shade and make sport of the world, be wary of the times and do not get caught,’ he said.

非夷齊而是柳下惠，戒其子以上容，首陽為拙，桂下為工；飽食安步，以仕易農；依隱玩世，詭時不逢。¹¹

With his insistence that painting was suitable for a clumsy person, Fa built on a long tradition of recluses and political outcasts who referred to themselves as clumsy, inept, or artless and who pursued a life in plainness or simplicity. The most famous example is Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (ca. 365–427) who, in the first of his sequel of five “Returning to Dwell in Gardens and Fields” (“Guiyuan tianju” 歸園田居) poems, described how he would “preserve artlessness” (*shouzhuo* 守拙): “Clearing scrub at the edge of the southern moors, / I stay plain by returning to gardens and fields” 開荒南野際，守拙歸園田。¹² While literary

¹¹ Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書 (Tainan: Pingping chubanshe, 1975), 2874. For the slightly altered English translation, see Burton Watson, *Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China: Selections from the “History of the Former Han”* by Pan Ku (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 106.

¹² Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, “Guiyuan tianju wu shou” 歸園田居五首, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu: fu shiwen ju suoyin* 陶淵明集箋注：附詩文句索引 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), 74. For the English translation, see Stephen Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 316.

historian Stephen Owen has translated *zhuo* in this instance as “plain,” music historian Shuen-fu Lin has translated it as “simplicity.”¹³ The term *zhuo*, which can be translated variously, expressed ideas about one’s simplicity, a general sense of aloofness and of being true to oneself.¹⁴ By the late imperial period, the term was used frequently. A famous example is Suzhou’s Garden of the Artless Administrator (*Zhuozheng yuan* 拙政園), or, in Craig Clunas’s translation, the Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician, where initially the Ming official Wang Xianchen 王獻臣 (fl. ca. 1500–1535) sought distance from his unsuccessful political career.¹⁵ In the seventeenth century, the term also took on aesthetic dimensions when *zhuo*, translated as “awkwardness” by art historian Qianshen Bai, had become a desideratum for calligraphers to be expressed in fragmented and idiosyncratic writing styles.¹⁶

What had happened to make Fa Ruozen, a successful early Qing official yet to be promoted to his highest position as the provincial administration officer (*buzhengshi* 布政使) of Jiangnan, to express a desire to reach “artlessness” or “awkwardness” through painting in his *Discourse*? Why was he so harsh with his work environment, and why was he so critical about being an official himself? Why did he seek to distance himself from his career?

¹³ Shuen-fu Lin translates the couplet as “I’ve cleared some wasteland in the southern fields, / Keeping to simplicity, I’ve come back to the farm”; see Shuen-fu Lin, “A Good Place Need Not Be a Nowhere: The Garden and Utopian Thought in the Six Dynasties,” in Zong-qi Cai, ed., *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), 154.

¹⁴ Art historian Katherine Burnett, for example, has argued that the term denoted an “unstudied genuineness” and moral “integrity”; see Katharine P. Burnett, *Dimensions of Originality: Essays on Seventeenth-Century Chinese Art Theory and Criticism* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2013), 99.

¹⁵ Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 23.

¹⁶ Bai, *Fu Shan’s World*, 118-29.

Fa's official career until 1667

When Fa wrote *Discourse of Painting* in the late summer of 1667, he had already both personally witnessed and experienced the vicissitudes of officialdom on manifold occasions. After having written the 1645 Shandong provincial exam (*xiangshi* 鄉試) on the outdated topic of the *Five Classics* (*wujing* 五經) alone (rather than on other classical texts as well), his nevertheless outstanding answers came to the attention of examination officials; consequently, the newly enthroned Shunzhi 順治 emperor (r. 1644–1661) ordered Fa Ruozhen to come to Beijing.¹⁷ According to the early Qing official and literary prodigy Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634–1711), the Shunzhi emperor personally made Fa Ruozhen a *juren* 舉人, a successful candidate in the provincial examination.¹⁸ By means of this imperial “special grace” (*te'en* 特恩), Fa was allowed to pass the 1646 metropolitan exam (*huishi* 會試),¹⁹ and also passed the palace examinations (*dianshi* 殿試) two months later.²⁰ After obtaining his *jinshi* 進士 (palace graduate) degree together with his younger cousin

¹⁷ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 666–667. See also Zhao Erxun 趙爾巽 *et al.*, eds., *Qingshi gao* 清史稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 3159.

¹⁸ Wang Shizhen 王士禎, *Gufuyu ting zalu* 古夫于亭雜錄, *juan* 1, 20b, in *Zhongguo jiben guji ku* 中國基本古籍庫, ed. Beijing Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心 (Beijing: Beijing Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2011) [hereafter: *ZGJBGJK*].

¹⁹ Wang Shizhen 王士禎, “Te'en ci huishi” 特恩賜會試, *Chibei outan* 池北偶談 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982): 9.

²⁰ Fa Ruozhen passed the palace examination as the eleventh-best candidate in the second category (*er'jia* 二甲); see *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin* 明清進士題名碑錄索引 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1982), 2626.

(*tangdi* 堂弟) Fa Ruozhen* 法若貞 (after 1613–1677),²¹ he started a promising political career as a Hanlin bachelor (*shujishi* 庶吉士) in the Inner Court of Historiography (*Nei guoshi yuan* 內國史院).²² In 1648, he was made an examination official and sent to supervise the provincial exams in Fujian province.²³ After his return to Beijing, he was promoted in 1651 to the position of expositor-in-waiting (*shijiang* 侍講) at the Hanlin Academy.²⁴ In the following year he was summoned together with other officials to an audience with the emperor.²⁵

But 1653 seems to have been the year when things took a turn for the worse. This had already been foreshadowed by personal losses that Fa had encountered: in 1650, his first wife, née Cui 崔, had died, prompting Fa to marry a second wife, née Zhou 周, in 1651. Only one year later, in 1652, both Mrs. Zhou and Fa's concubine, née Huang 黃, died in Beijing. In 1653, Fa then married Mrs. Bo 柏.²⁶ After meeting the emperor in the second month of 1653, he was suddenly “transferred out of the capital” (*waizhuan* 外傳) to supervise the food transport in Zhejiang; upon arrival in the south, he could not take up this position because of an illness.²⁷ Later that year, news reached him of a rebellion that Hai

²¹ To avoid confusion, whenever in the following Fa Ruozhen's 法若真 cousin Fa Ruozhen* 法若貞 is mentioned, he will be singled out by a star (*) behind his name. Fa Ruozhen* also passed the palace examination in the second category, see *ibid.*

²² Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 668.

²³ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 669.

²⁴ *Qingshilu* 清實錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 3: 512.

²⁵ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 680.

²⁶ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 675, 679.

²⁷ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 681.

Shixing 海時行 (d. 1653) had initiated in Jiaozhou.²⁸ In its course, Fa's father Fa Huan 法寰 (d. 1653), his two younger brothers Fa Ruoshi 法若奭 (d. 1653) and Fa Ruoxun 法若巽 (d. 1653)—a salaried scholar (*linsheng* 廩生)—, and a nephew were killed.²⁹ Fa rushed home to organize his father's funeral and observe the twenty-seven months long ritual mourning period prescribed by Confucian etiquette.³⁰

In 1659, Fa's career resumed when he returned to Beijing and was appointed to safeguard Xinghua 興化, Fujian province. Here, Fa Ruozhen earned credit for defending the city in 1660 against an attack and siege by Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (aka. Koxinga, 1624–1662).³¹ Upon his return to Beijing and an audience with the newly enthroned Kangxi emperor, he was promoted to the position of Surveillance Commissioner (*anchashi* 按察使) of Zhejiang province,³² a position that he started in the eighth month of 1662. His fellow official and friend Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳 (1616–1673) sent Fa Ruozhen off to the provinces.³³ After starting his new position, Fa's mother came to visit him in the south in the

²⁸ See Wang Zhen 王鎮, ed., *Chongxiu Jiaozhou zhi* 重修膠州志, in *Beijing shi wenwu ju tushu ziliao zhongxin cang guji zhenben congkan* 北京市文物局圖書資料中心藏古籍珍本叢刊 (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan chubanshe, 2012) [hereafter: *GJZBCK*], 22: 149.

²⁹ Sun Yuntao 孫蘊韜 and Gao Guoyou 高國樞, eds., *Jiaozhou zhi* 膠州志, in *Nanjing tushuguan cang xijian fangzhi congkan* 南京圖書館藏稀見方志叢刊 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2012), 18: 536. On the rebellion, see also *Qingshilu*, 3: 617; Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 681-682. The wife (née Yao 藥) of Fa Ruoxun who had managed to saved their son Tan 檀, was later officially recognised and memorialised as an “exemplary women” (*lienü* 列女) for her chastity and loyalty towards her husband; see Wang Zhen, ed., *Chongxiu Jiaozhou zhi*, in *GJZBCK* 22: 12.

³⁰ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 682-684.

³¹ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 686-691.

³² *Qingshilu*, 4: 97.

³³ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 698-699. For Gong Dingzi's farewell poem, see Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳, “Hesong Fa Huangshi xianzhang bing jian Yang youlong fangbo” 和送法黃石憲長並簡楊猶龍方伯, *Dingshan tang shiji* 定山堂詩集, in *QDSWJHB* 50: 667.

fifth month of 1663, but died in the tenth month of the same year.³⁴ Fa Ruozhen accompanied his mother's corpse back home to Jiaozhou where he stayed again for the twenty-seven months long mourning period required to be observed for one's parents before returning to Beijing in late 1666.³⁵

A 'sitting duck' and court politics in the 1650s and 1660s

When writing *Discourse on Painting* in the late summer of 1667, Fa was still without a new appointment and stayed as a guest at the Beijing residence of his friend Wang Chongjian 王崇簡 (1602–1678). While the above account of Fa's career from 1646 until 1667 appears to present a picture of gradual professional advancement, it is worth keeping in mind that the 1650s and 1660s were everything but a safe haven for serving officials. In the words of historian Ying Zhang, during the 1650s, "imperial favor was at best inconsistent and often mixed with contempt" and "Han officials had to ride out dangerous [political] instability."³⁶ Indeed, Fa Ruozhen came dangerously close to the orbits of the two major political conflicts of the era, the reform of the Censorate in 1651, and the Ming History Case in 1661–1663. These and other occurrences must have left Fa with a deep sense of vulnerability at the hands of an arbitrarily deciding administration. This, in turn, is reflected in his *Discourse on Painting*.

³⁴ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 722.

³⁵ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 724-725.

³⁶ Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics*, 175. Similarly, Lawrence D. Kessler has pointed out that in the 1650s and 1660s, "the political and social relationships between the ruling Manchus and the native Chinese elite presented far greater and more urgent problems" than, for example, the remaining rebels on the southeastern coast off Fujian; see Lawrence D. Kessler, "Chinese Scholars and The Early Manchu State," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 31 (1971): 179.

In the summer of 1651, the newly appointed chief of the Censorate,³⁷ the southern literati and official Hong Chengchou 洪承疇 (1593–1665), together with his colleagues initiated a purge at this body charged with supervising court officials. Eleven highly placed censors were transferred out of the capital which amounted to an effective demotion. The secrecy with which Hong Chengchou, Chen Mingxia 陳名夏 (ca. 1601–1654), and others advanced this purge while the Shunzhi emperor was away from Beijing on a hunting trip drew the ire of one of those transferred to the provinces, the northern official Zhang Xuan 張煊 (d. 1651). He impeached Hong and others in return. These accusations and counter-accusations led to a grand judicial case in the summer of 1651 in which Zhang was condemned to death and Hong was acquitted.³⁸ As a result of this confrontation at the highest administrative echelons, northern and southern literati were pitted against each other.³⁹ Fa Ruozhen got drawn into this conflict, too. Among other charges that had been brought by Zhang Xuan, Hong Chengchou had conspired against the Shunzhi emperor by secretly sending his (Hong's) mother back to their ancestral home in Fujian.⁴⁰ When Fa returned to Beijing in the summer of 1651, he took up Zhang Xuan's argument and reproached Hong Chengchou that, by sending his own mother back home, Hong had acted without "loyalty and filial piety" (*zhongxiao dajie* 忠孝大節).⁴¹ Although the sources do not indicate whether he had to suffer

³⁷ On the Censorate, see Robert. B. Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback: Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency, 1661-1669* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 80N30.

³⁸ Frederic Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 922-925.

³⁹ Jerry Dennerline, "The Shun-chih Reign," in Willard J. Peterson, ed., *The Cambridge History of China. Volume 9, Part One: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 107.

⁴⁰ Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 923.

⁴¹ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 677-678.

consequences from this conflict with a higher official or not, this episode must have exposed Fa to the complicated court politics of the time.

His first real trouble with the imperial administration came in 1656. Instead of returning to Beijing in the spring of 1656 after the twenty-seven months mourning period for his father required by early Qing mourning rituals instituted by the Shunzhi emperor, Fa Ruozhen requested to cure an illness and stayed at home in Jiaozhou.⁴² The decision to apply for medical leave must have angered Fa's superiors in Beijing: in 1654, the Qing court had introduced penalties for scholars who returned late after the mourning period that resulted automatically in an impeachment if one was to return six months late.⁴³ It can be assumed that Fa knew of these regulations, but he nevertheless asked for permission to stay home, maybe a sign of growing unease about serving at court.⁴⁴ And indeed, slightly more than half a year after he had requested medical leave and refused to leave Jiaozhou, Fa was impeached. While the charges brought by censor Zhang Zide 張自德 (ca. 1609–1668) in the tenth month of 1656 do not spell out returning late to his post but rather accuse him of an “impulsive inborn nature and eccentric and unreasonable behavior” 賦性浮躁，舉止乖張, the nearly exact timing of six months makes it not unlikely that Fa's decision to stay in

⁴² Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 684. For the establishment of a Ming-derived system of mourning in the Shunzhi reign, see Norman Kutcher, *Mourning in Late Imperial China: Filial Piety and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 121.

⁴³ Kutcher, *Mourning in Late Imperial China*, 122.

⁴⁴ In the early Qing, illness was a convenient tool for officials to retire from office. For a study of this phenomenon, see He Bian, “Too Sick to Serve: The Politics of Illness in the Qing Civil Bureaucracy,” *Late Imperial China* 33, no. 2 (Dec. 2012): 40-75.

Jiaozhou had also contributed to this impeachment.⁴⁵ As a result, Fa spent the next two years out of office in Jiaozhou.⁴⁶

The vulnerabilities that an official position engendered were again brought to the fore in the early 1660s. During the so-called Oboi regency (1661–1669), Kangxi’s regents intimidated uncooperative Chinese literati through the Jiangnan Tax Case of 1661 and the famous Ming History Case of 1661–1663.⁴⁷ The latter involved a privately written history of the Ming dynasty by Zhuang Tinglong 莊廷鑑 (1585–1655) that had circulated in Zhejiang province until officials discovered language deemed to be seditious and inflammatory. Investigations were launched in the course of which editors and readers, in total seventy southern literati, were executed and their families exiled to Manchuria.⁴⁸ When Fa was made surveillance commissioner of Zhejiang province in the winter of 1661, he had to navigate this dangerous situation: expected to execute government policies, he also commiserated with incriminated literati and colleagues of his. Shi Weicheng has described how Fa, even thirty years after these events, voiced his frustration over not having been able to save more families in the purge brought about by the Manchus.⁴⁹ Fa managed to clear the case of the previous

⁴⁵ *Qingshilu*, 3: 809.

⁴⁶ Fa Ruozen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 684-685.

⁴⁷ Because the Kangxi emperor was only seven years old when he ascended the throne in the spring of 1661, state affairs had been placed into the hands of four regents, the most well-known being Oboi (Chin.: Aobai 鰲拜, 1610–1669). This period that saw the end of many preferential policies towards Han Chinese instituted under the Shunzhi emperor. For a study of the Oboi regime, see Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback*. For policy decisions that assured preferential Manchu treatment during the Oboi regency and subjected Qing officials to scrutiny over their loyalty, see also Robert B. Oxnam, “Policies and Institutions of the Oboi Regency 1661-1669,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (February 1973): 269-277.

⁴⁸ For the Jiangnan Tax Case, see Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback*, 102-108; for the Ming History Case, see *ibid.*, 108-112.

⁴⁹ Shi Weicheng, “Fa Ruozen (1613-1696) de shanshui yanjiu,” 21.

governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) of Zhejiang province, Zhu Changzuo 朱昌祚 (1627–1667),⁵⁰ and contributed to the release from prison of Song Wan 宋琬 (1614–1673), who had been his predecessor on the post of surveillance commissioner of Zhejiang.⁵¹ These cases again demonstrated the instability of officialdom.

Painting and survival

Fa's tirade against despicable, if unnamed, colleagues in the imperial administration, voiced in his *Discourse on Painting*, reflects these experiences of the 1650s and 1660s as a 'sitting duck' at the mercy of higher officials and the court. While the *Discourse* opens with genuine praise for virtuous officials, it goes on to condemn corrupt ones and posits the art of painting as a way to ensure the attainment of a full life-circle and a natural death. It therefore reflects the "discomfort of ambivalence" towards state service that other scholars of the time also felt.⁵² Stating that, after leaving government affairs behind, he would go on to write poetry, and then take up painting as the most 'unskillful' occupation, Fa pointed out an advantage: "The painter then sighed and said: "Even if I paint not skillfully, it avoids that I am [killed] by the axe, and [ensures that] I will be able to age [naturally]." For Fa, just as for many other

⁵⁰ Wang Zhen, ed., *Chongxiu Jiaozhou zhi*, in *GJZBCK* 21: 159.

⁵¹ After leaving his post in 1661, Song Wan had been accused of inciting a rebellion in his native town Laiyang 萊陽 in eastern Shandong and was imprisoned until 1664; see Wang Chaohong 汪超宏, *Song Wan nianpu* 宋琬年譜 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2010), 157; this case was also connected to the Ming History Case and according to Wang Chaohong, Fa played a role in Song Wan's exculpation; see *ibid.*, 170.

⁵² Lynn A. Struve, "Ambivalence and Action: Some Frustrated Scholars of the K'ang-hsi Period," in Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 326.

Chinese artists, an “involvement with the arts,” as Kenneth DeWoskin once put it, was able to create “at least a semblance of shelter from the hazards and transience of political life.”⁵³

Fa’s experience of a fragile court environment and the desire to turn to the arts as a safe haven resembles greatly the situation of other early Qing officials who turned to painting and collecting as means to come to terms with the imponderables that employment at the court implied. Like Fa Ruozhen, Cheng Zhengkui had accepted to work for the Qing early on.⁵⁴ In 1656, Zhang Zide, the same censor who had impeached Fa, impeached Cheng Zhengkui on the grounds of “drinking and engaging in licentious behavior, thus tarnishing the rules of propriety for officials” 酒淫蕩檢，有玷官箴。⁵⁵ In the following year, Zhang Zide got Cheng Zhengkui fired for “excessive drinking, seeing prostitutes, and careless behavior” 縱酒挾妓，行止不檢。⁵⁶

For Cheng Zhengkui, painting landscapes also offered possibilities to navigate the decision of having chosen to work for the Qing. In a couplet from his poem “Again using the preceding rhyme to answer to the third [brother] Shen Zaifu’s poem” (“Zai yong qianyun da Shen san Zaifu” 再用前韻答沈三在夫), Cheng explained: “Having thrown myself into the ‘new rains,’ my eyes are nevertheless filled with old rivers and mountains” 投身新雨露，

⁵³ Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1982), 151.

⁵⁴ Unlike Fa Ruozhen, Cheng Zhengkui is traditionally considered a “turncoat” or “twice-serving minister” (*erchen* 貳臣) because he had worked under the Ming and subsequently also entered the services of the Qing.

⁵⁵ *Qingshilu*, 3: 809.

⁵⁶ *Qingshilu*, 3: 851.

滿眼舊江山。⁵⁷ Rain and dew are allusions to imperial favor and thus refer to the new Qing government for which he had decided to work in 1649.⁵⁸ Yet the old rivers and mountains—landscapes that had survived the dynastic cataclysm—offered possibilities of solace.⁵⁹ Conveniently, Cheng Zhengkui’s attachment to the old landscapes could also reassure the recipient of the poem of Cheng’s moral attachment to the Ming.⁶⁰

Cheng Zhengkui conceived of his practice as a landscape painter *expressis verbis* in relation to his decision to serve the Qing: “After the *jichou* year [1649], I went to the capital. For ten years I lived like a silkworm in the place of cocoons and then proceeded to paint my landscapes of *Dream Journey among Rivers and Mountains...*” 己丑以後，予往京師，十年如蠶之處繭，遂作《江山臥遊圖》....⁶¹ In 1651, Cheng Zhengkui had finished his *Dream Journey among Rivers and Mountains, No. 7 (Jiangshan woyou tu, qi qi 江山臥遊圖其七)* which he inscribed with a more detailed explanation of what motivated him:

⁵⁷ Cheng Zhengkui 程正揆, “Zai yong qianyun da Shen san Zaifu” 再用前韻答沈三在夫, *Qingxi yigao* 青溪遺稿, in *QDSWJHB* 20: 140.

⁵⁸ Cheng Zhengkui here uses the imagery of rain that brings forth new life as a symbol for the benevolent rule of a dynasty. This image draws on long-standing connotations of rain with rulership as expressed, for example, in Du Fu’s 杜甫 (712–770) couplet “The August Heaven sent down virtuous moisture, / there was life yet in what was parched and curled” 皇天德澤降，焦卷有生意 from his poem “Rain” (“Yu” 雨); see Stephen Owen, trans., *The Poetry of Du Fu* (Boston and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 4: 191.

⁵⁹ This recalls another line by Du Fu, reading: “Although the country is broken, mountains and rivers remain” 國破山河在; for the line, extrapolated from Du Fu’s poem “Spring View” (“Chun wang” 春望), see *ibid.*, 1: 258-259.

⁶⁰ Cheng Zhengkui had justified his decision to serve the Qing with the need to earn money to care for his grandmother rather than with a profound conviction to serve the Manchus; see Yang Xin 楊新, *Cheng Zhengkui* 程正揆 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1982), 8. Like this, Cheng Zhengkui could play out one Confucian value (filial piety) against another one (loyalty) and present himself as a reluctant collaborator.

⁶¹ Cheng Zhengkui, “Shu woyou juan hou” 書臥遊卷後, *Qingxi yigao*, in *QDSWJHB* 20: 305.

Those living in the capital encounter three difficulties: there are no mountains and rivers to enjoy, no calligraphy and painting to purchase, and no collectors from whom to borrow. Therefore, I desire to paint a hundred scrolls of *Dream Journey among Rivers and Mountains* to distribute into the world and thus to save the officials at court (*mashang zhujun*) from their difficulties. So far, I have completed approximately thirty scrolls, all of which have been taken away by people who care about affairs. By accident, there remains this painting on my desk and therefore I inscribe it and send it to you, Wugong [unidentified]. You live in the mountains, yet I present you with clouds and mists – this is like sending water to somebody living next to a river. Despite all of this, obtaining this painting at the time of the end of mountains and waters, you who live in the mountains can start anew. This can also show the type of work I do while staying in the capital city. Written in the eighth month of the *renchen* year [1652], sending it inscribed from Jinling [Nanjing], your “younger brother” [Zheng]kui.

居長安者有三苦：無山水可玩，無書畫可購，無收藏家可借。予因欲作《江山臥遊圖》百卷布施行世，以救馬上諸君之苦，約成三十餘卷，皆為好事者持去，案頭偶存是幅，因題寄五公。君居山，而予以雲煙貽之，大似向江邊人送水，雖然，山窮水盡時若得是圖，未始不為居山者開生面也；且以見予住長安功課如此。時壬辰八月從金陵題寄，弟揆。⁶²

Despite the apparent hyperbole—there were many art collectors in Beijing who accumulated considerable art collections either through gifts out of the imperial collections or by buying from the most prestigious collections in the Jiangnan area⁶³—it is apparent that for Cheng Zhengkui, paintings of “rivers and mountains” were a means to “save” (*jiu* 救) officials in Beijing, including himself. Left unspoken of what difficulties they needed to be saved from, landscape painting was conceived as a space of refuge that allowed an alternate life away

⁶² The colophon is transcribed in Yang Xin 楊新, “Cheng Zhengkui ji qi ‘Jiangshan woyou tu’” 程正揆及其《江山臥遊圖》，*Wenwu* 文物 no. 12 (1981): 79; translation adapted from a partial translation in Kim, “Chou Liang-Kung and his ‘Tu-Hua-Lu,’” 1: 115.

⁶³ The latter aspect prompted art historian Liu Jinku to talk about “Southern paintings being ferried to the north” 南畫北渡; see Liu Jinku 劉金庫, *Nanhua beidu: Qingdai shuhua jiancang zhongxin yanjiu* 南畫北渡——清代書畫鑒藏中心研究 (Taipei: Shitou, 2007). For a more detailed discussion of the network of art collections in Beijing during the early Qing dynasty, see Chapter Two.

from politics at the capital “at the time of the end of mountains and waters,” that is, during the time of the dynastic transition.

Just like Fa Ruozhen, Cheng Zhengkui conceived of his paintings as being done clumsily (*zhuo*). In the inscription opposing an album leaf showing a single house among snow-covered mountains and trees contained in a *Landscape* album in the collection of the Palace Museum, painted in the ninth month of 1649, probably shortly after he had arrived in the capital, he wrote:

When it comes to brushwork, what is valued are loftiness and simplicity. Although I have studied painting for forty years, I have obtained these few brushes with my blunt nature (*zi*) and my clumsy (*zhuo*) hands [only]. How could I manage to achieve competency through laboring myself?

筆貴高簡，予學畫四十年，得此數筆，資鈍手拙，豈力所能強到也歟？⁶⁴

Cheng Zhengkui expressed a similar idea of painting as a clumsy or artless practice that Fa Ruozhen articulated in his *Discourse on Painting*.⁶⁵ Both conceived of their artistic practices as means to sketch images of aloof painters who were only implied in politics because they had to and who kept to their own compasses of morality.

⁶⁴ The album appears to be consisting of 16 leaves; the leaf from which I quote is currently listed as leaf # 4 (Accession number: 新 00147024-4/16). For a reproduction of the leaf and the inscription see <https://digicol.dpm.org.cn/cultural/details?id=82316> (last accessed 26 August, 2021).

⁶⁵ Many other contemporaneous artists conceived of their practices in these terms. For a discussion of the appeal of *zhuo* in seventeenth-century calligraphy, see Bai, *Fu Shan's World*, 118-29; see also Dora C.Y. Ching, “The Aesthetics of the Unusual and the Strange in Seventeenth-Century Calligraphy,” in Robert E. Harrist and Wen C. Fong, eds., *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection* (Princeton, NJ: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1999), 342-359.

Zhou Lianggong also chose the age-old path of an involvement with the arts as a means to mediate the bad experiences made while serving the Qing.⁶⁶ While there is only circumstantial evidence to suggest that Fa knew Cheng Zhengkui,⁶⁷ Fa Ruozhen and Zhou Lianggong were closely associated. Fa had been acquainted with Zhou at least since the latter's official posting in 1641 to Wei 濰 county.⁶⁸ Together with Fa's hometown Jiaozhou, Wei county belonged to Laizhou 萊州 prefecture in Shandong (fig. I.1). In Wei county, Zhou Lianggong appears to have organized the local "branch" of the Restoration Society (Fushe 復社), the Society of Wei County (Weishe 濰社).⁶⁹ Fa's father Fa Huan had already socialized in local Fushe circles and was acquainted for example with Song Jicheng 宋繼澄 (1549–1676), the leader of the local Fushe organization in Shandong, the Great Society to the Left of the Mountains (Shanzuo dashe 山左大社).⁷⁰ Evidence that Fa Ruozhen was part of Zhou Lianggong's Wei society can be found in Zhou Lianggong's posthumous biography (*xingzhuang* 行狀) written by the early Qing book collector Huang Yuji 黃虞稷 (1629–1691):

When [Zhou Lianggong] was in Wei [county], he formed a literary society with the gentlemen of Lai[zhou] prefecture, which first consisted of sixteen men, of which

⁶⁶ For a concise account of the genesis of art as an escape from social realities and critique thereof starting with Zuo Si 左思 (ca. 250–305) in the third century and coming to full bloom in the Song, see Martin J. Powers, "When Is a Landscape like a Body?" in *Landscape, Culture, and Power in Chinese Society*, ed. Wen-hsin Yeh (Berkeley, CA: Center for Chinese Studies, 1998), 2-4.

⁶⁷ Cheng Zhengkui and Fa Ruozhen had been impeached by the same censor; if Fa was interested in the dealings of Zhang Zide, this might have given Fa a chance to learn about the Cheng Zhengkui.

⁶⁸ On Zhou Lianggong's posting to Shandong in 1641, see Kim, *The Life of a Patron*, 47.

⁶⁹ On the Restoration Society, see William S. Atwell, "From Education to Politics: The Fu She," in William T. de Bary, ed., *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 333-375.

⁷⁰ On the "Great Society to the Left of the Mountains," see Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, *Ming Qing zhi ji dangshe yundong kao* 明清之際黨社運動考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 167-176.

twelve were to become *jinsshi* degree holders: Mr. Shan Ruolu, Mr. Fa Ruozhen, Mr. Song Kefa, Mr. Kuang Lanxin, Mr. Wang Gai and Mr. Wang Ruchen, who all became famous.

在濰時，合萊郡士為文社，首拔十六人，成進士者十二，若：單公若魯、法公若真、宋公可發、匡公蘭馨、王公垓、王公如辰，皆為名世。⁷¹

From 1655 until 1661, Zhou Lianggong's career was in serious jeopardy because of the legal proceedings that the Qing court pursued against the imprisoned Zhou.⁷² But it was not only Zhou's career that was at risk. In fact, the charges brought against him threatened to bring about a death sentence for the accused. That Zhou was very well aware of this threat is highlighted in a poem that he wrote to Gong Xian:

悲予嚴譴日，	I lament the day I was severely reprimanded,
敢謂得餘生。	But I dare say that I obtained a surplus of life.
念室辜難蔽，	The prison cubicle could not shelter my crime,
朝廷法果平。	Yet, the court's laws were indeed fair.
羈心迷遠塞，	The locked-up heart is [still] obsessed with remote fortresses,
老淚濕蕪城。	My old tears wet the ruined city. ⁷³
却憶舟中語，	Recalling words [spoken] on the boat,
他時見欲驚。	We will be astonished when we meet another time. ⁷⁴

⁷¹ Huang Yuji 黃虞稷, "Xingzhuang" 行狀, in Zhu Tianshu 朱天曙, ed., *Zhou Lianggong quanji* 周亮工全集 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chuban chuanti jituan, 2008), 2: 969.

⁷² Hongnam Kim, "Chou Liang-Kung and his 'Tu-Hua-Lu,'" 1: 117-131.

⁷³ Ruined City (*wucheng*) refers to the "Rhapsody on the Ruined City" ("Wucheng fu" 蕪城賦), authored by Bao Zhao 鮑照 (421-465); see Xiao Tong 蕭統, *Wenxuan* 文選 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 503-506; for an English translation and annotation, see David R. Knechtges, trans. and annot., *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, Volume 2: Rhapsodies on Sacrifices, Hunting, Travel, Sightseeing, Palaces and Halls, Rivers and Seas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 2: 253-256. In the context of the Ming-Qing transition, this may be meant as a designation of Yangzhou 揚州 (Jiangsu province) which had also been destroyed in the wars of a dynastic transition.

⁷⁴ Zhou Lianggong 周亮工, "Bu yun zhuo Gong Banqian" 步韻酌龔半千, *Laigu tang ji* 賴古堂集, in Zhu Tianshu, ed., *Zhou Lianggong quanji*, 1: 304-305.

In his poem, Zhou Lianggong acknowledged that his life had been threatened by investigations into his person. The poem is also a rejoicing about (temporary) prison release as well as a lament about the military campaigns (“remote fortresses”) and destructions (“ruined city”) brought about by the Ming-Qing transition. In this dangerous context of the 1650s and 1660s, art collecting and patronage of contemporaneous artists was one way for Zhou Lianggong to seek out a position for himself that differed considerably from his official career.⁷⁵

Painting and morality

In Fa’s *Discourse*, painting is conceptualized as a way to cast an image of the self that is independent from his career as an official. But beyond that, it also casts painting as a means to attain a full life and to live an ethical life. What is noteworthy is that Fa considers painting done by an unskilled person as a means to prevent an untimely death and capital punishment. On the one hand, this statement points again to the aforementioned volatility and insecurity at court. At the same time, the desire to complete a full life-circle resonates in particular with values both Confucian and Daoist; by enlisting an artistic occupation for such means, Fa effectively moralized the act of painting and posited it as an act and occupation to maintain personal authenticity.

Fa’s emphasis on keeping natural completeness is derived from philosophical concepts of survival found both in the Confucian and the Daoist tradition. For example, in Daoist

⁷⁵ On this point, see Kim, *The Life of a Patron*, 93-145.

thought the parable of Emperor Chaos (Hundun 混沌) in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 emphasized the importance to keep one's physical integrity.⁷⁶ In combination with unskillfulness it also evokes stories, again in the *Zhuangzi*, of crooked trees that get to survive because their wood cannot be used for anything.⁷⁷ The idea of keeping one's natural completeness is also important in the Confucian tradition. Since the physical body was considered a parental gift that needed to be protected against harm and premature death, the upkeep of one's completeness was understood as an obligation towards one's family. In the introduction to the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing* 孝經), a text from the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) that expounded on the duties of sons towards their parents, Confucius (Chin.: Kongzi 孔子, 551–479 BCE) is recorded to have said: “Our physical body with its hair and skin is received from our parents, and we must not venture to injure or wound it. This is the beginning of filial piety” 身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也。⁷⁸

Although written fourteen years after his father's murder in 1653 at the hands of the rebel Hai Shixing, it is possible that Fa Ruozhen's *Discourse on Painting* also reflects these traumatic experiences. In order to take revenge, Fa Ruozhen had decapitated the rebel

⁷⁶ Liu Wendian 劉文典, ed., *Zhuangzi buzheng* 莊子補正 (Beijing: Zhonghua shudian, 2020), 249-250. For an English translation, see Burton Watson, trans., *Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 59.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6, 30-31.

⁷⁸ Translation adopted from Henry Rosemont, Jr., and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 105. For the reception and renewed importance of the *Classic of Filial Piety* in early Qing China, see Lu Miaw-fen 呂妙芬, *Xiaozhi tianxia: "Xiaojing" yu jinshi Zhongguo de zhengzhi yu wenhua* 孝治天下——《孝經》與近世中國的政治與文化 (Taipei: Lianjing, 2011), 214-58. Fa Ruozhen was well acquainted with the *Classic of Filial Piety* as his poetry shows; see, for example, the “Preface to four poems of the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds” in Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 230-31.

leader's dead body and offered the head to the spirits (*ling* 靈) of his deceased father, brothers, and nephew.⁷⁹ Fa's insistence that painting would help with living until the natural end of his days by avoiding the axe then may also carry undertones of a filial son.

Addressing his friend Xing Shixi, Fa Ruozhen in his *Discourse* established a direct relationship between painting, the preservation of life, and moral conduct. For Fa, painting provided a way to live up to moral obligations of uprightness in the context of immoral behavior at court. Bodily integrity not only mattered because one wanted to survive. It mattered also because, in the reflections exposed in Fa's *Discourse*, it was closely connected to one's moral integrity. Fa's autograph then participates in a long tradition of writing about the self as a means for self-perfection and -cultivation,⁸⁰ and transforms both the act of and the occupation with painting into an expression of morality and authenticity. As such, Fa's *Discourse on Painting* operates within the larger context of Confucian morality that, according to literary historian Martin Huang, characterized a man "by his independence and his courage to practice the Way alone, especially under unfavorable circumstances."⁸¹

Other literati of the early Qing also located the preservation of and striving for moral integrity as an important issue. Literary historian Xiaoqiao Ling writes:

⁷⁹ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 682. See also Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912)* (Folkstone, UK: Global Oriental, 2010), 1: 226. For a discussion of the "wholly extraordinary measure" without "statutory provision" in the Qing code to mutilate the body of a criminal for the purpose of offering revenge to a murdered person in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century legal cases, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, "Politics and the Supernatural in Mid-Qing Legal Culture," *Modern China* 19, no. 3 (July 1993): 337-347; quotations from 337-338.

⁸⁰ See Pei-yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁸¹ Martin Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 17.

This preoccupation with the *integrity* of the self is a predominant concern of the conquest generation, especially to those who considered themselves remnant subjects (*yimin*) of the previous dynasty. For them, how to survive cataclysmic change without compromising one's moral person remains the primary question....⁸²

As Fa Ruozen's *Discourse on Painting* exemplifies, anxiousness about one's moral integrity was also of concern for somebody who worked for the Qing. One tool for coming to terms with this was, in the words of Fa Ruozen, painting. Consequently, painting was far more than just a simple dabbling with ink and brush: it was positioned at the very heart of disputed positions that vied for displaying one's own ethical behavior. Fa Ruozen was not the only early Qing official to posit painting as a means to maintain one's moral integrity. The issue was even more pressing for Cheng Zhengkui who had obtained his *jinshi* degree in 1631 and served as an official under the Ming dynasty before ultimately starting to work for the newly established Qing dynasty in 1649.⁸³ From the statements quoted above, it is apparent that for Cheng Zhengkui, painting occupied a similar position.

Painting and reclusion at the capital

Fa Ruozen's *Discourse on Painting* praises the rare-to-come-by officials with the ability to bring an end to chaos and reinstate order as an act of skillful administration and warns against personal dangers engendered by incompetent officials intent on infighting and intrigues. Therefore, Fa's *Discourse* is not an unconditional statement against engagement

⁸² Ling, *Feeling the Past*, 44; italic emphasize by Xiaoqiao Ling.

⁸³ Yang Xin, *Cheng Zhengkui*, 1-7.

with the state, but one for withdrawal in times of adversity. This becomes particularly apparent at the end of the scroll when Fa Ruozen calls on Xing Shixi to seek the delights of clumsiness or artlessness—and the advantages it would bring about—together at the capital. Fa thus resorted to the well-recognized and centuries-old discourse around reclusion in Chinese culture.⁸⁴

Expressing the hope that he and Xing Shixi can jointly share the pleasures of artlessness—expressed through painting—Fa Ruozen assumes the voice of the painter by shifting the subject of his *Discourse on Painting* from “the painter” to the “I” (wu 吾). Fa presents himself as somebody who has met with lack of success in the imperial administration and, consequently, seeks an understanding and mutual friendship with Xing, the grandson of the famous late-Ming calligrapher Xing Tong and a painter himself.⁸⁵

Fa Ruozen’s scroll reveals an interesting multi-layered positioning: on a horizontal level with his friend, Fa showcases himself as unskilled and a failure who had been used by a despicable system. This appears to be diametrically opposed to Fa’s own attempts to showcase himself—in the same letter—as an admirer of Confucian values that posit an engagement with the vertical power structure in form of the imperial administration as a positively connoted act that can bring about order. Having first opted for cooperation in 1645-1646 and then later having to confront the realities of court intrigues and impeachments, Fa appears to have been in need to reinvent himself as a painter. *Discourse*

⁸⁴ For a history of this “pattern” of reclusion, see Alan J. Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁸⁵ There is no further evidence of Xing Shixi being recorded as a painter.

for Painting reveals this multi-layered positioning and the conflicted relationship that Fa's engagement with the state's administration brought about.

The attached poems at the end of the *Discourse on Painting*, otherwise unrecorded in Fa's poetry collection, reinforce the defiant tone of the preceding essay, claiming a space for the painter away from court and official duties. The first poem reads:

其人則矯矯， 其畫則蒼蒼。 絕技渾城市， 奇石避廟廊。	The painter is fearless and brave, His paintings are vigorous and forceful. With fine skills, he blends into the city, [Like] an extraordinary stone that avoids [being collected and displayed] in a court gallery.
悲歌燕趙沒， 書卷海山藏。 不去東蒙下， 瀟疎問野王。	The sorrowful songs of Yan and Zhao are not anymore, Books and scrolls hidden by the sea and the mountain. Not going to the foot of Mount Dongmeng, In carefree manner, I seek Yewang.

In this complex poem, Fa Ruozhen underscores his discontentment with current policies, specifies his desire to hide from court politics, and lines out his choice to become a painter. The general tone is one of displacement that was also common in the writings of other contemporaries and friends of Fa Ruozhen, such as the poet Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢 (1599–1669).⁸⁶ In his poem, Fa reflects on three life (and career) choices. The “sorrowful songs of Yan and Zhao” refer to the so-called “Songs of the Yi River” (“Yishui ge” 易水歌) that the legendary Jing Ke 荊軻 (d. 227 BCE), a retainer of the Crown Prince Dan (d. 226 BCE) of

⁸⁶ Ling, *Feeling the Past*, 173-74. Fa Ruozhen and Ding Yaokang, a literati from Zhucheng 諸城, a town neighboring Fa's native Jiaozhou, were acquainted with each other at least since 1649 which can be seen from a poem that Ding wrote to Fa to thank for a present of tea leaves and a fan; see Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢, “Jichou chuxi xie Fa Huangshi taishi kui mingshan” 己丑除夕謝法黃石太史饋茗扇, in *Ding Yaokang quanji* (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1999), 1: 50.

the Yan state (current-day Beijing), had sung before crossing the Yi River in order to head to his ultimately unsuccessful mission to assassinate King Zheng of Qin (later known as the First Emperor Qin Shihuang).⁸⁷ Writing in 1667, Fa Ruozen implies that the generation of rebels against the invading Manchus had vanished and that resistance against the Qing was not an option. At the same time, the “sorrowful songs of Yan and Zhao” can also refer to the “Preface to seeing off Dong Shaonan” (“Song Dong Shaonan xu” 送董邵南序) by Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) in which the Tang dynasty poet had lamented about a friend’s inability to find good employment despite his success in the imperial examinations and thus serve as a reminder of Fa’s own situation in which he had lost his employment when writing the *Discourse on Painting* in 1667.⁸⁸

The hiding of books and scrolls “by the sea and the mountain” of the following line is most likely a reference to the time-honored option of withdrawal from politics and a return to his hometown Jiaozhou, which lay off the ocean coast and was surrounded by mountains. By using the verb “hiding” (*cang*), Fa indicates the desire to seclude himself in his hometown. However, in the following line he confesses not to want to live the life of a hermit: according to the Zhengyi 正義 commentary by Zhang Shoujie 張守節 (late 7th century) to the *Shiji*, Mount Dongmeng is a place where the fictional Lao Laizi 老萊子 had gone into reclusion when society was in chaos.⁸⁹ In the last line, Fa then spells out his own aspiration:

⁸⁷ Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2020), 2532.

⁸⁸ Han Yu 韓愈, “Song Dong Shaonan xu” 送董邵南序, *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* 韓昌黎文集校注, comp. Ma Qichang 馬其昶 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2021), 350.

⁸⁹ Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 2142.

to become an artist instead. By seeking Yewang, Fa Ruozen refers to Gu Yewang 顧野王 (519–581), who had been an official, calligrapher, painter, and the teacher of the famous Tang dynasty calligrapher Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558–638). Gu Yewang had lived under two regimes, first under the Liang dynasty (502–557) and then the Chen dynasty (557–589).⁹⁰ Thus, Fa Ruozen established a parallel between their shared fate of having been born under one dynasty only to live under a second one. Despite Confucian morality dictating that one remained loyal to the dynasty under which one had been born, Gu Yewang had become a famous and remembered official under the new Chen dynasty and served it with his literary talents. By taking Gu Yewang as his historical exemplar to follow, Fa Ruozen is looking to justify his decision to serve the Qing. He is “divorcing” himself from the conventional moral dictates of the literati class that imposed political loyalty to the dynasty under which one had been born and entertains the idea of freeing himself from this responsibility. In this line, Fa Ruozen adopted the perspective of somebody who looked at literati talent and not literati morality. Having couched some bitterness about the fall of the Ming dynasty into his poem, Fa does not remain clung to the past. Rather, in a very pragmatic stance, he is someone who looks to the future: here speaks a conflicted man who wants to move on.

Mentioning Gu Yewang, Fa Ruozen indirectly also referred to Gu’s friendship with Wang Bao 王褒 (?–ca. 575)—like Fa Ruozen and the recipient of the scroll, Xing Shixi, who is also said to have been good at calligraphy.⁹¹ Here, Xing Shixi, Fa’s friend in painting, was

⁹⁰ For Gu Yewang’s biography, see Yao Silian 姚思廉, *Chenshu* 陳書, *juan* 30, 4b-6a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁹¹ For information on Wang Bao, see Knechtges and Chang, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature*, 2: 491-494 and 1134-1135.

thus equated to Wang Bao and their friendship equated to historical precedents that had spanned dynastic transitions.

The second poem on Fa's *Discourse on Painting* reads:

老來得畫友，	At my old age, I got a companion in painting,
灑墨潑江干。	Splashing ink, he spatters the river banks.
濃淡山河動，	Dark and light, mountains and rivers move,
蒼茫雲樹寒。	Green and vast, clouds and trees are chilling.
沉胸抱太古，	Mind stilled, I embrace high antiquity,
盪目脫長安。	Eyes cleansed, I toss away the capital.
相許高山曲，	We promised each other the tunes of the high mountains.
無弦壁上彈。	The zither without strings on the wall plays by itself.

The second poem is about Fa's friendship with Xing Shixi. Embracing the "tunes of the high mountains" evokes a piece of music played on the *guqin* 古琴 zither that goes back to the legendary Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE) musician Bo Ya 博雅. Bo Ya and Zhong Ziqi 鐘子期 became so good friends that Bo Ya did not continue playing the *guqin* after Zhong Ziqi's death.⁹² The non-stringed zither of the last line continues the topics of music and friendship by recalling the story of Tao Yuanming who famously carried around a zither without strings.⁹³ Playing by itself on the wall, the zither serves again to evoke the idea of an effortless friendship full of natural understanding and plays on the image of the friend "who understands one's sounds" (*zhiyin* 知音), that is, somebody who intuitively

⁹² For the story of Bo Ya and Zhong Ziqi, see Nanxiu Qian, *Spirit and Self in Medieval China: The Shih-shuo hsin-yü and Its Legacy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 20-42.

⁹³ The earliest reference to this story is found in Shen Yue 沈約, *Songshu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 2288.

understands his or her friend. The two poems thus continue the topics already elaborated upon in the preceding essay.

Through his *Discourse on Painting*, Fa Ruozen fashioned himself as one seeking withdrawal from the world of politics in times of adversity. Fa's *Discourse on Painting* demonstrates that the time-honored discourse on reclusion could also be invoked by an early Qing official to navigate his public and private roles, between political involvement and engagement on the one side, and a claim to personal integrity and cultural superiority on the other.⁹⁴ Fa Ruozen enlisted painting for such ends.

From theory to practice: early surviving paintings done in Beijing in the 1670s

While *Discourse on Painting* conveys a sense of frustration over the experiences made while in official service as well as Fa's stated desire to live a life away from such hassles, Fa's career resumed seemingly effortlessly shortly after he had finished his essay. In late 1667, shortly after completing his *Discourse*, he was called back into office and promoted to the position of provincial administration officer of Jiangnan.⁹⁵ However, his tenure in the south was only short-lived and ended unfavorably with him being fired over a financial scandal

⁹⁴ In a similar vein, Wai-yee Li has observed how self-defense by literati and women alike were often mixed with possibilities of shame; see Wai-yee Li, *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), 448.

⁹⁵ Fa was promoted in the ninth month of the *dingwei* 丁未 year (1667), shortly after he had finished the *Discourse on Painting* in the seventh month; see *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 725; compare also *Qingshilu*, 4: 332. The record in *Biographies of the Qing Dynasty* that records him being promoted to the same position in Henan province should be erroneous; cf. Wang Zhonghan 王鍾翰, ed. and comp., *Qingshi liezhuan* 清史列傳 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2016), 17: 5392.

involving his superior in Nanjing, Zhou Lianggong.⁹⁶ As a consequence of this scandal, Fa was obliged to personally cover incurred financial losses of the state coffers. Fa explains this in a handwritten explanatory note (*shuotie* 說帖) that precedes a number of letters which his friend Yan Guangmin 顏光敏 (1640–1686) from Qufu 曲阜 (Shandong province) collected (fig. 1.2):

I reflect that I, [Ruo]zhen, have been waiting for punishment for two years. I have been extremely strained financially because I only worked for others. If I had benefited myself even a little bit, Heaven and Earth's spirits could expose [such deals] and put me to death. Since I have resigned from my post, I [need to] substitute my superior (*shangxian*) to pay for [the losses incurred], this has already exhausted my family property. ...

伏念真待罪兩載，拮据萬狀，盡為他人作牛馬，若有一分一文自私自利，天地鬼神鑒誅。今離任之後，代上憲賠墊者，已罄變家產。...⁹⁷

In order to cover the incurred losses, Fa also begged his friend Song Kefa 宋可發 (d. ca. 1673) to buy his property consisting of a house and garden called Jingyao 景要 in the south of Jiaozhou.⁹⁸ Most likely driven by pecuniary needs, Fa Ruozen returned to Beijing in the late autumn of 1672 in the hope to regain an official position.⁹⁹ Here, he resumed also his social life with friends such as Wei Xiangshu 魏象樞 (1617–1687) and others.¹⁰⁰ In the

⁹⁶ Pei Zhe, “Fa Ruozen nianpu jianbian,” 80. For a discussion of the time spent in Nanjing, see Chapter Two.

⁹⁷ Transcribed in Shanghai tushuguan 上海圖書館, ed., *Yanshi jiacang chidu* 顏氏家藏尺牘 (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu wenxian chubanshe, 2006), 8: 3.

⁹⁸ Fa Ruozen, “Qianshi zhu zhongqi Song Aishi mai Jingyao yuanzhuang ba shou” 遣使囑中乞宋艾石買景要園莊八首, in *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 306-307.

⁹⁹ Fa Ruozen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 739.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Fa Ruozen, Wei Xiangshu and other friends like the official Zhou Tiguan 周體觀 (*zi* Boheng 伯衡, *jinsi* 1649) got together in the late autumn of 1672 in Beijing to talk about the poetry of their previously deceased colleague Feng Rujing 馮如京 (1602–1669); see Wei Xiangshu 魏象樞, “Renzi jiuyue Fa Huangshi, Zhou Boheng, Cheng Wocun, Feng Nasheng ji Keting lianju, er Xuecheng shizuo” 壬子九月法黃石、周伯

capital, he was financially dependent on these friends that included many successful court officials such as Wei, Wang Chongjian and others. Painting and poetry entertained him during this time and painting appears to have been a means for Fa to make a living.¹⁰¹

While Fa had started to paint as a child and experimented and improved his painting skills in the late 1660s, his earliest reliably surviving paintings date from the early 1670s when he had moved back to Beijing.¹⁰² A number of paintings done in 1673 and 1674 speak to Fa's early attempts to paint in the styles of early masters. Sometime in late August or early September 1673, for example, Fa Ruozhen painted *Spring's Transformation over Streams and Mountains* (*Xishan chundong tu* 溪山春動圖) for the Qing official Xu Gaowu 徐誥武 (*jinshi* 1661, d. 1692) (fig. 1.3). Two other paintings that were painted for friends around the same time are *Mountains and Valleys* (*Xishan tu* 溪山圖), painted in the winter of 1673-1674 at the occasion of a birthday for an unidentified Elder Xian 憲 (fig. 1.4),¹⁰³ and the

衡、成我存、馮訥生集可亭聯句，兒學誠侍坐，*Hansong tang quanji* 寒松堂全集，in *Gugong zhenben congkan* 故宮珍本叢刊 (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 2000) [hereafter: *GGZBCK*], 588: 212.

¹⁰¹ Fa Ruozhen writes: “When I came to the capital, I spent my days only by means of [composing] poetry and [making] paintings for my own amusement (*ziyu*). Minister Wei [Xiangshu] shared his “salary rice” (*fengmi*, rice that was paid in addition to an official's salary) with me [so that I could] get by” 來京日唯以詩畫自娛，少司農魏公分俸米度日；see Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 739.

¹⁰² Fa might have painted his first surviving painting in 1667 for “Elder Zhuo” 拙翁, who should be Fa's friend Shan Ruolu 單若魯 (style name: Zhuo'an 拙庵; *jinshi* 1646, d. ca. 1673) from Gaomi 高密 (Shandong), a town neighboring Fa's native Jiaozhou. This painting, entitled *Rain amidst High Mountains* 山高掛雨圖, is today in the collection of the Hong Kong Art Museum and has been published in Toda Teisuke 戶田楨佑 and Ogawa Hiromitsu 小川裕充, comps., *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku: zokuhen* 中國繪畫總合圖錄：續編 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1998), 2: 169 (S36-05). Compositionally and stylistically, the work appears to be an outlier in Fa's usual artistic production.

¹⁰³ Fa's friend, the Qing official Liu Zhengzong 劉正宗 from Shandong, sported the sobriquet Xianshi 憲石, but he died in 1661. Similarly, Fa's close friend, the Jiaozhou-native and student of his father, Zhou Zhiping 周之屏 sported the sobriquet Xianbo 憲伯, but died in 1670. Both these men therefore cannot be recipients of the 1673 painting. The only other person in Fa's circle of friends with the name Xian is Wei Xian 魏憲 about whom little is known; his poetry collection *Zhenjiang tang ji* 枕江堂集 was printed in 1673. Wei Xian appears to have been from Shandong. However, usually Fa Ruozhen does not address his friends with their name, but

undated *Snowscape* (*Xuejing shanshui tu* 雪景山水圖), painted for an unidentified Mr.

Wang 王 (fig. 1.5).¹⁰⁴

These paintings show a concern with and interest for the classical styles of Dong Yuan and Juran 巨然 (fl. 10th century) of the Five Dynasties as well as the Yuan dynasty masters. This is particularly well illustrated by *Valleys and Mountains without End* (*Xishan wujin tujian* 溪山無盡圖卷), which Fa painted in the spring of the *jiayin* 甲寅 year (1674) for his friend Chen Kaizhi 陳開之 (b. 1617) (fig. 1.6).¹⁰⁵ Especially because Fa used long “hemp-fiber texture strokes” (*pima cun* 披麻皴) for lending the depicted mountains some depth, this long handscroll is reminiscent of Huang Gongwang’s *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*. At the same time, Fa made use of so-called “alum heads” (*fantou* 礬頭) derived from the Dong-Ju mode, also visible in *Spring’s Transformation over Streams and Mountains*, *Mountains and Valleys*, and *Snowy Landscape* (cf. figs. 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5). With the exception of *Valleys and Mountains without End*, none of these paintings contain houses or other indications of human presence, maybe thus stressing the idea of reclusion that Fa seems to have sought by means of his painting.

with their sobriquet, thus making it unlikely that the painting would have been made for Wei Xian. The inscription wishes the recipient “to stand straight for one thousand autumns” 千秋正, indicating that this was a birthday picture.

¹⁰⁴ Despite some stylistic divergences between these two works, I take *Snowscape* to be from around the same time than *Mountains and Valleys*: both paintings are done on satin, show a general, if learned, concern with the Dong-Ju style, and incorporate Huang Gongwang-derived texture strokes. This concern places *Snowscape* also in proximity to *Valleys and Mountains without End* from 1674, discussed below.

¹⁰⁵ The two seals on the painting are recorded as belonging to this scroll in Victoria Contag and Wang Chi-ch’ien, eds., *Seals of Chinese Painters and Collectors of the Ming and Ch’ing Period* (Revised edition, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1982), 192. Around the time when Fa painted this painting, he and Chen were socialising frequently which can be seen from Fa’s poetry.

An indication of the interpretative horizon that a painting like *Valleys and Mountains without End*, done for a close friend, may have held comes from a poem that Wei Xiangshu wrote for the minister of justice Ai Yuanzheng 艾元徵 (d. 1676). Wei wrote the poem in 1676, two years after which Fa had painted *Valleys and Mountains without End*. The couplet in question reads:

胸中多少真丘壑，	[Ai Yuanzheng] had many hills and valleys in his chest,
不是黄山寫不真。 ¹⁰⁶	If it is not [Fa] Huangshan, they cannot be painted accurately.

From this short couplet, it can be deduced that Fa Ruozhen had a close relationship with Ai Yuanzheng. Maybe thinking about his home (“hills and valleys in his chest”), Ai must have invited Fa to render these mountains “accurately” (*zhen*). Thus, a painting like *Valleys and Mountains without End*, done for the close friend Chen Kaizhi, then may also show the “hills and valleys” that had been in Chen’s “chest.” *Valleys and Mountains without End* then can be read as an image of Chen’s estate and as a visualization of the idea of reclusion, a trope of literati life that Chen in all likelihood also pursued.

As this attempt of an interpretation indicates, the short dedications found on these early paintings do not imply that the works only served to repay social obligations which Fa had

¹⁰⁶ Wei Xiangshu, “Bingchen liuyue Sikou Ai Zhangren tongnian yi tuishi huaisheng shier shi” 丙辰六月司寇艾長人同年以退食槐聲十二詩, *Hansong tang quanji*, in *GGZBCK* 588: 223.

engendered with his friends in the capital.¹⁰⁷ Rather, short dedicatory inscriptions without further clues as to the painting's interpretative horizon appear to be the norm throughout Fa's oeuvre. Unfortunately, the short dedicatory inscriptions often do not allow to identify a painting's recipient and thus do not allow for a careful reconstruction of the social networks Fa was active in. But clearly, the paintings of that period were carefully painted. Fa's paintings of the early 1670s reveal that he moved in circles in which painting mattered, even if it is not entirely possible to reconstruct these networks.

A particularly interesting work from this period in which Fa Ruozhen appears to have reflected on his conflicted relationship with officialdom, already expressed in his *Discourse on Painting*, is *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* (*Yan'gai pian tu* 偃蓋篇圖),¹⁰⁸ which Fa Ruozhen painted in the spring of the *bingchen* 丙辰 year (1676) (fig. 1.7). Showing a monumental mountain clad in auspicious clouds and mist at the foot of which luxuriously grows a group of pine trees, Fa presents a more stable composition than in the aforementioned hanging scrolls: the playful curved mountain ridges that had flown from the bottom to the top of the other hanging scrolls here have been replaced with more

¹⁰⁷ That paintings could be used to repay social obligations is a well-researched aspect of literati painting. For some discussion of this phenomenon, see, e.g., James Cahill, "Types of Artist-Patron Transactions in Chinese Painting," in *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Paintings*, edited by Chu-tsing Li (Lawrence, KA: Kress Foundation Dept. of Art History, University of Kansas, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1989), 12; James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 50, 59, 64, 65-67; Craig Clunas, *Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming, 1470-1559* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004). The same was true for calligraphy; see, for example, Xue Longchun 薛龍春, "Shufa yingchou yu Wang Duo de renmai wangluo: yi shoushu renzhong de Henan difang guan yu Qing chu xin'gui wei li" 書法應酬與王鐸的人脈網絡——以受書人中的河南地方官與清初新貴為例, *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 40, no. 3 (Sept., 2010): 513-541.

¹⁰⁸ While the term *yangai* 偃蓋 denotes a horizontally growing tree that has grown to provide shadow or shelter like an umbrella or canopy, the translation of the painting's title here uses outreaching pine (*yansong* 偃松) according to the "Essay on the Outreaching Pine" ("Yansong pian" 偃松篇) by Zhang Yue 張說 (667-731) to which Fa Ruozhen referred.

systematically arranged mountain masses that build up to form a stable mountain.

Stylistically, this painting is also different from the aforementioned two in that the Yuan-derived brushwork, especially in terms of texturing, has given space to softer ink tonalities that betray a general concern with realistic lighting and subtle texturing. This mode recalls both the style of Gong Xian and Northern Song dynasty monumental landscape painting.¹⁰⁹ Presumably the realistic qualities of *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* must have led scholar and connoisseur Xue Yongnian 薛永年 (b. 1941) to note in a colophon to a painting done two years before *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* that Fa's style was "distantly in the flow of Yingqiu [Li Cheng 李成, 919–ca. 967]" 遠溯營丘.¹¹⁰

The current title of this work, excerpted from Fa's inscription reading "Yan'gai pian" 偃蓋篇 in the upper right corner of the painting, refers to a poem by the Tang dynasty official Zhang Yue 張說 (667–731), who had served under the short-lived Zhou dynasty (690–705) of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705; r. 690–705) and then served three Tang dynasty emperors. Ordered to write a harmonizing poem to the "Essay on the Outreaching Pine" ("Yansong pian" 偃松篇) by the imperial diarist Cai Fu 蔡孚 (fl. ca. 713–741), Zhang Yue

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of Fa Ruozhen's possible connection with Gong Xian and his awareness of Northern Song monumental landscapes, see Chapter Two.

¹¹⁰ Xue Yongnian's colophon is attached to the mounting of *Landscape* (cf. fig. 2.5) in the collection of the Jiaozhou Municipal Museum. In his colophon, Xue Yongnian must refer explicitly to *Painting to the Essay on Dropping and Covering* which Fa Ruozhen did in 1676 when he was 64 *sui* old. Mr. Xue writes: "I already know of one other *Landscape* painting earlier transmitted to the world that [Fa Ruozhen did] at the age of sixty-four *sui*; it is today collected at the Palace Museum" 已知傳世之作早者為六十四歲所寫山水圖，今藏故宮博物院。For a transcription of the colophon, see Jiaozhou shi bowuguan 膠州市博物館, ed., *Jiaozhou wenwu zhi* 膠州文物志 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 2015), 325.

responded with his poem “Distantly rhyming to imperial diarist Cai’s Essay on the Outreaching Pine” (“Yao tong Cai qiju Yansong pian” 遙同蔡起居偃松篇). It is to this poem that Fa Ruozhen made reference in his inscription. Zhang Yue’s poem reads:

清都衆木總榮芬，	At the Capital of Clarity, numerous trees are all luxuriant and fragrant,
傳道孤松最出羣。	But according to hearsay, this solitary pine is the most outstanding.
名接天庭長景色，	Its fame has reached the heavenly court and enhances its scenery,
氣連宮闕借氛氲。	Its spirit connects to the celestial palace, lending it auspicious sumptuousness.
懸池的的停華露，	The suspended pool, bright and white, holds splendid dew,
偃蓋重重拂瑞雲。	Layers and layers of outreaching [branches form a] canopy that caresses auspicious clouds.
不借流膏助仙鼎，	Not using its pine resin to stimulate [the fire in] the immortal tripod,
願將楨幹捧明君。	It would rather take its straight pillar to praise the bright sovereign.
莫比冥靈楚南樹，	Do not compare it with the Mingling trees of the south of Chu,
朽老江邊代不聞。	Which rot and age on the river bank and remain nameless for generations. ¹¹¹

Zhang Yue’s first three couplets describe a glorious, upright outreaching pine tree that grows in the environs of the Capital of Clarity, e.g. the Tang capital Chang’an 長安 (today’s Xi’an 西安). The tree is portrayed as connecting with auspicious clouds and to oversee a suspended pool, most likely the Huaqing Hot Springs (Huaqing chi 華清池) in which Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 (719–756) is said to have bathed together with Emperor Xuanzong (685–762). Starting from the fourth couplet, the poem, while continuing to describe the pine tree,

¹¹¹ Zhang Yue 張說, “Yao tong Cai qiju Yansong pian” 遙同蔡起居偃松篇, *Zhang Yue zhi wenji* 張悅之文集, juan 7, 11b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

takes on metaphorical meanings in which the pine tree also functions as a minister. That the pine tree is not using its pine resin to stimulate the fire in the imperial tripod must be understood as a metaphor for officials who, while supporting the emperor to run the country, are not doing this by taking from the stem that nourishes the tree, e.g., by being a burden to the general populace. Describing that the tree can be turned into a beam or straight pillar to serve the monarch (and, by extension, the state), Zhang Yue here uses an allusion from the *Book of Later Han* (*Houhan shu* 後漢書): “The model of the scholar-official (*shi*) are the pillar beams of the country” 士之楷模，國之楨幹也。¹¹² With this image, Zhang Yue conveyed his own unwavering loyalty to the throne. Zhang Yue warns against comparing the pine tree to the Mingling trees which grow south of Chu. These trees were famous for their longevity but, according to Zhuangzi, died namelessly.¹¹³

According to modern scholar Xiong Fei 熊飛, Zhang Yue wrote this poem in 717, at a moment when his career as a high official and minister at the capital had come to a temporary hold after he had been demoted to the position of a provincial secretary in Jingzhou 荊州, Hubei province.¹¹⁴ Therefore, Zhang Yue’s warning against being like the Mingling trees can well be understood as a warning against not putting one’s talent into the

¹¹² See Fan Ye 范曄, *Xinxiao Hou Hanshu zhu* 新校後漢書注 (Taipei: Shijie shuju yinxing, 1973), 2119. What has been translated here as “pillar” (*zhengan* 楨幹) can also refer to the foundation of a wall and, by extension, to the backbone of a body of people, its important core members. The term *zhigan* is derived from the name of Lu Zhi 盧植, whose style name was Gan 幹.

¹¹³ The Mingling trees appear in the *Zhuangzi* and are famous for their longevity: one spring of their lifetime measures five hundred years, and one autumn of their lifetime also measures five hundred years; see Liu Wendian, *Zhuangzi buzheng*, 10; for an English translation see Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 2. Watson translated *mingling* as “caterpillar,” while all Chinese commentaries see *mingling* as trees.

¹¹⁴ For the dating of the poem see Xiong Fei 熊飛, *Zhang Yue nianpu xinbian* 張說年譜新編 (Xinbei: Huamulan wenhua chubanshe, 2012), 111.

service of the state: a scholar's duty was to serve the state and thus to create a name for himself. With his admonition, Zhang Yue appears to promote meaningful, impactful service for the state. The last couplet then highlights Zhang's own unwavering loyalty: ordered to be in Jingzhou, he would not leave his post despite the unfavorable conditions there. The following year, in 718, however, Zhang Yue was back again in the capital Chang'an, suggesting that his poem celebrating loyal service to the crown might have had a play in his promotion.

With his allusion to Zhang Yue's poem, Fa Ruozhen likely aimed to establish a parallel between his own situation and that of his Tang predecessor: both had lived under two dynasties, and both had gone through periods of demotion. In 1676, when Fa painted *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine*, he was staying in Beijing, waiting to obtain an opportunity to serve the Qing again. It seems that with this painting, Fa Ruozhen called for renewed employment at court. Accordingly, the painting can be interpreted to underline his request. A group of flourishing and upright pine trees grows at the foot of an erect, straight, and very stable mountain that is placed centrally into the pictorial space. With this iconography, Fa Ruozhen references Guo Xi's *Early Spring (Zaochun tu 早春圖)* (fig. 1.8). Similar to Zhang Yue, Guo Xi is recorded to have described pine trees as representing state ministers who were supporting the emperor, symbolically depicted as a central, upright mountain:

A great mountain is dominating as chief over the assembled hills, thereby ranking in an ordered arrangement the ridges and peaks, forests and valleys as suzerains of varying degrees and distances. The general appearance is of a great lord glorious on his throne and a hundred princes hastening to pay him court, without any effect of

arrogance or withdrawal [on either part). A tall pine stands erect as the mark of all other trees, thereby ranking in an ordered arrangement the subsidiary trees and plants as numerous admiring assistants. The general effect is of a nobleman dazzling in his prime with all lesser mortals in his service, without insolent or oppressed attitudes [on either part].

大山堂堂為眾山之主，所以分布以次岡阜林壑為遠近大小之宗主也。其象若大君赫然當陽而百辟奔走朝會，無偃蹇背卻之勢也。長松亭亭為眾木之表，所以分布以次藤蘿草木為振契依附之師帥也，其勢若君子軒然得時，而眾小人為之役使...。¹¹⁵

Fa Ruozhen, Zhang Yue, and Guo Xi all could draw on an old-standing image of pine trees supporting the emperor, derived from a story about five pines trees under which the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 (r. 259–210 BCE), had taken shelter during heavy rain when he ascended Mount Tai (Tai shan 泰山), Shandong province, the foremost of the Five Marchmounts (Wu yue 五嶽).¹¹⁶ And indeed, the painting's auspicious iconography and state-supportive messages appear not to have been lost on the later Qianlong emperor, whose collector seals appear on the painting.

Initially painted for Fa's friend, the county magistrate Zhu Hongzuo 朱宏祚 (1630–1700), *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* on one level was meant to celebrate the contributions of Zhu Hongzuo—likely symbolized by one of the pine trees at the foot of the mountain.¹¹⁷ This, most likely, also served to repay some to the obligations engendered

¹¹⁵ Guo Si 郭思, ed., *Linquan gaozhi ji* 林泉高致集, in *Wenyuange siku quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983) [hereafter: *SKQS*], 812: 575-576. For the English translation, see Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 153.

¹¹⁶ See Huang Chaoying 黃朝英, "Wu Song" 五松, *Jingkang xiangsu zaji* 靖康緗素雜記, in *SKQS* 850: 399-400.

¹¹⁷ Fa Ruozhen painted this painting for Elder Hou (Houweng 厚翁), whom Fa further identifies as the fourth brother (*sixiong* 四兄). Shi Weicheng has demonstrated that the recipient of this painting is the fourth brother

by Fa's life in Beijing. But the painting's auspicious imagery also indicates Fa's willingness to serve the state. Yet, not everything is rosy, auspicious, and celebratory in this painting. Among the group of supporting pine trees at the foot of the mountain, there is one single crooked and withered pine tree among those in the back (third from the right, fig. 1.9). This note of dissonance is further enhanced by the use of a seal on this painting, reading "among mountains and waters" (*zai shanshui jian* 在山水間). While physically in Beijing, Fa transposes himself into a state of reclusion among "mountains and waters," thus drawing attention to his own existence that resonates with his claim of reclusion in the capital he had formulated nine years earlier in his *Discourse on Painting*.

The findings from *Discourse on Painting* and *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* appear to present a contradiction: in the former, Fa cautioned against service for the state, and in the latter he appears to celebrate state service and to seek renewed employment. But it is important to note that *Discourse on Painting* voiced frustration about corrupt court officials, not about state service as such. Also, the Kangxi emperor started to patronize artists in 1667, precisely the year when Fa wrote his *Discourse on Painting*.¹¹⁸

Among the 1667 recipients of imperial benevolence and attention was the painter Wang

of Zhu Changzuo 朱昌祚 (1627–1667), Zhu Hongzuo 朱宏祚 (1630–1700), sobriquet Hou'an 厚庵, whom Fa Ruozhen addressed as his "elder" (*weng* 翁) despite the fact that he was seventeen years younger than Fa; see Shi Weicheng, "Fa Ruozhen (1613-1696) de shanshuihua yanjiu," 26. For biographical information on Zhu Hongzuo, also written 朱弘祚, see the entry in the Archived Biographies (*Renwu zhuanji ziliao ku* 人物傳記資料庫) database of the Institute of History and Philology (*Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo* 歷史語言研究所) at Academia Sinica, accessible at <https://newarchive.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/sncaccgi/sncacFtp?ID=6&SECU=1001501599&PAGE=2nd&VIEWREC=sncacFtpqf:0@@@1277389692> (last accessed August 23, 2021). Fa had helped Zhu Hongzuo's older brother Zhu Changzuo, the former provincial governor of Zhejiang, to be rehabilitated in the aftermath of the Ming History case, see above.

¹¹⁸ Jonathan Hay identifies this as the reemergence of a "national art world"; see Jonathan Hay, *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 203, 363FN27.

Chongjie 王崇節 (fl. 1660s–70s), the younger brother of one of Fa Ruozen's closest friends, Wang Chongjian.¹¹⁹ Maybe Fa's turn to painting, theoretically formulated in the *Discourse on Painting*, can therefore also be interpreted as an attempt to look for a short cut and obtain imperial attention through paintings. Such an explanation would close the seeming contradiction between *Discourse on Painting* and *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine*.

But ultimately, it is not necessary to resolve this contradiction. Circumstances in 1667, when Fa wrote *Discourse*, and 1676, when he painted *Outreaching Pine*, were not the same. Fa must have been trying to position himself in different ways at different times. Rather, the apparent contradiction between disapproval of service and willingness to serve apparent in *Discourse on Painting* and *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* points to a larger dimension and function of painting at the hands of Fa Ruozen: both the content of his *Discourse* and the painting indicate that for Fa, painting was a means to reflect on his relation with the Qing state. Both the calligraphic handscroll and the painted hanging scroll reveal that for Fa Ruozen, one function of painting was to make statements about the self and its relationship to the self, thus giving the works an interpretative frame that plays out on the national level of analysis.

Such an understanding of early Qing painting is not new. In particular the landscape paintings done in the aftermath of the Ming-Qing transition have traditionally been

¹¹⁹ Wang Chongjie's now-lost *Parrots amid Apricot Blossoms* (*Xinghua yingwu tu* 杏花鸚鵡圖) entered the imperial collection in 1667; see Lan Ying 藍瑛 and Xie Bin 謝彬, eds., *Tuhui baojian xuzhuan* 圖繪寶鑑續纂, in *Huashi congshu* 畫史叢書 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1974), 2: 888.

interpreted by art historians to make overt statements about the artist and his (occasionally: her) relationship with the state. This tendency, or urge, to read landscape paintings to express thoughts about the artist's relation with the state has led James Cahill to read Fa Ruozhen's landscapes with their imagery of auspicious clouds and healing rain in a similar vein, stating that Fa's paintings became an "obsessive re-enactment of his personal struggle within the imagery of landscape, and a continual reassertion, throughout his later years, of the rightness of his earlier choice" to serve the Qing dynasty.¹²⁰ The study of Fa's *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* confirms this view and sheds light on the fact that Fa Ruozhen used at least one of his landscape painting for self-expressive ends that examined his relationship with the Qing state.

Painting and Xu Fang's Ming loyalism

In a similar vein, Xu Fang used painting to reflect upon his relationship to the state. As a near exact contemporary to Fa Ruozhen, Xu Fang shared the former's pecuniary precarity that was, at least in part, a motivating factor for both to turn to painting.¹²¹ But their respective post-1644 stances and relationships to the state separate the two artists clearly.

Unlike Fa Ruozhen, Xu Fang did not leave a *Discourse on Painting* or some similarly long essay on the art of painting or the motivations to paint. However, Xu Fang wrote the

¹²⁰ James Cahill, "Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen."

¹²¹ While Fa, after having lost his job, survived in Beijing with the help of his friends for whom he painted artworks to repay social obligations, Xu Fang openly sold his paintings. Famous is the anecdote that when Xu Fang needed to purchase daily necessities, he would send his donkey to Suzhou's city gate. Carrying his paintings, calligraphies, and a list of needed items, people who recognized Xu Fang's donkey exchanged art with what the artist in his reclusive hut needed; see Ju-Hsi Chou, ed., *Scent of Ink: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1994), 41. For Xu's pecuniary needs that he obtained through painting, see also the letter translated in the Introduction.

“Rhapsody of the Partridge” (“Zhegu fu” 鷓鴣賦), in which he reflected on his own relationship with the fallen Ming and with the ruling Qing. In the final month (*jiaping* 嘉平) of the *jisi* 己巳 year (mid-January to mid-February 1690), he calligraphed this “Rhapsody” in a long scroll which he preceded with the illustration of a bird (fig. 1.10). The addition of the painted image of the bird to his written “Rhapsody” exemplifies that Xu Fang also enlisted the art of painting as a meaningful way to enhance his reflections upon his relationship with the state.

Xu Fang’s handscroll can be compared to Fa Ruozhen’s *Discourse on Painting* exactly because both documents explore the relationship of the respective artist to the state. They are autodocuments that comment on questions of literati identity in the early Qing dynasty. The fact that Xu Fang combined his “Rhapsody” with a painting reveals how Xu Fang, similarly to Fa Ruozhen, understood the genre’s capacity to voice thoughts about his relationship with the Qing state. Xu Fang’s “Rhapsody” begins with a preface which spells out that the bird stands for the man:

Partridges are birds of the south. When flying, they necessarily head south, when gathering, they necessarily face south. They make this sound: “Only south, not north.” Therefore [the birds] are also called ‘Yearning for the South.’ I lament upon hearing this. A gentleman once said: “How come people are not comparable to the bird?”

鷓鴣，南方之鳥也。飛必南翔，集必南首。其鳴曰：「但南不北。」故亦名懷南。余聞而悲之。君子曰：「可以人而不如鳥乎。」¹²²

¹²² With some small variations, the text of the inscribed rhapsody can also be found in the artist’s literary collection; see Xu Fang 徐枋, “Zhegu fu bingxu” 鷓鴣賦并序, *Juyitang ji*, 379-382.

The preface makes unmistakably clear that the artist intended a national frame of analysis for the reading of his painting. Since the Manchus had conquered China from the north, the south had become a symbol of resistance, mourning, and longing for the Ming. Xu Fang could draw on a longstanding literary convention derived from an anecdote that depicted the south as the place of origin for benevolent rulership. The poet Wang Su 王肅 (464–501) had recorded: “Once upon a time, Emperor Shun played the five-stringed *qin* and composed the Song of the Southern Wind. Its lyrics are: ‘The warmth of the southern wind can dissolve people’s anger and the timeliness of southern wind can increase the wealth of the populace’” 昔者，舜彈五絃之琴，造《南風》之詩，其詩曰：「南風之薰兮，可以解吾民之慍兮，南風之時兮，可以阜民之財兮。」¹²³ Similarly, other Ming loyalist painters of the period used the connotations of the south as a means to depict their loyalist stance, too. On his *Landscape* from 1689, Gong Xian had inscribed a lineage of painters that all hailed from the south (fig. 1.11).¹²⁴ Consequently, Jonathan Hay has read this as an assertion of “the south, and especially Jiangnan, as the cultural center of the Chinese nation, in contrast to north China – which had fallen to the Manchus first, which had supplied the vast majority of early collaborators, and where the Qing capital was now located.”¹²⁵ Art historian Richard Barnhart has argued that Bada Shanren, taking inspiration from Song loyalist painters such as Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖 (1241–1318) and others who lived under the Yuan dynasty,

¹²³ Wang Su 王肅, *Kongzi jiyu* 孔子家語 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1991), 41. The English translation above is based on Zuoting Wen, “Born of the North Wind: Northern Chinese Poetry and the Eurasian Steppes, 1206–1260” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2020), 409.

¹²⁴ For a translation of the painting’s inscription, see Peter C. Sturman and Susan S. Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse*, 295.

¹²⁵ Jonathan Hay, “The Suspension of Dynastic Time,” in John Hay, ed., *Boundaries in China* (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 191-192.

“symbolically faced the south in his landscape paintings, as he did in every aspect of his life after 1644.”¹²⁶ And art historian Hui-shu Lee has read Bada Shanren’s *Birds and Fish* from 1693 in the Shanghai Museum as an image of the story, found in the *Zhuangzi*, of the transformation of the giant Kun fish into the large Peng bird which heads south to fulfil its ambitions and destiny.¹²⁷ Xu Fang thus posited the south as a space for Ming memory, but also complained in the third voice of “a gentleman” about the fact that people do not resemble partridges, that is, that they did not head to the south.¹²⁸ Here, he laments about those who collaborated with the Qing and had forgotten the Ming.

To the right of the depicted bird, Xu Fang added the inscription “Partridge” (*zhegu* 鷓鴣) from which the scroll derives its name and which the contemporary calligrapher Fu Shen 傅申 also wrote onto the scroll’s frontispiece. Next to the refined drawing of the bird perching on the branch of a pine tree, Xu Fang added an inscription in which he claimed to have “freely copied” (*lin* 臨) the “brush” (*bi* 筆) of the Ming painter Yao Shou 姚綬 (1423–1495) to whom he refers by his style name Yundong yishi 雲東逸史. Yao Shou indeed painted a number of birds; one example being *Myna in a Wintry Forest* (*Hanlin quyü tu* 寒林鷓鴣圖)

¹²⁶ Wang Fangyu, Richard M. Barnhart and Judith G. Smith, eds., *Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren (1626-1705)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery and Yale University Press, 1990), 144.

¹²⁷ Hui-shu Lee, “Bada Shanren’s Bird-and-Fish Painting and the Art of Transformation,” *Archives of Asian Art* 44 (1991): 12-13. For the story in the *Zhuangzi* see Liu Wendian, *Zhuangzi buzheng*, 1-7; for the English translation see Burton, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 1.

¹²⁸ For a reading of Xu Fang’s loyalist thoughts expressed through a positing of the south as a refugium for Ming *yimin*, see also Cheng Yu-yu 鄭毓瑜, “Ming Qing zhiji cifu zuopin de ‘Ai Jiangnan’ lunshu: yi Xia Wenchun ‘Da ai fu’ wei duanxu de taolun” 明清之際辭賦作品的「哀江南」論述——以夏完淳〈大哀賦〉為端緒的討論, in *Wenben fengjing: ziwo yu kongjian de xianghu dingyi* 文本風景——自我與空間的相互定義 (Taipei: Maitian chuban gongsi, 2005), 167-171.

at the National Palace Museum in Taipei (fig. 1.12). Compositionally, Xu Fang's *Partridge* recalls Yao Shou's handscroll *Singing Turtledove on an Old Branch* (*Gumu wujiu tu* 古木鳴鳩圖) at the Palace Museum in Beijing (fig. 1.13).¹²⁹ Yet, apart from the painting's subject of a bird sitting on a branch, there are not many similarities between the two paintings: different birds sit on different trees looking into different directions. Probably most evident is the difference in brushwork: while Yao Shou's plain and simple (*pingdan* 平淡) treatment of the ink harks back to the aesthetic ideals propagated by Wu Zhen 吳鎮 (1280–1354), Xu Fang's fine and detailed brushwork is much more studied and fits well into the overall picture of the artist as a meticulous painter.¹³⁰ Most notably, however, seems to be the fact that partridges do not have long tails like the bird depicted in this painting; rather the depicted bird appears to be a pheasant.

How can this inconsistency between the described partridge and the painted pheasant be explained? One hypothesis is that the correct depiction of the bird was not really a matter of importance. With other words, Xu Fang might have considered the choice of bird to be depicted irrelevant. Two facts can be cited to make this argument. First, the artist inscribed the painting to the right of the depicted bird himself with the two characters for partridge.

¹²⁹ For an illustration of the Beijing handscroll see <https://digicol.dpm.org.cn/cultural/details?id=88368>, last accessed Nov. 7, 2022.

¹³⁰ With these differences, Xu Fang's *Partridge* draws attention to the creative approach to "free copying" (*lin*) that was prevalent in the late Ming and early Qing also in the practice of calligraphy. With the translation of the term *lin* as "free copying," I follow Prof. Qianshen Bai. For his discussion on the impact of Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636) on the practice of copying as a mode of instruction into a creative technique see Bai, *Fu Shan's World*, 34–40; for the same practice by the calligrapher Fu Shan 傅山 (1607–1684), see *ibid.*, 241–242. See also Bai Qianshen 白謙慎, "Cong Bada Shanren lin 'Lanting xu' lun Ming mo Qing chu shufa zhong de linshu guannian" 從八大山人臨《蘭亭序》論明末清初書法中的臨書觀念, in Hua Rende 華人德 and Bai Qianshen 白謙慎, eds., *Lanting lunji* 蘭亭論集 (Suzhou: Suzhou daxue chubanshe, 2000), 462–472.

Maybe Xu Fang did consider his depicted bird a partridge, maybe the composition called for a bird with a longer tail so as to counterbalance the growth of the tree. Such a line of thought gains more weight from the fact that Xu Fang's "Rhapsody" itself makes clear that the artist and writer was less concerned with the partridge in particular, but more with the imagery of birds and their connotation with the south in general. Indeed, the "Rhapsody of the Partridge" refers to a number of other birds that all have a similar characteristic, namely their moral integrity. This is particularly apparent in the end of the "Rhapsody" inscribed on the scroll which reads:

... And even though this is merely an intelligent bird from the hillside of Long[shan], it can reminisce about the previous emperor. The virtuous Qin[ji]liao is a loyal bird who does not enter foreign territories. When it comes to the partridge, how to be its match? Therefore, I authored this rhapsody to praise it. I am facing the winds and heave a sigh. I turn around, look at the end of Heaven and sigh deeply: who can grant me these feathers?

... 是雖隴坻慧鳥，能思上皇。秦繚¹³¹貞禽，不入異域。方茲鷓鴣，焉能爲匹？遂爲文以賦之。因臨風而嘆息。睠天末而長懷，又誰能傳我以羽翼？

With his reference to the intelligent bird of the hillside of Long[shan] 隴山 (along the border between Shaanxi and Gansu province), Xu Fang referenced an old story set during the reign of the first ruler of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1127–1129) was said to have kept hundreds of parrots (*yingwu* 鸚鵡). In the story, the emperor asked one of the parrots if it missed home upon which the bird, who was from Longshan 隴山, replied that it did. When, years later, an official travelled to Longshan—

¹³¹ The character used on the scroll, *liao* 繚 (entangle), was probably meant to be the character *liao* 鷦 (wren), and is pronounced like the character *liao* 了.

which, in the meantime, had been conquered by the Jin dynasty (1115–1234)—the bird asked about the previous emperor, e.g. the last emperor of the Northern Song (960–1127) dynasty, Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100–1126) or his son Emperor Qinzong 欽宗 (r. 1126–1127). The official replied that the emperor had already fallen, upon which the bird is said to have cried without end.¹³²

In the extract of Xu Fang’s “Rhapsody” translated above, the artist references a second story, that of the Qinjiliao 秦吉了 (hill myna), which appears to have originated in the Tang dynasty. Many versions of this story exist. In one of them, a military leader in Sichuan was petting a Qinjiliao that “could also speak human words” (*yi neng renyan* 亦能人言). When a “barbarian chieftain” (*yiqiu* 夷酋) wanted to buy the bird and offered money, the bird’s owner was willing to sell the bird. Yet, the bird said: “I am a bird of the Han people, I do not wish to go to the barbarians” 我漢禽，不願入夷中, upon which the bird committed suicide. The end of the story records: “Alas, the gentry betray their master and forget his gratefulness, they are content with living in a foreign country, but they do not kill themselves for this humiliation. So they are not alike the Qinjiliao 嗚呼！士有背主忘恩與甘心異域而不能死者，曾秦吉了之不若也！”¹³³

With his “Rhapsody,” Xu Fang must have aimed to criticize humans’ moral decay. His references are only lightly veiled metaphors for Xu Fang’s own times of foreign conquest,

¹³² See Liu Mei 劉湄, ed., *Shaanxi tongzhi* 陝西通志, in *SKQS* 556: 709.

¹³³ Shao Bowen 邵伯溫, *Shaoshi wenjian lu* 邵氏聞見錄, Li Jianxiong 李劍雄 and Liu Dequan 劉德權, punct. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 189.

and they make clear that birds in general were more laudable than men.¹³⁴ Therefore, it is possible that Xu Fang painted a pheasant instead of a partridge to stand in for the bird he described.

A second, more convincing hypothesis may be that Xu Fang deliberately painted the pheasant instead of the partridge. He might have done so in order to couch another layer of loyalist meaning into his painting. With its long tail, the depicted bird resembles much more a golden pheasant (Lat: *chrysolophus pictus*; Chin.: *jinji* 錦雞) than a partridge. It is not convincing that Xu Fang would not have known the difference between a partridge and a pheasant. But coincidentally, the golden pheasant also featured on the rank badges for civil officials of the second rang (*erpin wenguan* 二品文官) during the Ming dynasty (fig. 1.14). Although the Ming dynasty rank badge iconography continued to be used in the Qing dynasty (fig. 1.15), Xu Fang may have had the Ming golden pheasant in his mind and probably, by painting it rather than a partridge, couched a second layer of loyalist meaning in his painting which he reinforced with the inscribed “Rhapsody.”¹³⁵

Writing in 1690, Xu complained with his “Rhapsody” about contemporaries who had forgotten the Ming. Asking for feathers to become a bird himself, then, was clearly a way for Xu Fang to formulate a desire to be as virtuous as the birds of these stories. Although the

¹³⁴ For a reading of Xu Fang’s rhapsody as participating in a larger discourse on saving the country from the invading Manchus, see Lin Yi-rong 林宜蓉, *Zhoufang, liaoji yu jiuguo: Ming Qing yidai wenren Xu Fang zhi shenfen rentong yu yimin lunshu* 舟舫、療疾與救國——明清易代文人徐枋之身分認同與遺民論述 (Taipei: Wanjuan lou, 2014), 126.

¹³⁵ David Hugus, *Chinese Rank Badges: Symbols of Power, Wealth, and Intellect in the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2021), 66.

gap between described partridge and painted pheasant apparent in Xu Fang's handscroll *Partridge*, which I tried to solve above, remains problematic, Xu Fang's pheasant can most plausibly be interpreted to add a layer of Ming loyalist feelings. It must have functioned as a self-image that helped Xu Fang to make a statement about his own moral integrity and relationship with the Qing dynasty. With such an interpretative horizon, Xu Fang's painting can be set into relation with a long tradition of paintings of birds on tree branches, exemplified by *Doves and Pear Blossoms after Rain* (*Lihua yuhou tu* 梨花雨外圖) by Qian Xuan 錢選 (1235–1305), that were used to reflect about loss, amongst others, of one's native dynasty (fig. 1.16).¹³⁶ Clearly, Xu Fang had a national interpretative horizon in mind when he painted this work.

Conclusion

The aforementioned examples drawn from Fa Ruozhen, Xu Fang, Gong Xian, and Bada Shanren make abundantly clear that early Qing artists understood the ability of painting to articulate reflections about one's identity and relation with the state. The same idea was also articulated in the writings of Fa Ruozhen and others cited above. Artists were keenly aware of the capacity of painting to shape identities on the national level. Comparative and referential examples drawn from China's long history of painting—Guo Xi, Qian Xuan, and Yao Shou—also clarify that such a perspective was not new or innovative for the survivors of the Qing conquest.

¹³⁶ For such a reading, see Peter C. Sturman, "Confronting Dynastic Change: Painting after Mongol Reunification of North and South China," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 35 (Spring 1999): 152-154.

In this regard, it is interesting to contrast the aforementioned case studies of Fa Ruozhen's *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* with Xu Fang's *Partridge*. The former, done by a "Qing collaborator," was read here as Fa's desire to serve the new dynasty while the latter, painted by a "Ming loyalist," articulated Xu's resolute position as an adherent of the previous dynasty. The two paintings thus stand in for and reiterate the well-known historiographic binary that divides loyalists' paintings from collaborators' paintings. Although this chapter has not analyzed Fa's cloudy mountains, the findings presented here suggest that Cahill's reading of Fa Ruozhen's art as having state-supportive meanings that he derived from the artist's auspicious cloud and healing rain iconography finds corroborative evidence in *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine*.¹³⁷

This chapter has explored to what extent paintings could be employed to shape identities and formulate thoughts about one's relation with the state. Having been at the heart of scholarly inquiry for the last fifty years, this question was part of the repertoire of each literati painter working in the aftermath of the Qing conquest. In the analysis of Jonathan Hay, landscapes were "the pre-eminent genre for the metaphoric exploration of the individual's relation to state and nation."¹³⁸ The example of Fa's landscape, but also the theoretical writings of his contemporaries cited above, demonstrate this clearly. But in what follows, I shift the interpretative framework away from the national towards the local level. By leaving the arena of national politics, subjecthood, and allegiance, the following chapters aim to uncover

¹³⁷ Cf. Cahill, "Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen."

¹³⁸ Hay, "The Suspension of Dynastic Time," 171.

ways in which landscape painting was used to spell out one's identity in the aftermath of the Qing conquest in different ways.

CHAPTER TWO

The Local Turn: Evoking the Landscapes of Home

The preceding chapter investigated Fa Ruozhen's *Discourse on Painting* and how his 1667 essay shaped an alternative identity from that in his role as an official operating in the dangerously volatile environment of court politics of the 1650s and 1660s. *Discourse* is an important object in which he reflected on his subject position vis-à-vis the state. *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine*, done in 1676, as well as Xu Fang's *Partridge* also made claims about the artists' relationships with the state.

The following discussion shifts the perspective by focusing on an aspect of locality in Fa's work. While self-positioning on the national level necessarily dealt with issues of subjecthood—divided along the polarizing lines of service and commitment to the Qing or fealty for the Ming—the local level was a less politically charged space of refuge. Here, painters could deal with and express other matters of concern. In order to reveal the extent to which the local informed Fa's landscapes, this chapter is primarily interested in uncovering how a series of Fa's landscapes can be related to the local landscapes of his home region south of Jiaozhou.

Fa Ruozhen and the making of place-images in seventeenth-century China

The recollection of events that had taken place at particular places is a central aspect of Fa's artistic practice. This is apparent in the earliest surviving and firmly ascribable painting by Fa Ruozhen, *Reclining in the Western Hills* (*Wozuo xishan tu* 臥坐西山圖), which he painted in 1673 while in Beijing (fig. 2.1).¹ In his own inscription, Fa recorded a social event occurring in the Western Hills:

On an autumn day of the *guichou* year [1673], [grandson] Abalang asked for a painting. I splashed some ink and the two gentlemen Haiwen and Zhongyu then completed it. Meanwhile, we poured wine during White Dew [15th solar term, around September 8] and sang [poems] of yellow flowers [chrysanthemums?]. Coiled, like clouds approaching; obscured, as if rain had gathered. Reclining in the Western Hills, our sounds flowed among the myriad trees. We boisterously strummed our lutes and whirled in dance. This really made me as a guest not to be lonely anymore. Some say these are the three perfections [e.g. poetry, calligraphy, and painting], but I would not dare.

癸丑秋日，阿八郎問畫。老夫灑墨，海文、仲玉兩先生成之。一時釀酒白露，高唱黃花。卷若雲來，翳如雨收，臥坐西山，響流萬樹。擊筑婆娑，頗使客況不孤也。或云三絕，未敢謂然。²

Immediately preceding the making of this painting, Fa had spent three years in Nanjing, Anhui, and Suzhou where he had interacted with painters such as Kuncan and collectors such as Zhou Lianggong. Therefore, Fa Ruozhen had lived and been active in important

¹ The painting was previously in the Wong Nan-p'ing 王南屏 collection before being sold in auction at China Guardian 中國嘉德 in Beijing on May 13, 2013, lot 1424. Its present location is unknown.

² Translation adapted from Liu Heping in Richard M. Barnhart *et al.*, *The Jade Studio: Masterpieces of Ming and Qing Painting and Calligraphy from the Wong Nan-p'ing Collection* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 1993), 160.

centers of contemporary painting that had witnessed the proliferation of place-images, of landscape paintings that referred to, captured, or evoked particular places and regional sceneries. Fa Ruozhen's inscription to *Reclining in the Western Hills* seems to suggest that his work also participated in this larger cultural trend of landscape paintings that evoked a particular place. Yet, in contrast to paintings by Hongren, for example, which clearly show readily recognizable topographical features of Anhui's Yellow Mountains, Fa's *Reclining in the Western Hills* obscures an identification with a particular place. This chapter investigates if a painting like *Reclining in the Western Hills* evokes a particular place.

At least since the late Northern Song Dynasty, theories of literati painting dismissed preoccupations with representation and “form likeness” (*xingsi* 形似) as secondary, if not completely beyond the point of painting.³ In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Dong Qichang further stressed the independence of painting from its descriptive or representational role. For Dong, “brush and ink” (*bimo* 筆墨), grounded in the study and mastery of ancient masters, were of greater concern than the representation of landscapes, leading to his famous statement, “When it comes to discussing the strange and unusual [seen from] paths, then painting does not equal nature, but when it comes to discussing the marvels of brush and ink (*bimo*), then landscapes certainly do not equal painting” 以蹊徑之

³ The scion of literati painting theory Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036–1101) wrote, “If anyone discusses painting in terms of formal likeness, his understanding is nearly that of a child”; translated in Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1036–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 26. As Wu Hung recently has noted, the disapproval of “attention on the coherent outlines” and imitation of the “likeness of things” appears to have been already a concern among Tang dynasty painters such as Wu Daozi 吳道子 (ca. 685–ca. 758); see Wu Hung, “Simulated Landscape Paintings: Newly Unearthed Tomb Murals in Tang China,” *The Art Bulletin* 103, no. 4 (2021): 22.

怪奇論，則畫不如山水，以筆墨之精妙論，則山水決不如畫。⁴ To what extent Dong's theories were a point to reckon with for landscape painters throughout the seventeenth century can be measured from an inscription that Gong Xian 龔賢 (1618–1689) left on the album leaf “Pavilion on a Lake” reading: “There is a reality to the scene [depicted here], it was not obtained from paper and ink” 此有真境，不得自楮墨間。⁵ In this sentence, Gong Xian discusses the training of a painter. He deemed it necessary to stress that one should not only learn from old master paintings, but that a painter should also observe real landscapes.⁶ In seventeenth-century landscapes, painterly concerns with the representational thus had to navigate a narrow field of tension devised by Dong Qichang, who had emphasized brushwork as the foremost artistic preserve. Accordingly, James Cahill has noted for example that painterly projects à la Zhang Hong 張宏 (1577–after 1652) aiming at the accurate representation of particular places stand for the limits of representational painting in the face of brush-and-ink practices understood as self-expressive and self-reflective.⁷

The conventional discourse on “premodern Chinese landscape painting” or “traditional Chinese painting” that dismisses ideas of representational painting as a practice not suited for the literati had a dominating effect until the 1990s. While scholars had thought about the

⁴ Dong Qichang 董其昌, *Huachan shi suibi* 畫禪室隨筆, in *SKQS* 867: 474.

⁵ The album is collected at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City; for an image of the album leaf see <https://art.nelson-atkins.org/objects/17829/pavilion-on-a-lake?ctx=36aca6bd-afa7-41b4-87f0f5e5da4ea1c8&idx=11> (last accessed October 30, 2022). Translation altered from Marc F. Wilson's in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collection of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and The Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, OH: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), 280.

⁶ For a discussion of Gong Xian's interest in “true-view landscapes” and topographical landscapes see Chung-lan Wang, “Gong Xian (1619–1689): A Seventeenth-Century Nanjing Intellectual and His Aesthetic World,” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2005), 159-179.

⁷ Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 5-35.

relationship between painting and environment,⁸ important paintings such as Dong Qichang's *Wanluan Thatched Hall* (*Wanluan caotang tu* 婉變草堂圖) from 1597 continued to be more eloquently discussed in stylistic terms⁹—and this despite the fact that the painting's title refers explicitly to a particular place (fig. 2.2).¹⁰ In contrast, scholarship over the last twenty years or so has increasingly shown that rarefied relations to place factored into the production of landscape painting especially in the seventeenth century.¹¹ Accordingly, Shih Shou-ch'ien has recognized that landscape painting's "opposing" (*duili* 對立) relationship to nature is often easily overlooked, especially in the seventeenth

⁸ Richard Edwards, *The World Around the Chinese Artist: Aspects of Realism in Chinese Painting* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1989); Richard Vinograd, "Vision and Revision in Seventeenth-Century Painting," in Wai-ching Ho, ed., *Proceedings of the Tung Ch'i-ch'ang International Symposium* (Kansas City, MO: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1991), 18-1-18-28; Albert Lutz and Huang Qi, "In der Fremde wohnen oder nach Hause zurückkehren ist einerlei," in Museum Rietberg, ed., *Chinesische Szenen 1656/1992: Die 13 Meter lange Bildrolle des Malers Xiao Yuncong aus dem Jahr 1656. Fotografien von Daniel Schwartz* (Zurich: Museum Rietberg, 1992), 7-50.

⁹ Wen C. Fong, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and Artistic Renewal," in Wai-kam Ho, ed., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555-1636*, 43-53; Shih Shou-chien, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's 'Wan-luan Thatched Hall' and the Innovation in His Painting Style," in Wai-ching Ho, ed., *Proceedings of the Tung Ch'i-ch'ang International Symposium*, 13-1-13-17; Richard M. Barnhart, "Dong Qichang and Western Learning: A Hypothesis in Honor of James Cahill," *Archives of Asian Art* 50 (1997/1998): 7-16.

¹⁰ The painting's title refers to the study by the same name which Dong's friend Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558-1639) had started to build in the very same year; see Chen Jiru 陳繼儒, *Yanqi youshi* 巖棲幽事, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1985), 24: 90.

¹¹ To name but a few: Jonathan Hay, "Ming Palace and Tomb in Early Qing Jiangning: Dynastic Memory and the Openness of History," *Late Imperial China* 20, no. 1 (1999): 1-48; Catherine Stuer, "Dimensions of Place: Map, Itinerary, and Trace in Images of Nanjing" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2012); Anne de Coursey Clapp, *Commemorative Landscape Painting in China* (Princeton, NJ: P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, in association with Princeton University Press, 2012); Lü Xiao 呂曉, "Tuxie xingwang: Ming mo Qing chu 'Jinling shengjing tu' yanjiu" 圖寫興亡——明末清初「金陵勝景圖」研究, in Beijing huayuan 北京畫院 and Nanjing bowuyuan 南京博物院, eds., *Wei you jiashan buyan kan: Ming Qing wenren shijing shanshui zuopin ji* 唯有家山不厭看——明清文人實景山水作品集 (Nanning: Guangxi meishu chubanshe, 2015), 12-35; Elizabeth Kindall, *Geo-Narratives of a Filial Son: The Paintings and Travel Diaries of Huang Xiangjian (1609-1673)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016); Amy S. Huang, "Jinling Remembered: Nanjing as *topos* in the Seventeenth Century," (PhD diss., Brown University, 2018) (not consulted); Stephen H. Whiteman, *Where Dragon Veins Meet: The Kangxi Emperor and His Estate at Rehe* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2020), 162-182.

century.¹² The question therefore is: did place figure into Fa's artistic practice, and if so, which place or places?

***Reclining in the Western Hills*, Fa's early painting style, and a reconstruction of his learning**

An inquiry into the style of Fa's *Reclining in the Western Hills* enables one to situate the work—and Fa's artistic practice in general—within the cultural milieu in which the work participated. Compositionally, *Reclining in the Western Hills* starts in the left lower corner with a rocky shoreline on which five different trees are growing. Behind this group of trees, a modestly sized coiling mountain grows into the opposing right upper corner, effectively separating the painting into two spaces: a contracted foreground and a distinct middle ground. The background is only alluded to by light washes. Despite its comparatively light use of ink, many characteristics of Fa's mature brushwork, such as trembling outlines used for the contours of rocks and a smoky application of ink, are already evident in *Reclining in the Western Hills*.¹³ The tree furthest in the back of the group shown in the foreground has long, downward extending foliage, so-called “dropping-leaf dots” (*chuiye dian* 垂葉點). This particular kind of foliage would become one of Fa's stylistic characteristics over the course of the next ten to fifteen years. Additionally, Fa used particular brush idioms for rendering the mountain in *Reclining in the Western Hills* that he would later build on. He

¹² Shih Shou-ch'chien 石守謙, “Yi bimo he tiandi: dui shiba shiji Zhongguo shanshui hua de yige xin lijie” 以筆墨合天地——對十八世紀中國山水畫的一個新理解, *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立台灣大學美術史研究集刊 26 (2009): 6-7.

¹³ In this sense also Liu Heping in Barnhart *et al.*, *The Jade Studio*, 160.

employed so-called “raveled rope” (*jiesuo cun* 解索皴) texture strokes for which the Yuan dynasty painter Wang Meng 王蒙 (ca. 1305–1385) is best known (figs. 2.3 and 2.4), and the “resembling rolling clouds” (*juanyun cun* 卷雲皴) strokes, a trademark of the Northern Song painter Guo Xi that can be found in his *Early Spring* from 1072 (fig. 1.8).¹⁴ Fa would draw on these methods of texturing throughout his career.

That by the early 1670s, Fa was familiar with historical styles of painting is demonstrated by a painting that he did in 1672 “in the style of Mi Fu.”¹⁵ A better indication of what Fa’s take on the Mi family style (Mi Fu 米芾, 1052–1107 and Mi Youren 米友仁, 1074–1151) looked like is *Landscape* (*Shanshui tu* 山水圖), which Fa painted in the sixth month of the *jiayin* 甲寅 year (1674) (fig. 2.5). In *Landscape*, Fa applied nearly no outlines at all, rather constructing his cone-shaped mountains by relying on shades of ink applied in horizontal strokes. This closely recalls Mi Youren’s manner in *Cloudy Mountains* (*Yunshan tu* 雲山圖) (fig. 2.6). The influence of the Mi style on Fa, unacknowledged in the painting’s inscription, did not go unnoticed by later scholars and connoisseurs. In his colophon to the painting attached onto the hanging scroll, Xue Yongnian mentions, “[the painting is] distantly in the tide of Yingqiu [Li Cheng 李成, 919–ca. 967] but [Fa] concurrently also consulted the old misty peaks and cloudy trees of Old Mi” 遠溯營丘，兼參米老煙巒雲樹。

¹⁴ The English translation of the three terms *chui’ye dian*, *jiesuo cun*, and *juanyun cun* follows Benjamin March, *Some Technical Terms of Chinese Painting* (Baltimore, Waverly Press, Inc., 1935), 30, 34.

¹⁵ The painting is in the collection of the Shandong Provincial Museum in Jinan and is published in black and white in Zhongguo gudai shuhua jianing zu 中國古代書畫鑒定組, ed., *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu* 中國古代書畫圖目 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996): 16: 204 (魯 1-172).

With the exception of the Mis, Fa Ruozhen seldom acknowledged historical sources for his own painting style. This suggests that he held the cloudy paintings, for which now Mi Youren is mostly known, in high esteem. Indeed, if Fa's *Cloudy Mountains* (*Yunshan tu* 雲山圖) from 1684 is compared to *Pavilion of Rising Clouds* (*Yunqi lou tu* 雲起樓圖), traditionally attributed to Mi Fu but more likely a close copy of the artist's work from the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), the veneration that Fa must have held for the Mis is evident (figs. 2.7 and 2.8). Both paintings are on silk, which naturally allows for more atmospheric, watery washes without outlines than paper. Although Fa's mountains are rockier compared to the Mi idiom, the strong reliance on mists and vapors emerging from the mountain valleys is indicative of how Fa had studied the Mi style. Mi Fu's *Pavilion of Rising Clouds* was well-known in the seventeenth century; Dong Qichang's title slip mounted above the painting is evidence for this. Also, Fa's close friend Wang Duo was fundamentally opposed to the sparse painting style of Ni Zan and promoted the Mi style instead.¹⁶ Given Fa's close relation with Wang Duo (see below), the latter's opinion must have given strong impetus for Fa to study the Mi idiom.

While *Reclining in the Western Hills* (1673), *Landscape* (1674), and *Cloudy Mountains* (1684) all demonstrate that Fa was familiar with art historical styles, he—unlike many other painters of his time—left no surviving art-historical theory of his own and it is unclear what his sources of learning were. From the surviving documentation, we know that Fa had started to paint at that age of eleven *sui* 歲 (ten years in western counting) and that his

¹⁶ See, for example, Eugene Y. Wang, "Chinese Art: The Story of Haze (Part One)," *Oriental Art* 49, no. 3 (May/June 2018): 82-83.

younger brother Ruozhi 若直 was a gifted painter of landscapes and birds-and-flowers before he died in 1638.¹⁷ For a painting like *Reclining in the Western Hills*, the painting album *The Mustard Seed Garden* (*Jieziyuan huapu* 芥子園畫譜) cannot have played a role as a learning guide since it was published only six years after Fa finished his painting. However, Fa probably learned painting with the help of other late Ming printed painting albums.¹⁸ He may also have learned from his father's friends to whom also the eminent calligrapher and sporadic painter Huang Daozhou 黃道周 (1585–1646) counted.¹⁹ Most likely, he must have had opportunities to study ancient paintings in the collection of the important Jiaozhou-based art collector Zhang Ruoqi 張若麒 (*jinshi* 1631). Zhang's collection contained paintings such as *Whiling Away the Summer by a Lakeside Retreat* (*Huzhuang qingxia tu* 湖莊清夏圖) by Zhao Lingrang 趙令穰 (fl. late 11th–early 12th cent.), which his son Zhang Yingjia had acquired from Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680) at the beginning of the Kangxi reign around 1661, and *Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountains* (*Qiaohua qiuse tu* 鵲華秋色圖) by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322).²⁰ Already by 1641, Fa Ruozhen called Zhang Ruoqi (*hao* Tianshi 天石) his “teacher” (*yeshi* 業師), thus underlining the two men's close relationship.²¹

¹⁷ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 642, 653.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the variety of genres the modern term “painting manual” has come to encompass, see J.P. Park, *Art by the Book: Painting Manuals and the Leisure Life in Late Ming China* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2012), 30; for a summary discussion of other late-Ming painting manuals, see *ibid.*, 67-83.

¹⁹ Evidence for Fa Huan's and Huang Daozhou's friendship comes from a poem (not preserved, only recorded) that Huang sent to Fa after the latter had failed a provincial exam in 1637; see Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 652.

²⁰ For a study of this collection see Zhang Hui 章暉 and Bai Qianshen 白謙慎, “Qing chu fuzi shoucangjia Zhang Ruoqi he Zhang Yingjia” 清初父子收藏家張若麒和張應甲, *Xin meishu* 新美術 no. 8 (2014): 37-48.

²¹ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 654.

Fa must also have been exposed to ancient paintings after he had moved to Beijing in 1646. For those with cash or government positions, early Qing Beijing presented manifold possibilities to acquire ancient paintings. The chaos of the dynastic change had caused many fleeing officials of the Ming dynasty to sell their private collections, opening the chance for private collectors such as Sun Chengze 孫承澤 (1592–1676) to snap up paintings. Sun recorded: “With the changes of the *jiashen* year [1644], famous paintings filled the market” 甲申之變，名畫滿市.²² Since Sun Chengze was a friend of Fa’s friend Wang Chongjian, it is possible that Fa had access to Sun’s important art collection, too.²³ In addition, after the Shunzhi emperor had taken the throne, he bestowed ancient paintings on officials as a token of his gratitude. Wang Shizhen, for example, recorded: “In the third year of the [reign] of the Shunzhi emperor (1646), [the emperor] bestowed hundred scrolls of paintings stored at the Office of the Palace Treasury onto high officials” 世祖順治三年，賜閣臣內府藏畫百軸.²⁴ The Shunzhi emperor also bestowed a painting on Fa, although it is not possible to reconstruct exactly when this happened and what painting it was. In 1693, Fa remembered this imperial gift in the long poem, partly translated below, entitled “Respectfully reading the late [Shunzhi] emperor’s bestowed painting scroll, moved by the imperial favor, in tears

²² Sun Chengze 孫承澤, “Jing Hao shanshui” 荆浩山水, *Gengzi xiaoxia ji* 庚子銷夏記 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011), 58.

²³ Traces for the friendship between Wang Chongjian and Sun Chengze abound; see, for example, Wang’s obituary (*ji* 祭) written after Sun’s death in Wang Chongjian 王崇簡, “Ji Sun Beihai shaozai wen” 祭孫北海少宰文, *Qingxiang tang wenji* 青箱堂文集, in *QDSWJHB* 17: 160. For a study of Sun Chengze’s collecting activities, see Liu Jinku, *Nanhua beidu*, 159-166.

²⁴ Wang Shizhen, “Ji guan Song Muzhong shuhua” 記觀宋牧仲書畫, *Chibei outan*, 276.

I record this” (“Pengdu xian Huangdi yusi huazhou, ganshu enze, yongku jishi” 捧讀先皇帝御賜畫軸，感沐恩澤，痛哭紀事):

稽首先皇帝，	I kowtow before the late [Shunzhi] emperor,
天高浩蕩恩，	and before his vast and mighty grace that is high as Heaven.
...	...
選軸酬寅亮，	He chose a scroll to compensate me for my respectful service
	[to the court],
封籤出午門。	Sealed with a title slip, I exit by the Meridian Gate
	[of the Forbidden City]. ²⁵

Fa Ruozhen also moved in the circles of important painting collectors active in the capital. Although it cannot be established with certainty which paintings he encountered there, it is possible to reconstruct a network of scholars and occasions that would have brought Fa in direct contact with ancient paintings. Having passed the *jinshi* degree alongside Wang Wujiu 王無咎 (*jinshi* 1646), Fa gained access to the latter’s father Wang Duo and became Wang Duo’s close friend and colleague at the Hanlin academy (Hanlin yuan 翰林院).²⁶ Traces of their friendship and interactions abound: When visiting Fa Ruozhen at his Tower of Borrowing Mountains (Jieshan lou 借山樓) in Beijing in 1650, Wang Duo wrote a hanging

²⁵ Fa Ruozhen, “Pengdu xian Huangdi yuci huazhou, ganshu enze, tongku jishi” 捧讀先皇帝御賜畫軸，感沐恩澤，痛哭紀事, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 634-635. Exiting by the Meridian Gate of the Forbidden City was a particular favor bestowed on meritorious officials. It also seems that Fa Ruozhen collected some Yuan dynasty Buddhist paintings. The calligrapher and official Li Wenzao 李文藻 (1730–1778) records that paintings of Luohans (Arhats) that had been in Fa’s collection were given away by his grandson Fa Kunhou 法坤厚 to the investigating censor (*jiancha yushi* 監察御史) of Shandong, Shen Tingfang 沈廷芳 (*hao* Jiaoyuan 椒園, 1692–1762) who determined that these were Yuan dynasty paintings; see Li Wenzao 李文藻, “You Guangxiao si ji” 遊光孝寺記, *Nanjian wenji* 南澗文集, in *XXSKQS* 1449: 73.

²⁶ A poem written on the occasion of a visit in the company of Huang Zhilin 黃志遴 (*jinshi* 1646) to the bedridden Wang Duo in 1648 attests to this connection; see Fa Ruozhen, “San yue Wang Juesi nianbo ou bing jie Huang Oumei nianzhang guo fang er shou” 三月王覺斯年伯偶病偕黃鷗湄年丈過訪二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 217. For the professional connection between Fa and Wang at the Hanlin academy see Shi Weicheng, “Fa Ruozhen (1613-1696) de shanshuihua yanjiu,” 15.

scroll congratulating Fa on the completion of the newly built Stone Garden (Shi pu 石圃) (fig. 2.9).²⁷ According to the first of three poems by Wang Duo entitled “Summoning Ding Yehe” (“Zhao Ding Yehe” 招丁野鶴) recorded by the playwright Li Yu 李漁 (1611–1680), Wang Duo and Ding Yaokang often visited Fa Ruozen at his residence.²⁸ Fa was also a frequent guest in Ding’s household. For example, a scroll that Wang Duo wrote on the occasion of a party Ding had organized mentions Fa Ruozen as an attendant.²⁹ According to Fa’s friend Tang Menglai 唐夢賚 (1627–1698), Wang Duo and Tan Bida 談必達 (b. 1607, style name: Baifu 白復) wrote a preface for a text by Fa Ruozen, presumably now lost, entitled *Retained Wall-Hidden Poetry (Biliu 壁留)*.³⁰ The early Qing official and historian Fu Weilin 傅維鱗 (1608–1667) also recorded that Fa Ruozen and Wang Duo were close friends and that Fa helped Wang to promote his books.³¹ In other words, Wang and Fa were close friends and met on many occasions.

²⁷ The scroll was sold on Dec. 3, 2016 by Rongbaozhai 榮寶齋 in Beijing (lot 722); it is noted in Xue Longchun 薛龍春, *Wang Duo nianpu changbian* 王鐸年譜長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), 1166.

²⁸ Wang Duo 王鐸, “Zhao Ding Yehe” 招丁野鶴, in Li Yu 李漁, *Chidu chuzheng* 尺牘初徵, in *Siku jinhui shu congtan, jibu* 四庫禁毀書叢刊, 集部 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000), 153: 529.

²⁹ Xue Longchun 薛龍春, “Yingchou yu biaoyan: youguan Wang Duo chuanguo qingjing de yixiang yanjiu” 應酬與表演——有關王鐸創作情境的一項研究, *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立台灣大學美術史研究集刊 29 (September 2010): 177.

³⁰ Tang Menglai’s “Preface to the Collection of Yellow Hill by Mr. Fa Huangshi” reads partly: “I have read the gentleman’s [Fa Ruozen] *Biliu*, in one scroll, for which Mengjin, Lord Wang Wen’an [Wang Duo] had written a preface” 嘗讀先生《壁留》一卷，孟津王文安公為之敘；see Teng Menglai, “Fa Huangshi xiansheng Huangshan jilüe xu” 法黃石先生黃山集略序, in Fa Ruozen, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 200. I have not been able to locate this text. My translation of the poetry collection *Biliu* rests on the judgment that Tang Menglai had read poetry in Fa’s collection. The title probably refers to Confucian classics that had survived because they were hidden within walls (so-called *Kong bishu* 孔壁書 or *Kong bi guwen* 孔壁古文) during the Qin dynasty’s burning of books and burying of scholars; for the story, see Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 2414.

³¹ Fu Weilin 傅維鱗, “Wang Juesi Nishan yuan shixu” 王覺斯擬山園詩序, *Sisi tang wenji* 四思堂文集, in *QDSWJHB* 27: 284.

Since Wang Duo was an important collector of ancient paintings Fa must have had ample opportunities to study ancient paintings in Wang's collection at least on some of these occasions.³² Other avenues for the exposure to ancient paintings would have been Fa's acquaintance and friendship with important early-Qing collectors and connoisseurs such as Song Quan 宋權 (1598–1652), his son Song Luo 宋犛 (1634–1714), and with Liu Zhengzong 劉正宗 (1594–1661).³³ Since Fa was also acquainted with the important collector Zhou Lianggong, he must have had access to the circles of northern connoisseur-collectors belonging to the so-called Snow Garden Society (Xueyuan she 雪苑社) in which collectors like Zhou, Sun Chengze, and Liang Qingbiao 梁清標 (1620–1691) socialized. Contemporary scholars such as Fu Shen 傅申, Hongnam Kim, and Liu Jinku 劉金庫 have all pointed out that the aforementioned collectors had strong collecting preferences for monumental landscapes in the Northern Song tradition.³⁴ Art historian Xue Longchun 薛龍春 has also shown that Wang Duo, contrary to Dong Qichang who focused more on the painters of the Yuan dynasty to construct his lineage of painters, propagated the styles of Northern Song landscape painters.³⁵ Fa's *Reclining in the Western Hills* as well as other works such as *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* reveal Fa's exposure

³² Early art works collected by Wang Duo have been listed in Fu Shen 傅申, "Wang Duo ji Qing chu beifang jiancangjia" 王鐸及清初北方鑒藏家, *Duoyun* 朵雲 28, no. 1 (1991): 77.

³³ See Shi Weicheng, "Fa Ruozen (1613-1696) de shanshuihua yanjiu," 17-18. For a study of Song Luo's collecting activities see Liu Jinku, *Nanhua beidu*, 256-265.

³⁴ See Fu Shen, "Wang Duo ji Qing chu beifang jiancangjia," 74-84; Kim, *The Life of a Patron*, 44; Liu Jinku, *Nanhua beidu*, 159-252.

³⁵ Xue Longchun 薛龍春, "Wang Duo de shoucang, jianding ji qi yiyi" 王鐸的收藏、鑒定及其意義, *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立台灣大學美術史研究集刊 43, no. 2 (2017): 171-172.

to ancient works both in their brushwork and in their compositional configurations and demonstrate his familiarity with Wang Duo's theory of painting.

Familiarity with painting styles and practices in Nanjing and Anhui

While the above explanations may account to some degree for the style of *Reclining in the Western Hills*, more immediate stylistic inspiration must have come from Fa's exposure to contemporary painters in Nanjing and Anhui province where he resided and travelled between 1668 and 1672. Initially having been made the provincial administration officer on the right (*you buzhengshi* 右布政使) of Huguang 湖廣 (Hubei and Hunan province), the court urgently needed to fill a vacancy in Jiangnan. Fa Ruozhen was chosen and, toward the end of 1667—shortly after finishing the *Discourse on Painting*—promoted to be the provincial administration officer of Jiangnan, the second highest position in the provincial administration. Fa arrived at the seat of the provincial administration in Jiangning 江寧 (today's Nanjing) in the first month of the *wushen* 戊申 year (1668) where he came to work closely with Zhou Lianggong. Despite a professional conflict between Zhou and Fa at the beginning of his tenure,³⁶ the two men socialized extensively and often took trips together. For example, they travelled to the Jiashan Temple (Jiashan si 嘉善寺) in today's Jiaxing 嘉

³⁶ Upon arriving in Nanjing, Fa and Zhou appear to have had a conflict over the accuracy of official documents. Fa Ruozhen recorded: "Minister Zhou Yuanliang [Zhou Lianggong] did not hand over the check books, so I assembled all servants and made them come into the office. In the first month, I made the books myself and sent them to Minister Zhou, asking him to allow me to use the seals to approve them" 署司周公元亮不送交盤冊，予集各役入署，一月自造冊，送周署司，清允用印許之; see Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 725.

興, Zhejiang province,³⁷ and to the most prominent site of mourning for the Ming dynasty, the mausoleum of the first Ming ruler Hongwu 洪武 (r. 1368–1398) at Mount Zhong (Zhongshan 鐘山).³⁸

While Fa interacted with many northern literati and officials during his stay in Nanjing,³⁹ Zhou Liangong must also have been instrumental in introducing Fa Ruozhen to Nanjing's thriving art scene. Fa was, for example, acquainted with the Restoration Society member and poet Ji Yingzhong 記映鍾 (1609–1681) who was active in Nanjing's art circles.⁴⁰ A farewell poem that Ji wrote for Fa, probably in 1672 when Fa went back to Beijing, attests to their friendship.⁴¹ After Zhou Liangong was impeached in the winter of 1669, Fa Ruozhen

³⁷ See Fa Ruozhen, “Xie Liu Renhou, Du Zilian, Zhou Leyuan, Hu Junyu you Jiashan si, kan yu zhong taohua, de yi shu taohua, jiu yibei ju ershi shou” 偕劉仁侯、杜子濂、周櫟園、胡君玉遊嘉善寺，看雨中桃花，得一樹桃花，酒一杯句二十首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 261-262. At the occasion of this trip, the travelling friends engaged in a poetry competition. For the poems by Du Chuang 杜濬 (*hao* Zilian 子濬, 1622–1685) written during this trip, see Du Chuang 杜濬, “Xie Fa Huangshi, Liu Renhou, Zhou Leyuan, Hu Junyu you Jiashan si, kan yu zhong taohua, fu de yi shu taohua, jiu yi bei” 偕法黃石、劉仁侯、周櫟園、胡君玉遊嘉善寺，看雨中桃花，賦得一樹桃花，酒一盃, *Meihu yin* 湄湖吟, in *QDSWJHB* 78: 319.

³⁸ Du Chuang 杜濬, “Wen Fa Huangshi, Liu Renhou, Zhou Leyuan you Jiangshan jianyi, fu ci xie zhi” 聞法黃石、劉仁侯、周櫟園遊蔣山見憶，賦此謝之, *ibid.*. Mount Jiang (Jiangshan 蔣山), to which Du Chuang here refers, is also known as Mount Zhong (Zhongshan 鐘山), the site of the Ming mausoleum Xiaoling 孝陵. In 1669, Fa returned to this site; see Fa Ruozhen, “Ye zhao Ming taizi miao ershou” 謁昭明太子廟二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 273-274. For a study of the importance of Xiaoling in the memory of Ming loyalists and related paintings in early Qing China that evoked this site of memory, see Hay, “Ming Palace and Tomb in Early Qing Jiangning,” 1-48.

³⁹ Such as Kong Zhenlai 孔貞來 (*hao* Yuanqi 元起, fl. ca. 1660s–1670s), Du Chuang, Cheng Kangzhuang 程康莊 (*hao* Tanru 坦如, 1613–1679), and Gao Hang 高珩 (*hao* Niandong 念東, 1612–1697).

⁴⁰ For example, Ji Yingzhong's “Poems of Plum Blossoms” (“Meihua shi” 梅花詩), calligraphed at the end of *A Study among Plum Blossoms* (*Meihua shuwu tu* 梅花書屋圖) which Nanjing-based artist Weng Ling 翁陵 did in 1649, attests to the interactions that Ji Yingzhong had with painting circles in Nanjing; for an illustration of the scroll and the colophon see Shan Guoqing 單國強, ed., *Jinling zhujia huihua* 金陵諸家繪畫 (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, and Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2000), 84-85.

⁴¹ Ji Yingzhong 記映鍾, “Zengbie Fa Huangshi dacan” 贈別法黃石大參, *Zhuangsou shichao* 鱸叟詩鈔, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 2296: 40-41.

as his subordinate also got impeached and lost his employment on the grounds of having concealed account shortages.⁴² He remained in Jiangnan until the summer of 1672, staying with Qing officials and friends such as Zhang Chaozhen 張朝珍 (d. 1680) and Dong Weiguo 董衛國 (d. 1683) in Anqing 安慶 (Anhui province), Tong Ji 佟冀 (fl. 1660s) and Liu Renhou 劉仁侯 (fl. 1660s) in Nanjing, and travelling to Changzhou 常州 and Suzhou.⁴³

Fa's impeachment led to more time for travel and triggered an increased expression through art for which a rise in paintings from that period onwards speaks. The fact that Zhou Lianggong, who died in 1672, at least recorded Fa Ruozhen as a painter in the annex to his famous *Record of Reading Paintings* (*Duhua lu* 讀畫錄), albeit without giving biographical details like he did for more prominent artists of the period, provides corroborative evidence for this hypothesis.⁴⁴ Fa started to produce painted fans (*huashan* 畫扇) for friends like Du Chuang 杜澗 (1622–1685), rather than producing fans (*shan* 扇), which were likely inscribed rather than painted.⁴⁵ Most concrete evidence for Fa's increasing interest in painting comes from a documented interaction with Kuncan. In 1669, Fa wrote "Asking for a painting from the Chan Master Shixi, two poems" 問畫石溪禪師二首 of which the first seems to be a detailed description of a work by the eminent monk-painter:

⁴² For Zhou Lianggong's impeachment see Kim, "Chou Liang-Kung and his 'Tu-Hua-Lu'," 1: 161. Fa was fired for mismanagement of the provincial accounts; in his autobiography there is a long account in which he justifies the accounts and tries to blame his predecessors, leading him several times to complain: "Serving in office at Jiangnan is very difficult" 江南之官難矣哉! See Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 730-737.

⁴³ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 738-739.

⁴⁴ Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, in Zhu Tianshu, ed., *Zhou Lianggong quanji*, 5: 176.

⁴⁵ Du Chuang, "Xie Fa Huangshi huashan" 謝法黃石畫扇, *Meihu yin*, in *QDSWJHB* 78: 319.

半幘山如漆，
千峯墨作雲。
天青未可問，
夜黑到誰分。

彷彿蛟龍影，
支離虎豹文。
祖堂三十里，
風雨漫相聞。

One half of the painting, mountains are black as lacquer,
Over thousands of peaks, ink is used to make clouds.
The sky is blue but cannot be questioned,
The night is black to the extent that nobody can distinguish
anything.
Resembling the silhouettes of mythical dragons,⁴⁶
Jumbled, the patterns of tigers and leopards.⁴⁷
Zutang Mountain is only thirty *li* away,
But among wind and rain, we hear of each other in vain
(*man*).⁴⁸

Since the two painters appear to have met at Mount Zutang in proximity to Nanjing's Mount Niushou 牛首山, where Kuncan lived, the poem may describe a painting that Kuncan had given to Fa.⁴⁹ In the starting couplet, Fa described the general appearance of the painting in which Kuncan, in his characteristic manner, must have used a lot of ink to depict the landscape. In the following couplet, Fa returns to Kuncan's characteristic brushwork. Because of its fizzy and frequently turning strokes, Fa purports to recognize the silhouettes of flood dragons, tigers, and leopards.⁵⁰ In 1669, Kuncan indeed painted with dark and heavy ink and with fizzy brushwork; this is exemplified in his *Crossing a Stream with a Stick* (*Xiqiao cezhang tu* 溪橋策杖圖) which he made during that year for Cheng Zhengkui (fig. 2.10).

⁴⁶ *Jiaolong*, a mythological creature capable of invoking floods and storms.

⁴⁷ *Hubao wen* refers to the characteristic patterns of the skin of tigers and leopards.

⁴⁸ Fa Ruozhen, "Wenhua Shixi chanshi ershou" 問畫石溪禪師二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 273.

⁴⁹ Fa's explanatory note to the poem suggests that the two painters met at Kuncan's residence; for Kuncan's residence at Mount Zutang, see Zhao Hongjun 趙洪軍, ed., *Kuncan huihua zuopin biannian tulu* 髡殘繪畫作品編年圖錄 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 2018), 6.

⁵⁰ Bai Qianshen has drawn attention to the discourse of deformity and fragmentation in Ming loyalist circles and the political associations that such aesthetics held for painters like Fu Shan 傅山 (1607–1684), Shitao, and Kuncan; see Bai, *Fu Shan's World*, 122–126.

Interestingly, the poem also contains a political dimension. While the second couplet remains somewhat unclear in its meaning, it hints at Fa's views on the political situation at the time. While Su Shi had been able to grab a cup of wine and question the blue skies in his famous *ci*-poem to the tune "Water Mode Song" ("Shui diao ge tou" 水調歌頭), Fa Ruozhen stated that even though the sky continued to be blue, his own times had deteriorated to the point that it had become impossible to interrogate the sky.⁵¹ The following line, "The night is black to the extent that nobody can distinguish anything" can also be interpreted as a comment on the current political situation and the Manchu invasion. Fa Ruozhen expressed that the political circumstances of his own time had become so murky that it was impossible to discern right from wrong. These two lines rhyme well with the first couplet in which Fa had described the dark clouds emerging from Kuncan's brush. Fa appears to expand on the theme of a bleak political situation in his last couplet when he states that the painters' residences are not that far from each other and thus, they are able to hear the "wind and rain," meaning catastrophes or hardships in their respective lives, but that both of them are unable to do anything about the situation. While Kuncan is typically portrayed as a Ming loyalist, Fa Ruozhen had only recently lost his official position in the Qing administration. In comparable manner to his *Discourse on Painting*, the poem indicates Fa's difficulties of having made the decision to serve, and the consciousness of the reputation that such a decision might bring about. In his poem, he seeks to position himself

⁵¹ A reference to the couplet "How many times has the moon shone full? / Lifting my cup I ask the blue sky" 明月幾時有，把酒問青天; see Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi xuanji* 蘇軾選集, comp. and annot. Wang Shuizhao 王水照 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), 260; translated by James R. Hightower in Victor H. Mair, ed., *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 323.

as somebody with whom Kuncan can seriously converse about the difficulties the monk-painter had encountered.

While Kuncan's painting style had no apparent influence on Fa, the nineteenth-century collector Wu Ci 吳慈 (fl. mid-19th century) in his long colophon on the mounting of *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* concluded that Fa had learned from a monk while in Nanjing:

Fa Ruozhen, style name Hanru, sobriquets Huangshi and Huangshan, was from Jiaozhou. He obtained his *jinshi* degree in the *bingxu* year of the Shunzhi reign [1646]. He was recommended for the *boxue hongci* examination held in the *jiwei* year of the Kangxi reign [1679], but did not present [himself]. As an official he got until [the position of] the lieutenant governor (*buzhengzhi*) of Anhui. He was skilled at calligraphy and painting, and authored [the collection of poetry] *Huangshan shiliu*. While serving in office in Anhui province, he had a friend in painting, the monk Yuegong. Yuegong's delicate way of employing ink develops lovingly and the layout of his painting is wondrous and surprising. He and Huangshan encouraged each other, and both of them attained great marvels. Now I obtain this scroll, it describes the poetic ideas of the poem line "cold mountains [unexpectedly] became greener" by a Tang poet [Wang Wei]. The thousands of cliffs and myriads of valleys on it expand vastly and stretch into the depth. I compared it with a painting album done by Yuegong that I had previously collected. I observe its wondrous and surprising places [in the composition] - the painting is not inferior to Yuegong, whereas his use of ink [gives the feeling of] pouring and is unrestricted. Its spirit-resonance (*qiyun*) emerges out of this fabric. It resembles but it is not just learned from Yuegong's craftsmanship and his level of competence. This really is divine! This is really an unrivalled piece by a true master. On the twenty-sixth day of the ninth month of the fifth year of the Xianfeng period, a *yimao* year [1855], studied and inscribed by Mr. Wu Ci, with the style name Zhiping and art name Yuelunshan qiaozhe from Qianjiang [Hangzhou].

法若真，字漢儒，號黃石，亦號黃山，膠州人。順治丙戌進士，康熙乙未薦鴻博不就，官至安徽布政使。工書畫，著有黃山詩留，當其官皖省時，有畫友悅公和尚，美墨滄慈，布局奇險，與黃山互相砥礪，並臻其妙。今得此幀，寫唐人寒山蒼翠詩意，千巖萬壑，宏闊深厚，證以舊藏悅公畫本。觀其奇險處，不減悅公，而用墨淋漓縱橫，氣韻溢於縑外，似又非悅公學習功力所能及。神哉

技乎！真法家無上品也。時咸豐五年，歲次乙卯，九月廿六日，錢江月輪山樵者吳慈治平甫鑑藏并識。⁵²

Although the colophon's biographical information is erroneous (Fa was not sent to Anhui but to Nanjing), the text implies that Fa had studied with the unidentified monk Yuegong 悅公. Unfortunately, no other sources attest to this connection, but the colophon indicates that Fa learned with that monk. Light ink, of which Wu Ci speaks, is also a prominent feature of *Reclining in the Western Hills* and makes it possible to relate Fa's early work to contemporaneous painting from Nanjing and Anhui. In the 1650s, the Anhui-native painter, calligrapher and seal carver Cheng Sui 程邃 (1607–1692) already painted monumental compositions in light ink tones, for which his *Tall Views of Streams and Mountains* (*Xishan gaoyuan tu* 溪山高遠圖) is exemplary (fig. 2.11).⁵³ By at least 1657, Fa Ruozhen and Cheng Sui were acquainted with each other.⁵⁴ Another painting to which *Reclining in the Western Hills* can be compared is *Jade Flask Peak* (*Yuhufeng tu* 玉壺峰圖) by the Anhui painter Dai Benxiao 戴本孝 (1621–1693) from ca. 1675 (fig. 2.12). Just like Fa Ruozhen, Dai Benxiao has rendered his monumental composition in light ink and unobtrusive brushwork. There is no evidence for these painters' acquaintance, but Fa had travelled in Anhui and thus may have heard about or seen works by Dai Benxiao.

⁵² Colophon to *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* that is mounted on the painting's mounting to the left, it is usually not reproduced in photos of the painting.

⁵³ For a dating of the undated painting, see the catalogue entry by Huang Yifen 黃逸芬 in *Yuemu: Zhongguo wanqi shuhua*, 2: 88-89.

⁵⁴ Fa Ruozhen wrote a prefatory poem for Cheng Sui's poetry collection, the preface of which is dated to the *dingyou* 丁酉 year; the text was printed in the Shunzhi period, therefore establishing that Fa's poem must have been written by 1657. For Fa's poem, see Cheng Sui 程邃, *Xiaoran yin* 蕭然吟, in *QDSWJHB* 21: 597.

Fa's approach to painting appears to have most in common with Gong Xian. To my knowledge, there is no direct evidence for the two painters' acquaintance. However, given the close relationship that Gong Xian had with Zhou Lianggong, and Zhou Lianggong's close relationship with Fa in turn, it is very likely that Fa at least knew of Gong Xian or had the chance to see some of his paintings at Zhou Lianggong's residence in Nanjing.⁵⁵ Also, Fa's friend Xing Mingshi—for whom he had written *Discourse on Painting*—was a friend of the poet Fang Wen 方文 (1612–1669).⁵⁶ Fang Wen, in turn, was a close friend of Gong Xian.⁵⁷

The emphasis placed on strong dark-light contrasts in the most prominent works of both painters, exemplified by Fa's *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* (*Yunyan diefeng tu* 雲煙疊嶂圖) and Gong's undated *Cloudy Valley and the Shades of Pines* (*Yunhe songyin tu* 雲壑松蔭圖) already speaks to this relationship (figs. I.2 and 2.13). Unlike his early paintings of the 1650s, exemplified by *Arrayed Peaks and Cliffs* (*Lieyan zanfeng tu* 列巘攢峰圖) in which

⁵⁵ Gong Xian seems to have deliberately remained away from Nanjing's society which might explain why he did not meet Fa Ruozhen. Zhou Lianggong, for example, recorded that Gong Xian had "a disposition for addictive loneliness, and that he remained unsociable and difficult to bring together with other people" 性孤癖，與人落落難合 and that "his feet do not bring him to the city's markets and it is only with Fang Tushan [Fang Wen 方文, 1612–1669], Tang Yanfu [Tang Yansheng 湯燕生, 1616–1692] and others left behind by the previous dynasty that he socializes and amuses himself" 足不履市井，惟與方龠山、湯岩夫諸道老過從甚歡；see Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, in Zhu Tianshu, ed., *Zhou Lianggong quanji*, 5: 94-95. However, it is well documented that Gong Xian and Zhou Lianggong had frequent interactions; see Hongnam Kim, "Chou Liang-Kung and his 'Tu-Hua-Lu'," 1: 162; Silbergeld, "Political Symbolism in the Landscape Painting and Poetry of Kung Hsien," 57-58; 63. It is not likely that Gong Xian avoided Fa Ruozhen deliberately because Fa was a Qing official since Gong had many Qing officials as friends, such as Zhou Lianggong or Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1618–1683).

⁵⁶ E.g., Fang Wen 方文, "Zeng Xing Mingshi" 贈邢命石, *Tushan ji* 龠山集, in *XXSKQS* 1400: 260.

⁵⁷ Weng Wan-go 翁萬戈, *Meiguo Gu Luofu cang Zhongguo lidai shuhua mingji jingxuan* 美國顧洛阜藏中國歷代書畫名迹精選 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1999), 279.

he was pursuing the Dong Yuan and Juran traditions (fig. 2.14), Gong Xian's paintings done in the late 1660s and early 1670s, when Fa was in Nanjing, place less emphasis on lines and have a softer appearance. This is exemplified by *Landscape (Shanshui tu 山水圖)* (fig. 2.15).⁵⁸ While this painting is a Dong Qichang-inspired elaboration on the idiomatic compositional formula of Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301–1374), Gong's use of softer ink and the increasing contrast between lighter and darker ink, also seen in an album leaf from ca. 1669–1670 (fig. 2.16), may have been a point of departure for Fa's *Reclining in the Western Hills*.

Fa's attempt in *Reclining in the Western Hills* to render a Song-inspired monumental composition also fits well into the cultural environment of early Qing Nanjing where the revival of Song-derived monumental compositions was a strong component of the local art scene.⁵⁹ Fa's particular brushwork reminiscent of Guo Xi may actually reinforce this Nanjing connection: around the same time that Fa sojourned there, Guo Xi's *Early Spring* is recorded to have been at the residence of the Nanjing collector Chen Shizhong 陳師仲 (fl.

⁵⁸ While Gong Xian's art is often said to have evolved in the mid-1660s from a "white" to a "black" period, scholar Xiao Ping 蕭平 has also drawn attention to the fact that Gong's increasing interest in works with heavy and fluid layers of black ink found expression while he simultaneously continued painting in the "white" mode up until the late 1660s (and beyond); see Xiao Ping 蕭平, "Gong Xian de zaoqi huihua" 龔賢的早期繪畫, in Liu Haisu 劉海粟, ed., *Gong Xian yanjiu ji* 龔賢研究集 (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1988), 2: 27-28, and Xiao Ping 蕭平, "Gong Xian de zhong, wanqi huihua" 龔賢的中晚期繪畫, in *ibid.*, 2: 31.

⁵⁹ This phenomenon has been extensively studied by earlier art historians; see, for example, Shih Shou-ch'ien 石守謙, "You qiqu dao fugu: shiqi shiji Jinling huihua de yige qiemin" 由奇趣到復古——十七世紀金陵繪畫的一個切面, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 15, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 33-76; Cahill, *The Distant Mountains*, 165-179; Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 91-93, who sees this development also as a product of contact with Western painting. Hsü Kuo-huang has also pointed out that the monumental compositions of the Song regained popularity in the work of the seventeenth-century orthodox masters Wang Hui and Wang Yuanqi; see Hsü Kuo-huang 許郭璜, ed., *Li-Guo shanshui huaxi tezhan* 李郭山水畫系特展 (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1999), 128-129.

early Qing dynasty).⁶⁰ In any event, art historian Tsukamoto Marumitsu 塚本磨充 has shown that Guo Xi's style was ubiquitously prominent in early Qing China because it had been broken down to features that were reproduced in nearly every painting album of the time.⁶¹ Thus, Fa's familiarity with Guo Xi's style, evidenced by *Reclining in the Western Hills*, was not dependent on the publication of the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual*, nor on a direct viewing of Guo Xi's *Early Spring*. *Reclining in the Western Hills* reflects his relative familiarity with at least an idea of Guo Xi's style as well as his exposure to the two important early Qing painting centers Nanjing and Anhui.⁶²

***Reclining in the Western Hills*, reclining journeys, and the evocation of place in Fa Ruozhen's art**

In his inscription to *Reclining in the Western Hills*, Fa recorded that the painting was done on the occasion of a gathering of friends in the Western Mountains of Beijing. Since it is well-known that landscape paintings served to commemorate social events, it is not surprising that *Reclining in the Western Hills* also had such a function.⁶³ According to Fa, the painting was done together with Yang Zhifan 楊之範 (style name: Haiwen 海文, fl. 2nd half 17th cent.) from Shaoxing 紹興 (Zhejiang province) and Yang Xiu 楊琇 (style name:

⁶⁰ Wu Qichen recorded having seen Guo Xi's *Early Spring* in the house of Chen Shizhong on December 13, 1672; see Wu Qichen 吳其貞, *Shuhua ji* 書畫記 (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2006), 473.

⁶¹ For a discussion of the popularity of Guo Xi's painting style in the early Qing, see Tsukamoto Marumitsu 塚本磨充, *Hokusō kaigashi no seiritsu* 北宋绘画史の成立 (Tōkyō: Chūōkōron bijutsu shuppan, 2016), 545-573.

⁶² On the question of the early Qing "transregional art world" that enabled artists to know about the developments in other regional centers of painting, see also Hay, *Shitao*, 202-203.

⁶³ See, e.g., Richard Vinograd, "Situation and Response in Traditional Chinese Scholar Painting," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46, no. 3 (Spring 1988): 366.

Zhongyu 仲玉, 1607–after 1696) from Fa’s hometown Jiaozhou who “was skilled in painting and pursued the ideas of the masters of the Tang and Song” 畫工直追唐宋人.⁶⁴

While it is possible that *Reclining in the Western Hills* bears traces of these two other painters, I believe this painting to be predominantly by Fa notably because of a characteristic composition that is typical for Fa Ruozhen.⁶⁵ The only (authentic?) painting I was able to trace by Yang Zhifan is stylistically considerably different from *Reclining in the Western Hills* (fig. 2.17). The second inscription on the painting by Fa’s close friend Wei Xiangshu confirms the view of Fa’s authorship because Wei writes only about Fa Ruozhen as the painter of *Reclining in the Western Hills*:

Our respectable Old Man of the Yellow Rock’s home hangs over the Eastern Sea, but now he is lodged as a guest in the Western Hills. When he paints, mist and clouds emerge under his brush. One can sit [before his painting] for a reclining journey. Chaoyun, Chief Venerable in charge of the Office of Scrutiny, fell in love with it at first sight, as if he had seen it in a dream. One day he suddenly saw it on the wall and immediately wondered where it came (*fei*) from. Now he has requested me to write an inscription on it, afraid that it might suddenly disappear (*fei*) again. Inscribed by Wei Xiangshu from Weizhou.

黃石年翁家懸東海，客對西山。筆底寫出煙霞，聊當坐臥。巢雲都老掌科見而愛之，夢中若攜取。然一日忽從壁上觀，不知何處飛來也。命余題識，恐復飛去。古蔚州魏象樞書。⁶⁶

⁶⁴ See Fa Ruozhen, “Mucan xing zeng Yang Zhongyu” 牧蠶行贈楊仲玉, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 429-430; I have not been able to locate works by him. Yang Xiu had studied under Fa’s father Fa Huan and therefore must have been a childhood friend of Fa Ruozhen. Fa also referred to him as Senior Zhong 仲翁.

⁶⁵ Collaborative paintings abound in the history of Chinese painting. Often, painters chose the album format for collaborations, but hanging scrolls and handscrolls were also occasionally done in collaboration. *Reclining in the Western Hill* does not show different visual sections separable by distinguishable brushworks or styles, thus suggesting that a unifying hand was responsible for this painting.

⁶⁶ Translation adapted from Liu Heping in Richard M. Barnhart *et al.*, *The Jade Studio*, 160. Liu had identified the painting’s admirer Chaoyun as Pan Zongluo 潘宗落, see *ibid.*, 160FN2; for Pan Zongluo’s *jinshi* degree in 1688 (and not in 1684 as Liu Heping writes), see *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin*, 2667. For confirmation that his *hao* was Chaoyun 巢雲, see Yang Tingfu 楊廷福 and Yang Tongfu 楊同甫, *Qingren shiming biecheng zi hao suoyin* 清人室名別稱字號索引 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1989), 1655. However, it is not likely that Pan Zongluo, who obtained his *jinshi* degree only in 1688, would have had a high-ranking

In his own inscription, Fa recorded how he and his friends gathered in the Western Mountains; since Fa was in Beijing when he painted *Reclining in the Western Hills*, this refers to the mountain range of the same name west of the capital. Recording a social gathering that had taken place at a particular location, it is worth asking whether Fa painted the scenery surrounding him and his friends or if he painted a more generalized landscape. Having lived in Nanjing for more than three years, Fa must have been familiar with paintings that evoked specific peaks, temples, and other particular places in Nanjing “without being tied to the specifics of place,” paintings that were “markers of a concept of locality rather than [...] signs of specific sites.”⁶⁷ Examples by painters such as Hu Yukun 胡玉昆 (1607–after 1687), Ye Xin, Gao Cen 高岑 (1621–1691), Fan Qi, and others abound. Having also travelled to Anhui, Fa may have been familiar with similar place-evocative pictures by Hongren, Dai Benxiao, and others, too.⁶⁸

government position in 1673 when this painting was done. It is far more likely that Chaoyun here designates another Jiaozhou native, Wang Gai 王垓 (1626–1683), who also sported this sobriquet. Fa and Wang were acquainted at least since 1641 when they had met in Wei county. Starting in 1672, the two men had frequent literary and social interactions. The painting, which Fa initially made for his grandson, must have been obtained by Wang Gai, the ambassador to the kingdom of Ryukyu (Liuqiu 琉球) and assistant surveillance commissioner of Zhejiang. For the wonderful story of Wang Gai’s transit to the islands of Ryukyu see Pu Songling 蒲松齡, “Balong” 罷龍, *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋志異, in *XXSKQS* 1788: 180-181. It is likely that the collector seal Langye Wangshi ganming zhencang tushu 瑯琊王氏玕名珍藏圖書 impressed on the painting refers to Wang Gai’s family collection. Langye refers to an ancient Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) stele erected on the Langye terrace in direct proximity to Jiaozhou on the southeastern coast of Shandong.

⁶⁷ Vinograd, “Fan Ch’i (1616–after 1694): Place-Making and the Semiotics of Sight,” 143.

⁶⁸ Cf. Qiu Caizhen 邱才楨, *Huangshan tu: shiqi shiji xiabanye shanshuihua zhong de Huangshan xingxiang yu guannian* 黃山圖：17世紀下半葉山水畫中的黃山形象與觀念 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2011), 101-142.

As Fa Ruozen had stated in his own inscription, the painting was made upon request of his grandson Abalang 阿八郎 (1673–1694) when Fa and some friends “reclined and sat in the Western Mountains.”⁶⁹ Although not stating that he was engaged in a “reclining journey” (*woyou* 臥遊), a concept originally going back to the painter and theorist Zong Bing 宗炳 (375–443), Fa’s use of the word “reclining” (*wo* 臥) in connection with the making of painting implies the possibility of using the painting as a means for a mind journey.⁷⁰ In the early Qing, the discourse of a reclining journey took on additional political connotations when Cheng Zhengkui used it for his paintings to distance himself from the court and officialdom.⁷¹ In line with Zong Bing’s idea of a landscape painting serving as a means for mental travel, Fa’s use of the word “reclining” thus points to the painting’s possibility to refer to a place other than Beijing’s Western Mountains. Significantly, Wei Xiangshu in his own inscription also referred to this concept, this time by stating that the finished painting served for such a purpose. Before this, he spells out that Fa has been missing his home on the Eastern Sea, by which he refers to Jiaozhou. By describing Fa’s home as “hanging” (*xuan* 懸) over the ocean, Wei Xiangshu gives rise to an image of remoteness that conjures up meanings of longing for one’s home and family.⁷² With the painting as a tool for a

⁶⁹ Exactly how Abalang could have “asked” (*wen* 問) for a painting in 1673 is unclear since he was born in 1673; presumably, Abalang’s father had asked for a painting. Abalang normally would refer to one’s own eighth son. However, from Fa’s poetry it is clear that Balang refers to his grandson, a child born to Fa Ruozen’s son Fa Nan 法楠 (1654–1678): “My lucky grandson Balang was born to [Fa] Nan” 吉孫八郎楠生也; see Fa Ruozen, “Yitang cheng ershou” 詒堂成二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 470.

⁷⁰ Zong Bing had explained that landscape paintings could transport the viewer mentally to places not accessible in person, serving as a substitute for nature and allowing for mind journeys; on Zong Bing, see Susan Bush, “Tsong Ping’s Essay on Painting Landscape and ‘Landscape Buddhism’ of Mount Lu,” in Susan Bush and Christian F. Murck, eds., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 132-164.

⁷¹ Kim, “The Dream Journey in Chinese Landscape Art,” 20-26.

⁷² Presumably for this reason, Liu Heping also translates the verb *xuan* as “missing”, see *ibid.*

reclining mind-journey, Wei Xiangshu therefore points to the painting's function as an *aide-mémoire* with which Fa reflected on his home. Wei points to what scholar Edward Casey described in the following way: “*In remembering we can be thrust back, transported, into the place we recall.*”⁷³ But contrary to Zong Bing, who had longed “for [the mountains] Lu and Heng,” that is famous mountains,⁷⁴ Wei Xiangshu implies that Fa's longing was directed towards his home mountains.

A separate poem written in 1673, most likely on the occasion of inscribing another now lost painting, demonstrates the esteem that Wei Xiangshu had for Fa Ruozen. But most importantly, Wei's lines again underline the important role of a painting to transport the viewer to other places:

<p>憶昔瀛洲萃大文， 膠州太史迥不群。 有時作賦齊班馬， 亦或揮毫比右軍。 此來非復天祿， 石渠之舊席， 獨有西山、 北海供吾筆底之煙雲。</p>	<p>Recalling the bygone Yingzhou,⁷⁵ I gather with eminent writers, Our Hanlin compiler from Jiaozhou is uniquely different. Occasionally, he composes a rhapsody equal to those of Ban [Gu] and [Si]ma [Xiangru], Or he wields his brush like the general of the right [Wang Xizhi]. On this visit [to Beijing], he did not recover [his position] at the Tianlu Pavilion, Nor his previous seating mat at the Stone Channel.⁷⁶ He only has the Western Mountains And the Northern Sea to provide me with the mist</p>
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⁷³ Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 201; italicized emphasis by Mr. Casey.

⁷⁴ Kim, “The Dream Journey in Chinese Landscape Art,” 13.

⁷⁵ Fabled abode of immortals in the Eastern Sea.

⁷⁶ Tianlu Pavilion and Stone Channel, allusions to offices in the Forbidden City; the “old mats” (*jiuxi* 舊席) being the seating mats, or positions, at these offices.

高陽李子年最少，
潑墨臨池屬同調。

為公寫出萬壑心，

一坐一臥視而笑。

魏生也向壁間遊，
徒將老眼窺二妙。

and clouds [the painting] that are currently under my
brush [for inscription].⁷⁷

Li from Gaoyang is the youngest [among us],⁷⁸

With splattered ink, he practices calligraphy and
belongs to the same category [as Fa Ruozhen].

For Fa Ruozhen, he wrote out the myriads of valleys
from his mind,

Fa and Li – one sits while the other reclines, they look
[at each other] and laugh.

I, Wei, also travel towards the painting on the wall,

In vein, my old eyes also peer towards the two
marvels.⁷⁹

Wei Xiangshu's poem draws attention to the professional precarity in which Fa was living in the 1670s and may allude to the fact that an occupation with the arts kept him afloat. More importantly, the last couplet brings again to the fore how a landscape painting provided a space for mind travel, nearly describing the painting as a portal for a mind-trip. Before this, Wei also mentioned that both the Western Hills and the Northern Sea, the name of the ocean surrounding the peninsula of Shandong, were in some way on the mind of Fa when he painted, thus again reinforcing the idea that in *Reclining in the Western Hills*, Fa Ruozhen not only recorded an event that had taken place close to Beijing, but simultaneously also evoked the landscapes of home in his painting.

⁷⁷ Two readings possible depending on whether one uses an enumerative comma [、], used above, or a separating comma [，]; in the latter case, Northern Sea should be read as Fa Ruozhen himself as this was one of his self-employed style names. This translation opts for the former: although Fa Ruozhen occasionally referred to himself by the sobriquet *Beihai* or Northern Sea, his friends usually referred to him as *Huangshi* or Yellow Stone. For this reason, the translation above treats Beihai as a place rather than a name.

⁷⁸ Referring to Li Wei 李霽, 1625–1684, *jinshi* 1646.

⁷⁹ Refers both to Fa Ruozhen and Li Wei (both are painters/artists) and to the craftsmanship of the bamboo painter Ai Shu 艾淑 and the dragon painter Chen Suoweng 陳所翁 of the Song dynasty, see Xia Wenyan 夏文彥, *Tuhui baojian* 圖繪寶鑑, in *Huashi congshu* 畫史叢書 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1974), 768. For the poem, see Wei Xiangshu, “Ti Fa Huangshi tongnian bijian hua” 題法黃石同年壁間畫, *Hansong tang quanji*, in *GGZBCK* 588: 215-216.

Reclining in the Western Hills as a painting of home

Reclining in the Western Hills shows no humans or human-made structures such as houses, huts, pathways, or boats. In that regard, the painting is no exception to the overwhelming majority of Fa's works which are peculiarly empty: his paintings are typically completely devoid of humans or markers of human habitation or activity. The lacuna of human beings and any trace of human presence make his paintings an outlier of the pictorial conventions of Chinese landscape painting. While a number of prominent seventeenth-century artists such as Dong Qichang and Gong Xian painted landscapes devoid of humans, the works of these artists at least show remains of human presence, often in the form of houses, huts, temples, or human-made pathways. These are nearly entirely absent in Fa's work, and they are completely absent in *Reclining in the Western Hills*. Significantly, this absence of recognizable structures does not only obscure an identification of the painting's environment with that of Beijing, it obscures an identification with Fa's home, too. In addition, the mountain is rather nondescript and further complicates such an identification.⁸⁰

However, Wei Xiangshu's inscription indicates that in *Reclining in the Western Mountain*, Fa conjured up remembrances of his home. In the absence of the artist's own confirmation in the painting's inscription, it needs to be asked if Fa did other paintings of "home." This term refers not to a narrow place of habitation such as a house in Jiaozhou, but a region lying to the south and south-east of Jiaozhou, on the western side of the Jiaozhou Bay

⁸⁰ James Cahill already observed: "The question of how local scenery affects an artist's style is complicated by the difficulty of distinguishing direct dependences on the scene in nature from the effects of earlier pictures of it by other artists or the local school"; see Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 153.

(Jiaozhou wan 膠州灣) opposite of today's Qingdao 青島, where Fa was predominantly active after his retirement in 1679. This was the region where Fa had grown up, where most of his friends lived, and which broadly constituted his home.

A comparison of *Reclining in the Western Hills* with *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* (*Huangshan yanyun tu* 黃山煙雲圖), which the artist painted in 1691, clarifies that the larger Jiaozhou region underpins Fa's uninhabited *Reclining in the Western Hills* and endows his work with place-based mnemonic meanings (fig. 2.18).⁸¹ In the inscription to *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill*, Fa reminisces about a visit by his son-in-law Zhang Chengsi 張誠思 (fl. late 17th c.):

In the second spring month of the *xinwei* year [1691], my worthy son-in-law [Zhang] Chengsi passed by Yellow Hill. After a trip of three days, [illegible] this scroll [illegible], I am painting this as a gift for him to [make] a reclining journey, and also to commemorate his trip. Here is a poem:

I do not know how many nights it had been since the return of the spring wind,
Today, my guest came to the Yellow Hill on his trip.
Coiling around the river, the old trees are there year after year,
With firewood locking up against the chilling mist, my gate is yet to close.
Written by old Zhen at the age of 79 *sui*.

辛未春之二月，誠思賢婿過黃山。三日行，□卷□□，畫此以送臥遊，亦以識此行也。即以號將之。

不識春風迴幾夜，客來今日到黃山。
繞河老樹年年在，柴鎖寒煙門未關。
七十九翁真寫。

⁸¹ The current location of the painting is unknown; it was auctioned at least three times: on November 21, 2004 by Beijing Hanhai 北京翰海 (lot no. 1498, see <https://auction.artron.net/paimai-art29151498/>), on November 4, 2011 by Beijing Baoruiying 北京寶瑞盈 (lot no. 324, see <https://auction.artron.net/paimai-art5009290324/>), and on October 19, 2017 by Qingdao Zhongyi 青島中藝 (lot no. 286, see <https://auction.artron.net/paimai-art0069630286/>). All links last accessed April 8, 2021.

In the above inscription the name Huangshan 黄山 has been translated as Yellow Hill and not as Yellow Mountains as is usually done. Why? Scholars often awkwardly associate Fa Ruozhen with the Anhui School (Xin'an pai 新安派) that was mostly centered around Anhui's Yellow Mountains. This is explained with either Fa's professional activity, travels and subsequent retirement in the area, or with Fa's style name Huangshan 黄山, or with both.⁸² But although it is clear that Fa travelled briefly in Anhui, a short examination of his poetry collection also clarifies that he never retired to the Yellow Mountains in Anhui as has often been claimed in previous scholarship.

Representative paintings by Fa Ruozhen, when compared to representative works created by artists commonly counted among painters of the Anhui school, reveal evident discrepancies in style that cast even more doubt about such an association of Fa with Anhui: Where, in Fa's *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* (cf. fig. I.2), are the iconic rock formations of the Yellow Mountains that so fascinated Mei Qing 梅清 (1624–1697) (fig. 2.19)? And where are the Yellow Mountains' strangely crooked and lonely pine trees holding out above steep precipices that so interested Hongren (fig. 2.20)?

In 1691, when Fa painted *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill*, he lived in proximity to Jiaozhou and not in Anhui. Here, he had retired to Yellow Hill (Huangshan 黄山), south of

⁸² Lothar Ledderose, ed., *Im Schatten hoher Bäume: Malerei der Ming- und Qing-Dynastien (1368–1911) aus der Volksrepublik China* (Baden-Baden: Staatliche Kunsthalle, 1985), 160; Richard Edwards, in Wai-kam Ho, ed., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, 1555-1636*, 2: 164; Shane McCausland, in Zhang Hongxing, ed., *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting, 700-1900*, 302; Stephen Little, ed., *17th-Century Chinese Paintings from the Tsao Family Collection* (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2016), 504; Kim Karlsson, in Kim Karlsson and Alexandra von Przychowski, ed., *Sehnsucht Natur: Sprechende Landschaften in der Kunst Chinas* (Zurich: Museum Rietberg, 2020), 26.

Jiaozhou and taken Yellow Hill as his sobriquet.⁸³ A seventeenth-century map overlooking Jiaozhou towards the south included in the *Jiaozhou Gazetteer* (*Jiaozhou zhi* 康熙膠州志, printed in 1673) confirms the presence and awareness of Yellow Hill located in the south of Jiaozhou (fig. 2.21). In a letter to Wei Xiangshu, Fa also described the location of Yellow Hill as being “eighty plus *li* from the city [of Jiaozhou]” 黃山去城八十餘里, which corresponds to approximately forty kilometers.⁸⁴ In the inscription noting that his relative had visited him at Yellow Hill, *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* ostensibly commemorated the occasion. Although not explicitly spelling out that he was painting Yellow Hill, the “old trees” that “coil around the river” described by Fa in his poem appear in the painting itself and *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* was clearly meant to give a sense of Yellow Hill. Indeed, a couplet from a poem by Fa written on a different occasion to see off a friend makes unmistakably clear that he observed Yellow Hill with the intention of painting it:

澗迴丹水停車轍，
摹索黃山入畫圖。

Winding along the cinnabar river, I stopped my cart,
Tracing and seeking Yellow Hill, I bring it into my
paintings.⁸⁵

⁸³ I translate Jiaozhou’s Huangshan as Yellow Hill in order to distinguish it clearer from the Yellow Mountains in Anhui. This is fitting since Yellow Hill is not an impressively large mountain but a low hill as will be shown further below in this chapter. While western scholars have associated Fa Ruozhen with the Yellow Mountains in Anhui, Jao Tsung-I 饒宗頤 (1917–2018) came already to the conclusion that Fa retired to Jiaozhou’s Yellow Hill rather than to Anhui’s Yellow Mountains; see Jao Tsung-I 饒宗頤, *Rao Zongyi ershi shiji xueshu wenji* 饒宗頤二十世紀學術文集 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 2003), 19: 1236.

⁸⁴ Fa Ruozhen, “Ji xingbu shangshu Wei Yuzhou shu” 寄刑部尚書魏蔚州書, *Huangshan ji*, in *QDSWJZBCK* 61: 48.

⁸⁵ Fa Ruozhen, “Song Zhang Zhisi zhi li” 送張識思之里, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 595.

A comparison with *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill*, evocative of Yellow Hill, suggests that *Reclining in the Western Hills* was also on Fa's mind when he painted the latter (fig. 2.22). *Reclining in the Western Hills* is a close-up of the mountain, eschewing (yellow line) the frontal river bank with its trees in the right lower corner of the painting seen in *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* indicated by an orange circle. However, a closer comparison shows that the two paintings are *structurally* similar in that they both show a group of trees growing at the foot of the mountain (blue circle). Both paintings also present a mountain rising towards the upper right (green arrow), and the mountain in both compositions is cut through vertically by a creek (red arrow), along which growing trees and vegetation are clustered. This secondary vertical axis provides both paintings with a supplementary upwards movement, this time thrusting towards the left upper corner. The comparison of these two works then allows for the argument that *Reclining in the Western Hills* was meant to evoke the landscapes of home rather than the environs of Beijing. The painting's current title, taken as an excerpt from Fa's inscription, is therefore somewhat misleading, despite the fact that it also simultaneously recorded events that had taken place in the environs of the capital.

Images of home and a strategy of artistic seriality

Arguably, throughout his life as a painter, Fa Ruozhen was concerned with the landscapes of home. A survey of Fa's work shows that the compositional structure revealed in *Reclining in the Western Hills* and *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* can also be found in a number of other works from the 1670s through the 1690s. It is visible in his 1685 painting, on the basis

of the poetic inscription titled *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain* (*Huashan Luoyanfeng tu* 華山落雁峰圖), in the Shanghai Museum (fig. 2.23).⁸⁶ It is yet again repeated in the 1687 hanging scroll *Splashing Spring over Treetops* (*Shumiao feiquan tu* 樹杪飛泉圖) (fig. 2.24) and in the 1690 hanging scroll *Longing for Rain in Cloudy Mountains* (*Yunshan yu yu tu* 雲山欲雨圖) in Qingdao (fig. 2.25).

The same structural similarity is repeated in the undated masterwork *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* from ca. 1690 in Stockholm (cf. fig. I.2), in the 1691 *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* (*Cenglun diezhang tu* 層巒疊嶂圖) in the collection of the Shandong Provincial Museum in Jinan 濟南 (fig. 2.26) and yet again in *Landscape for Senior Qu* (*Shuimo qihuai Qu weng shanshui tu* 水墨寄懷渠翁山水圖), dated 1692, previously in the collection of the Shanghai Museum (fig. 2.27). Despite the fact that Fa is playing with different directions of thrust, the overall compositional structure remains the same: the paintings start with pine trees on a riverbank in the bottom right, are followed by a second group of pine trees positioned on the left side of the painting further in the back, and then are followed by a creek that winds its way upwards towards the upper left corner of the painting.

While such a cursory overview does not do justice to the individual paintings,⁸⁷ the comparative view of these paintings reveals that independent from their individual appearances, differing scales, and varying degrees of monumentality, all these paintings

⁸⁶ For a discussion of the misleading title of this painting, see Chapter Three.

⁸⁷ They will be discussed further in detail below and in the following chapters.

share the same structural composition (fig. 2.28). This is even reflected in paintings that seem to mirror the aforementioned paintings in their lower parts: in *Cloudy Mountains*, dating to 1684 in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 2.7), and *Landscape for Senior Wu* (*Shou Wu weng shanhui tu* 壽武翁山水圖), dating to 1695 and previously in the collection of the Shanghai Museum (fig. 2.29), the composition does not start in the lower right corner, but in the lower left one. In fact, what these paintings do is not to mirror the composition but simply to omit the foreground riverbank. These paintings also share a riverbank populated with pine trees, a creek that rises towards the left upper corner, and a general thrust of the mountain towards the opposing upper corner. Additionally, it is important to note that all of these landscape paintings are uninhabited.

Of course, this feature of Fa's paintings could be dismissed on the grounds of artistic habit that had prompted Fa to paint the same composition time and again. Such an argument would negate the importance of seriality to Fa's work. Indeed, this reason led Cahill to comment: "Fa [Ruozhen]'s limited technique and habit of either repeating compositions or improvising [*sic*] them, often in a somewhat slapdash manner, keep him out of the first rank of masters of his period."⁸⁸ However, it is worth calling to mind that artists around the world have repeatedly painted their compositions and improved on them. Qualifying his own practice in French as *répétition* but in Dutch with the more telling word *variaties*, for example, indicates that Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) understood his repetitions as a

⁸⁸ Cahill, "Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen."

creative practice in which he elaborated on previously painted works.⁸⁹ Among Chinese painters, Mi Youren appears to have repeated compositions according to the developmental stages of his art,⁹⁰ as did Wen Zhengming.⁹¹ The most prominent painter is Ni Zan who painted the same composition time and again throughout much of his career.

An overview of Fa's painterly work from the 1670s through the 1690s thus reveals an artistic strategy of seriality that was employed in a number of works—but not in all works that he made over this period. Drawing on the findings about *Reclining in the Western Hills* and *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* from 1691, I argue that the aforementioned paintings, stretching over a period of more than twenty years, are evocative of Yellow Hill and therefore of Fa's home south of Jiaozhou. Nevertheless, Fa's paintings cannot be understood to be topographical representations of Yellow Hill. Topographical paintings are usually “conveying more or less accurate, exactly depicted, pictorial representations of a given landscape.”⁹² The high degree of variations in both appearance and monumentality of Fa's paintings already speaks against a topographical reading of his work. Comparing his

⁸⁹ See William H. Robinson, “On the Origins and Evolution of Van Gogh's Repetitions,” in Eliza E. Rathbone, William H. Robinson, Elizabeth Steele, and Marcia Steele, eds., *Van Gogh: Repetitions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 21-24.

⁹⁰ Peter C. Sturman, “Mi Youren and the Inherited Literati Tradition: Dimensions of Ink-Play,” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1989), 1: 186.

⁹¹ Wen Zhengming painted the Garden of the Inept Administrator in Suzhou twice: in 1533 he painted an album with 31 leaves, and in 1551, he painted another album with 8 leaves. The former's whereabouts are unknown; for documentation, see Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, 210FN33. The latter one is currently held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, see <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/39654?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=wen+zhengming&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=3> (last accessed September 18, 2021). Interestingly, Clunas also gives the later album, the “repetition” of sorts, less artistic weight, which seems a general feature of the evaluation of “repetitive” art works; see Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 47. This point has also been raised by Jonathan Hay, “Review of *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* and other works by Craig Clunas,” *Art Bulletin* 94, no. 2 (Jun. 2012): 311.

⁹² Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 9.

paintings to a photo of Yellow Hill taken in August 2017 makes it even harder to imagine in which way the monumental visions presented especially in paintings like *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* and *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* might relate to the relatively unimpressive hill close to Jiaozhou (fig. 2.30).

Rather than delivering an “accurate portrait” of a specific site, Fa’s variations in appearance, scale, brushwork, ink washes, and degrees of monumentality must be qualified as an act of artistic creativity that works within the confines of a serially repeated composition and the traditions of landscape painting. This contradicts James Cahill evaluation of Fa’s art as limited in technique and monotonous compositional repetitions that kept the artist “out of the first rank of masters of his period.”⁹³ Following Edward Casey, it can be argued that Fa transformed his visions of Yellow Hill into “painted images that are topo poetic in their contemplative sublimity.”⁹⁴

Fa’s act of creativity did not aim at *representing* Jiaozhou in the sense of depicting it accurately or surveying the site, but to *evoke* it. Fa’s paintings discussed above point to an act of imaginative painting that was concerned with a concrete place, but in a subjective rather than objective way. Scholars have observed that the act of taking a seemingly objective photograph of a particular site can produce very different results according to who is taking the photo: the early twentieth-century American photographer Benjamin W. Kilburn shooting Vishram Ghat in Braj, Northern India, for example, produced not only the site but

⁹³ Cahill, “Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen.”

⁹⁴ Casey writes on the American artist Fitz Hugh Lane, but something similar can be seen as happening in Fa’s paintings of his parents and extended family; see Casey, *Representing Place*, 39.

also the colonial subject, while Indian photographers of the same site focused on the religious site and not the act of worship.⁹⁵ In a similar vein, John Hay has observed that the representation of something needs an observer whose nature, status, and position is critical when evaluating the observed. With this, John Hay drew attention to the relationship between an observing subject and its represented object, stressing that the “ideological basis” of representational realism works within particular (and culturally specific) systems of meaning that do not necessarily hold the same dialectal meaning in seventeenth-century China and twenty-first century America.⁹⁶ This opens up the possibility of “representing,” “evoking”—or “embodying” as John Hay said—a place without having to reproduce its accurate physical appearance.⁹⁷

A comparison of the series of paintings mentioned above with *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* (cf. fig. 1.7) is instructive (fig. 2.31). The comparison makes clear that Fa used a different composition in *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* that eschews the conspicuous waterfall or small river coming from the left upper corner and the mountain’s directional force towards the opposite upper corner in all the other paintings. Although all these paintings start in the right lower corner with a *repoussoir* landmass on which trees are growing, the paintings differ structurally in that *Painting to the Essay on The Creeping Pine Providing Covering* presents a centrally rising mountain while

⁹⁵ Sugata Ray, *Climate Change and the Art of Devotion: Geoaesthetics in the Land of Krishna, 1550–1850* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2019), 176.

⁹⁶ John Hay, “Subject, Nature, and Representation in Early Seventeenth-century China,” in Wai-ching Ho, ed., *Proceedings of the Tung Ch'i-ch'ang International Symposium*, 4-1–4-16.

⁹⁷ On the question of the convergence of the terms representation and embodiment see *ibid.*, 4-16. Similarly looking for a good expression, James Cahill wrote of “imaginative conjuring”; see Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 155.

the other paintings all show a rising mountain with a predominantly rightward thrust. Also, *Painting to the Essay on The Creeping Pine Providing Covering* lacks the typical secondary axis of a waterfall around which trees are coiling and that grows towards the upper left corner in Fa's other paintings.

All this indicates that Fa was conscious about when to repeat his composition – and when not to. Indeed, Fa painted a number of paintings that eschew this compositional formula altogether. Examples include *Landscape* in the collection of the Jiaozhou Municipal Museum and *Snowy Landscape* (*Xuejing shanshui tu* 雪景山水圖) in an American private collection (cf. figs. 2.5 and 1.5). All these paintings make abundantly clear that Fa was perfectly capable of constructing paintings with other compositions, lending further credibility to the argument that the aspect of seriality in Fa's work points to a larger project that aimed to evoke a particular place: his native Jiaozhou.

Mount Tiantai and place specificity in Fa's work

Fa's long handscroll *Mount Tiantai* (*Tiantai shanse tu* 天台山色圖) from 1681 provides further evidence for the argument that particular places inspired Fa to make paintings and that he evoked rather than represented these places in his works (fig. 2.32). Handscrolls are rare in Fa Ruozhen's surviving oeuvre, but in 1681, one month after he painted *Mount Tiantai*, he also painted another long handscroll, *Landscape* (*Shanshui tu* 山水圖) (fig.

2.33).⁹⁸ Although the two paintings differ considerably in style and quality, I consider *Landscape* with its looser brushwork also an authentic work by Fa Ruozhen: with its emphasis on bright colors and kinesthetic, loose brushwork, it fits into a body of paintings in which Fa experimented with this particular style in the early 1680s.⁹⁹

With its bland texture strokes recalling the unassertive aesthetics associated with Wu Zhen and its grand composition emphasizing an atmospheric naturalism usually associated with Song painting, *Mount Tiantai* seems to knit together these two great painting traditions. This recalls a conceptual idea of painting known as the Great Synthesis (*dacheng* 大成) which seventeenth-century orthodox painters like Dong Qichang, Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680), and Wang Hui 王翬 (1632–1717) promoted. The circumstances leading up to the making of this painting explain Fa’s use of “orthodox” ideas. This, in turn, indicates that the separation of “individualists” and “orthodox painters,” so often made in accounts of seventeenth-century Chinese painting, may be a simplistic one.

In the ninth month of the *gengshen* 庚申 year (1680), Fa had left Jiaozhou and travelled via Yangzhou 揚州, Zhenjiang 鎮江, Jiaying, and Suzhou to Hangzhou 杭州. Here, he stayed with friends such as the governor-general of Zhejiang, Li Zhifang 李之芳 (1622–1694), and

⁹⁸ As far as I can tell, there are only five painted handscrolls among Fa’s surviving works, one of which is a handscroll of flowers and not of a landscape.

⁹⁹ Other examples for this colorful, atmospheric early-1680s style include the hanging scroll *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* (*Chongshan xinglin tu* 崇山杏林圖), painted in 1683 (see Chapter Three) and an undated and unpublished album *Landscapes of Four Seasons* (*Shanshui tuce* 山水圖冊), ca. 1681, in the collection of the Shandong Provincial Museum in Jinan (not published).

the provincial administration officer of Zhejiang, Li Shishen 李士楨 (1619–1695).¹⁰⁰ When Fa’s friend Tang Menglai came to Hangzhou, the two friends stayed together with the *guzhin* 古琴 (zither) player Cheng Xiong 程雄 (fl. 17th century) at the villa of the high official Cao Rong 曹溶 (1613–1685).¹⁰¹ Here, rules of sociability must have led Fa to paint an auspicious painting of cranes for his host Cao Rong, probably similar to *Cranes amid Plum Blossoms* (*Meihe tu* 梅鶴圖) which Fa had painted three years earlier for an unidentified friend named Wei 委 in Beijing (fig. 2.34). In a poem that Cao Rong wrote on the occasion of Fa’s return to the north, he mentioned explicitly that Fa’s cranes were “particularly excellent” (*temiao* 特妙).¹⁰²

After having spent the winter in the milder climate of the south, Fa prepared to return to Jiaozhou in the third month of the *xinyou* 辛酉 year (1681). Before leaving Hangzhou, the painter Wang Zhuo 王晫 (style name: Danlu 丹麓, fl. ca. 1640–1680s) and the Qing official Lin Yunming 林雲銘 (sobriquet: Xizhong 西仲, 1628–1697) organized a farewell party for Fa Ruozhen and others departing Hangzhou.¹⁰³ It was at this party that Fa also met with Gu Zaimei 顧在湄 (aka Gu Mei 顧湄,¹⁰⁴ sobriquet: Xingwen 荇文, style name: Yiren 伊人; fl. latter half 17th c.). Gu and Fa discussed paintings and, after they parted ways, Fa must have

¹⁰⁰ Shi Weicheng, “Fa Ruozhen (1613–1696) de shanshuihua yanjiu,” 29.

¹⁰¹ Cheng Xiong 程雄, “Shuhuai cao zixu” 抒懷操自序, *Songfeng ge qinpu* 松風閣琴譜, in *SKQS* 839: 164.

¹⁰² Cao Rong 曹溶, “Da Fa Huangshi ji song zhi huan Donghai ershou” 答法黃石即送之還東海二首, *Jingtang shiji* 靜惕堂詩集, in *QDSWJHB* 45: 527.

¹⁰³ See Fa Ruozhen, “Wang Danlu shanji tong Lin Xizhong zhijiu huabie ji ji zhujunzi ershi er shou” 王丹麓山齋同林西仲置酒話別即寄諸君子二十二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 446-448.

¹⁰⁴ Not to be confused with the famous Nanjing courtesan Gu Mei 顧眉 (1619–1663/64).

received two poems from Gu Zaimei which he acknowledged in two of his own poems written shortly after the party. The second of these poems reads:

論畫纔停三日餘， 蕭條草閣半床書。	It is only three days ago that we discussed paintings, In my desolate thatched hut, the bed is half filled with books.
須尋元宋諸人法，	I ought to search for the methods of the Song and Yuan [painters],
約待秋風北海車。	While I am looking forward to the autumnal meeting when the chariot of Beihai will come. ¹⁰⁵

Fa's reflections on studying Song and Yuan painting methods is reminiscent of the Great Synthesis in painting as understood in the 1680s notably by Wang Hui. Gu Zaimei, for whom Fa wrote this poem, was familiar with this orthodox ideal. As one of the Ten Virtuous Men of Taicang (Taicang shizi 太倉十子) and a native of Loudong 婁東 (Taicang), Gu Zaimei was closely acquainted with the poet and painter Wu Weiye 吳偉業 (1609–1671) and had been an early patron of Wang Hui.¹⁰⁶ By 1680, Wang Hui was already known for his mastery of synthesizing Song monumental compositions with Yuan calligraphic brushwork into handscrolls (rather than hanging scrolls) of the “Mountains and Rivers Without End” genre; Wang Hui's *Clearing after Snow at Shanyin, after Wang Wei* (Lin

¹⁰⁵ The poem's last line remains somewhat unclear. Beihai 北海, the northern Sea, is probably meant to refer to Kong Rong (153–208) who, because of his appointment as the Commander of the Beihai district in Shandong, was known as Kong Beihai. Kong Rong was a very close friend of the famous calligrapher Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132–192). If this reading is correct, Fa Ruozhen here would call his friend Gu Zaimei with the name Beihai, thus alluding to the friendship of these two men of antiquity. The meaning of the character used for chariot 車, which needs to be read *ju* and not by its usual reading *che* (for the purpose of rhyming), remains somewhat unclear. I would like to acknowledge the help of Prof. Zuoting Wen and Wandu Wang who provided valuable help with the translation. For the poem, see Fa Ruozhen, “De Loujiang Gu Xingwen lunhua er shou,” 得婁江顧苻文論畫二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji*, 212: 445-446.

¹⁰⁶ For Gu Mei's patronage of Wang Hui see Chang, “Wang Hui: The Evolution of a Master Landscapist,” 50.

Wang Wei Shanyin jixue tu 臨王維山陰霽雪圖) is an example for this (fig. 2.35).¹⁰⁷ Since Gu Zaimei had not only been Wang Hui's patron but also had collaborated with him on a painting album, he certainly was aware of Wang's innovations in the handscroll genre.¹⁰⁸ Therefore it is likely that Gu shared his insights into the possibilities of the handscroll format to integrate Song and Yuan ideals with Fa Ruozhen. This, in turn, helps to explain why Fa painted two long handscrolls after returning from his trip to the south while he otherwise mainly focused on painting hanging scrolls. In particular, with its unassertive brushwork and its emphasis on an atmospheric naturalism, *Mount Tiantai* thus reflects Fa's acquaintance with the theoretical ideals of orthodox painting of the early 1670s and 1680s. At the same time, *Mount Tiantai*'s brushwork, its sensitivity towards the light and dark, and the general uneventfulness recall again the particular brush idiom of Gong Xian.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ According to Chin-Sung Chang, Wang Hui's *Summer Mountains, Misty Rain* (dated 1668, Collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco) "marks the beginning of his experiments with the pictorial potential of the handscroll format for creating vast panoramic landscapes" that synthesised Song pictorial elements and Yuan brush idioms; see Chang, "Wang Hui: The Evolution of a Master Landscapist," 69; on Wang Hui's conception of a Great Synthesis in painting see *ibid.*, 83.

¹⁰⁸ In the same year that Fa Ruozhen met with Gu Zaimei (1680), the latter had contributed to a collaborative album—now lost—done together with Wang Hui, Yun Shouping 惲壽平 (1633–1690), Da Chongguang 笪重光 (1623–1692), and Yang Jin 楊晉 (1644–1728); the album was painted collectively in the tenth month of the *gengshen* 庚申 year (1680) and is recorded in Shao Songnian 邵松年, *Chenglan shi gu yuan cui lu* 澄蘭室古緣萃錄, in *XXSKQS* 1088: 149-150. Later, presumably the same album was inscribed by the high Qing official Li Zuoxian 李佐賢 (1807–1876) who mentioned a collaborative work of five artists, pointing out Gu Zaimei and Wang Hui in particular; according to Li Zuoxian, Gu Zaimei's work ranked equally with that of Wang Hui; see Li Zuoxian 李佐賢, "Ti wujia hebi huace" 題五家合璧畫冊, *Shiquan shuwu leigao* 石泉書屋類稿, in *QDSWJHB* 624: 393. The relationship between Wang Hui and Gu Zaimei is further attested to by *Green Wutong Trees in a Village* (*Biwu cunzhuang tu* 碧梧村莊圖), a painting which Wang Hui painted in 1684 for Gu Zaimei; the painting was auctioned by Beijing Yingshi 北京盈時 on October 30, 2012 (lot 418), see <https://auction.artron.net/paimai-art0016940418/> (last accessed May 19, 2021).

¹⁰⁹ In his colophon to *Mount Tiantai*, the collector Yan Shiqing 顏世清 (1873–1929) considered Fa's art not to be influenced by Dong Qichang and the Four Wang's (四王一董說教字內，四方學子不窺華亭門徑，便守婁東範圍) but rather to derive from independent masters like Cheng Zhengkui, Gong Xian, Kuncan, Shitao, and Zha Shibiao (青溪、半千、石谿、石濤、梅壑數人而已). However, I argue that Fa made conceptual choices in *Mount Tiantai* that betray his familiarity with orthodox ideals.

Mount Tiantai shows a nonpopulated landscape. Stretching over 13 meters (42 feet) in length, the handscroll depicts rock-and-mountain clusters that randomly change from close-up views to larger scenes indicated through receding land masses and larger or smaller trees. In comparison to other seventeenth-century representations of the famous Buddhist pilgrimage site in south-east Zhejiang province, Fa's handscroll is unusual. It omits renown and recognizable sites of touristic interest or of religious importance that other contemporaneous artists, focusing on one or several of the mountain's remarkable and "strange" (*qi* 奇) views, chose to depict. Yang Wencong 楊文聰 (1597–1646) and Shitao, for example, focused on the mountain's famous Stone Bridge (Shiliang 石梁) (figs. 2.36 and 2.37), while Dai Benxiao 戴本孝 (1621–1693) had opted for the mountain's fabled Strange Pines (Yisong 異松) as his painting subject (fig. 2.38). In *Mount Tiantai*, none of these iconic sights are depicted. Only Fa's own inscription establishes the painting's place-specificity: "In the seventh month of the *xinyou* year [1681], the twentieth year of the Kangxi emperor of the Great Qing, my son Zhang asked for a painting, so I created a scroll of [Mount] Tiantai..." 大清康熙皇帝廿年，辛酉七月，樟兒索畫，乃作《天台圖》一卷...¹¹⁰ Towards the end of the scroll, a short section of the handscroll departs from the otherwise uniform pictorial program and presents a forest of blossoming peach trees as the painting's most prominent feature. Because of this, the scroll takes on a distinct flair of reclusion since the legendary Peach Blossom Land (Taohua yuan 桃花源) described by Tao Yuanming was intimately connected with the idea of reclusion.¹¹¹ This idea of reclusion is

¹¹⁰ Adopted from a translation by Richard Edwards in Ho, ed., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang*, 2: 164.

¹¹¹ Tao Yuanming, "Taohua yuan ji" 桃花源記, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 469-470; see also Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 215-226.

further enhanced by a seal impressed by Fa right at the beginning of the scroll reading “Studio of Reclusion” (“Dunzhai” 遯齋).

While the theme of reclusion is one topic of the painting, *Mount Tiantai* is foremost a travel record that conjures up remembrances of a particular place: when read in conjunction with a chapter entitled “Twelve Small Records from Mount Tiantai” (“Tiantai jiaoji shi’er” 天台小記十二) contained in Fa’s *Collected Writings of Yellow Hill*, it becomes clear that Fa’s travels must have taken him to a site known as Peach Spring (Taoyuan 桃源).¹¹² The seventh of these twelve records reads:

After crossing the You stream, I traveled along the rivers in the valley. The mountain ridges were cleft and disbanded into layers, and the hillsides were cluttered with little rocks and boulders. Numerous transformations competed against each other. There were long vines hanging from dangerous cliffs. There were eccentric pines crouch across stone terraces. And there were shadows in the shape of tiger-stripes and bird-claw prints cast on the sandy paths. It was totally silent during the long time I sat there; even the twittering of birds did not reach [my ear]. It was as tranquil as remote antiquity. Then I climbed on the Huixian Rock. The Pearl Screen [waterfall] was hanging from a precipitous peak, its waters flying and spouting like fountains and billows. There was no cave in sight, and all that existed were a myriad blossoming peach trees. The blossoms came in red or pink, some of them smiling, some of them smitten, some of them standing independently, some of them leaning against each other. These flamboyant blossoms were like floating rosy clouds, blinking along with the ups and downs of the rippling water. Upon hearing the rippling of the streams, I wondered if it might be the sounds of pendants and ornaments [of beautiful girls].

¹¹² “Peach Spring” is not only a physical site in the northern Tiantai Mountains, which was first developed as a tourist site in the Northern Song dynasty when authorities in 1087 planted peach trees and opened a road for tourists; see Richard E. Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 505n20. The site was also connected with the Daoist-inspired legend of the two Han dynasty villagers Liu Chen 劉晨 and Ruan Zhao 阮肇 who, according to Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), got lost in the mountains sometime between 58 and 75 CE, ate two magical peaches, and then encountered female immortals; after six months of staying with them, they returned to the world of mortals just to find that hundreds of years had passed and they encountered the seventh generation of their descendants; for an English translation of the story, see Liu Yiqing, comp., *Hidden and Visible Realms: Early Medieval Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, edited and translated by Zhenjun Zhang (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1-4.

When looking from the distance at the Twin Fairy Peak, I wondered again if these were also two graceful [girls] reluctant to part from this place. The pink petals flowed away in vain, only their lingering fragrance remained in the trees. Walking among blossoms and leaning against the trees, it was as if the clucking of chickens and the barking of dogs were in my ears.

渡槽溪，透蛇川谷，石鉞層剝，岬嶠砢礪，萬變爭錯。或掛長蘿於懸壁，或倒怪松于石罈，或畫虎班鳥篆于砂迳。坐久寂寂，鳥音不來，悠然太古。乃登會仙石，峭掛珠簾，泉飛浪噴，亦無洞可尋。唯桃花千萬樹，紅深紅淺，如咲、如痴、如距、如依，艷妬行雲，浮沈水浪。聽溪流珊珊，疑環珮聲來，眺雙女峯，又疑娟娟，顧戀不能去。澹粉空流，餘香在樹，徙倚花間，彷彿雞犬聲在耳。¹¹³

Reading this record against *Mount Tiantai* suggests that Fa's painting served to reflect on his trip to Peach Spring. The "numerous transformations," the hillsides "cluttered with little rocks and boulders," the "eccentric pines" crouching "across stone terraces" and even the silence that Fa writes about seem to be captured in the painting, not to mention the "myriad blossoming peach trees."

Peach Spring is otherwise a notably ignored feature in seventeenth-century visual representations of Mount Tiantai. Yang Wencong, Shitao, and Dai Benxiao had chosen more prominent sites of Mount Tiantai in their paintings. The popular publication *Marvelous Sights within the Seas* (*Hainei qiguan* 海內奇觀) from 1609 also did not advertise this spot in its woodblock-printed map.¹¹⁴ Similarly, a painting-map of Mount Tiantai dateable to after 1736 promotes tourist spots through careful labeling but also omits Peach Spring (fig. 2.39). However, the site is recorded in literary accounts such as *Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake*

¹¹³ Fa Ruozhen, "Taoyuan" 桃源, *Huangshan ji*, in *QDSWJZBCK* 60: 506-507.

¹¹⁴ For an illustration see Yang Erzeng 楊爾曾, ed., *Xinbian hainei qiguan shi juan* 新編海內奇觀十卷, in *Zhongguo guji zhenben congkan: Tianjin tushuguan juan* 中國古籍珍本叢刊——天津圖書館卷 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2013), 24: 218.

(*Xu Xiake youji* 徐霞客遊記) by the famous late Ming traveler Xu Xiake 徐霞客 (1587–1641): “Peach Spring is next to the Temple of Country Protection, but the temple is already destroyed; the natives are ignorant and know nothing about it” 桃源在護國寺旁，寺已廢，土人茫無知者。¹¹⁵

Fa’s physical and sensory experiences at Peach Spring left a deep, lyrical impression that he described in his account; these are also reflected in the overall sensory approach to his handscroll. He called upon his memories when he painted *Mount Tiantai* after his return to Jiaozhou. At first glance, *Mount Tiantai* retains a tendency toward an image that conceptualized ideals rather than recording specific locales. Yet, closely reading this painting against Fa’s own account reveals his painting’s rootedness in a very specific locale, suggesting that his painting seeks to evoke this place within the traditional boundaries of landscape painting, art-historical considerations of a Great Synthesis, and a general concern with “brush and ink.”

It is well documented that contemporaneous artists painted travel memories in which the accuracy of the visited place was not of foremost concern to painters. In his 1685 album *Eight Views of Yellow Mountain* (*Huangshan basheng tu* 黃山八勝圖) in the Sumitomo Collection in the Sen-oku Hakuko Kan in Kyoto, Shitao drew on distinct place memories for his painting. In the album’s fifth leaf, two sites of touristic interest were conflated into a single composition: the Singing String Spring (Mingxian quan 鳴絃泉) and the Tiger Head

¹¹⁵ Xu Hongzu 徐宏祖, “You Tiantai shan riji” 遊天台山日記, *Xu Xiake youji* 徐霞客遊記, in *QDSKQS* 601: 354.

Rock (Hutou yan 虎頭岩) (fig. 2.40). Combining these two sites catered, according to Shih Shou-ch'ien, to the contemporaneous desire for strange (*qi*) views.¹¹⁶ Shitao identifies the two sites in his inscription, writing: “When I came to the Stone Lion, I was lying down to listen to the Singing String Spring” 何年來石虎，臥聽鳴絃泉. And this despite the fact that the two sites are separated from each other in the actual topography of the Yellow Hills. Shitao brought them together in a single album leaf to emphasize recollections rather than an accurate topographical description of the landscape, thus similarly citing the subjective landscape rooted in a specific locale.

What is interesting about Fa's work in comparison is that while Shitao chose to focus on readily recognizable geographic features—just as Yang Wencong and Dai Benxiao had done—Fa clouded his evocation of place in an obfuscating manner and unassertive brushwork that render the identification of place difficult. Notwithstanding its ambiguities, however, *Mount Tiantai* exemplifies how Fa Ruozhen's artistic practice encompassed the making of place-pictures. The particularity of *Mount Tiantai* is that the painting only makes very oblique references to a particular place and appears to present a place-idea, or to evoke a place, rather than to provide an accurate topographical representation of it. Indeed, if it were not for Fa's own title inscription, the work's place-specificity would easily be overlooked. In that regard, the painting at first appears to be closer situated to a painting like Wang Yuanqi's *Autumn Colors on Mount Hua* (*Huashan qiuse tu* 華山秋色圖) from 1693 (fig. 2.41). In his inscription, Wang Yuanqi also evoked travel memories but the painting

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of this album as an object processing travel memories, see Shih Shou-ch'ien, *Shanming guying: Zhongguo shanshuihua he guanzhong de lishi*, 255-257.

shows hardly any of the strange views for which Mount Hua is known.¹¹⁷ Rather it couches these memories—similarly to Fa Ruozen—in the depiction of the seasonal phenomenon of colored autumn leaves and otherwise emphasizes Huang Gongwang-derived, so-called “orthodox” brushwork. This comparison alerts again to *Mount Tiantai*’s characteristic emphasis on brushwork, which Fa had come to reflect about so intensively on his trip south and through his exchange with Gu Zaimei. Nevertheless, in contrast to Wang Yuanqi, Fa Ruozen’s seasonal marker of peach blossoms also served him to slip in a vision of Peach Spring, thus providing a concrete marker of locality. *Mount Tiantai* thus provides further evidence for the argument that particular places inspired Fa to make paintings and that he evoked rather than represented these places in his works.

Conclusion

Fa’s artistic practice therefore can be shown to encompass two aspects: an evocation of place, and an artistic strategy to achieve this aim. In so doing, Fa’s art fits into early Qing patterns of painterly practices. Other seventeenth-century painters, active notably in Nanjing and in Anhui, were also engaged in painting pictures that represented specific places “without,” as Richard Vinograd states, “being tied to the specifics of place,” that is pictures that were “markers of a concept of locality rather than [...] signs of specific sites.”¹¹⁸ Jonathan Hay has drawn attention to this phenomenon, too. Discussing two album leaves by

¹¹⁷ Wang Yuanqi’s inscription reads in part: “In the *guiyou* year [1693], I travelled to Mount Hua, ... [and] wrote six poems to record its famous sights. This painting sketches the general appearance of the mountains that I had climbed on. The Southern Peak and the Western Peak are what my eyesight had reached...” 余癸酉歲遊華山。... 作詩六章。以紀其勝。此圖就余所登陟者。寫其大槩。南峰西峰目力所及也....

¹¹⁸ Vinograd, “Fan Ch’i (1616–after 1694): Place-Making and the Semiotics of Sight,” 143.

Hu Yukun and Gao Cen respectively that both depicted the site of the tomb of the Ming founding emperor, he also found these paintings not to be specific topographic representations of the mausoleum's site but to differ in their takes on the depiction of the mountain.¹¹⁹ This points to creative approaches to the rendition of a particular place by different artists to which could also be added Ye Xin's handscroll *Mount Zhongshan* of 1654 (fig. 2.42).

Fa's practice of rendering home, then, can be seen in a similar vein: it is not informed by a desire to convey "topographic information with utmost clarity and economy" as James Cahill wrote about mapmakers.¹²⁰ Rather, it is concerned with the sensory, the aesthetic, and the atmospheric,¹²¹ with the period's fashion for "original" or "strange" landscapes,¹²² and with the general elite discourse on the importance of brushwork over representational content that is constitutive for literati discourses on art since the eleventh century and which

¹¹⁹ Jonathan Hay, "The Suspension of Dynastic Time," 195.

¹²⁰ Cahill, *The Distant Mountains*, 207.

¹²¹ Maxwell K. Hearn has observed the same opposition in the art of Wang Hui; see Maxwell K. Hearn, "Pictorial Maps, Panoramic Landscapes, and Topographic Paintings: Three Modes of Depicting Space during the Early Qing Dynasty," in Jerome Silbergeld, Dora C.Y. Ching, Judith G. Smith, and Alfreda Murck, eds., *Bridges to Heaven: Essays on East Asian Art in Honor of Professor Wen C. Fong* (Princeton, NJ: P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, and Princeton University Press, 2011), 102.

¹²² This can exemplarily be seen in the fluidity of aggregate conditions of his rock formations in paintings like *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* (cf. fig. I.2). In a similar vein, Jonathan Hay has seen *qi* in the "massive but fluid rock outcrop[s]" in Shitao's album *Landscapes for Liu Shilou*; see Hay, *Shitao*, 211-212. On the discourse of strangeness in the late Ming and early Qing see Burnett, *Dimensions of Originality*; Bai, *Fu Shan's World*, 10-20. Contemporaries of Fa also commented on the strangeness in his paintings. Wei Xiangshu for example wrote in his preface to Fa's *Huangshan shiliu*, "Yellow Hill's [paintings] are divinely strange and change unpredictably, unrestrainedly he has exhausted his contemporaries' paths and established a different style, thus developing his own skills" 黃山神奇變幻，橫絕時蹊，別立骨格，自出手眼; see Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 199. For a discussion of the "strange" in Fa's work, see also Shi Weicheng, "Fa Ruozhen (1613-1696) de shanshui hua yanjiu," 52-61.

had been brought to the fore again in the seventeenth century by Dong Qichang.¹²³ While Fa's paintings do not represent Yellow Hill and other hills of his home region topographically, the above findings nevertheless indicate that the place of home figured into the making of certain works in Fa's oeuvre—despite its rarefied relationship with the actual physical environment.

To produce and/or own paintings of home was not something that only Fa Ruozhen was interested in. Fa's friend Song Luo, for example, had “begged” Wang Hui to make a painting of his home Xipo 西陂 (from which Song Luo derived his style name) in modern-day Shangqiu 商邱, Henan province.¹²⁴ Xu Fang in his “Record of the Famous Views of the Western Hills” (*Xishan shengji tu ji* 西山勝景圖記) described the landscape between Tianping 天平 and Lingyan 靈巖 mountains to the west of his native Suzhou as being “really a picture” 真畫圖 where “my thatched hut is located” 余草堂在焉.¹²⁵ He added that the landscape there “does not fall short of textual [descriptions] and paintings of it” 又不假少文畫圖矣.¹²⁶ The statements of Song Luo and Xu Fang point to a desire, shared by a Qing

¹²³ For a concise discussion on how literati painting adheres to its own discourse of representation, see Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 18-23.

¹²⁴ Song Luo wrote: “Xipo is my home, ... I had begged Wang Hui from Mount Yu to make a painting [of it] and, after getting it mounted, stored it away in a box. Now I am waiting for another day when I will retire home and can repair it” 余家西陂...乞虞山王翬寫為圖，裝而藏之篋中，俟異日歸老補葺焉; see Song Luo 宋犖, “Xipo zayong (you xu)” 西陂雜詠有序, *Xipi leigao* 西陂類稿, in *QDSKQS* 1362: 97. That Fa and Song were acquainted with each other is evident from a poem that Fa wrote for Song Luo when the latter was promoted to be provincial administration officer of Jiangsu; see Fa Ruozhen, “Jihuai Song Muzhong Jiangfan er shou” 寄懷宋牧仲江藩二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 549.

¹²⁵ Xu Fang's painting appears to have been lost.

¹²⁶ Xu Fang, “Xishan shengjing tu ji” 西山勝景圖記, *Juyitang ji*, 514.

collaborator and a Ming loyalist, to have paintings that evoked the local landscapes of home. They also stand in remarkable contrast to Dong Qichang's emphasis on brushwork over representational value. Fa's practice as well as Xu's record and Song's request draw attention to the representational character of landscape paintings. Xu's and Song's assertions thus point to a field of tension that existed between artistic practices focused on brushwork on the one hand and representation on the other. They demonstrate that the making of paintings of the local landscapes of one's home was a well-established artistic practice of the seventeenth-century.

Fa, too, tried to capture his own local landscapes, e.g. his mindscape, in parts of his work while counterbalancing any representational project with the demands of brushwork. He employed seriality to create images evocative of Yellow Hill, the area where he grew up and where he chose to retire. In that regard, he also fits a seventeenth-century pattern: Wang Yuanqi with his "modular painting,"¹²⁷ Cheng Zhengkui with his numerated series of *Reclining Journey* handscrolls,¹²⁸ and the travel records of landscapist Huang Xiangjian 黃向堅 (1609–1673) all reveal tendencies for seriality.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ See Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 202-213.

¹²⁸ Zhou Lianggong estimated that by 1662 at the latest, Cheng Zhengkui had already painted 300 works; see Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, in Zhu Tianshu, ed., *Zhou Lianggong quanji*, 5: 75. Some scholars estimate that Cheng Zhengkui most likely managed to paint these five hundred scrolls, see Yang Xin, "Cheng Zhengkui ji qi *Jiangshan woyou tu*," 78 and Zhang Lu 張祿, "Cheng Zhengkui huihua yishu sixiang yanjiu: yi 'Qingxi yigao' wei zhu" 程正揆繪畫藝術思想研究——以《清溪遺稿》為主 (PhD diss., Wuhan ligong daxue, 2014), 108. It should, however, be noted that while Cheng Zhengkui numbered his scrolls, the numbering did not follow a logical order, thus casting some doubt over the accuracy of these numbers.

¹²⁹ Cf. Kindall, *Geo-Narratives of a Filial Son*.

More directly related to Fa's artistic practice of seriality in order to create place images of his home region is Xu Fang. Similarly to Fa, Xu's body of surviving paintings is comparatively small; the *Illustrated Catalogue of Selected Works of Ancient Chinese Painting and Calligraphy* (*Zhongguo lidai shuhua tumu* 中國古代書畫圖目) records only 25 paintings. Next to a number of works that show the painter's interest in imitating works of ancient masters, Xu Fang made a number of paintings that recall his home region around Suzhou.¹³⁰ For example, Xu Fang painted at least two images of Mount Qinyuhang 秦餘杭 山 in the environs of Suzhou, once in 1672 in (fig. 2.43), and once at an unknown date.¹³¹ In contrast to Fa, Xu Fang elaborately described both in his inscription and in the painting itself geographical and architectural features of Mount Qinyuhang and its built environment, thus making an identification with Mount Qinyuhang much easier than in the case of Fa Ruozhen.¹³² These two paintings illustrate how Xu Fang also employed seriality in his artistic practice to paint images of place.

Doubtlessly under the influence of traditional discourses pejorative of representational content of painting, Fa Ruozhen seldom made the relation between painting and environment explicit. Nevertheless, place factored into Fa's artistic practice. The fact that he was not particularly outspoken about the locales pictured in his paintings does not mean that

¹³⁰ See for example Fu Yanghua 付陽華, "Qingchu yimin huajia Xu Fang de huihua, jiaoyou yu shenghuo" 清初遺民畫家徐枋的繪畫、交遊與生活, *Zhongguo shuhua* 中國書畫 195 (2019): 46.

¹³¹ The 1672 painting is not dated, but as Zhang Yunshuang has shown, the painting belongs to a series of place pictures that Xu Fang did in 1672; see Sturman and Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse*, 216. For an illustration of the second painting, nearly identical in size and today in the collection of the Anhui Provincial Museum in Hefei, see *Zhongguo gudai shuhua jianding zu*, ed., *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu*, 12: 235 (皖-362).

¹³² For a transcription and translation of Xu Fang's inscription to the 1672 painting, see Peter C. Sturman and Susan S. Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse*, 295-296.

place was not central in Fa's practice. His series of paintings evoking Yellow Hill thus is part of a long tradition in which artists used the landscape genre to express their "feelings of longing for home" (*sixiang zhi xu* 思鄉之緒). Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049–1106), for example, had painted his mountain estate while staying at the capital of the Northern Song, Bianliang 汴梁 (today's Kaifeng 開封, Henan province).¹³³ Faced with the realities of public service, Wen Zhengming also had his home on his mind when he painted *Colors of Spring at Mount Yan* (*Yanshan chunse tu* 燕山春色圖).¹³⁴ Similarly, confronted with cultural and weather differences while living in Beijing, Dong Qichang expressed reminiscences about his southern home in his album *Eight Views of Yan and Wu*.¹³⁵ But while such paintings of home offered Li Gonglin, Wen Zhengming, and Dong Qichang the possibilities of a "temporary escape to a private world unencumbered by the demands of public responsibility" (as Robert Harrist wrote about Li Gonglin), Fa's images of home took on another layer of meaning that reveals the particular mnemonic importance of Yellow Hill for the artist.¹³⁶ The significance of Fa's place-images and how they helped to articulate particular, place-bound memories in processes of identify formation is the subject of the following chapter.

¹³³ Robert E. Harrist, Jr., *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-Century China: Mountain Villa by Li Gonglin* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 13 & 31-32.

¹³⁴ Shih Shou-ch'ien, "Jiajing xinzheng yu Wen Zhengming huafeng zhi zhuanbian," 279-83.

¹³⁵ Wang Hongwei 王洪偉, *Fengge yu jingyu: Dong Qichang gan dongjing shanshui yanjiu* 風格與境遇——董其昌乾冬景山水研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2020), 267-272.

¹³⁶ Harrist, *Painting and Private Life*, 106.

CHAPTER THREE

The Landscapes of Jiaozhou, Family Memories, and the Making of a Lineage

In the trauma-rich context of the early Qing, artists explored the possibilities of the landscape genre to remember the deceased by evoking particular places in their paintings that carried important memories. *Spring Rain over South Lake* (*Nanhu chunyu tu* 南湖春雨圖) by the poet, painter, and Qing official Wu Weiye illustrates this point well (fig. 3.1). His painting shows a lake surrounded by low mountains as well as some houses and, further in the back, a marshland that again is framed by low mountains. The artist also inscribed his long “Song of the Mandarin Duck Lake” (“Yuanhu qu” 鴛湖曲) on the top of the painting. According to the research of the author and collector Huang Chang 黃裳 (1919–2012), Wu had visited Jiaying 嘉興 (Zhejiang province) in 1642 and had spent time here with his friend Wu Changshi 吳昌時 (d. 1643), the owner of a garden estate at Mandarin Duck Lake to which the Bamboo Pavilion (Zhuting 竹亭) belonged.¹ Due to infighting at the court, Wu Changshi had been executed under the Chongzhen emperor in 1643, and among the few literati of the time to remember his friends was Wu Weiye who wrote the long “Song of the Mandarin Duck Lake” to commemorate his deceased friend.²

¹ Huang Chang 黃裳, *Yinyu ji* 銀魚集 (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), 50 and 61-62.

² Huang Chang, *Yinyu ji*, 90-96.

Painted while again sojourning in Jiaxing in 1652, where Mandarin Duck Lake is located, the painting shows a flat landscape that is interrupted by some hills.³ In the painting's right lower part is a pavilion that is framed by bamboos. This pictorial detail already gestures to the importance of place that informed Wu Weiye's painting: presumably, this is Wu Changshi's Bamboo Pavilion from which Wu Changshi derived his sobriquet Zhuting. Wu Weiye's inscribed poem further signals that *Spring Rain over South Lake* shows the local landscape of Jiaxing:

我來倚棹向湖邊，	Upon my arrival, I lean against an oar by the lake's shore,
煙雨台空倍惘然。	Upon seeing the deserted Terrace of Mist and Rain, my irresolution doubles.
...	...
君不見白浪掀天一葉危，	Do you not see, like a piece of reed, my boat is perilous when white billows start rising to the skies,
收竿還怕轉船遲。	Taking in the fishing rod, I worry that it is too late to turn the boat around. ⁴

Probably, the terraced elevation in the lower left corner of the painting is the Terrace of Mist and Rain; on it, the depicted double-storied pavilion among trees then must be Jiaxing's famous Tower of Mist and Rain (Yanyu lou 煙雨樓), which is located between Mandarin Duck Lake and Biao Lake (Baio hu 滂湖).⁵ Upon seeing Wu Changshi's empty residence by

³ Around this time, Wu Weiye, living in seclusion and refusing to serve the Qing government, was constantly recommended for official service in Beijing. He tried to unite the literary societies of Suzhou and Songjiang, but after failing to do so decided to join the government in Beijing in 1653; see Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 934-942.

⁴ The song is also contained in Wu Weiye's poetry collection; see Wu Weiye 吳偉業, "Yuanhu qu" 鴛湖曲, *Wu Meicun quanji* 吳梅村全集, annotated and punctuated by Li Xueying 李學穎 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019), 71-72.

⁵ The Tower of Mist and Rain was first built during the Wuyue Kingdom (907-978) and had been refurbished during the Wanli period (1573-1620).

the lakeside, Wu Weiye reflected on the course of history and the unpredictability of human life. Therefore he reached the conclusion that just like a fisherman who risked to fish during a rainy day but had to turn back when the storms were getting too strong, scholars who entrusted themselves to politics also were in perilous situations during historical transitions. The sight of his friend's residence thus made Wu Weiye think about Wu Changshi's lot, and about his own.

Spring Rain over South Lake thus demonstrates that place was the most important factor that allowed Wu Weiye to pictorially capture memories of his deceased friend. But by adopting a particular style for *Spring Rain over South Lake* that immediately evoked the southeast of China, place figures also in an additional dimension into this painting. Wu Weiye applied long, horizontally placed wet texture strokes to formulate his vision of the watery landscapes of Jiaxing.⁶ This manner of depicting the southern landscapes had a long tradition in painting going back to the tenth-century painter Dong Yuan. Later, it was resurrected by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322) (cf. figs. 3.2 and 3.3). In the late Ming, this southern regional flavor was again revived by artists such as Zhao Zuo 趙左 (ca. 1570s–1633 or later) and Yang Wencong (cf. figs. 3.4 and 3.5). If compared to other works by Wu Weiye, it is apparent that the artist must have used the idiom deliberately to refer to the specific southern landscapes of Jiaxing. For example in *Landscape*, which he painted “on a clear summer day in the capital” (*Chang'an qingxia xiesi* 長安清夏寫似) for his friend and colleague Cheng

⁶ Overall, the painting strongly recalls Dong Qichang's approach of combining different art-historical styles in a “great synthesis” (*dacheng* 大成). This is fitting since Wu Weiye is counted among the followers of Dong Qichang.

Zhengkui, Wu also used a historical style—but this time that of Huang Gongwang.⁷

Although Wu Weiye's surviving painterly oeuvre is limited, it appears that he was mostly interested in painting in Huang Gongwang's style – the pinnacle of orthodox taste in the early Qing. While Dong Yuan's style, which Wu Weiye used so prominently in *Spring Rain over South Lake*, also counted among the appropriate models to follow if one was an adherent to the art-historical canon set up by Dong Qichang, Wu's 1652 painting signals that style had a broader connotation for the artist. Mandarin Duck Lake was a concrete place in southeastern China. Both the employed style and the pictorial elements show that the connotations of place played an important role for Wu Weiye and allowed him to remember his deceased friend Wu Changshi by means of his landscape painting *Spring Rain over South Lake*.

More specifically, artists of the early Qing also used the possibilities of the landscape genre to remember family members by depicting their home mountains. The work of the Anhui-based painter Dai Benxiao is one example. In a leaf from an album to which the calligrapher Fu Shan 傅山 (1607–1684) later contributed by inscribing the leaves opposite of the paintings, Dai painted an empty mountain hut protected by autumnal trees and standing in front of a geomantically advantageously placed mountain (fig. 3.6). The short poem inscribed in the upper left corner of the painting reads:

⁷ For this painting, otherwise unpublished, see the Digital Collection of the Palace Museum in Beijing, <https://digicol.dpm.org.cn/cultural/details?id=158409> (last accessed March 7, 2022).

巨石若崇冠，
霜林如列綵。
此中人著書，
千秋應有待。

Giant rocks are like lofty caps,
Frosted groves are like colorful silk.
Amidst it all, a person writes a book.
There is something to be expected in the next thousand years.

The poem harks back to the idea of perpetuating one's name through the act of writing which might be appreciated only long time after the death of the author. Such an idea had been articulated for example in the biography of Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 BC) contained in the *Book of Han*, which records the historian as saying about his *Records (Shiji 史記)*: “When I have completed this work, I shall deposit it in the Famous Mountain. If [by doing so] it is handed down to men who will appreciate it and penetrates to the villages and great cities, then even if I have to suffer a thousand mutilations, what regret should I have” 僕誠已著此書，藏之名山，傳之其人通邑大都，則僕償前辱之責?⁸ With his poem, Dai Benxiao evokes the image of the outsider Sima Qian—for the latter had been punished to be castrated and, because of his mutilation, was disrespected among his peers—and portrays himself as an individual living away from society whose deeds cannot be appreciated by his own generation. The image of reclusion is mirrored in the painting by the isolated mountain hut.

But while Dai Benxiao's painting foremost appears to be a lament about his own lot, the artist also left a prominent red seal on the painting that reads “Woodcutter from Mount Ying'e” (“Ying'e shan qiao” 鷹阿山樵). The size of the seal—larger than any of the

⁸ Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 2735; translation in Burton Watson, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 66. Recently, a detailed scholarly discussion of the letter has (again) questioned the authenticity of the letter; see Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, Michael Nylan, and Hans van Ess, *The Letter to Ren An and Sima Qian's Legacy* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2016), 8-9.

inscribed characters—indicates that its impression is an important part of the pictorial space and composition. “Woodcutter from Mount Ying’e” was one of Dai Benxiao’s sobriquets and appears as a seal impression on a large number of Dai Benxiao’s surviving paintings.⁹

The Hezhou Gazetteer (*Hezhou zhi* 和州志) reports:

Mount Ying’e lies forty *li* to the northwest of the prefecture’s [capital Hezhou]; its topographical features are towering and precipitous. In the mountain’s recesses, eagles and falcons often fly in flocks; Dai Wuzhan [Dai Benxiao] of the Ming came here to flee bandits; his sobriquet was “Woodcutter from Mount Ying’e.”

鷹阿山，州西北四十里，形勢聳峭，山坳常有鷹隼飛集，明戴務旃避賊於此，號鷹阿山樵。¹⁰

While the choice of the word “woodcutter” (*qiao* 樵) indicates again a state of reclusion—woodcutters and fishermen are the quintessential image of the recluse—a singular focus on Dai Benxiao’s reclusion risks to conceal the importance of Mount Ying’e as a place of memory for the artist.¹¹ Why did Dai seek reclusion specifically at Mount Ying’e? Dai Benxiao hailed from Hezhou (Anhui province) and his family owned land at nearby Mount Ying’e. Dai Benxiao’s father Dai Zhong 戴重 (1602–1646), a famous Ming loyalist and official at the court of the short-lived Southern Ming dynasty installed at Nanjing after the

⁹ The *Signatures and collector and artist seals of China* records seven other works with seals that refer to Mount Yinga; see Shanghai bowuyuan 上海博物院, ed., *Zhongguo shuhua jia yinjian kuanzhi* 中國書畫家印鑒款識 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987, 2013), 1542-1543.

¹⁰ Zhu Dashen 朱大紳, ed., *Zhili Hezhou zhi* 直隸和州志, *juan* 4, 2b, in Beijing Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, ed., *Zhongguo fangzhi ku* 中國方志庫 (Beijing: Beijing Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2011) [hereafter: ZGFZK].

¹¹ The woodcutter, along with the fisherman, is a standard image employed to signify a recluse that goes back at least to the Yuan dynasty. For a discussion, see James I. Crump, “Tales by Woodsman for the Fisher’s Ear,” in *Songs from Xanadu: Studies in Mongol-Dynasty Song-Poetry (San-ch’ü)* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1983), 81-105.

fall of Beijing in 1644, had ordered his son to look after the family plots before committing suicide by self-starvation, also at Mount Ying'e, in 1646.¹² The trauma caused by this paternal suicide can be gauged from the explanation that Dai Benxiao provided in his poetry collection that consists of two parts, the “Draft of Poetry from my Former Life” (“Qiansheng shi gao” 前生詩稿) and the “Draft of Poetry from my Remaining Life” (“Yusheng shi gao” 餘生詩稿). The former contains poems Dai had written before turning 45 *sui*, while the latter contains the poems written after that date. In his own preface (*zixu* 自序), Dai noted:

Alas! This year, I have also reached [the age of] 45 *sui*. This is exactly the age at which my father passed away.¹³ This makes tears flow down my face in abundance. I choke so much that I cannot speak. When reflecting on what I have lived through for the past twenty years, neither to die nor to live would be an appropriate choice. Sometimes I shouldered firewood in remote valleys, sometimes I worked as a teacher in a village school. Sometimes I made a living by writing, and at other times I made do in market taverns. As for the day of birth or the year of death, I, a despondent person, no longer have a frame of reference.

嗟！予以是歲條亦四十五年矣，與先君子易簣之期適同，不覺涕頤如瀚，哀哽不能言。痛思二十年來，身世所涉，死生究無一當。或負薪窮谷，或傭書村塾，賣文為活，溷跡市屠。生之日，死之年，悵悵乎不知其何從也？¹⁴

This excerpt from Dai Benxiao's own preface spells out that in 1666, twenty years after Dai Zhong's suicide, the trauma was unforgotten and continued to have lasting effects on Dai.

¹² Nishigami Minoru 西上實, “Dai Benxiao yanjiu” 戴本孝研究, in *Anhui sheng wenxue yishu yanjiusuo* 安徽省文學藝術研究所, ed., *Lun Huangshan zhu huapai wenji* 論黃山諸畫派文集, translated by Ruan Rongchun 阮榮春 (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1987), 121. Whether the father was buried at Mount Ying'e remains unclear.

¹³ A literal translation would read “when I changed my father's mat;” this is a reference to the story of Confucius's disciple Zengzi 曾子 who, lying on his deathbed, was worried about lying on a mat that was considered ritually not appropriate and therefore ordered Zichun 子春 to change it. For a translation of this story, see Michael David Kaulana Ing, *The Dysfunction of Ritual in Early Confucianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 200-201.

¹⁴ Quoted from Xu Hongquan 許宏泉, *Dai Benxiao* 戴本孝 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 14.

As the site at which the suicide had occurred, Mount Ying'e must have occupied an important place in Dai's memorial landscape. Since the album was painted in 1678 when Dai Benxiao was again living in Hezhou, the album leaf probably shows his own isolated reclusive place of dwelling on Mount Ying'e.¹⁵ Undoubtedly, Mount Ying'e was a site of deep-seated memories at which Dai Benxiao could think about his father.¹⁶ Through the use of his seal, Dai Benxiao brought the memorial importance of Mount Ying'e into the pictorial realm of his album leaf.

A number of other seals that Dai Benxiao used continuously throughout his life similarly underscore the importance of paternal memory and alter the meaning of his art. After Dai Zhong's suicide, Dai Benxiao had moved to Remote Valley (Tiaotiao gu 迢迢谷) at Mount Ying'e where he erected a Hut for Guarding the Ink Stone (Shouyan an 守硯庵). According to Xu Hongquan, a precious ink stone from the Southern Tang dynasty (937–976) had been passed down in the family as an heirloom that Dai's father had refused to hand over to the notorious Southern Ming official and general Ma Shiying 馬士英 (1591–1647).¹⁷ Frequently found among the surviving works of Dai Benxiao, seals such as "Remote Valley," "Hut for Guarding the Ink Stone," and "Guarding the Ink Stone" ("Shouyan" 守硯) thus equally underscore Dai Benxiao's filial sentiments and highlight the role of memory that found its way into his painterly oeuvre through the use of prominently placed seals.

¹⁵ Cf. Xu Hongquan, *Dai Benxiao*, 71.

¹⁶ In this sense also Nishigami Minoru, "Dai Benxiao yanjiu," 122.

¹⁷ Xu Hongquan, *Dai Benxiao*, 24.

Family remembrances amid the mountains of home

The cases of Wu Weiye and Dai Benxiao alert to the capacity of landscape painting to capture memories of family and friends that were evoked through what at first glance appear to be simple images of “mountains and waters.” Two further early-Qing cases for the making of local landscapes that commemorated family members are Xu Fang and Fa Ruozhen. At least in the case of Xu Fang, it is well known that, after the fall of the Ming, the painter remained in the area around his native Suzhou where he changed residences often until finally settling at his Thatched Hall Upon the Gully (Jianshang caotang 澗上草堂) at Mount Tianping (Tianping shan 天平山) northwest of Suzhou.¹⁸ Scholars have pointed to the close connection of Xu Fang’s ‘home turf’ and his practice of painting landscapes of the Suzhou region.¹⁹

The local landscapes of Suzhou held considerable memorial potential for Xu Fang through which he commemorated private family memoirs. Exemplary for this is the case of Xu Fang’s maternal uncle Wu Mingchu 吳明初 (dates unknown). According to Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866–1940), Wu Mingchu had cared for Xu Fang after the latter’s father, Xu Qian 徐

¹⁸ According to Xu Fang, “‘The Thatched Hut Upon the Gully’ is on the northern side of Mount Tianping and the southern side of Lingyan” 澗上草堂在天平山之陽，靈巖之陰; see Xu Fang, “Jiayin chongjiu denggao ji” 甲寅重九登高記, *Juyitang ji*, 192. Prior to moving to this secluded mountain villa, he had lived at numerous locations in the Suzhou area. The place mostly associated with him is the Qinyuhang Mountain 秦餘杭山 where he lived before moving to his Thatched Hut Upon the Gully; see Fu Yanghua 付陽華, “Qingchu yimin huajia Xu Fang de huihua, jiaoyou yu shenghuo,” 48. Xu Fang appears to have painted a now-lost album of a number of his residences; see Xu Fang, “Yiju shijing tu zan” 移居十景圖贊, *Juyitang ji*, 474-477.

¹⁹ Fu Yanghua 付陽華, “Cong ‘Wuzhai gongzi’ dao ‘Jianshang yimin’: yiyou zhihou Xu Fang de zhusuo, jiaoyou ji huihua” 從「勿齋公子」到「澗上遺民」——乙酉之後徐枋的住所，交遊及繪畫, *Luoyang shifan daxue xuebao* 洛陽師範大學學報 31, no. 6 (June 2012): 113-118; see also Fu Yanghua, “Qingchu yimin huajia Xu Fang de huihua, jiaoyou yu shenghuo,” 44-49.

泚 (1597–1645), had committed suicide in 1645 by drowning himself at the Bridge of Tiger Hill (*Hushan qiao* 虎山橋) in Suzhou as a result of the fall of Nanjing and the defeat of the Ming.²⁰ In the “Record of the Wu family’s mountain residence at Dengwei” (“Wushi Dengwei shanju ji” 吳氏鄧尉山居記), Xu Fang wrote:

The dwelling at Mount Dengwei is the place where my maternal uncle Wu Mingchu resides in reclusion to take care of his mother. ... [Wu Mingchu] previously had said to me: “This place only has a few acres of infertile land. The woods and plants they provide are not enough to pay the governmental tax. [The tax collectors] pursue me every year and even newly produced silk and newly harvested grains are not spared. However, my grandfather and father devoted their talents here and their burial mounds are here. Therefore, I undertake this hardship [of staying here] by myself and hope my children and grandchildren will continue it without cease.” ...

Mountain Dengwei is at the heartland of the Wu region. The place at which my maternal uncle resides possesses the best sceneries of the mountain. Turn to the right of his residence and follow the fence to walk to the west: there are Mounts Tongjing, Qingzhi, Zhenruwu, and Xuanmu. These mountains are interconnected and stretch for dozens of *li*. ... Later, one would see residences dotted with mulberry trees and hemp, which look exactly like the Peach Blossom Spring of Wuling.²¹ ...

When lodging in a scenic place to pass life in unhurried wandering, will one ever realize that one’s existence is in the dusty world? In the past, Ruan Xiaoxu (ca. 479–536) merely encircled it with trees when constructing a Buddhist retreat, while Dai Yong (377–441) assembled some rocks to diverge the river, grew groves of trees, and irrigated them with river water.²² They were remembered by history. How could their deeds compare with that of Mr. Wu Mingchu? [Wu] resides at a famous mountain. All the landscape, springs, flowers, and trees in his environment are the best. This single mountain villa is enough to make him immortal.

After touring his villa in detail, I made a painting of it. After that, I wrote an essay to record it and commemorate father and sons of the Wu family who once had lived

²⁰ Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉, *Xu Sizhai xiansheng nianpu* 徐侯齋先生年譜, in Xu Fang, *Juyitang ji*, 531.

²¹ *Sang ma li* 桑麻里, signifying one’s hometown/village, a reference to Tao Yuanming’s Peach Blossom Spring which, according to the story, was discovered by a fisherman from Wuling (Hunan Province). This is linked to shelter from wars and political chaos, which invests the place of residence of Xu Fang’s uncle with a certain measure of political significance.

²² Ruan Xiaoxu and Dai Yong, two exemplars of filial piety.

here. People who read my essay in the future perhaps will be able to envision these people and this place!

鄧尉山居，為余伯舅吳明初先生隱居養母處也... 先生嘗語余曰：「此地僅有瘠土數畝，樵蘇所給，不償官逋，歲苦追呼，新絲新穀所不能免。然吾祖父埋玉於此，馬鬣之封在焉，吾故獨肩其勞，子孫以之，不敢委也。」...

鄧尉實吳之奧區，而涇陽所居復擅一山之絕，繇宅之右循籬落而西則為銅井，為青芝，為真如塢，為玄墓，羣山透迤，綿亙數十里，... 既而見桑麻里，儼然武陵桃源也。...

夫棲託好佳而優游卒歲，豈復知此身之在塵世哉。昔阮孝緒為精舍，僅以樹環繞，戴顓築室，聚石引水，植林開澗，便垂史策，豈若先生之宅居名山之中，山泉花木，種種極致乎？獨此山墅堪偕其人為不朽矣。

余遊覽既審，遂為之圖，復作記以系之，以志是父是子之所以居之者如此。後之覽余斯文者，其亦有以想見其人其地也夫。²³

Ostensibly a record in which Xu Fang praises his maternal uncle's filial piety, the essay also allows to gauge how remembrances of family members were intimately bound to specific places. For Xu Fang, the desire to remember his relative's deeds and virtues resulted in a painting of the uncle's villa located at Mount Dengwei rather than, for example, a portrait. While this particular painting does not seem to have survived, a hanging scroll entitled *Mount Xuanmu* (*Xuanmu shan tu* 玄墓山圖), dated 1686, exists in the collection of the Seikadō Bunko Art Museum in Tokyo (fig. 3.7). The landscape background of a monumental mountain raising above a temple complex is held in traditional brushwork techniques that Xu Fang applied in his typical refined brushwork. Ostensibly, the artist also made use of the "ruler-painted" (*jiehua* 界畫) technique to depict the orderly arranged

²³ Xu Fang, "Wu shi Dengwei shanju ji" 吳氏鄧尉山居記, *Juyitang ji*, 179-181.

complex of the Sheng'en Temple (Sheng'en si 聖恩寺) situated at the foot of the steeply rising mountain.

The painting's upper third is inscribed with a description of Mount Xuanmu.²⁴ Since this text is part of the "Record of Ten Views of [Mount] Dengwei" ("Dengwei shijing ji" 鄧尉十景記), and since Xu Fang is known to have produced at least one album of the ten views of Mount Dengwei in 1657, *Mount Xuanmu* must have been part of a serial production of images of his home region that stretched over a period of twenty to thirty years.²⁵

Unfortunately, the inscription to *Mount Xuanmu* does not reveal the painting's recipient.

Yet, it allows us to speculate that *Mount Xuanmu* might also carry commemorative meanings through which Xu Fang reflected on his family in subtle ways. In parts it reads: "Among the mountains of Wu [Suzhou], [Mt.] Xuanmu is the most secluded (*pi*) and also the most fantastic (*qi*). Facing Lake [Taihu] with precipitous rocks at [the lake's] bend, its crimson cliffs and turquoise walls look like a screen. It is also called [Mount] Dengwei..."

吳之山惟玄墓最僻，亦最奇。面湖險隩，丹崖翠壁，望之若屏，亦名鄧尉....

In light of Xu's "Record" and his assertion that Mount Xuanmu (Xuanmu shan 玄墓山) is also called Mount Dengwei (Dengwei shan 鄧尉山), the painting likely also carries

²⁴ A text resembling this inscription verbatim at least in its beginning can otherwise be found in Xu Fang, "Dengwei shijing ji" 鄧尉十景記, *Juyitang ji*, 197.

²⁵ For Xu Fang's 1657 album, see Xu Fang 徐枋, "Dengwei huace fuhuai ji" 鄧尉畫冊復還記, *Juyitang ji*, 197-199. Xu Fang also painted other mountains of the Suzhou area in multiple versions, see for example the two paintings *Mount Qinyuhang* 秦餘杭山圖 in a private American collection and the collection of the Anhui Provincial Museum; for a short discussion, see Yunshuang Zhang's catalogue entry in Sturman and Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse*, 216.

memories of the residence of Xu Fang's maternal uncle and of the man. While the painting is showing the Sheng'en Temple—a publicly accessible Buddhist temple that held no particular relation with Xu Fang and his extended family—it is also interesting to note that a band of mist separates the temple from the steep rising mountain behind it. Mist is a classical pictorial convention to indicate and create spatial distance within a painting. Taking into account that architectural rules, based on geomantic beliefs, dictated that a temple be built with a south-north axis, the painting's viewer is looking from the south over the temple complex towards the north. Since in actuality, Mount Xuanmu lies approximately one kilometer to the south of Mount Dengwei, the steeply rising mountain in the background can represent Mount Dengwei which is separated by distancing mists from Mount Xuanmu. In the distance at the foot of what is here identified as Mount Dengwei appears a hip-roofed hall: maybe the mountain villa of Xu Fang's uncle Wu Mingchu. Although speculative in nature, it is possible to read *Mount Xuanmu* as a way to commemorate the mountain villa of Wu Mingchu and, by extension, Xu Fang's maternal uncle.

While Xu Fang left extensive writings that help to elucidate mnemonic functions in his landscape paintings, the role of family remembrance in Fa Ruozhen's art—albeit being an important aspect of his legacy—can only gradually be uncovered by considering the specifics of places and sites and their importance in Fa's mnemonic landscape. A good work to start with is *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains (Chongshan xinglin tu 崇山杏林圖)* which Fa painted in 1683 (fig. 3.8). The painting shows an entirely unpopulated mountain at the foot of which a cluster of trees is growing. There are two additional clusters of trees that grow further in the background, on the river's edge and on the slope

respectively. The painting shows a much more monumentalized composition than *Reclining in the Western Hills* from 1673. Stylistically, it is also very different in that it relies less on the manner of prominent texture strokes that are apparent in *Reclining in the Western Hills* and instead puts emphasis on atmospheric washes, very loose texture strokes, and an ample and prominent use of color. While such characteristics are not representative of his art, Fa Ruozhen explored the possibilities of looser painting techniques and colors in the early 1680s.²⁶

The painting's inscription records the seasonal blooming of apricots that Fa had encountered at Mount Jingtai (Jingtai shan 鏡臺山):

In the third month [of 1683], when I passed by the Zheng family hamlet, I paid my respects at [Mount] Jingtai where hundreds of branches of apricots were in bloom, shimmering between [deep] red and light red. The blossoms appeared among dark and light green [foliage]. Alternately hiding and exposing their glory, they were like brocade covering the mountain...

三月禮鏡臺過鄭氏村莊，杏花約數百根，紅淺紅深身、綠濃綠淡，掩映光輝、錦繡山面...

Indeed, the memory of the full blossoms carried for several months as Fa continues to describe in his inscription:

... For several days this scenery did not leave and lingered in my eyes and wrist. When I withdrew in high summer, sitting upright behind the screen [providing shade], I retired to make this painting. Again, I feel to be among the fragrant

²⁶ Other examples include *Mount Tiantai* (cf. fig. 2.32), *Landscape* (cf. fig. 2.33), both from 1681, and an undated and unpublished album *Landscapes of Four Seasons* (*Shanshui tuce* 山水圖冊) in the collection of the Shandong Provincial Museum in Jinan.

blossoms and the rainy mountain, like on the far-away mountain top of Mount Wu!
The seventy-one *sui* old man Zhen from Yellow Hill.

...數日來眼中、腕中局不能去，抑深暑垂簾兀坐退而為圖，又覺花香山雨在山頭遠巫間，七十一叟黃山真。

The inscription reveals that the painting served Fa for a mind journey, this time back in time to a particular place in Fa's home region. A small mountain to the west of the Small Pearl Mountain (Xiaozhu shan 小珠山), Mount Jingtai is located on the western side of Jiaozhou Bay.²⁷ Activating memories tied to this particular place, the painting reveals that such memories are an important factor for both Fa's poetic inspiration and his artistic work. These memories drew on his experiences of inhabiting the landscapes of home.

A sense of home is further enhanced by Fa's seal reading "Returning Home to the Bends of the Eastern Mountains" ("Guiqu laixi dongshan zhi e" 歸去來兮東山之阿). With the seal's "Eastern Mountains" (*dongshan* 東山) designating Fa's native province Shandong and the invocation of the classical poem "Returning Home" ("Guiqu laixi" 歸去來兮) by Tao Yuanming, the seal reinforces the painting's connotation with the general theme of reclusion at home.²⁸ The seal thus draws attention to Fa's understanding of his painting practice on one level as a means to formulate a desire for a reclusive lifestyle, a subject matter often found in seventeenth-century landscape painting.²⁹ Indeed, nine years before painting

²⁷ In an explanatory note to his poem "Sending a poem to Master Pochen," Fa writes "Mount Jingtai, a mountain of renown, is to the east of Jiaozhou" 鏡臺，山名，在膠州東 (e.g. western side of the Jiaozhou Bay); see Fa Ruzohen, "Ji Pochen daoshi" 寄破塵道士, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 321.

²⁸ Tao Yuanming, "Guiqu laixi" 歸去來兮, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 451-452.

²⁹ See Peter C. Sturman, "The Art of Reclusion," in Sturman and Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse*, 13-49.

Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains, Fa had already spent time at Mount Jingtai. In the third poem of a sequel of six written in 1674 he described himself as a destitute scholar out of work cherishing a life in reclusion at Mount Jingtai:

III.

六月至七月，	From the sixth to the seventh month,
朝暮見南山。	I looked to the southern mountains from morning to evening.
聚散雲空影，	Gathering and fleeting, clouds form heavenly shadows,
陰晴雨欲殷。	Now overcast and now clear, rain is about to give way to thunder.
牧鷄辭吏醉，	Tending to the chickens, I bid farewell to the drunk official,
放豕待門關。	Setting the pigs free, I wait to close the gate.
羊棗壠前樹，	There are jujube trees in front of the grave mound,
依栖不忍刪。	I find shelter here, and bear not to be removed. ³⁰

Echoing the seal on his painting, the poem makes heavily use of the imagery of reclusion popularized by Tao Yuanming in one of his “Twelve Poems on Drinking Wine” (“Yinjiu shi’er shou” 飲酒十二首). Tao’s couplet in question reads: “Picking chrysanthemums under the eastern fence, Leisurely I glance at South Mountain” 採菊東籬下，悠然見南山.³¹ Tao-inspired images of reclusion are further evoked when Fa writes about chickens and pigs moving freely in the courtyard.³² But while the poem was written in 1674 on a temporary

³⁰ Fa Ruozhen, “Jiayin qiye Jingtai shan xiu xinda fumu mu liu shou” 甲寅七月鏡臺山修先大父母墓六首, *Huangshan shiliu*; in *SKCM-ji* 212: 352.

³¹ Tao Yuanming, “Yinjiu shier shou” 飲酒十二首, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 242. Fa Ruozhen must have meant the Larger and Lesser Pearl Mountains to the south of Mount Jingtai, rather than Mount Lu (the “Southern Mountain”) to which Tao Yuanming looked. On the significance of the Eastern Fence in Chinese art, see Susan E. Nelson, “Revisiting the Eastern Fence: Tao Qian’s Chrysanthemums,” *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 3 (September 2001): 437-460.

³² For example, the “sounds of cocks crowing and dogs barking” that can be heard “from one courtyard to the next” (阡陌交通，雞犬相聞), described in Tao Yuanming’s famous “Peach Blossom Spring,” have become a famous literary image of reclusion; see Tao Yuanming, “Taohua yuan ji” 桃花源記, *Tao Yuanming ji jianzhu*, 469; English translation by James Robert Hightower in Victor H. Mair, ed., *The Shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 364.

visit to Jiaozhou, when Fa Ruozhen was visiting from Beijing where he was still waiting to be reinstated, *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* was painted in 1683, three years after he had given up on getting re-employed at the capital and had permanently moved back to Jiaozhou. Therefore, the poem may contain statements about a reclusive life as an alternative to officialdom. However, having given up his hopes for a political career, such a reading is most likely not warranted in the case of *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains*. Nevertheless, the presence of yet another seal affixed to the painting, “Studio of Escape” (“Dunzhai”), opens interpretative possibilities of reclusion. Such a possibility is certainly enhanced by the prominent use of pink blossoms in the painting; despite the fact that Fa meant them to be apricot blossoms, the pink blossoms are also readily associated with peach blossoms and thus bring the legendary reclusive Peach Blossom Spring to mind.

But while *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* decidedly accommodates an interpretation of reclusion as the painting’s theme, the inscription also contains an interesting detail that draws attention to the commemorative importance of Mount Jingtai. Fa’s inscription mentions, “I paid my respects at [Mount] Jingtai.” Employing the word *li* 禮, the inscription emphasized the idea of rituals held or ceremonies conducted at Mount Jingtai. Indeed, Mount Jingtai played an important role in Fa’s memorial landscape. While the traditional burial grounds of the Fa family had initially been located at Cloud Ridge (Yunling 雲嶺) in the Jiaozhou area, the family must have decided to change locations after 1632.³³ When exactly the shift of burial grounds occurred is not clear, but Fa’s parents were

³³ The Fa family seems to have abandoned the family burial grounds at Cloud Ridge which is explained with a violation of the calm of the ancestors that had occurred in 1632: upon one of the times in which the Fa’s had sought safety in the hills south of Jiaozhou, Fa’s father had discovered that a certain Mr. Gao tried to bury his wife on the same grounds. The case was brought to the attention of the local judge who ruled in the favor of the

buried at Mount Jingtai rather than at Cloud Ridge.³⁴ Indeed, in the poem quoted above, Fa Ruozhen mentioned in the last couplet jujube trees in front of a grave mound. The title of the suite of poems written in 1674 at the occasion of the Ghost Festival (Zhongyuan jie 中元節) clearly underlines Mount Jingtai's importance as the parental burial site: "Six poems written in the seventh month of the *jiayin* year [1674] after restoring the graves of my late father and mother at Mount Jingtai" ("Jiayin qiyue Jingtai shan xiu xianda fumu mu liu shou" 甲寅七月鏡臺山修先大父母墓六首).³⁵

In the poem's first line, Fa described having spent an entire month at Mount Jingtai ("from the sixth to the seventh month"). Such a practice evokes the ideal of *lumu* 廬墓, of living at the side of one's ancestors' tombs, which was a renewed practice in seventeenth-century China to demonstrate one's filial piety.³⁶ While Fa did not live there continuously, the line draws attention to the fact that he must have lived at the tomb around the Ghost Festival, when typically offerings are made to the deceased. In the last of the six poems, Fa addressed

Fa's. Nevertheless, damage had been done and the calm of the ancestors had been disturbed; see Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 648.

³⁴ Fa Ruozhen, "Xiaoyi heba ji" 孝義河壩記, *Huangshan ji*, in *QDSWJZBCK* 60: 535.

³⁵ Fa Ruozhen, "Jiayin qiyue Jingtai shan xiu xianda fumu mu liu shou," *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 352. Fa used the terms *xiandafu* 先大父 and *xiandamu* 先大母 idiosyncratically. Rather than designating his grandparents as would have been usual, he referred to his father and his mother. Evidence for this use comes from his *Huangshan ji* in which he spells out that his *xiandafu* is "Tongfeng gong" and his *xiandamu* is called Li (先大父通奉公、先大母李); see Fa Ruozhen, "Xiaoyi heba ji" 孝義河壩記, *Huangshan ji*, in *QDSWJZBCK* 60: 535. He referred to his father as "Tongfeng gong"; see *ibid.*, 60: 545. Fa continued to visit these tombs nearly on a yearly basis, for which poems like "Examining Orchid River [a river on Mount Jingtai] on the 16th day of the seventh month, two poems about my ancestral tombs" (Qiyue shiliu lanhe zhan, zumu er shou 七月十六蘭河展, 祖墓二首) and "On the 13th day of the seventh month offering sacrifices in rain at the parental tombs at Mount Jingtai" (Qiyue shisan yuzhong li Jingtai xiandafumu mushang shi shou 七月十三雨中禮鏡臺先大父母墓上十首) give testimony; see Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 637 and 653-654.

³⁶ Weijing Lu, "Reviving an Ancient Filial Ideal: The 17th-Century Practice of *Lumu* 廬墓," *China Historical Review* 20 (2013): 159-179.

his parents directly: “Coming close and following you, I live at the side of your tombs (*lumu*)” 就從廬墓側. By writing about his practice of living next to the tombs, Fa was promoting his filial piety. With this in mind, *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* is arguably foremost a painting of Fa’s parental burial ground. Such a layer of meaning is easily overlooked since Fa deliberately left out pictorial indicators of a burial site, such as a grave mound or a commemorative stele.

A third seal impression on the painting confirms and highlights the role of the work as a medium of parental commemoration. The affixed seal reads, “The Eldest Son of [Mr.] Happy Cloud, The Teacher of Hundreds” (“Yiyun bozi shi bai” 怡雲伯子師百). Fa here referred to his father’s professional activity as a teacher and used the father’s sobriquet Happy Cloud (Yiyun 怡雲); his seal, affixed to a painting evocative of the family burial grounds, thus confirms how parental memory was intimately bound to Mount Jingtai. The rituals (*li*) that Fa mentioned in his inscription thus designate rituals for his ancestors. Painted in 1683, *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* is therefore best read as a painting that commemorated Fa’s own parents. Hidden behind a layer of apricot blossoms and obvious references to cultural tropes of reclusion, Fa’s painting on a deeper level functions as a marker of family remembrance.

Maternal memories at Yellow Hill

While *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* is the only painting amid Fa’s surviving work that focused on Mount Jingtai, *Reclining in the Western Hills* from 1673 inaugurated a

series of paintings that evoked Yellow Hill (fig. 2.1). Through a composition that remained structurally the same over the course of twenty years, Fa Ruozhen could summon up this small hill in the environs of Jiaozhou while his painting style evolved and he aggrandized the monumentality of the central mountain dramatically.

Yellow Hill was extremely important in Fa Ruozhen's mnemonic landscape. During the last two or three decades of the Ming dynasty, the political, alimentary, and sanitary conditions of the Shandong area markedly deteriorated. In 1622, for example, the White Lotus Rebellions caused misery in Shandong.³⁷ In late 1631, Kong Youde 孔有德 (ca. 1602–1652) launched the Wuqiao Mutiny (Wuqiao bingbian 吳橋兵變) which led to a six-month siege of Laizhou, the capital of the prefecture to which Jiaozhou belonged.³⁸ In 1638, the founding emperor of the Qing dynasty, Hong Taiji 皇太極 (1592–1643), had invaded Zhili 直隸 and Shandong and captured the cities of Jinan and Tianjin 天津.³⁹ Shi Kefa 史可法 (1601–1645) recorded: “Recently, [the Manchus] filled the city of Jinan and killed officials and their

³⁷ Recorded in Susan Naquin, “Connections Between Rebellions: Sect Family Networks in Qing China,” *Modern China* 8, no. 3 (July 1982): 340.

³⁸ After having been ordered by the governor of Denglai (Dengzhou 登州 and Laizhou, Shandong province), Sun Yuanhua 孙元化 (1581–1632), to supply troops from Dengzhou to the northern border of the Ming empire, Kong Youde stopped in Wuqiao and led his mutinying troops back to Dengzhou on the northern littoral of the Shandong peninsula. Here, he turned against Sun Yuanhua and started to besiege Dengzhou on February 11, 1632, over which he wrought control in the matter of days after the defending commander Geng Zhongming 耿仲明 (1604–1649) surrendered the city to Kong Youde. Later, Kong Youde and Geng Zhongming went on to lay siege to the prefectural capital of Laizhou, a siege that took six months and that ended with the retreat of the rebels to Dengzhou; see Christopher S. Agnew, “Migrants and Mutineers: The Rebellion of Kong Youde and Seventeenth-Century Northeast Asia,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52, no. 3 (2009): 525–531. See also Kenneth M. Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty, 1618–44* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2014), 95–103; Huang Yi-Long 黃一農, “Wuqiao bingbian: Ming Qing dingge de yitiao zhongyao daohuoxian” 吳橋兵變：明清鼎革的一條重要導火線, *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 42, no. 1 (March 2012): 79–133.

³⁹ Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 142.

families. It really is to be pitied” 昨山東濟南滿城，官員家眷都殺絕了，真是可憐。⁴⁰ One of the victims appears to have been Fa’s younger brother Fa Ruozhi 法若直, who was on a government stipend in the provincial capital and who died this year.⁴¹ In the winter of 1642-1643, the Manchus overcame the Ming defenses at the Great Wall and again invaded Zhili, Shandong, and even got as far south as northern Jiangsu.⁴² These events indicate the extent to which Ming imperial control over Shandong had declined even before the suicide of the last Ming emperor in 1644. This was further brought to the fore by an increase in marauding gangs that contributed to the general insecurity and chaos.⁴³ Then, in 1644, the troops of Li Zhicheng 李志成 (1606–1645), who had overthrown the Ming dynasty in Beijing, began terrorizing Shandong.⁴⁴

During these tumultuous years in which the socio-political order of Shandong dissolved, the Fas were just one of many gentry families in southeast Shandong to seek safety either in the mountains south of cities such as Zhucheng 諸城, Gaomi 高密, or Jiaozhou that separate

⁴⁰ Shi Kefa 史可法, “Jiashu ba” 家書八, *Shi Zhongzheng gong ji* 史忠正公集, *juan* 3, 8a-b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁴¹ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 652-53.

⁴² Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 157; Kenneth M. Swope, *The Military Collapse of China’s Ming Dynasty*, 170.

⁴³ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 6-7; Brook, *Praying for Power*, 232-233; Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 154-156. Xiaoqiao Ling has shown that memoirs of northerners show a far greater concern with the rebels than with the threat that the Manchu armies posed; see Xiaoqiao Ling, “Re-reading the Seventeenth Century: Ding Yaokang (1599–1669) and His Writings” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010), 27 and 27FN86.

⁴⁴ At the same time, pest and famines plagued Shandong. The historian Ji Yun 紀昀 (1727–1808) recorded the horrors of the 1640 famine in Shandong and Henan provinces that even lead to wide-spread cases of cannibalism; see Ji Yun 紀昀, “Luoyang xiaoxia lu” 洛陽消夏錄, *Yuewei caotang biji* 閱微草堂筆記, *juan* 2, 12a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

these cities from the Yellow Sea, or to take a boat and relocate to off-shore islands.⁴⁵ When Laizhou was under siege by Kong Youde in 1632, the Fas took refuge in the mountain range of Mount Tiequan (Tiequan shan 鐵泉山) south of Jiaozhou.⁴⁶ And when the Manchus invaded Shandong in the winter 1642-1643, the family again retired to the same southern mountain range. An account gives an idea of the traumatic experiences Fa Ruozen and his family faced in these mountains when they encountered the invading Manchus:

In the *renwu* year [1642], ...the Manchu troops penetrated deeply into Shandong. In the south they hunted for the Yellow River and in the north, they captured Deng[zhou] and Lai[zhou]. I assisted my now-late mother, Madame Li, and my now-deceased wife, Mrs. Cui, as well as my two sons to flee south and followed my office-holding father. When we encountered the [Manchu] troops on the southern flank of Mt. Tie[quan], the roads were filled with the local population, who numbered in the ten-thousands. Everybody was going [to the mountains] to hide and we entered the mountain villa of the Yangs. No sooner had we got off the cart when soldiers arrived and we presented the horses and donkeys [to them to barter for survival]. We gathered our strength and escaped to the attic where we plotted how to live under deteriorating conditions. By chance, I went down to the troop ramparts and was caught. This was the 13th day of the 12th lunar month. They peeled away my cloths and tied a knife to my back, and added on to the nape of my neck and pressed it against the skin of my head. After I received the [blow of the] knife, my blood dripped just like rain. It was a pain like no other. My mother and my now-deceased wife were upstairs where they were crying. In order to ransom me, they let clothes and jade earrings as well as precious clothes fall down. Like this, I escaped death.

壬午...我朝大兵深入山東，南狩黃河，北獵登萊。予奉先母李太夫人、亡室崔氏，兩子南下，將從先大夫任。遇大兵於鐵山之陽，土民載道者，數萬計，皆卻走，乃避，入上莊楊氏。甫下車，兵至，獻馬驢去，合力遁樓上，圖苟活。偶諛入兵壘，獲之。是在十二月十三日，剝衣背縛，刃加於項，迫於膚頂，受一刀，血瀝如雨，不知其痛也。先太夫人與亡室哭樓上，悉墜衣、珥，贖之，得不死。⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Drawing on Ding Yaokang's *A Brief Record of the Escape from Calamity* (*Chujie jilue* 出劫記略), Timothy Brook gives an account of what happened in late-Ming coastal southeast Shandong; see Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 240-44.

⁴⁶ Fa Ruozen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 647.

⁴⁷ Fa Ruozen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 654-655.

The account shows that Fa's survival in these events had depended on his mother and wife, who had to give away precious earrings and clothes in exchange for Fa's life. Described as having occurred on Mount Tiequan, Fa here meant the general term for a range of mountains south of Jiaozhou encompassing also Mount Song (Song shan 松山), and Yellow Hill.

Indeed, in a long preface (*xu* 序) to "Four Poems Written for the Completion of the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds" ("Ciyun an cheng sishou" 慈雲庵成四首), Fa explains that it was Yellow Hill where he experienced the aforementioned traumatic events:

I constructed the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds on the eastern bank of the river on Yellow Hill. Water scoured the old shore, sand was washed away, and field ridges changed. Among some deserted fences and cottages is a newly ploughed field circled by willow trees. This is the place in Yellow Hill where seventeen years ago I escaped death.⁴⁸ In the upheavals of the *renwu* year [1642], when mountains and rivers were about to change, I had fled the war by escaping to Mount Tie[quan], carrying my mother on the back. Yet my head was wounded (*chuang*⁴⁹) with a weapon and I was captured. My mother took out some jade pendants and redeemed me; that is how I survived. I and my mother hugged each other and cried bitterly—the sound of our sorrow made the mountains tremble. My mother slowly said: "I am old and only have one son. I vow to become a nun [lit.: hold a long vegetarian fast] to express my gratitude towards the mountains' kindness for saving us from death." Alas—how time flies! How these seventeen years have passed by quickly!

I have been sincerely talking about this land and bought several acres of fields on this mountain. Every time I have a meal I cannot forget where I was captured because I do not want to forget how many years my aged mother has been keeping a vegetarian diet. My mother is now 73 *sui* old but when am I going to recompense her labor? Together we will hold a vegetarian fast for a long time. Therefore, I

⁴⁸ The poem is included in the entries for 1655 of Fa's chronologically ordered poetry collection; seventeen years ago would thus refer to 1638 and not to 1642 when he had been wounded by the Qing troops. However, the following sentence makes it clear that he was writing about the *renwu* year [1642] and not about occurrences in 1638. A likely explanation is that the poem was incorrectly printed in the *juan* containing poems from 1655 and should actually be inserted into the one containing poems from 1659; this makes sense given that Fa repeats the number seventeen further down in the preface, thus ruling out the possibility of a printing error.

⁴⁹ The character *chuang* 刃 used in the text stands for *chuang* 創.

constructed this small chapel as my residence. Let me devote myself to take the Buddhist tonsure and to replace my mother in her vegetarian fast. In this way I can live through the rest of my life. I have found monk Dingxian [unidentified] from whom I can ask [advice] on how to convert. From now on, I will seek refuge in the temple and recite sutras, and I will tend to my readings and pay respect to my mother. Loving the way the white clouds hover above and in admiration of the great mercy of the other river bank I name this the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds.

慈雲庵，築於黃山河之東厓。水圯古岸，沙走畝遷；離舍落落，柳圍新鋤。此十七年前黃山不死處也。壬午大變，山河將改。予負老母避兵鐵山。兵接刃予腦，受縛。母出珮資贖，生還。子母抱哭，哀動山響。徐曰：「我年老，只一兒。既不死，願長齋以酬山岳恩」。嗟乎日月！幾何已十七年矣。

倦言此土，置數畝山田。每食不能忘昨受縛處，乃不能忘老母持齋之年也。今老母七十有三，劬勞何報？偕素長天，卜築小庵。舍身剃度，代母受齋，了此百年。得僧定憲可問皈依。自此投庵唄梵，趨闕定省。戀白雲之依依、顧大悲於彼岸。乃名其庵曰「慈雲」。⁵⁰

This account speaks to what historian Timothy Brooks has called the “male world” of patronage in which a male relative presented himself as building a construction “undertaken in deference to the wishes of his female relatives.”⁵¹ But more than this, the preface clearly establishes Yellow Hill as a place of particular importance in Fa Ruozen’s mnemonic landscape. Its importance is both a result of the traumatic events of the dynastic transition and a feeling of guilt for not having appropriately recompensed his mother’s deeds that allowed his own survival. By 1659, when Fa Ruozen built the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds (Ciyun an 慈雲庵) at Yellow Hill and commemorated its construction with the preface and a suite of four poems, Fa’s mother had lived seventeen years in the mountains. With its commitment to “holding a vegetarian fast” (*xiesu* 偕素) and “taking the Buddhist

⁵⁰ Fa Ruozen, “Ciyun an cheng sishou (you xu)” 慈雲庵成四首有序, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 230-231.

⁵¹ Brooks, *Praying for Power*, 188.

tonsure” (*sheshen tidu* 舍身剃度), the text carries obvious Buddhist overtones. At the same time, the text also attests to Fa’s feelings of filial piety towards his mother. This is clearly spelled out when Fa wants to “pay respect to my mother” (*dingxing* 定省), referring to the daily matinal and nocturnal practice of greeting one’s parents.⁵² Interestingly, Fa also mentions that he obtained a copy of the *Classic of Filial Piety*, presumably to be placed in the temple: “From my respected old Chan master, I have obtained selected canonical sutras and a copy of the *Classic of Filial Piety* and will be lecturing to the myriad beings about the Mahāyāna (the most supreme Vehicle, *wushang cheng*) 得尊老禪師檢大藏並孝經一部, 與衆生說無上乘.⁵³

These accounts convey Fa’s remembrance of traumatic events, the joy of survival, and a sense of incurred debts towards his mother. Importantly, the preface establishes Yellow Hill as an important place in Fa’s mnemonic landscape. Scholars and philosophers have emphasized the importance that both body and place have for memory,⁵⁴ leading Janet

⁵² The expression *dingxing* refers to the saying *chenhun dingxing* 晨昏定省, meaning “to pay respect to one’s parents from morning to evening.”

⁵³ Fa Ruozhen, “Ciyun an cheng sishou (you xu)” 慈雲庵成四首有序, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 231. With its strong mixing of the traditional Confucian concept of filial piety with the idea, articulated in the text, of retribution and accumulation of goodness to repay for his mother’s acts, the preface testifies to the “religious dimensions” that the *Classic of Filial Piety* had developed in the late Ming under thinkers like Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙 (1553–1621). For a discussion, see Miaw-fen Lu, “Religious Dimension of Filial Piety as Developed in Late Ming Interpretations of the *Xiaojing*,” *Late Imperial China* 27, no. 2 (December 2006): 1–37; see also Lu Miaw-fen 呂妙芬, “Zuowei yishixing wenben de Xiaojing: Ming-Qing shiren *Xiaojing* shijian de ge’an yanjiu” 作為儀式性文本的孝經：明清士人孝經實踐的個案研究, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 60 (June 2008): 1–24.

⁵⁴ According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), lived experiences are intrinsically bound up with places, thus stressing the importance of the body as a link to the world, an “anchorage in a world”; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Donald A. Landes (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 23; 146. The subjective and lived aspects of place were also stressed by Yi-Fu Tuan in his *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945) drew attention to the importance of place in the act of remembrance; see Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, critical edition by Gérard Namer (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997), 51.

Donohoe to speak of the “implacement” of memory.⁵⁵ From Fa’s preface it is evident that his implaced memories of traumatic events, survival, and incurred debts towards his mother were clearly significant for the artist.

A painting like *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* (fig. 2.18) does not describe Fa’s narrative of ransom and rescue and eschews the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds. However, it implies through an unstated subtext and the use of an iconography of clouds that Fa was reflecting on these events and remembered his mother. In 1684, one year after *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains*, Fa painted *Cloudy Mountains*, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York (fig. 2.7). The ravines and gorges in *Cloudy Mountains* are filled with white clouds which stands in some contrast to earlier paintings like *Reclining in the Western Hills*. The painting’s inscription in the lower right corner is laconic, reading “In mid-autumn of the *jiazi* year [1684], the Old Man from Yellow Hill inscribed this at the age of seventy-two [*sui*]” 甲子仲秋，黃山老人七十二歲識. The impressed seals are equally concise: “Seal of Fa Ruozen” (“Fa Ruozen yin” 灑若真印) and “Yellow Stone” (“Huangshi” 黃石).

Together with *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* from a year earlier, *Cloudy Mountains* marks an evolution of Fa’s painting style in which he started to move away from

Exploring the interrelations between place and memory, Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) spoke of the importance of place as helping humans to position themselves; see Paul Ricœur, *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000), 49; translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 41.

⁵⁵ Janet Donohoe, *Remembering Places: A Phenomenological Study of the Relationship between Memory and Place* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, and London: Lexington Books, 2014), 1.

the modes of Dong Yuan and Juran and began to experiment with the fluidity and transformability of rock and mountain forms. In the early 1680s, Fa developed a very personal style that consists of brush strokes done in a diagonally upward manner. These brush strokes allowed him to give his painted rock formations a floating effect. In both *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* and *Cloudy Mountains*, the mountains appear to transform into clouds floating towards the upper right corner of the respective painting. *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* and *Cloudy Mountains* stand at the beginning of a stylistic evolution that would become Fa's later trademark: seemingly dissolving the material substance barrier between rocks and clouds by rhythmically patterning his rocks so that these appear like floating clouds.

In Chinese culture, clouds are often considered auspicious symbols. Sima Qian for example wrote: "Like mist but not mist, like clouds but not clouds. Dark and billowing. Chilly and swirling. These are called auspicious clouds" 若煙非煙，若雲非雲，郁郁紛紛，蕭索輪囷，是謂卿雲.⁵⁶ As harbingers of either life-spending rain or destructive downpours, clouds were a recognized metaphor in seventeenth-century painting that allowed paintings to take on political meanings. Jonathan Hay, for example, has identified rain in the work of Shitao as a means to reflect on the fall of the Ming and the subsequent rise of the Qing dynasty.⁵⁷ Similarly, James Cahill has interpreted Fa Ruozhen's *clouds* as *rain* and thus as auspicious motifs. Reading Fa's landscapes in connection with his willingness to serve the Qing, Fa's cloud iconography led Cahill to the conclusion that these paintings were not "the

⁵⁶ Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 1339.

⁵⁷ Jonathan Hay, "Shitao's Late Work (1697–1707): A Thematic Map" (PhD Diss., Yale University 1989), 429-30, no. 55.

Chinese scholars' response to the shock of the Manchu conquest,' but rather portray[] a landscape undergoing regeneration through healing rain."⁵⁸ By doing so, both James Cahill and Jonathan Hay read and analyzed cloud iconography employed by early Qing literati artists on the national level of the interpretative spectrum that landscapes offer. But clouds can also have other meanings and do not necessarily have to be read in these broad political terms. Tamara Bentley has drawn attention to clouds' function as a sexual metaphor when they are pierced by rain.⁵⁹ Robert Harrist has traced their potential to symbolize the recluse.⁶⁰ And Peter Sturman has emphasized how clouds, flying this way and the other, signified mobility and ambition in the work of Mi Youren.⁶¹

The case of Fa Ruozhen provides an interesting example to explore the function of clouds as a marker for family remembrance. *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* and *Cloudy Mountains* were both painted *after* he had given up hope to find re-employment in the state's administration and had moved back to Jiaozhou and had settled at Yellow Hill. While this does not preclude that Fa used his paintings to reflect on his relationship with the Qing administration, it seems highly questionable if images evocative of his home ultimately explored only his relation with the state.

⁵⁸ Cahill, "Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen."

⁵⁹ Tamara H. Bentley, "Authenticity and the Expanding Market in Chen Hongshou's Seventeenth-Century Printed Playing Cards," *Artibus Asiae* 69, no. 1 (2009): 152 and 152FN25.

⁶⁰ Harrist, *Painting and Private Life*, 102.

⁶¹ Sturman, "Mi Youren and the Inherited Literati Tradition," 1: 240-246; Peter C. Sturman, "Distant Peaks, Clearing Clouds by Mi Youren," in Shanghai bowuguan 上海博物館, ed., *Qiannian danqing* 千年丹青 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2010), 039-040.

Indeed, the cloud iconography of Fa's *Cloudy Mountains* is a visual counterpart to the aforementioned preface to the "Four Poems Written for the Completion of the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds." The preface made clear that clouds played a particular mnemonic importance: Fa had built the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds for his mother. Clouds were thus brought together with compassion, *ci* 慈. But the word *ci* not only means compassion; it also commonly refers to the affection of a mother for her child or, more broadly, to parental love; in modern Chinese it also can designate one's mother directly (in modern Chinese, *jiaci* 家慈 stands for one's own mother). As art historian Yuhang Li explains: "Compassion is intimately related to the mother image in Chinese culture."⁶² That accumulating clouds at Yellow Hill reminded Fa of his mother is further substantiated in the suite of four poems that follow the preface:

<p>I. 萬畝黃山萬畝雲， 雲臥慈崖受渡津。 貝葉全消不死淚， 蓮花度出再生身。 不須揭諦河干偈， 願作逍遙世外臣。</p>	<p>Ten thousand acres at Yellow Hill, ten thousand acres of clouds, Clouds recline by the cliffs of compassion by the Fort of Receiving [Deliverance].⁶³ [Sutras written on] palmyra leaves completely dried the tears of the undying,⁶⁴ Lotus flowers reincarnated the reborn body. [I] do not need the [Heart Sutra] <i>gatha</i> from the shores of the Ganges, And am content with being a subject leisurely wandering in the realm beyond.</p>
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⁶² Yuhang Li, *Becoming Guanyin: Artistic Devotion of Buddhist Women in Late Imperial China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 11.

⁶³ General reference to the idea of crossing the river of cyclic existence for obtaining nirvana.

⁶⁴ *Beiyè* 貝葉 are leaves of the palmyra palm tree which were used instead of paper by monks for recording Buddhist sutras.

但得明年春雨足，
遶庵多種幾千椿。

If the rain is sufficient next spring,
I will plant many more cedrelas to encircle the
temple.⁶⁵

II.

萬畝黃山雲影屯，
千年繚繞大慈恩。
承歡諸子皆極樂，
無病長生第一尊。
颯踏香飛雨欲散，
婆娑枝結月無根。
偏嫌山夜鐘聲遠，
錯認他家祇樹園。

Ten thousand acres at Yellow Hill, shadows of clouds
pile up,
For thousands of years, they have been coiling around
the [Temple of] Great Kindness and Grace.⁶⁶
All those who serve [the Buddha/my mother] have
[ascended to] the Land of Bliss,⁶⁷
The one who is free from disease and [enjoys]
longevity ranks first.
Brimming and exuberant, the [smokes of] incense float
and rainy [clouds] are about to disperse,
Dancing and swaying, rootless branches interlock
before the moon.
I only regret that bells' sounds travel distant in night
mountains,
[Making me] mistake our temple as the temple of other
families.⁶⁸

III.

萬畝雲飛入我籬，
慈顏遶膝欲垂垂。

Ten thousand acres of clouds fly into my fences,
Loving face [of my mother in front of me], [offspring]
circling around my knees, I am gradually getting old.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Reference to the *Zhuangzi*, where the cedrela (*chun* 椿) is a legendary, white-flowering plant that counted 8000 years as one springtime, and 8000 years as one autumn; the plant is therefore a symbol for longevity; see Liu Wendian, *Zhuangzi buzhen*, 10; for an English translation, see Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, 2; Watson translated *chun* as the “great rose of Sharon.”

⁶⁶ The monastery of Great Kindness and Grace 大慈恩寺 in Chang'an, built by emperor Taizong's crown prince in 648, where the monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (fl. 602–664) lived and where he built his famous 200 feet high pagoda in which scriptures brought back from his trips to India were stored. Here used as a general reference to designate Buddhist temples, in particular Fa's own temple in Jiaozhou.

⁶⁷ Land of Bliss (Sanskrit: *sukhāvātī*; Chinese: *jile* 極樂) is the name of the Pure Land of Amitābha in Mahayana Buddhism.

⁶⁸ *Qiyuan* 祇園, a reference to Qiyuan 祇洹, a sacred place of dwelling of the historical Buddha in the ancient Indian kingdom of Kosala (ca. 7th–5th century BCE). The term became an antonomasia for Buddhist temples.

⁶⁹ The translation of this line poses some problems. Circling around the knee (*raoxi* 遶膝) should be a variation on the idea that parents have children at their knees (*xixia* 膝下), since children are small when “circling” around the knees of adults, the children here in question should be small and thus cannot refer to Fa Ruozhen as a son. The last three characters are translated as “I am gradually getting old”; *yu* has been translated here as “about to” or “gradually.” While the compound *chuichui* usually also has the meaning “gradually,” it has here been read as an abbreviated form of *chuichui laoyi* 垂垂老矣 derived from Du Fu's “A Companion Piece to a

編蓬土壁白毫見，	Pleated thatch, earthen walls, the White-Curled-One appears, ⁷⁰
鑿圃山蔬紅雨吹。	Carved-out garden, mountain vegetables, crimson rain blows. ⁷¹
戰血苔封千載後，	For moss to seal over spilt blood of war takes a millennium,
禪心秋老百年期。	But developing a Buddhist mind mature like autumn takes only a hundred years.
却憐麋鹿啖枯草，	I pity the <i>milu</i> deer feeding on withered grasses,
乞得君王賜大悲。	And beg for the Emperor's bestowal of great pity.

IV.

萬畝雲飛覆我牆，	Ten thousand acres of clouds fly to cover my walls,
飛來飛去挽慈航。	Flying back and forth, [clouds] pull the Compassionate Ferry.
百年繫綵時猶短，	One hundred years [for pleasing one's parents by] knotting colorful clothes are a short time, ⁷²
一日違顏夢漸長。	My dreams [of my mother] grow longer if I do not see her face for a day.
合手鷺峯金作粒，	Joining palms at Cormorant Peak where grains are made of gold, ⁷³

Poem Sent Me by Pei Di, 'Climbing to the East Pavilion of Shuzhou to Send Off a Traveler, Coming Upon Early Plum Blossoms and Thinking of You'" (He Pei Di deng Shuzhou dongting song ke, feng zaomei xiangyi jian ji 和裴迪登蜀州東亭送客逢早梅相憶見寄), where the corresponding couplet reads: "My one tree here by the river is gradually blossoming, / day and night it makes my hair grow white still faster" 江邊一樹垂垂發，朝夕催人白頭; for the poem and its translation see Owen, trans., *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 2: 338-339. At the same time, it may refer to the descending clouds.

⁷⁰ The white *urnā* or *urnākośa* curl (Chinese: *baihao* 白豪), the thirty-first mark of the Buddha, a spiral dot on the forehead between the eyebrows of the Buddha often interpreted as a third eye and said to emit light. Fa seems to imply that the building resembles the Buddha's *urnā*.

⁷¹ Crimson rain (*hong yu* 紅雨) can refer to falling peach petals in a nod to the poem "Bring in the Wine" (*Jiang jin jiu* 將進酒) by Li He 李賀 (791–817); Li He's couplet in question reads: "More than ever now, as the green spring nears its evening, / And peach flowers scatter like crimson rain!" For this translation, see A.C. Graham, trans., *Poems of the Late T'ang* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), 102. The translation above reads 'crimson rain' as an oblique reference to Fa Ruozhen's own bloody injury at the hands of the Manchus in 1642 which he mentioned in the preface to this poem; such a reading is further substantiated by the following couplet.

⁷² Refers to the story of Lao Laizi 老萊子 from the kingdom of Chu 楚 (613–591 BCE) during the time of the Spring and Autumn Period (ca. 771–476), said to have been extremely filial; at the age of seventy, he still wore colored cloths to make his parents laugh; later the saying came to refer to filial piety and pious behavior as is attested by idioms like *cayiqin* 綵衣娛親 (donning colorful clothes to amuse one's parents) and *xicai yuqin* 戲彩娛親 (playing in colorful clothes to amuse one's parents). For the story of Lao Laizi, see the comment by Zhao Po 趙岐 to the *Mencius*; Meng Zi 孟子, *Mengzi* 孟子, *juan* 9, 3a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁷³ While Fa Ruozhen's poem reads Cormorant Peak (*cifeng* 鷺峯), it is most likely meant as a reference to Vulture Peak (*jiufeng* 鷲峰). Burton Watson translates *jiufeng* as Eagle Peak, see Burton Watson, trans., *The*

舍身琪苑玉分香。 為依鐘磬回山影， 敲惹晨昏滿地霜。	Devoting life to the Gem Garden where jades disperse fragrance. ⁷⁴ In order to lean on the echoes of bells and drums returning from the mountains, I tap and perturb frost on the ground in the mornings and evenings. ⁷⁵
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While the poems' overall tone has clearly a Buddhist context, they also focus on Fa Ruozhen's own relationship with his mother. For example, the cedrelas (*chun* 椿) that Fa promises to grow in the first poem also can symbolize one's parents.⁷⁶ In the second poem, the line *chenghuan zhuzi jie jile* 承歡諸子皆極樂 is translated as "All those who served [the Buddha] have [ascended to] the Land of Bliss" because the Land of Bliss designates the Buddhist paradise. However, the compound *chenghuan* usually does not mean to serve the Buddha but to please one's parents. Accordingly, the line can also be translated, "All those who serve [my mother] will [ascend to] the Land of Bliss." In the third poem, Fa is thinking about his own process of getting gradually old while having his mother's "loving face" in front of him – in the context of this suit of poems, this line makes only sense if one recalls that Fa's mother had saved his life in 1642 and therefore only made it possible that Fa could

Lotus Sutra (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), xvi. According to a search on the database *Zhongguo jiben guji ku*, Fa Ruozhen appears to be the only person to have ever used the term *cifeng*. Vulture Peak (Sanskrit: Gridhrakūta), a mountain in Rajgir, Bihar, India, a famous Buddhist pilgrimage site where the Buddha has trained disciples and taken refuge.

⁷⁴ While Fa Ruozhen's poem reads Gem Garden (*qiyuan* 琪苑), it is likely that he actually referred to the Jetavana, or Jeta's Grove (Chinese: *qiyuan jingshe* 祇園精舍), a *vihara* (facility for dwelling) located in the suburbs of Śrāvastī, the capital of Kosala, donated to Gautama Buddha by the wealthy merchant Sudatta; see Nagao Gadjin and Mark L. Blum, "The Life of the Buddha: An Interpretation," *The Eastern Buddhist* 20, no. 2 (Autumn 1987): 25. This is the same Qiyuan already mentioned in the second poem above.

⁷⁵ Fa Ruozhen, "Ciyun an cheng sishou (you xu)" 慈雲庵成四首有序, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 230-31.

⁷⁶ The Ming official Jin Shi 金實 (fl. early 15th century) for example writes: "Cedrelas and lilies designate one's father and mother" 指父母為椿萱者; see Jin Shi 金實, "Chunxuantang ji" 椿萱堂記, *Juefeizhai wenji* 覺非齋文集, *juan* 11, 4b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

grow old. This is further enhanced by the “crimson rain” mentioned in the third poem which can metaphorically refer to his own blood spilled at Yellow Hill in 1642 where he now was cultivating vegetables. Fa confirms such a reading when he says that bloodshed cannot be forgotten within “a thousand years.” Fa’s own filial behavior towards his mother is again expounded on in the fourth poem before he turns his attention to important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India to underscore the sincerity of his religious beliefs that are intertwined with his Confucian filial piety.

These four poems attest to the complex relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism in seventeenth-century China. Confucian orthodoxy dictated the primary importance of the patrilineal lineage and paid little attention to a son’s mother. This overly patrilinear value system had started to be questioned by Buddhist thinkers prior to the early sixth century. Alan Cole has drawn attention to the fact that “Buddhist writers challenged this arrangement by redefining filial piety so that it reflected the importance of the mother-son relationship.”⁷⁷ What Cole termed the “Buddhist version of filial piety,” introduced “a new complex of sin, guilt, and indebtedness into the family” in which especially sons were asked to “feel indebted to their mothers for a range of kindness (*en* [恩]) received in infancy, including the kindness of giving birth (*huai en* [懷恩]) and the kindness of breast-feeding (*ru bu zhi en* [乳哺之恩]).”⁷⁸ Such a sense of guilt was already apparent in Fa’s preface and is further spelled out in the poems itself.

⁷⁷ Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

It is significant that all four poems extolling his mother's deeds and Fa's own filial behavior start with an imagery of clouds at the temple at Yellow Hill. Whether it is the "ten thousand acres of clouds" that "recline by the cliffs of compassion" (I.), or the "shadows of clouds" that have been "coiling around" his temple (II.), or the "ten thousand acres of clouds" that have flown into the fences of his temple and somehow enable the poet to see the "loving face" of his mother (III.), or again the "ten thousand acres of clouds" that cover the walls of the temple (IV.): the starting couplets of all four poems clearly establish a cloud iconography that does not have state-related auspicious meanings but is inflected by individual memories of Fa's mother.

This suite of four poems is important for our understanding of Fa's cloud iconography. It served as a means to remember, commemorate, and reminisce about his mother. Albeit the fact that the four poems had been written in 1659 and *Cloudy Mountains* was only painted twenty-five years later in 1684 when his mother was already dead, clouds at Yellow Hill must have played an important role in Fa's mnemonic landscape. For Edward Casey, remembering "is to relive the past," an act through which one re-enters "the 'no longer living worlds' of that which is irrevocably past," and a means by which "we try to re-enter such worlds ... as they are now rememberable in and through reminiscence."⁷⁹ In order to remember his mother, Fa Ruozen did not have to paint the chapel or narrative scenes of his capture by the Manchus. Rather, the clouds in the series of paintings evocative of Yellow Hill served as a metaphor for compassion and, in metonymical extension, for Fa's mother that allowed him to remember her. With its evocation of Yellow Hill, Fa's *Cloudy*

⁷⁹ Casey, *Remembering*, 107.

Mountains then points to the role that place plays in the “production, retention, and reinvigoration of memory.”⁸⁰

The imagery of clouds was deeply intertwined with family memories of the Fa family. This might simply have to do with the fact that Jiaozhou is located close the ocean’s coast and clouds moving into the off-shore mountains must have been a common phenomenon as it is still today. Nevertheless, it is remarkable to what extent clouds figure prominently in the names of places and people that were significant for Fa Ruozen. For example, his younger brother Ruozhi, who had died tragically young in 1638, had been buried at the family burial grounds at Cloud Ridge.⁸¹ And Fa’s father had for a long time studied and taught at his own small academy located at Happy Cloud Mountain (Yiyun shan 怡雲山), today in Gaomi 高密 county neighboring Jiaozhou. In his eulogy, Fa recorded his father’s style name as Kaisan 開三 and his sobriquet as Jian 鑑; nevertheless, he referred to his father more frequently as Happy Clouds (Yiyun 怡雲), demonstrating that the memory of his father was intimately connected with the mountain in direct proximity to his hometown at which he had taught.⁸²

From the start, the Chinese poetic tradition has understood natural imagery and concrete phenomena “by virtue of cosmic categorial correspondence, [to] embody and evoke a larger

⁸⁰ Donohoe, *Remembering Places*, xi.

⁸¹ Fa Ruozen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 653.

⁸² Fa Ruozen, “Tongfeng gong xiankao Yiyun zhuan,” 通奉公顯考, *Huangshan ji*, in *QDSWJZBCK* 60: 545.

significance.”⁸³ Often described as allegory or metaphor, “images” (*xiang* 象) consisted of objects (*wu* 物) such as orchids, pine trees, and bamboo and what art historian Martin Powers has called their “social content.”⁸⁴ Such ideas had a lasting impact on the art of landscape painting, too. Martin Powers has explained how the tenth-century painter Jing Hao 荆浩 (ca. 855–915) had started to attribute “expressive gesture” to landscapes, thus allowing natural objects to be considered animate and take on qualities of moral character.⁸⁵ Under Jing Hao’s brush, pine trees in paintings thus assumed the metaphorical role of the virtuous but destitute and alienated scholar, an imagery that Guo Xi radically transformed when he conceptualized pine trees to assume state-supportive meanings.⁸⁶ Similarly, by the Song dynasty, clouds had firmly taken on auspicious meanings.⁸⁷

But clouds also had a second, less often discussed metaphorical meaning of family remembrance to which Fa Ruozhen’s paintings alert. Art historian Huang Xiaofeng 黃小峰 has traced clouds as a signifier of home and, by extension of parents, to the poetry from the

⁸³ Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1987), 168; Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 18-20.

⁸⁴ Powers, “When Is a Landscape like a Body?,” 7.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁸⁶ On the question of the court’s appropriation of the imagery of the destitute yet morally upright gentleman and the wilderness ideals embodied by landscape painting, see Foong Ping, *The Efficacious Landscape: On the Authority of Painting at the Northern Song Court* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 31-73.

⁸⁷ For example, the Northern Song literati Liu Daochun 劉道醇 (fl. around 1057) in his *Evaluation of Famous Painters of the Song Dynasty* (*Songchao minghua ping* 宋朝名畫評) had recorded the professional painter Chen Yongzhi 陳用志 (fl. ca. 1023–1032) to have painted a now-lost mural at the house of the eminent statesman Wen Yanbo 文彥博 (1006–1097) with clouds and an effect of falling morning rain; see Liu Daochun 劉道醇, “Chen Yongzhi” 陳用志, *Songchao minghua ping* 宋朝名畫評, in *SKQS* 812: 464. Such an auspicious symbolic imagery, designating an “upright and benevolent official who labored for the good of the people,” would have been understood by everybody to designate the non-depicted Wen Yanbo; see Clapp, *Commemorative Landscape Painting*, 31; in this sense also Shih Shou-ch’ien, *Shanming guiyong*, 42.

Tang and Song dynasties in which clouds allowed poets to think about a distant home. According to Huang, the expression “gazing at clouds” (*wangyun* 望雲 or *zhanyun* 瞻雲) derives from a poem by the Tang dynasty poet and official Di Renjie 狄仁傑 (630–704) who, having climbed on top of the Taihang Mountains (Taihang shan 太行山) and gazed towards the south, had exclaimed: “The abode of my family is under these clouds” 吾親所居在此雲下!⁸⁸ Magnified by an increasing popularity of this poetic theme during the Song, clouds became, according to Huang Xiaofeng, a means for artists to express their filial piety and led to the formation of the late fourteenth-century painting genre of “gazing-at-clouds-and-thinking-about-parents pictures” (*wangyun xiqin tu* 望雲思親圖). Painting images of cloudy mountains thus allowed travelling officials to give voice to their longing for their parents who remained at home, thus permitting an outlet for one’s emotions of filial piety. The early Ming official Wu Daoyan 吳道延 (fl. late 14th century), for example, had thus made a painting for his mother entitled *Cloudy Mountains* (*Yunshan tu* 雲山圖) that allowed him to give his filial piety towards his mother a visible form while away on official duties.⁸⁹ By the sixteenth century, however, this meaning appears to have been largely lost on most artists who made images of cloudy mountains, rather employing the genre as a means for practicing the ancient styles.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Huang Xiaofeng 黃小峰, “Cong guanshe dao caotang: 14 shiji ‘Yunshan tu’ de hanyi, yongtu yu bianqian” 從官舍到草堂——14世紀「雲山圖」的含義、用途與變遷 (Phd diss., Zhongyang meishu xueyuan, 2008), 59-60; Di Renjie quoted from *ibid.*, 60.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 115. I have found one other example from the sixteenth century in which the official Yang Jisheng 楊繼盛 (1516–1555) acknowledged the role of “gazing at clouds and thinking about home pictures”; see Yang Jisheng 楊繼盛, “Wangyun siqin tu yin” 望雲思親圖引, *Yang Zhongmin gong ji* 楊忠愍公集, *juan* 2, 27a-28a, in *ZGJBGJK*. In fact, there is a long tradition of making paintings that commemorated parents in China that goes back to at least the Tang dynasty (618–907). Zhu Jingxuan 朱景玄 (fl. 841–846) recorded: “During the Kaiyuan period (713–741) when the imperial carriages travelled to the Eastern [Capital] Luo[yang], Wu

With their long-standing ability to designate parents, clouds helped Fa Ruozhen in his *Cloudy Mountains* to reminiscence about his mother. Indeed, Fa was not the only early Qing painter to employ the imagery of clouds to evoke parental memories. A recorded painting inscription by Xu Fang to his now presumably lost painting *White Clouds among Wooded and Bare Hills* (*Baiyun huqi tu* 白雲岵岵圖) shows that Xu also used white clouds as a means to remind the painting's recipient of his parents:

Master Jian of Changlu [modern Cangzhou 滄州, Hebei province] said to me: “At early age, I left home [to become a monk] and roamed beyond the mundane world.⁹¹ However, I have never narrowed my sentiments towards my parents (*mingfa zhi huai*).⁹² In the past, Prince Sujāti [Chinese: *Xusheti* 須闍提] cut his flesh to cure his parents.⁹³ Chen Zunsu (ca. 780–877) of Muzhou [modern Jiande 建德, Zhejiang

Sheng [Wu Daozi, ca. 680–ca. 760] met with general Pei Min [fl. first half 8th century] and the administrator (*changshi*) Zhang Xun [fl. ca. 675–750] who all put their talents on display [Pei Min: sword dancing; Wu Daozi: painting; Zhang Xu: calligraphy]. At the time, general Pei Min generously offered gold and silk, inviting [Wu] Daozi to make a painting for his [deceased] parents at the Tiangong Temple of the Eastern Capital” 開元中，駕幸東都，吳生與裴旻將軍、張旭長史相遇，各陳其能。時將軍裴旻厚以金帛召致道子，於東都天宮寺為其所親將施繪事。Although the text does not specify what sort of painting Wu Daozi made, it is unlikely that he made a landscape painting. Yet this anecdote shows that paintings in the memory of parents were done early on; see Zhu Jingxuan 朱景玄, *Tang chao minghua lu* 唐朝名畫錄, 1b-2a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁹¹ The sentence *you fang zhi wai* 遊方之外, here translated as roaming beyond the mundane world, is from the *Zhuangzi*; see Liu Wendian, *Zhuangzi buzheng*, 215. It is a concept that plays on the idea of leaving the conventional world of Confucian rules for the pursuit of personal cultivation; this would apply both to Daoists and Buddhist monks.

⁹² With the phrase *mingfa zhi huai* 明發之懷, Xu Fang's painting inscription refers to the poem “Diminutive” (“Xiaowan” 小宛) in the *Book of Songs*, where the original lines read: “I lie awake till the dawn does break, / Missing the two people of my life” 明發不寐，有懷二人; see Ma Chiying, annot., and Wang Yunwu, ed., *Shijing jinzhu jinshi*, 337; for the English translation, see Waley and Allan, trans., *The Book of Songs*, 176. According to traditional commentaries such as the one by the Song philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), this passage meant one's parents. Zhu Xi explained: “‘*Mingfa*’ designates the daybreak when it starts to become bright; ‘*er ren*’ are mother and father” 明發，謂將旦而光明開發也。二人，父母也; see Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shiji zhuàn* 詩集傳, *juan* 12, 4a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁹³ In the tale of Prince Sujāti, he rescues his parents by feeding them on his own flesh as a sign of filial devotion and even is willing to sacrifice his life for his parents to survive while under threat of attack by wild animals. For a summary of the tale, see Angela Falco Howard, *The Imagery of the Cosmological Buddha* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 73-74.

province] had sold woven reed sandals to support his parents.⁹⁴ In thinking of these historical figures, I feel guilty and there is not a single day on which I do not have such thoughts.” Therefore, I painted this picture and presented it to him. Looking upwards to the white clouds and climbing among these mountains, this is to sketch his longing for his parents. A filial son will take being filial to his parents as his will. Changli [Han Yu 韓愈; 768–824] once said: “If someone is a Mohist in name but acts as a Confucian, then he should be accepted.”⁹⁵ Those who have left society and those who are still engaged with it would understand this painting.

長蘆簡公嘗語余曰：「某早歲出家，遊方之外，顧明發之懷未嘗少間。昔須闍提太子割身肉以療父母，睦州陳尊宿織蒲履以養親，緬懷古人，實切自愧，惟無己之思如一日耳。」余因作此圖以貽之，仰望白雲，陟彼嵒岵，聊寫其思親之彷彿，孝子之身，終此以志也。昌黎云：「有墨名而儒行者則進之」。世出世間，必有知此圖者。⁹⁶

In his inscription, Xu Fang recalled a conversation with the painting’s unidentified recipient, a certain Master Jian, in which the latter enumerated historical exemplars of filial piety to underscore his own commitment to the Confucian precepts of filial piety. Importantly, Xu Fang painted a landscape in which white clouds among mountains were understood to give visual form to thoughts about parents that the painting’s recipient wanted to convey. Crucially, Xu Fang claims that anyone would be able to read this iconography of white clouds among mountains as expressive of one’s commitment to one’s parents.

⁹⁴ Reference to the Chan master Muzhou Daoming 睦州道明, who was known for making straw sandals and having sold these to support his mother; see Puji 普濟, *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 230.

⁹⁵ Translation based on Shao-yun Yang, “Reinventing the Barbarian: Rhetorical and Philosophical Uses of the *Yi-Di* in Mid-Imperial China, 600–1300 (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2014), 100. In his preface, Han Yu formulated a rebuke of Buddhism which he equated with Mohism. But he also showed that even if one was not a Confucian in name but behaved according to Confucian rules of etiquette, one would be able to be accepted among “civilized men.” For the preface, see Han Yu, “Song futu Wen Chang shi xu” 送浮屠文暢師序, *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu*, 355-358.

⁹⁶ Xu Fang, *Ti baiyun huqi tu* 題白雲嵒岵圖, *Juyitang ji*, 517.

While the iconography of clouds allowed painters from Wu Daoyan to Xu Fang to think about home and parents, Fa Ruozhen's poems quoted above indicate that he considered clouds in connection with Yellow Hill more specifically to remind him of his mother. A short explanation of Fa Ruozhen's family relations helps to specify whom Fa was thinking about specifically. Fa in fact had two mothers: his formal mother (*dimu* 嫡母), the principle wife of his father, née Zhao 趙 who had died in 1669, and his actual birth mother, née Li 李, who had died in 1663.⁹⁷ While the death of his formal mother is closer in date to the start of the series of paintings that I read as place-evocations of Yellow Hill, Fa's series must have revived the memory of his birth mother. Fa's preface and the "Four Poems Written for the Completion of the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds" do not articulate that it was his birth mother Li who saved him from death, but there is confirmation from his auto-biographical essay.⁹⁸ Other records also make unmistakably clear that the affective bond between Fa and his birthmother Li was much stronger and mattered more to Fa than the one with his formal mother Zhao. When his formal mother died in 1669, Confucian mourning rituals would have required Fa to return to his home and observe the mourning rituals. Instead, Fa remained in Nanjing and its environs travelling and painting before returning to Beijing in 1672. In contrast, after the death of his birth mother in 1663 due to health complications with her stomach, he accompanied his mother's body home and spent more than two years at home, burying his mother, mourning her, and remaining "at the side of my mother's tomb" 在先大

⁹⁷ Fa was therefore the son of Fa Huan's concubine, and not of his "official wife" (*qi* 妻). However, Mrs. Zhao does not appear to have given birth to male descendants. Therefore, Fa Ruozhen continued the family's lineage as the principal heir. In the late Ming and early Qing, it was common practice for "official wives" to find concubines of lower social status for their husbands to continue the patrilineal line if they were not able to bear children by "appropriating" their offspring; see Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 351.

⁹⁸ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 655.

夫墓側。⁹⁹ He also left a lengthy account of the hardships that his mother had undergone to raise her children, which he did not do for his formal mother.¹⁰⁰ Resonating well with the findings of other scholars interested in mother-son relationships in premodern China, the affective relationship with his birthmother—intensified by Fa’s “second birth” through his rescue by his mother in 1642—must have informed Fa’s series of paintings that all evoke the same place and, by extension, conjured maternal memories.¹⁰¹

Transformation, afterlife, and immortality

Beyond Fa’s cloud iconography that recalled his mother, the transforming rocks and clouds seen in his paintings served him to express thoughts on his relatives’ afterlife. *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* is a point in case for such a reading. Done after a trip in 1683 to Mount Jingtai where both his parents had been buried, for the first time the painting made use of the qualities for which Fa Ruozhen is best known: his dissolution and transformation of the material states of rocks from solid into floating matter. Nine years prior to making this painting, Fa had visited Mount Jingtai on the occasion of the Ghost Festival and commemorated his visit with the suite of six poems entitled “Six poems written in the seventh month of the *jiayin* year [1674] after restoring the graves of my late father and mother at Mount Jingtai.” The first of these poems reads:

⁹⁹ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 722-725.

¹⁰⁰ Fa Ruozhen, *Huangshan nianlüe*, in *BJTSGCZBNP* 72: 722-723.

¹⁰¹ See, e.g., Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*; Maram Epstein, *Orthodox Passions: Narrating Filial Love During the High Qing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019).

I.

登臨二十載，	Climbing the mountain for twenty years,
蘭谷待人來。	In the Orchid Valley, waiting for others to come. ¹⁰²
仙子乘珠水，	Immortals ride the waters of Pearl [Mountain], ¹⁰³
秦橋依鏡臺。	Qin Shihuang's bridge is located at Mount Jingtai.
結廬侵岸側，	Building a hut that trespasses the shore's side,
斷草圯沙隈。	Broken grasses fall over the sandy river bank.
祖武凌碑篆，	I had ancestral deeds carved and inscribed onto a stele,
驚看鳳詔裁。	In awe, I stare at the chiseled phoenix mandate. ¹⁰⁴

The poem establishes a clear sense of Mount Jingtai's sanctity as a burial ground by invoking old Daoist concepts of immortality and the belief in the afterlife. The first couplet validates the poem's site-specificity and its close connection with the parental burial site. Since Fa's father had died in 1653 and subsequently was buried at Mount Jingtai, Fa Ruozhen had ascended Mount Jingtai over twenty years to conduct rituals at the paternal tomb when he wrote the poem in 1674. Orchid Valley was the name of a site at Mount Jingtai. In the second couplet, Fa establishes a connection between this place of burial with Daoist ideas of immortality and afterlife. The water-riding immortals of the third line indicate that Fa Ruozhen considered Mount Jingtai to be a numinous place where the dead could transform into transcendent beings. This does not necessarily mean that Fa Ruozhen considered his parents, both buried at Mount Jingtai, to have transformed into immortals. He may simply indicate his wish for such a transformation and his hope that his parents would get access to the immortal netherworlds. The third couplet confirms that Fa had built a

¹⁰² "Orchid Valley," name of a valley on Mount Jingtai.

¹⁰³ "Pearl Mountain," designating Large Pearl Mountain 大珠山 and Small Pearl Mountain 小珠山, the most prominent chain of mountains in the south of Jiaozhou and representative of the local scenery; Fa Ruozhen often conflated other smaller and less-well known mountains of the region into this general designation.

¹⁰⁴ Fa Ruozhen, "Jiayin qiyue Jingtai shan xiu xinda fumu mu liu shou," *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 352.

lodging close to his parental burial ground in order to be closer to his deceased ancestors. In the last couplet, Fa mentions the carving of a commemorative stele to mark the burial site and an imperial edict (“phoenix mandate”) that his father must have received.

Most significant for our purposes, the poem highlights the connection of the burial site with numinous Daoist energies and ideas about afterlife and immortality. Indeed, Fa could draw on long-standing traditions and tropes that considered the coasts of Shandong an area where encounters with immortals were possible. The bridge of the First Emperor Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 (259–210 BCE), which Fa Ruozen claimed to have its basis at Mount Jingtai, is but the most prominent example. According to legend, the First Emperor built a stone bridge close to today’s Qingdao on the other side of the Jiaozhou Bay where Mount Jingtai is located. By means of this bridge, the emperor wanted to access the place where the sun was rising. A sea spirit helped him in this enterprise after he had begged and prayed for its help. When a court painter tried to paint the sea spirit, the god destroyed the stone bridge. While the emperor managed to return to land, the painter died in the floods of the sea.¹⁰⁵ Another version of this story records that when the emperor was dissatisfied with the slow progress of the stone bridge’s construction, the divine being (*shenren* 神人) whipped the stones to speed them up, which made the stones bleed.¹⁰⁶ One of the most famous writers of the seventeenth century from Shandong, Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640–1715), also told of immortals in the coastal areas of Shandong in his *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*

¹⁰⁵ For this story, see Sun Yueban 孫岳頌, ed., *Peiwen zhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜, *juan* 45, 3a-3b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

¹⁰⁶ For this, see Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 *et al.*, *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, *juan* 6, 18b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

(*Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異).¹⁰⁷ In a geographic area that is naturally benefitting from low-hanging clouds coming in from the sea, Fa Ruozhen must have integrated folk beliefs to conjure up images of immortals and the idea of reaching immortality at the tomb of his parents.

In conjunction with Fa's poem, the change of materiality from firm mountain to floating clouds occurring in *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains* can be interpreted as a visualization of the process of transformation involved when a deceased person turns into an immortal. Through the evocation of the parental burial site, Fa's painting not only resuscitated family memories, but through the visual device of transforming a mountain into clouds the painting may also have formulated a wish for parental access to a state of immortality. The floating clouds, then, take on qualities of the immortals so well-known from Han tombs said to have bridged the distance between mountain tops and heaven with their wings by leaving earthly realms (fig. 3.9). Since these journeys had been visualized to take place from the top of mountains, it is only befitting that Fa should locate the metamorphosis of the stable geological masses into floating mists equally at the top of his composition. By choosing not to depict immortals but rather the numinous qualities of a specific place at which access to immortality was supposed to occur, further enhanced by the spectacle of the blossoming apricot trees, Fa's painting then is relatable to paintings like *Penglai, Isle of the Immortals* (*Penglai xiandao tu* 蓬萊仙島圖) by Yuan Jiang 袁江 (ca. 1670–ca. 1755) (fig. 3.10). Depicting one of the three legendary floating islands of the immortals in the East Sea, Yuan Jiang's painting also calls on Daoist imaginations of a place

¹⁰⁷ E.g., Pu Songling, "Anqi dao" 安期島, *Liaozhai zhiyi*, in *XXSKQS* 1788: 166-167.

where transformation was said to be achievable. Done in fundamentally different styles for largely different purposes and under very different circumstances, the paintings nevertheless speak to similar Daoist beliefs in the afterlife that continued to hold significance for painters and viewers alike in the early Qing.¹⁰⁸ In Yuan Jiang's painting, too, the boundaries between fluid water, floating clouds, and stable landmasses, individually quite realistically depicted, are deliberately left ambiguous, maybe to achieve a similar effect of transformability with which Fa Ruozen had begun to experiment in 1683.

At first, the interpretative connection between the transformative imagery in *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains*, painted in 1683, and ideas about immortality formulated in the poem nine years earlier (1674), may appear to be speculative. Yet, Fa Ruozen continued to explore and expand on this idea in later works. Two years after having painted *Apricot Groves amid Towering Mountains*, he painted *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain* in 1685 (fig. 2.23). In *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain*, Fa has more firmly developed his distinct and personal style in which the material substance of the stable mountain mass is dissolved, changing between rocks and floating clouds. If looked at in isolation, entire rock formations could now also be clouds. Fa had already experimented with this style in *Cloudy Mountains* from 1684, albeit in a somewhat more impressionistic manner that relied heavily on washes rather than calligraphic brushwork. In *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain*, the effect is further enhanced and taken to a more monumental scale. The metamorphosis is now firmly dominating the painting, not only covering the last upper third of the mountain but reaching

¹⁰⁸ For a general discussion of the painting, see Howards Rogers and Sherman E. Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting from the Forbidden City* (Landsdale, PA: International Arts Council, 1988), 185-186.

down to the middle of the composition. In the upper corner, Fa left an inscription that reinforces the reading of the transformative landscape in Daoist terms:

When Li Bai climbed on the Luoyan Peak at Mount Hua, he said: “This is the mountain’s highest peak; by breathing it is possible to reach the Heavens. I regret I could not come up with verses like Xie Tiao’s [464–499] that can startle people, so I scratch my head and ask the blue sky.” *The Old Man of Yellow Hill, aged 73 sui*.

李太白登華山落雁峰，曰：「此山最高頂，呼吸可通帝庭。恨不攜謝朓驚人句，搔首以問青天耳。」黃山老人七十三。

Fa’s inscription is a direct quote from an anecdote recorded by Feng Zhi 馮贄 (fl. ca. late 9th c.) in which, upon sight of Luoyan Peak, the poet Li Bai 李白 (701–762) is said to have exclaimed: “This is the highest peak [of Mt. Hua], inhaling and exhaling its air can make me reach the seat of the Heavenly Emperor” 此山最高，呼吸之氣想通天帝座矣。¹⁰⁹

According to Feng Zhi, Li Bai saw numinous energies at Luoyan Peak (Luoyan feng 落雁峰), and thus connected Mount Hua (Huashan 華山) with Daoist ideas of immortality and transcendence. This impression is reinforced if another poem by Li Bai about Mount Hua is also taken into account. Li Bai’s “Song of Parting for Dan Qiuzi from Mount Hua’s Cloud Terrace” (“Xiyue yuntai ge song Dan Qiuzi” 西嶽雲台歌送丹丘子) similarly establishes a connection between the mountain top, immortality and transformation. In its second half, the poem reads:

¹⁰⁹ Feng Zhi 馮贄, “Saoshou wen qingtian” 搔首問青天, *Yunxian zaji* 雲仙雜記, *juan* 1, 6b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

白帝金精運元氣，	The White Emperor and the golden essence operate primordial energy, ¹¹⁰
石作蓮花雲作臺。	Out of stones arise lotuses and out of clouds appear terraces. ¹¹¹
雲臺閣道連窈冥，	Cloud Terrace's plank roads ¹¹² connect the far and indistinct,
中有不死丹丘生。	In its midst, there is the immortal Daoist Danqiu.
明星玉女備灑掃，	The Jade Maiden of Bright Star ¹¹³ is there to sweep and clean,
麻姑搔背指爪輕。	And Magu ¹¹⁴ gently scratches his back with her fingernails.
我皇手把天地戶，	Our Celestial Emperor ¹¹⁵ guards the gate to Heaven and Earth,
丹丘談天與天語。	Danqiu discusses heavenly matters with the Emperor.
九重出入生光輝，	He enters and leaves the nine-layered heavens ¹¹⁶ and sparks bright radiance,
東來蓬萊復西歸。	He came to the eastern Penglai island and returned to the west. ¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ One of the Five Celestial Emperors (*wu tiandi* 五天帝), the god of the west, the master of Mount Hua's realm. In Daoist thought, gold is the element connected with the west.

¹¹¹ Cloud Terrace Peak 雲臺峰 and Lotus Peak 蓮花峰 are two of the five peaks on Huashan.

¹¹² Planks attached to the steep cliffs, thus forming pathways into the mountain.

¹¹³ According to the *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*, the Jade Maiden of Bright Star lives on top of Mount Hua where she drinks Jade essence; see Li Fang 李昉, "Mingxing yunü" 明星玉女, *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, *juan* 59, 1a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

¹¹⁴ Magu 麻古, a mythical goddess said to have lived during the Eastern Han dynasty; she is the protector of women, said to have been able to transform rice into pearls, and her fingernails resemble bird claws; her longest and most detailed biography is recorded by Wang Yuan 王遠 in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–ca. 343) *Biographies of Divine Immortals* (*Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳); for an English translation, see Robert Ford Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 259-264.

¹¹⁵ The word *huang* 皇 here refers to Celestial Sovereign (*tianhuang* 天皇) rather than emperor (*huangdi* 皇帝); a variant name of the God of Heaven, also variously known as Yudi 玉帝, Taiyi 太一, Tiandi 天帝, etc., he guards the entrance to heaven. In the "Biography of Zhang Heng" ("Zhang Heng liezhuan" 張衡列傳) contained in the *Book of the Later Han*, Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139) is recorded to have said: "I called on the supervisor of the Heavenly Gate to open the door and let me visit the King of Heaven at the Jade Palace" 叫帝闢使闢扉兮，觀天皇于瓊宮; see Fan Ye, *Xinxiao Hou Hanshu zhu*, 1933.

¹¹⁶ The "nine-layered heavens" (*jiuzhong* 九重) refers to the highest place in Heaven.

¹¹⁷ Meaning that he crossed the two realms connected with immortality: the three magical floating islands of the Eastern Sea for which Penglai stands in, and Mount Kunlun in the West.

玉漿倘惠故人飲，
騎二茅龍上天飛。

If you could kindly share the jade drink with your old
friend [Li Bai,]
We [Danqiu and Li Bai] could ride two grass
dragons¹¹⁸ and fly to the heavens.¹¹⁹

Written as a parting gift, the poem spells out how the ascension to high grounds at Mount Hua was connected with the attainment of immortality. It invokes the two most legendary abodes of immortals, the imaginary island of Penglai 蓬萊 in the eastern seas, and the Western Peaks, that is Mount Kunlun (Kunlun shan 崑崙山). It also refers to jade drinks that allow to obtain immortality. By bringing Li Bai and his wish to attain immortality atop of Mount Hua into his pictorial realm, Fa Ruozhen invests *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain* with a Daoist dimension. This resembles closely what he had done in *Apricot Blossoms amid Towering Mountains*. Intriguingly, the last part of the first couplet of Li Bai's poem quoted above (it is not the first couplet of the entire poem) is particularly noteworthy: "Out of clouds appear terraces" (*yun zuo tai* 雲作台). Read against Fa's specific cloud imagery, it is compelling to think that this image might have found its way into Fa's paintings in which the material substance between rocks and clouds appears so fluid.

While today entitled *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain*, the painting's composition fits into the serial evocation of Yellow Hill. Fa did not title his painting himself but the title is derived from the inscription. However, the inscription also leaves the possibility that there is no

¹¹⁸ According to the *Biographies of Exemplary Immortals*, Huzixian and a female wine shop keeper rode a "grass dog" (*maogou* 茅狗) sent down by an immortal to fly up Mount Hua where they became immortals; see Liu Xiang 劉向, "Huzixian" 呼子先, *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳, *juan* 2, 11b-12a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

¹¹⁹ Li Bai 李白, "Xiyue yuntai ge song Dan Qiuzi" 西嶽雲台歌送丹丘子, *Li Taibai quanji* 李太白全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), 453-454.

direct relationship between the painting and Mount Hua, the western of the five sacred mountains (*wuyue* 五嶽) in Shaanxi province. I argue that the current title is misleading and that the painting is not a painting of Mount Hua, but rather one of the imaginative and aggrandizing evocations of Yellow Hill in Fa's series of home and therefore one of the paintings that served to articulate thoughts about his mother. Arguably, Fa invoked Mount Hua here not for the purpose of delivering a portrait of that mountain but rather aimed to establish an imaginary connection of Yellow Hill with the attainment of immortality poetically so nicely captured by his prominent literary predecessor, Li Bai.

Two reasons support such an argument. First, Fa's poetry and other writings do not indicate that he ever travelled to Mount Hua, thus making it rather unlikely that he would have done a painterly record of a touristic experience as had been the case in the long handscroll *Mount Tiantai* of four years earlier (fig. 2.32). Additional evidence comes from another painting. Done in 1691 and measuring over three meters in height, Fa's *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* presents an even grander mountain vision (cf. fig. 2.26). The swirling cloud-mountains, so nicely captured already in *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain*, are rendered with a greater sense of spatial presence in *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs*. While *Luoyan Peak at Mount Hua* presents a somewhat one-dimensional screen of cloud-mountains, *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* gives a clearer sense of spatial recession. Otherwise, the composition remains structurally the same compared to works like the early *Reclining in the Western Hills* and *Luoyan Peak at Mount Hua*. The painting bears two seals by the artist. The seal placed at the beginning of the inscription reads "Studio of Reclusion" ("Dunzhai"); another seal at the end of the inscription reads "Old Man from Yellow Hill" ("Huangshan laoren" 黄山老人).

These seals appear frequently on Fa's paintings. Given that Fa's painting practice was so home-oriented, the presence of these seals on *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* indicates that the painting has a closer connection with Jiaozhou's Yellow Hill than with Mount Hua.

Further evidence comes from the painting's inscription:

The poem "Gazing at the Marchmount" by Du Shaoling [Du Fu] reads: "The Western Marchmount [e.g. Mount Hua] stands tall and towering and leads with lofty ridges/all the other peaks are spread like sons and grandsons [around their father]./ How can I ask to obtain the immortal's cane,/ and leaning on it get to the Jade Maiden Temple [on top of the mountain]?"¹²⁰ Li Qinglian [Li Bai] also said: "I have climbed on the top of [the southern peak], by breathing its air it is possible to reach Heavens. I regret that I did not bring the startling verses of Xie Tiao, so I scratch my head and ask the blue sky." I dedicate this painting to [my fifth grandson] Huchen, also known as Yinjin. Grandfather Yellow Hill at the age of seventy-nine *sui*, sketched [this painting] in the eighth month of the *xinwei* year [1691].

杜少陵《望岳》詩曰：「西嶽峻嶒竦處尊，諸峰羅立似兒孫。安得仙人九節杖，拄到玉女洗頭盆。」李青蓮亦謂：「登絕頂，呼吸可通帝坐。恨不攜謝朓驚人句，搔首問青天。」吾將似虎臣、寅津。大父黃山七十九，辛未八月寫。
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After a literary bow to the Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) and his impressions of Mount Hua, Fa mentioned the same story about Li Bai already discussed above. While the two-fold mention of Mount Hua at first seems to indicate the importance of Mount Hua as a painting subject, the fact that Fa Ruozhen quoted Feng Zhi's anecdote about Li Bai a second time speaks to Fa's artistic practice of seriality: not only did he repeat his compositions, but in the instance of *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs*, he also repeated the inscription.

¹²⁰ For a different translation of Du Fu's entire poem, of which Fa only quotes the first four lines, see Owen, trans., *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 4: 47.

¹²¹ I acknowledge the help of Ms. Bao Yannan 鮑艷因, curator of painting at the Shandong Provincial Museum in Jinan, in deciphering the painting's inscription.

The repetitious use of the inscription alerts to the heightened importance of the textual references. Rather than painting twice an image of a mountain he had never visited, it is more likely that the textual references to immortality are evocative of something more profound: Du Fu's poem from which Fa quoted mentions the Daoist Jade Maiden and her living on top of Mount Hua, a reference that Li Bai in his own poem also used. Both Du Fu and Li Bai thus acknowledged Daoist-derived ideas of immortality. By quoting from these poems, Fa Ruozen brought their poetic and referential dimension into the pictorial realm of *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs*. Fa Ruozen appears to have "absorbed" the literary figures of Li Bai and Du Fu in paintings like *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain* and *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* in order to "slip into the place" of these poets, thus opening his paintings of Yellow Hill to Daoist ideas of immortality and transcendence.¹²² Rather than painting Mount Hua, Fa Ruozen then mentions Mount Hua in *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain* and *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* to invoke ideas of immortality and, by so doing, 'transferring' the numinous energies of Mount Hua to Yellow Hill.

In Fa's most famous work, *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains*, the artist has painted perhaps his most compelling vision of nature's transformability (fig. I.2). The painting is neither signed nor sealed, which led art historian Shane McCausland to speculate that the painting could have been part of a triptych, similar to the kind of tripartite works that Gong Xian and Shitao produced.¹²³ But since there is no evidence for Fa having painted tripartite works, and since the work fits fully into Fa's compositional scheme of his series of Yellow Hill, such an

¹²² The idea of absorbing an earlier poet in order to "slip into his place" has been proposed earlier by Jonathan Hay, from whom I quote here, in the context of Shitao's art; see Hay, *Shitao*, 306.

¹²³ See Shane McCausland's catalogue entry in Zhang Hongxing, ed., *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting*, 302.

argument seems unfounded. In addition, *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs*, which Fa painted around the same time, is stylistically extremely similar to *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains*. The similarity is indeed so great that *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* can be called *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains*' "bigger brother" (*Rising Peaks* is one meter larger than *Clouds and Mists*). Since *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* is inscribed and sealed and therefore is not part of a tripartite work, it seems implausible that *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* should be.¹²⁴

A renewed focus on the iconographies of clouds and transformability in paintings such as *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs*, *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain*, and *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* can help to clarify to whose transcendence Fa was referring. Indeed, a conventional reading would posit the self-reflective painter's own desire for immortality as the guiding principle for an interpretation of the work. While this cannot be excluded, it would stand in some contrast to the earlier reading of his paintings as commemorative of Fa's mother. In this regard, the "Four Poems Written for the Completion of the Chapel of Compassionate Clouds," translated above, provide additional clues. The poems established the Buddhist significance of Yellow Hill, the site of Fa's memory of his mother. Beyond that, the fourth poem illustrates the fluidity of boundaries between philosophical and religious concepts of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism:

Ten thousand acres of clouds fly to cover my walls,
Flying back and forth, [clouds] pull the Compassionate Ferry.

¹²⁴ Additionally, *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* is dated 1691, making it very likely that *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* must have been painted around the same time.

One hundred years [for pleasing one's parents by] knotting colorful clothes are a short time,
My dreams [of my mother] grow longer if I do not see her face for a day.
Joining palms at Cormorant Peak where grains are made of gold,
Devoting life to the Gem Garden where jades disperse fragrance.
In order to lean on the echoes of bells and drums returning from the mountains,
I tap and perturb frost on the ground in the mornings and evenings.

While the first couplet introduces the importance of clouds at Yellow Hill, the second couplet is evidence of Fa's filial commitment to his mother by referencing the story of the filial son Lao Laizi 老萊子 who allegedly amused his aged parents by wearing colorful clothes. In the third couplet an interesting intermingling of Buddhist and Daoist ideas occurs. The Cormorant Peak (*cifeng* 鷺峯), an idiosyncratic alteration of the conventional name Vulture Peak (*jiufeng* 鷲峰, Sanskrit: Gridhrakūta), refers to the famous Buddhist pilgrimage site in Rajgir, Bihar, India, where the historical Buddha had trained disciples and taken refuge. Similarly, the Gem Garden (*qiyuan* 琪苑) of the next line is a reference to another Buddhist pilgrimage site, the Jetavana, or Jeta's Grove (Chinese: *qiyuan jingshe* 祇園精舍), a *vihara* (facility for dwelling) located in the suburbs of Śrāvastī, the capital of the ancient Indian Kingdom of Kosala. According to Fa Ruozhen, at these decidedly Buddhist places Daoist alchemy was operating: grains made of gold and jades dispersing fragrances evoke traditional ideas of Daoist alchemy related to the attainment of immortality. For example, Daoist immortals would not eat grains because of the fear of the corruptive and destructive forces occurring in the body.¹²⁵ But if these grains were made of one of the Five Elements, to which gold counted, this destructive effect would be prevented. Similarly, the

¹²⁵ Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, translated from French by Karen C. Duval (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 167.

idea that jade would disperse life-prolonging fumes features prominently in Daoist thought. The poem thus attests to the complicated relationships between these three philosophical traditions in late imperial China.¹²⁶ The third couplet thus introduces ideas of Daoist transformation that Fa also referred to in his painting inscriptions.

Formulating evocations of Yellow Hill, paintings like *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain, Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs*, and *Clouds and Mist in the Mountains* then can be read as depicting liminal spaces between the worlds of the living and the already deceased. This is made clear by the poem: it signals Fa's wishes not for his own immortality, but for that of his mother. The inscriptions of an anecdote about Li Bai and a poem by Du Fu on *Luoyan Peak of Hua Mountain* and *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* are a mobilization of classical poetry and esteemed historical figures to formulate these wishes for his mother. In this regard, Du Fu's poem "Gazing at the Marchmount" appearing on Fa's painting is of heightened interest since it reads in part: "The Western Marchmount [e.g. Mount Hua] stands tall and towering and leads with lofty ridges / all the other peaks are spread like sons and grand-sons [around their father]" 西嶽峻嶒竦處尊，諸峰羅立似兒孫。¹²⁷ The line reinforces the idea of a child's respect for his parent and of hierarchical order, thus again underlining Fa's reverence for his mother.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ This is commonly noted by scholars of late imperial China; see, for example, Li, *Becoming Guanyin*, 3.

¹²⁷ Stephen Owen translates the two lines as: "The Western Marchmount looms towering, it juts up in an exalted position, / the many peaks stand ranged around like its children and grandchildren"; see Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 2: 47.

¹²⁸ Fa's repetitive compositions that commemorated his mother and expressed desires for her immortality thus appear to be somewhat comparable to the painting project by the female Suzhou painter Xu Can 徐燦 (1617–1698) who had "vowed to do 5048 Guanyin paintings to pray for her mother-in-law's longevity"; see Li, *Becoming Guanyin*, 59.

Conclusion

A large number of Fa's landscapes are dedicated to male descendants and male family members that had married into the Fa family. For example, *Reclining in the Western Hills* from 1673 was initially painted for his grandson Abalang (fig. 2.1). In 1674, Fa had made *Landscape* for his nephew Jinghua 景華 (fig. 2.5). In 1681, he painted *Landscape* for his son Fa Yun 法雲 (1633–after 1713), and *Mount Tiantai* for his son Fa Zhang 法樟 (1641–after 1721) (figs. 2.33 and 2.32). In 1687, he painted *Splashing Spring over Treetops* and dedicated the painting seven years later, in 1694, to his brother-in-law (fig. 2.24). In 1691, he painted *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* for his son-in-law Zhang Chengsi (fig. 2.18). Also in 1691, Fa painted *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* and dedicated it to his fifth grandson Yinjin 寅津 (style name: Huchen 虎臣) (fig. 2.26).

In comparison to the widely circulating work of other contemporary artists like Shitao or Gong Xian, Fa Ruozhen's work appears not to have attracted many collectors of his time. With the exception of the nineteenth-century colophon by Wu Ci on *Clouds and Mists in the Mountains*, the little we have in terms of colophons to handscrolls such as *Mount Tiantai* or *Landscape* (both 1681) are from the early twentieth century. This suggests that Fa's works remained mostly in Jiaozhou after Fa's death in 1696, probably among the heirlooms of his

descendants. In his colophon to the 1681 handscroll *Landscape* (fig. 2.33), the collector Ye Gongchuo 葉恭綽 (1881–1968) alludes to this:¹²⁹

At the beginning of the Republic [1910s], Shandong was not peaceful and there were [valuable] things only stored in family shrines, but these were all plundered by looting insurgent troops. Huangshi [Fa Ruozhen] painted himself several hanging scrolls with landscapes which had been passed on in his family. When these events [in Shandong happened], they all spilled out [of the family shrines] and people vied to acquire them.

民國初，山東地方不靖，只家祠藏物，蓋為亂軍所掠。黃石自繪山水數簾，當以傳家。故悉數散出，人爭購之。

Fa's paintings were not tools for self-promotion destined at larger strata of Jiaozhou's society or a transregionally operating literati class. Rather, they were mostly done for family members and remained with them. This is significant because they must have contributed, at least in the early years of the Qing dynasty when Fa's memories were still alive, to foster a sense of belonging among Fa's extended family. A renewed look at *Clouds and Mists above Yellow Hill* (1691) and *Splashing Spring over Treetops* (1687, inscribed 1694) exemplifies this (fig. 2.18 and 2.24). The inscriptions to both works signal that Fa intended his paintings to serve the respective recipient, his son-in-law and his brother-in-law, as tools to conduct reclining journeys.¹³⁰ These paintings were therefore *aides-mémoire* that were to help visualize Yellow Hill while away from this place. Since Yinjin and other family members would have understood the close associations of the local landscape with cloud imagery and

¹²⁹ On Ye Gongchuo and his art collecting activities see Kuiyi Shen, "Scholar, Official, and Artist Ye Gongchuo," in Max Yeh et al., *The Elegant Gathering: The Yeh Family Collection* (San Francisco, CA: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2006), 21-33.

¹³⁰ For a partial translation of the inscription on this painting, see Liu Yang, ed., *Fantastic Mountains: Chinese Landscape Painting from the Shanghai Museum* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2004), 144.

familial love, these hanging scrolls were aiming to transmit Fa's memories of his mother to the following generations.¹³¹

The early Qing experienced a general societal conservatism in which literati families aimed to reform gentry culture in order to maintain their social status among their local communities that had started to erode during the economic boom of the late Ming.¹³² As intellectual historian Kai-wing Chow has shown, one way for reassuring the literati of their social status was the “upholding” of the “core values of Confucian orthodoxy,” such as filial devotion.¹³³ Similarly, historian Ying Zhang has shown that performative demonstrations of filial piety served to reinforce self-images of early Qing officials and Ming loyalists alike.¹³⁴ In this general historical picture of the early Qing, Fa's attempts to communicate his own filial behavior and to remind his family of his mother's deeds through his landscapes must be considered significant. Paintings of Yellow Hill arguably served Fa Ruozen as a tool that aimed at building a lineage-conscious family tradition and to foster a sense of literati identity based on the Confucian core value of filial piety.

¹³¹ As such, they were what Susanne Kuehler has called “landscapes *as memory*” that were “implicated in the process of remembering” and are “shaped by memory-work rather than by accounts of distinct memories”; see Susanne Kuehler, “Landscape as Memory: The Mapping of Process and its Representation in a Melanesian Society,” in Barbara Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1993), 86.

¹³² On the general social changes of the late Ming and early Qing in which notably merchants started to challenge the social position of the literati, see Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 4-11.

¹³³ Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 3. Given the relatively small imperial administration to manage an enormous population, lineages served as local social organizations that were crucial in the upholding of local social order; see *ibid.*, 71-128.

¹³⁴ Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics*, 157-211.

The subtlety of Fa's approach and the limited circulation of his work resulted in the artist not being recognized as a "filial painter" by traditional critics.¹³⁵ However, Fa's works demonstrate that family remembrance was an important painting subject which he aimed to pass on. It is noteworthy that his paintings were not uniquely addressed to members of his patrilinear family. Rather, a number of paintings were painted for male affinal family members, too. Fa's practice therefore sheds light on the relevance of the entire family in strategies of securing elite status in a local community like Jiaozhou.¹³⁶ After the traumatic events that had occurred in Shandong during the Ming-Qing transition and that had affected the entire family, paintings that transmitted maternal memories must have played an important role in fostering a sense of belonging and purpose among the extended Fa clan. Fa's works showcase how landscape paintings shaped literati identity on the local level.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ In his *Record of Paintings and Calligraphy of the Passing-Cloud Tower*, the nineteenth-century collector Gu Wenbin 顧文彬 (1811–1889) only noted Weng Yunhui 翁運槐 (n.d.) and his younger brother Weng Yunbiao 翁運標 (*jinsi* 1723) as well as Huang Xiangjian as early Qing painters famous for their filial activities; see Gu Wenbin 顧文彬, *Guoyun lou shuhua ji 過雲樓書畫記* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011), 176.

¹³⁶ Fa's practice of remembering primarily his mother through painting is a further confirmation for recent scholarly efforts that question the traditional scholarly emphasis on the importance of the patriline in late imperial China. For related studies, see, e.g., James Robson, "Brushes with Some 'Dirty Truths': Handwritten Manuscripts and Religion in China," *History of Religions* 51, no. 4 (2012): 330-334; Stevan Harrell, "Orthodoxy, Resistance, and the Family in Chinese Art," in Jerome Silbergeld and Dora C.Y. Ching, eds., *The Family Model in Chinese Art and Culture* (Princeton, NJ: P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, 2013), 72-77; Epstein, *Orthodox Passions*, 1-5; Ping-chen Hsiung, "Constructed Emotions: The Bond between Mothers and Sons in Late Imperial China," *Late Imperial China* 15, no. 1 (1994): 87-117; Ping-chen Hsiung, "Female Gentility in Transition and Transmission: Mother-Daughter Ties in Ming/Qing China," in Daria Berg and Chloë Starr, eds., *The Quest for Gentility in China: Negotiations Beyond Gender and Class* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 97-116; Yue Du, "Unlimited Debt toward Father and Mother: State-Sponsored Generational Hierarchies in Late-Imperial China," *Ars Major, 3rd series* 34, no. 2 (2021): 93-125.

¹³⁷ Similarly, historian Norman Kutcher has observed: "For many who did choose to serve, their decision often entailed a turning inward toward their family, particularly where ritual matters were concerned. ... In the post-conquest environment some scholars both inside and outside the government were able to build a new and independent unity apart from the state"; see Kutcher, *Mourning in Late Imperial China*, 74.

That Fa's paintings had such pedagogical functions is exemplified by *Five Pine Trees at Mount Tai* (*Taidai wusong tu* 泰岱五松圖) which he painted for his grandson Yinjin in 1685.¹³⁸ While the painting is now lost, a poem gives evidence for the painting's existence:

直掃白雲萬歲呼，	Directly sweeping away white clouds, hailing Ten Thousand Years, ¹³⁹
清秋明月插天孤。	Clear autumn and a bright moon, [the pine trees] break into the sky in solitariness.
須留霜雪十年後，	Certainly if left to frost and snow for then more years,
再看青青五大夫。	They will become the Five Senior Officials when another glance is cast. ¹⁴⁰

The poem contains a reference to the well-known story of the five pine trees at Mount Tai under which the First Emperor sought shelter during a storm; afterwards, the sovereign bestowed the title “Five Senior Officials” on these pines.¹⁴¹ With this particular iconography, the painting must have been a tool to teach Fa's grandson about service to the emperor. The painting therefore served Fa to “regulate his family” (*qijia* 齊家). Part of a larger Confucian discourse on how to achieve order in the world, *The Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學) saw regulating one's family as the second step (after cultivating one's body, *xiushen* 修身) before the ordering of the country (*zhiguo* 治國) and the establishment of

¹³⁸ Also in 1685, he painted *Landscape* (*Shanshui tu* 山水圖), now in the collection of the Palace Museum for Yinjin; see <https://digicol.dpm.org.cn/cultural/detail?id=62dff8b632a94ec2918cb9feb463f60e&source=1&page=1> (last accessed Sept. 30, 2022). This must have been the first painting that introduced Yinjin to Yellow Hill and the gradually developing cloud iconography.

¹³⁹ Refers to the “eternal” rule of the First Emperor.

¹⁴⁰ Fa Ruozhen, “Zuo *Taiyue wusong tu*, liu wusun, zi zhi yue Yinjin, zai zi yue Huchen” 作泰岱五松圖，留五孫，字之曰寅津，再字曰虎臣，*Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 518-519.

¹⁴¹ E.g. Wang Mao 王楙, “Wu song shi” 五松事, *Yeke congshu* 野客叢書, *juan* 26, 10b-11a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

harmony for all under Heaven (*ping tianxia* 平天下) could be achieved.¹⁴² Paintings that commemorated Fa's mother through the evocation of the local scenery of Yellow Hill similarly must have been intended to construct the literati identity of the Fa family by foregrounding the importance of filial piety as a central Confucian value.

¹⁴² See James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960, 3rd ed.), 1: 357.

CHAPTER FOUR

Literary Topographies and the Role of Local Landscapes in Forging a Literati Community

In the aftermath of the Qing conquest, the painting of local topography was not limited to family associations. In Suzhou, artists like Zhang Hong and Xu Fang, for example, painted historically famous and popular tourist places in their home region. In a tradition going back at least to Shen Zhou, Zhang Hong painted Suzhou's Tiger Hill, its associated temple and the Nodding Stone Terrace at its foot (fig. 4.1; cf. fig. 4.2). Xu Fang also appears to have painted the scenery of Tiger Hill at least twice. Once in his *New Record of Tiger Hill* (*Huqiu xinlu tu* 虎丘新錄圖) in the collection of the Nanjing Museum (unpublished).¹ In his 1657 *Dengwei Mountain Album* (*Dengwei huace* 鄧尉畫冊), discussed already in the previous chapter, he also must have represented Tiger Hill. According to his "Record of Ten Views of Mount Dengwei" ("Dengwei shijing ji" 鄧尉十景記), Tiger Hill Bridge was part of these views: "Those travelling to Dengwei [Mountain] have to go through the Bridge at Tiger Hill; therefore, Tiger Hill is the beginning [point] for all the mountains of Dengwei" 凡遊鄧尉者必繇虎山橋，虎山固鄧尉諸山之開始也。² From this, it can be followed that Xu Fang's 1657 album must have also contained a leaf that depicted Tiger Hill. Being an

¹ For a record of the painting, see Fu Yanghua, "Qingchu yimin huajia Xu Fang de huihua, jiaoyou yu shenghuo," 45.

² Xu Fang, "Dengwei shijing ji" 鄧尉十景記, *Juyitang ji*, 194.

important site known for its natural beauty and its historic significance—the burial site of King Helü 闔閭 (r. 514–496 BCE)—Tiger Hill had become a tremendously popular travel destination among Ming dynasty literati.³

But artists did not paint merely to record the local sceneries and travel experiences. In the context of the Ming-Qing transition, such landscape paintings took on more meaning in that they helped reassure the art-consuming elite communities of a shared cultural history and thus contributed to processes of identity formation among local elites. This argument follows John D. Langlois’s proposition that once “the fighting [of the dynastic transition] was over, culturalistic notions enabled the Han people to participate in the new Sino-Manchu polity, committed to the belief in the universality and continuity of their culture.”⁴ Accordingly, scholars have shown that local landscapes and famous sites in early-Qing Yangzhou contributed to the fostering of literati communities which found common ground for understanding—irrespective of their post-1644 political affiliations—in the city’s shared cultural heritage. Historian Tobie Meyer-Fong has shown that such identities were often captured in literary anthologies.⁵ Scholarly consensus recognizes that paintings functioned in very similar ways in Nanjing, where the depiction of local sceneries was notably a way for

³ Yuan Hongdao, for example, described it as being overrun by tourists; see Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes*, 306-307.

⁴ John D. Langlois, Jr., “Chinese Culturalism and the Yüan Analogy: Seventeenth-Century Perspectives,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40, no. 2 (Dec., 1980): 357. For Langlois, “Chinese culturalism [...] meant that the transmission of the [Chinese cultural] tradition was ultimately of greater importance than maintenance of ephemeral polities”; *ibid.* For a similar argument of the importance of culture as a binding force for the literati in the Tang dynasty, see Peter K. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T’ang and Sung China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 2-4; and for its significance during the Jin dynasty, see Peter K. Bol, “Seeking Common Ground: Han Literati Under Jurchen Rule,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47, no. 2 (Dec. 1987): 467-469 and 494-500.

⁵ Tobie Meyer-Fong, “Packaging the Men of Our Times: Literary Anthologies, Friendship Networks, and Political Accommodation in the Early Qing,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 64, no. 1 (June 2004): 9-14.

yimin artists to express their nostalgia and sadness regarding the fall of the Ming and to commemorate the past.⁶

Curiously, there are no studies of Suzhou, the most important painting center during the Ming, which examine in depth the role of painting during the early Qing. Often described as a diehard *yimin* who hardly left his house to interact with people, Xu Fang repetitively painted the local landscapes of Suzhou.⁷ Despite his assurances that his work was not easily obtained, Xu Fang appears to have used painting as a means for survival and to primarily have sold his paintings on the vibrant art market of early Qing Suzhou.⁸ Therefore, his landscapes offer insights into the question how local sceneries contributed to fostering a sense of Suzhou-based local literati identity that had its foundation primarily in shared historical memories rather than in private ones.

⁶ Yang Tun-yao 楊敦堯, “Tuxie xingwang: shijing shanshui tu zai Qing chu Jinling shehui wanglu zhong de yihan” 圖寫興亡：實景山水圖在清初金陵社會網路中的意涵, *Shuhua yishu xuekan* 書畫藝術學刊 1 (Dec. 2006): 253-283; Hay, “Ming Palace and Tomb in Early Qing Jiangning,” 1-48; Stuer, “Dimension of Place: Map, Itinerary, and Trace in Images of Nanjing;” Vinograd, “Fan Ch’i (1616–after 1694): Place-Making and the Semiotics of Sight,” 129-157; Lü Xiao 呂曉, *Ming mo Qing chu Jinling huatan yanjiu* 明末清初金陵畫壇研究 (Nanning: Guangxi meishu chubanshe, 2012), 141-201.

⁷ After 1645, Xu Fang moved several times in the region of Suzhou; see Fu Yanghua, “Cong ‘Wuzhai gongzi’ dao ‘Jianshang yimin’: yiyou zhihou Xu Fang de zhusuo, jiaoyou ji huihua,” 113-118.

⁸ Xu Fang’s commercial painting activities are illustrated with the price list discussed in the Introduction. Famous is also the anecdote that when he needed to purchase necessities, Xu Fang would send his donkey to Suzhou’s city gate. Carrying his paintings, calligraphies, and a list of needed items, people who recognized Xu Fang’s donkey exchanged art with what the artist in his reclusive hut needed; see Chou, ed., *Scent of Ink*, 41. Xu Fang thus took advantage of what has elsewhere been described as a robust art market in early Qing Suzhou; see Kindall, *Geo-Narratives of a Filial Son*, 91.

Perpetuating Han Chinese culture at Mount Tianping

Xu Fang's handscroll *Springs and Rocks on Mount Tianping* (*Tianping quanshi tu* 天平泉石圖) of 1691 provides a good example of how his paintings fostered a sense of literati identity in the aftermath of the Ming-Qing transition (fig. 4.3). As art historian Ju-Hsi Chou has already observed, the painting appears to be the culmination of an artistic project that repeatedly aimed to represent Mount Tianping: in 1672, Xu Fang had already painted the same mountain once in an album leaf and later in a hanging scroll now collected at the Nantong Museum.⁹ Painting the same mountain that Shen Zhou had depicted two hundred years earlier (fig. 4.4), it is evident that Xu Fang expanded the focus of his scroll considerably and chose to show an overall view of Mount Tianping. In a style that combines Xu's well-documented classical inclinations for the modes of Juran and Huang Gongwang with the more lyrical, colorful, and unassuming manner of Shen Zhou, the long handscroll starts in the outskirts of Suzhou and ends in the mountain's shoreside at Lake Tai. But in contrast to Shen Zhou, whose painting centers around two figures seated on the terraced platform from which Mount Tianping derives its name, Xu Fang's composition shows the terrace relatively early on in the composition while placing a cluster of houses behind a three-fold archway (*pailou* 牌樓) and in front of an eight-storied pagoda (*ta* 塔) right at the scroll's center (cf. fig. 4.3a). Archway and pagoda signal a commemorative structure, or at least a structure of significance. The long inscription at the end of the painting praises the

⁹ See Chou, ed., *Scent of Ink*, 42 and 169fn10, 169fn11.

scenic sites at Mount Tianping.¹⁰ Right at its beginning, the inscription draws attention to the painting's centrally placed commemorative structure:

The wonders of the springs and rocks on Mount Tianping are superior among those of the mountains of Wu [Suzhou]. Fan Wenzheng's [Fan Zhongyan] shrine is here. In front of the shrine, there is an old tree, outstanding and remarkable; [its foliage] in red and green, [the tree] bends and twists like a dragon, and is several hundred years old.

天平泉石之勝，甲於吳山，范文正公之祠在焉。祠前古樹尤奇，丹翠夭矯如虯龍，數百年物也。¹¹

When studied in detail, there is a large tree in front of the depicted archway that seems to resonate with Xu Fang's inscription. It is very likely that the commemorative structure in the center of Xu Fang's composition is meant to represent the shrine of the Song dynasty author and official Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052). A comparison with the album leaf *Mount Tianping* (*Tianping shan tu* 天平山圖) by Zhang Hong, who is generally known as an artist who created "topographical pictures," further substantiates such an argument (fig. 4.5).¹² Although Zhang Hong did not inscribe his leaf, thus not stating clearly that he painted the site at which Fan Zhongyan was commemorated, the structure at the leaf's center as well as an archway *and* a pagoda mark an important place. Xu Fang's and Zhang Hong's images of Mount Tianping therefore use the same architectural elements for highlighting an important place on Mount Tianping. Since Mount Tianping, although well-known for its natural beauty, ultimately derived its interest and importance, according to Shih Shou-ch'ien, from

¹⁰ For a translation of the entire inscription see Chou, ed., *Scent of Ink*, 43.

¹¹ Translation based on Ju-Hsi Chou's translation; *ibid.*

¹² Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 5.

Fan Zhongyan's shrine, Xu Fang's handscroll centers on the burial site of the prominent Song dynasty writer and official.¹³

In his painting, Xu Fang therefore drew on the presence of a famous historical figure, Fan Zhongyan, and by doing so emphasized one of the main spots of Suzhou's cultural landscapes. In that regard it is interesting to note that Xu Fang and Zhang Hong painted the shrine in different layouts: while Zhang painted the pagoda to the right of the archway and *in front* of the buildings that must have housed the shrine, Xu Fang painted the pagoda *behind* the shrine itself. This suggests that an accurate depiction of the commemorative structure mattered less than its general recognizability as well as the presence of Fan Zhongyan. While historical memory in modern Western societies is often bound with archaeological remains, the importance of places within the shared cultural memory of historical China appears to have been linked to famous historical figures. The philosopher Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) observed: “Lors de la visite de tel site archéologique, j'évoquais le monde culturel disparu auquel ces ruines renvoyaient tristement” (During a visit to an archaeological site, I evoked the cultural world gone by to which these ruins sadly referred).¹⁴ In Ricœur's case, the physical remains of the past constitute the point of departure for the act of remembrance. This seems to have been different in seventeenth-century China, where the presence of historical figures bestowed gravitas to places that

¹³ Shih Shou-ch'ien, “‘Yuyu chunshu’ yu Mingdai zhongqi Suzhou zhi songbie tu” 「雨餘春樹」與明代中期蘇州之送別圖, in *Fengge yu shibian*, 234.

¹⁴ Ricœur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, 48; translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 41.

following generations thought worthwhile to remember. The poet and writer Dong Yining 董以寧 (1629–1669), for example, explained:

The fame of mountains and rivers is mostly due to outstanding people. Before Su Shi's excursion, the Red Cliff was just another stupid rock. Since Su Shi toured it, although the terraces are ruined and the pavilions are damaged, Red Cliff is still a famous mountain.

山川得名多因人傑。未有蘇公之遊，赤壁一頑石也。蘇公既游之後，雖荒臺殘榭，赤壁一名山也。¹⁵

Painting Fan Zhongyan's shrine, Xu Fang conveyed the presence of an important historical figure in Suzhou's mountains. As an important writer and statesman who had been loyal to the Song court, Fan Zhongyan exemplarily represented Han Chinese culture. Arguably, Fan Zhongyan's continued presence therefore served any given viewer of the scroll as a means for self-identification. Interestingly, the painting's inscription does not specify the painting's recipient. There is no way of saying whether *Springs and Rocks on Mount Tianping* was meant to be sold on the art market or whether the long inscription suggests that the painting was made for other purposes. However, Xu Fang could rely on the easy legibility of his image: anyone from Suzhou and beyond would have recognized the structure as Fan Zhongyan's shrine.

The extent to which Fan Zhongyan was recognized as a symbol and role model that could be invoked to construct Han literati identity in the early Qing can be gauged from a number of prominent early Qing visitors that included Qing collaborators and Ming loyalists alike, and

¹⁵ Dong Yining 董以寧, "You Chibi ji" 遊赤壁記, *Zhengyi tang shiwen ji* 正誼堂詩文集, no p.n., in ZGJBGJK. For the English translation, see Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou*, 25.

even the Kangxi emperor himself. Song Luo, for example, after a visit to the shrine wrote an antithetical couplet (*duilian* 對聯) to be hung on both sides of the shrine's entrance in which he praised Fan Zhongyan's resourcefulness in military strategies, his political success, and his dedication to the general populace.¹⁶ The famous Ming loyalist and eminent scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682) had also visited the shrine. In a poem written on that occasion, he reminisced on Fan Zhongyan's experience in defending the Northern Song against the Western Xia (1038–1227) expansion and, in a hardly hidden swipe at the Manchus, expressed his wish to fight alongside Fan Zhongyan to expel nomadic invaders.¹⁷ The *yimin*-turned-collaborator Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629–1709) went to the shrine to pay his respects to Fan. At the same time, he also wanted to see the handwritten plaque bestowed by the Kangxi emperor onto the shrine in 1705, which the emperor had inscribed “The Great Prime Minister who Aided His Era” (“Jishi liangxiang” 濟時良相) to honor Fan.¹⁸ This short list of early Qing literati and the emperor himself shows to what extent the collective memory of Fan Zhongyan had relevance in the early Qing. That Xu Fang himself was aware of the potential of Fan Zhongyan to spur self-identification with the famous Song dynasty writer is evidenced by the request of Xu's wife, Mrs. Zhang 張, for Xu to compile the family genealogy in the style of the Fan family genealogy.¹⁹

¹⁶ Liang Zhangju 梁章鉅, *Yinglian conghua* 楹聯叢話, in *XXSKQS* 1254: 34.

¹⁷ Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, “Jiuliu Yanzi jiyuan zhong, yougan er zuo” 久留燕子磯院中有感而作, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng shi jianzhu* 顧亭林先生詩箋注, comp. Xu Jia 徐嘉, in *XXSKQS* 1402: 207.

¹⁸ Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, “Tianping shan ye Fan Wenzheng gong ci” 天平山謁范文正公祠, *Pushuting ji* 曝書亭集, in *SKQS* 1317: 640.

¹⁹ Xu Fang, “Gao wangshi Zhang shuoren wen” 告亡室張碩人文, *Juyitang ji*, 374. An interesting side-note is that a descendant of Fan Zhongyan, Fan Wencheng 范文程 (1597–1666), was a prominent collaborator of the early Qing regime; see R. Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644–1796* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2010), 264.

It is therefore plausible to argue that Xu Fang's invocation of a historically famous figure also reinforced ideas of Han Chinese culture and its continuing vitality as a point of identification that was of significance in the early Qing. The contrast between Shen Zhou's and Xu Fang's handscrolls depicting Mount Tianping then could not be more pronounced: while Shen Zhou's colophon to his *Mount Tianping* suggests that the scroll carried *private* memories that are pictorially alluded to by the depiction of two men in private conversation, Xu Fang's painting centers on broadly shared cultural memories.²⁰ In Xu Fang's painting, the commemorative structure of Fan Zhongyan's shrine itself is prominently and centrally placed in the painting; its importance is additionally highlighted and made visible in the beginning lines of the inscription that Xu Fang himself placed on the painting.

Promoting Yellow Hill among the Jiaozhou literati

The interconnection between physical places and local identity did not matter to artists in Suzhou alone but played out in eastern Shandong, too. Some of Fa Ruozhen's paintings can be read as constituting the remaining traces of the artist's much larger attempts to use art, culture, and history as tools to build local literati society in his native Jiaozhou and to bestow cultural significance on Yellow Hill as a center within that locale. One way for doing

²⁰ Shen Zhou's *Mount Tianping* is followed by a colophon that contains two poems, one on Mount Zhixiang and the other on Mount Tianping. The poem on Mount Tianping mentions Fan Zhongyan's shrine in its first couplet: "Mount Tianping is appears in the gazetteers of famous mountains, / the shrine at the mountain's foot is even more famous" 天平合在名山志，山下祠堂更有名。Shen Zhou therefore was not oblivious to the mountain's famous site, but after this poem praising Mount Tianping's scenery, his colophon records the memories of a private gathering of friends. It reads: "In the night of the fourteenth [day] of the sixth month, I together with my friends from the Pushu Hut enjoyed the moon [at Mount Tianping]" 六月十四夜同浦舒庵諸友賞月。

so was Fa's construction of the One Stone Garden (Yishi yuan 一石園) in 1680.²¹ This construction needs to be seen in the light of a local Jiaozhou tradition of building private gardens that reached back to the Ming dynasty. Up until 1653, when it was destroyed by the rebels supporting Hai Shixing who had also killed Fa's father, the largest private garden in the north was the Fine Tree Garden (Jiashu yuan 嘉樹園) of the important Kuang 匡 family based in Jiaozhou. According to the modern scholar Shi Yehua 石業華, the Fine Tree Garden had been a center of local literati activities and continued to play an important factor in the self-identification of Jiaozhou's literati elite even after its disappearance.²² Fa's garden has also long disappeared, but being related by marriage to the Kuang family, Fa reconnected with the local tradition of garden building when he constructed his One Stone Garden.²³ Fa must have also aimed at (re-)creating an infrastructure for "elegant gatherings" (*yaji* 雅集) that aimed at bringing local elites and friends together and to foster his image as a culturally leading literati of his home region.²⁴ Similarly, Fa endorsed a friend's call for sponsorship for the reconstruction of a local temple for the God of War, Guan Yu 關羽

²¹ Fa Ruozhen, "Yishi yuan luocheng ju liu Ji sun" 一石園落成句留吉孫, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 42; see also Fa Ruozhen, "Yishi yuan jiufeng xiaoji" 一石園九峰小記, *Huangshan ji*, in *QDSWJZBCK* 60: 541-543.

²² See Shi Yehua 石業華, ed., *Yiwang de Jiashu yuan* 遺忘的嘉樹園 (Jiaozhou: Zhengxie Jiaoshou shi weiyuan hui, 2014).

²³ Fa Ruozhen was related to Jiaozhou's Kuang family by marriage: two sons of the Kuang family, Kuang Yinan 匡吟菴 and Kuang Xianchen 匡憲臣, had married granddaughters of Fa Ruozhen. This makes it even more pertinent that he knew about the garden. For evidence of Fa's granddaughters' marriage with the Kuangs, see, for example, the preface to Fa Ruozhen, "Qishijiu zishou ershiyi shou" 七十九自壽二十一首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 592.

²⁴ In the seventeenth century, building gardens remained a way for literati to express their cultural literacy and commitment to literati ideals, a process that had essentially begun in the sixteenth century; for a discussion focusing on the "restricted geographical area" of Jiangnan and Beijing "between c. 1450 and 1650", see Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*. Clunas draws attention to the fact that small gardens, to which the name One Stone Garden seems to speak, appear to have been fashionable among literati who were keen on demonstrating social status rather than owning a productive garden, see *ibid.*, 91.

(Guandi 關帝) and initiated the carving of a stele to commemorate their efforts.²⁵ In a case study focused on the neighboring Zhucheng 諸城 county, Timothy Brook has shown that such practices were a preferred way of the literati to reinforce their social identity.²⁶ Because Guan Yu was “the guardian of Buddhism *and* the guardian of the state,”²⁷ Fa’s endorsement of his friend Yang Xiu’s 楊琇 call to renovate the temple at Yellow Hill must have served to formulate a shared claim to local leadership and eminence that reinforced their local literati identity.²⁸ Since both the One Stone Garden and the temple of Guandi were located at Yellow Hill, Fa’s cultural endeavors underline the energy with which he attempted to integrate the hill into a network of literati infrastructure in early Qing Jiaozhou.

These two small examples provide evidence for the existence of a local literati society in Jiaozhou that cared about forms of cultural expression that were also pursued by their more prominent southern peers—and that despite the fact that Jiaozhou was located at the margins of the Qing empire and off the grid of traditional core regions of cultural relevance such as Jiangnan or Beijing. Typically, travelers from Suzhou or Nanjing would travel to Beijing by taking a boat up the Grand Canal that led through Jinan, approximately 350 kilometers west of Jiaozhou. Nonetheless, Jiaozhou had direct exchanges with the Jiangnan area because it had an important harbor which, according to Zhang Zhikang 張志康, Jiaozhou native and researcher with the Calligraphy and Painting Research Academy of Shandong (Qilu shuhua

²⁵ Fa Ruozhen, “Dai Yang Zhongyu chongxiu Guanyu gong an mushu” 代楊仲玉重修關繆公庵募疏, *Huangshan ji*, in *QDSWJZBCK* 61: 115-117.

²⁶ Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power*, 227-248; see also 185-226.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 288.

²⁸ For a similar case, see Prasenjit Duara, “Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (1988): 787-788.

yanjiuyuan 齊魯書畫研究院), was used for the transport of salt and silk despite the maritime trade ban instituted by the Ming dynasty and continued into the Qing. During the early Qing, the port was also used as the place of embarkment for China's emissaries to the Ryūkyū Kingdom (1429–1879; modern-day Okinawa, Japan).²⁹ Exchanges with Jiangnan's literati society were also ensured when officials were transferred to the south. This had been the case with Fa Ruozhen, who had stayed in the Jiangnan area between 1669 and 1672 and later returned on a private journey to Suzhou and Nanjing in 1680.

Within Fa Ruozhen's painting oeuvre, there is also evidence suggesting that he sought to integrate Yellow Hill into a network of sites that mattered to early Qing Jiaozhou literati. Even before Fa returned from Beijing to Jiaozhou and was still hopeful of regaining a position in the imperial administration in the 1670s, painted evocations of Yellow Hill played an important role in his self-identification as a literatus hailing from Jiaozhou. According to the inscription on the last leaf of an album with eight leaves which is now in the Guangdong Provincial Museum, Fa painted *Landscapes* on the New Year's Day of the *bingchen* 丙辰 year [1676] while being accompanied by his friend Wang Yi 王宸 (dates unknown, fl. late 17th century) (fig. 4.6). With the exception of leaf 4 in which Fa's particular interest in the Mi family style of painting becomes again apparent (the inscription confirms this, reading "imitating the methods of the younger Mi [Mi Youren]" 倣小米畫法), the Guangdong album demonstrates that Fa was less interested in rehearsing classical

²⁹ Zhang Zhikang 張志康, "Guanyu haishang sichou zhi lu shifa gang de lishi yanjiu yu sikao yijian" 關於海上絲綢之路始發港的歷史研究與意見, unpublished research paper, 24-28; on the relationship between China and the Ryūkyū Kingdom, see, e.g., Angela Schottenhammer, "Empire and Periphery? The Qing Empire's Relations with Japan and the Ryūkyūs (1644–c. 1800), a Comparison," *The Medieval History Journal* 16, no. 1 (2013): 139-196.

painting styles than in finding a pictorial language for himself. The leaves are characterized by a light use of ink and little texturing that is consistent with other albums that Fa painted (discussed below).

Similar to his *Reclining in the Western Hills* from 1673, the Guangdong album shows views of relatively unimpressive, low mountains in a range of techniques. Many leaves of the album are inscribed with poetic couplets that talk about reclining journeys and natural phenomena. Read together with impressed seals such as “Mountain Obsession” (“Shanpi” 山癖), the album can partly be understood to participate in the discourse of the novel or the strange (*qi*) that many artists of the period pursued in their work. Beyond that, however, the leaves must have been meant to be read as evocations of Yellow Hill. The inscription on the first leaf suggests so:

黃山樹數畝。
繞樹望皆山。

相約來嘉客，
村口門不關。

At Yellow Hill, trees cover several *mu*,
Coiling around the trees, wherever you gaze, you see
the hill.

Settling on a time for my esteemed guest to come,
At the village [illegible], the gate will not be closed.

In combination with the painting on which the poem is inscribed, the implication is that Fa was painting Yellow Hill. Following Fa’s inscribed description of Yellow Hill is the short notice: “Brother Jincheng has agreed to come and visit Yellow Hill for which we have determined the fourth month [to be the right time]. I am painting this album to reflect this decision, and so that none of us will forget [our appointment]” 薑臣年兄，訂黃山之行，四月為期。倣此圖鑑之，或不相忘耳。 The album thus can be understood as an invitation

card for Wang Yi that offers the recipient a preview of Yellow Hill. Indeed, in an explanatory note to the fourth poem out of a suite of six self-congratulatory poems that Fa wrote shortly after this on his birthday (that year falling on March 6, 1676), Fa confirms their mutual appointment again: “Wang Jinchun and I have agreed on a time and plan to return [together] to [Shan]dong” 時約王薑臣計東歸.³⁰ Fa thus appears to have used the Guangdong album to promote his home and Yellow Hill.

A literary topography for Yellow Hill

After his return to Shandong in 1680, Fa had settled permanently at Yellow Hill. In 1682, he painted here a landscape album of twelve leaves, now in the Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo 兵庫 prefecture, Japan (fig. 4.7). The Kurokawa album consists of eight painted leaves showing flat mountains. Compared to Fa’s more famous works, the album leaves are understated in their expressivity. Quite in keeping with his standard practice, the leaves are empty: no humans or indications of human presence such as houses, huts, bridges, and the like can be seen. The individual leaves do not contain titles, but they are faced with long inscriptions.

Most prominent is Fa’s use of the term “Ideas in Painting on Yellow Hill” (“Huangshan huayi” 黃山畫意) as the title of the album, inscribed on the first two leaves. The term *huayi* was first coined in the Northern Song dynasty by painters and critics like Ouyang Xiu 歐陽

³⁰ Fa Ruozhen, “Zhengyue Chang’an zishou liu shou” 正月長安自壽六首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji*, 212: 368.

修 (1007–1072) and Su Shi and was used to differentiate conceptions or ideas in painting from the representational form or appearance (*xing* 形) of objects depicted. Ouyang Xiu, for example, wrote a poem about an old painting of an oxcart in which he reflected on the function of painting to convey conceptions rather than simply depicting the forms of objects.³¹ Although the term's denotations differed subtly from writer to writer in the Northern Song dynasty,³² its fundamental meaning, namely that form or appearance of depicted objects or landscapes was secondary to the ideas a work was meant to convey, remained one of the foundational concepts of literati painting theory. Dong Qichang's reiteration of the literati ideal of the amateur painter (*lijia* 戾家) and his work's "scholarly spirit" (*shiqi* 士氣) as a contrast to the professional painter (*huashi* 畫師) and his work's "crafted spirit" (*jiangqi* 匠氣) is but a continuation of that thinking.³³ Interestingly, for Fa Ruozhen the old Song dynasty term played an important role as is attested to not only by the inscribed first two leaves of this album (the title), but also by the last leaf which is unaccompanied by a painting and constitutes a coda to the Kurokawa album. The inscribed text reads:

³¹ See Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting*, 24.

³² See Wai-kam Ho, "The Literary Concepts of 'Picture-like' (*Ju-hua*) and 'Picture-Idea' (*Hua-i*) in the Relationship between Poetry and Painting," in Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong, eds., *Word and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting* (New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), 359-404; Eugene Y. Wang, "Response: 'Picture Idea' and Its Cultural Dynamics in Northern Song China," *The Art Bulletin* 89, no. 3 (September 2007): 463.

³³ For a discussion, see Fong, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and Artistic Renewal," 1: 49.

Su Zizhan [Su Shi] said: “I do not have talent in painting, I only have ideas in painting.” Alas, I am old. How can I know what paintings are about? I also take ideas into my paintings. It is like presenting white clouds to a guest. [Inscribed] by the seventy *sui* old monk Huangshan, [dated] the fifth lunar month of the *renxu* year [1682].

蘇子瞻謂：「無畫才而有畫意。」僕老矣！何知所謂畫？亦以意為之，如白雲之贈客³⁴耳。黃山七十衲和南，是歲壬戌五月。

According to Fa Ruozhen, his conception of “ideas in painting” was inspired by the Song dynasty poet Su Shi. This in itself is curious because Su Shi’s “quote” that Fa Ruozhen gives can otherwise not be corroborated in Su’s work. However, the text was important for Fa Ruozhen since he even used it as a seal that can be found on some of his paintings.³⁵ In essence, Fa claimed to pursue the amateur ideal of literati painting. The difficulty of grasping what ideas in painting exactly were appears to be couched in a reference to the poem entitled “The Emperor asked what is there in the mountains; I replied with this poem” 詔問山中何所有，賦詩以答” by the Daoist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (452–536):

山中何所有，	[You ask:] What is there in the mountains?
嶺上多白雲。	On the peaks there are many white clouds.
只可自怡悅，	I can only enjoy them by myself,
不堪持贈君。	But it is impossible to grasp them for presenting them to you. ³⁶

³⁴ James Cahill had identified the character transcribed above with *ke* 客 as *qin* 親 and accordingly translated the last sentence as “bestowal of parental affection”; see Cahill, “Awkwardness and Imagery in the Landscapes of Fa Jo-chen.” For the same reading, see Shi Weicheng, “Fa Ruozhen (1613–1696) de shanshui hua yanjiu,” 47. However, it is clear that the character should be read as *ke*: the *qin* character in cursive script has an outward *tiao* 挑 stroke, while the *ke* character in cursive script terminates with an inward *dai* 帶 stroke which aligns closely with the character in leaf 11 (fig. 4.8). The album thus does not provide further evidence for the reading of clouds as a symbol of maternal love for her son.

³⁵ The seal can be found on an unpublished album in the collection of the Shandong Provincial Museum and on his masterpiece *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs*, also in the collection of that museum (fig. 2.26).

³⁶ Tao Hongjing 陶弘景, “Zhaowen shanzhong he suoyou, fushi yi ke” 詔問山中何所有，賦詩以答, *Huayang Tao yinju ji* 華陽陶隱居集, *juan* 1, 10a, in *ZGJBGJK*.

This Daoist conception of the clouds (and the world) as impermeant and ungraspable can be read as an analogy to painting in which the contained “ideas” cannot be grasped and can only be enjoyed by oneself.³⁷ Fa thus implied that a firmly determinable character of his paintings was not his desideratum. However, this does not mean that Fa Ruozen just painted for the sake of painting. Rather, it is possible to reconstruct some of his “ideas in painting” that he sought to express.

Read in conjunction with the opposing inscriptions, the Kurokawa album suggests that Fa aimed to accumulate cultural significance at Yellow Hill through establishing (imaginary) connections of his place of seclusion with literary paragons of the past. Similarly to the Guangdong album, with the exception of its leaf 7, the Kurokawa album shows flat mountains basically in a variation on the same compositional structure that is so characteristic for Fa Ruozen. Especially in leaves 9 and 10, the structural similarity to the series of hanging scrolls discussed in Chapter Two is apparent. That Fa had a relation between these landscapes and the local landscape of Yellow Hill in mind follows from two aspects. First, the album is accompanied by the aforementioned frontispiece which can be either read as a self-reference to Fa Ruozen who sported Huangshan as his sobriquet, or as a designation of Yellow Hill, the place at which he had chosen to seclude himself. The low, unimpressive hills depicted in Fa’s album appear to reflect the topography of the coastal area west of Jiaozhou Bay where Yellow Hill is located.

³⁷ Coincidentally, Fa’s reference to Tao Hongjing’s poem might also speak to his interest in the work of Mi Youren, for whom Tao’s poem equally was important and that informed Mi’s paintings of clouds. For a discussion and a slightly different translation of Tao’s poem, see Sturman, “Mi Youren and the Inherited Literati Tradition,” 1: 244.

Secondly, in the album Fa mobilized literary paragons and their reclusive dwellings for constructing a “literary topography” of Yellow Hill that drew up a lineage of sites of reclusion celebrated in literature and situated his own site of reclusion within.³⁸ A case in point of how he aimed to enhance Yellow Hill’s cultural significance is the album’s leaf 5. In very dark ink, Fa painted a low, flat mountain that rises behind a landbank upon which a cluster of trees grows. No particular art historical style is recognizable, thus further demonstrating that Fa was seldom interested in participating in the “return to the ancients” (*fugu*) movement that more prominent artists of the time adopted when they painted albums. The inscribed anecdote on the opposing leaf reads:

In his “Record of the Thatched Hut on Mount Lu,” Bai Letian [Bai Juyi] wrote: “In the hall, there are set up a wooden daybed, a plain screen, a lacquered *qin* (zither) as well as Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist books. Since I had become the master of the area, I [often] looked up to view the mountains, bent over to listen to the springs, and looked around at the bamboos, trees, clouds, and rocks. From dawn to dusk,³⁹ my eyes were overwhelmed [by the scenery, but later, the temptations of these things receded. One night [at Mount Lu] calms one’s body, two nights [at Mount Lu] quieten one’s heart, and after three nights [at Mount Lu], one becomes disinvested (*tuiran daran*) [from worldly affairs]. Nobody knows why, but this happens.”

白樂天《廬山草堂記》云：「堂中設木榻，素屏，漆琴，儒、道、佛書。樂天既來為主，仰觀山，俯聽泉，旁睨竹樹雲石，自辰及酉，應接不暇。俄物誘既息，一宿體寧，再宿心恬，三宿後頽然嗒然，不知其然而然。」

Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) had not been to Jiaozhou, and the low flat mountain depicted in Fa’s album leaf does not resemble in any way the stately Mount Lu whose majestic waterfall was a staple when it came to its artistic depiction (figs. 4.9 and 4.10). Thus, there is no

³⁸ The term “literary topography” is borrowed and altered from Whiteman’s “mnemonic topography”; see Whiteman, *Where Dragon Veins Meet*, 168.

³⁹ Literally from *chen* [fifth earthly branch, corresponds also to 7 am–9 am] to *you* [tenth earthly branch, corresponds also to 5 pm–7 pm].

apparent relationship between the painting and the inscription. Is it but an ungraspable “idea in painting” that Fa Ruozhen was trying to convey?

In his “Record of the Thatched Hut” (“Caotang ji” 草堂記), Bai Juyi described the charms and comforts of his modest residence at Mount Lu, a famous place of seclusion since the Six Dynasties. Another passage in Bai Juyi’s “Record of the Thatched Hut,” though unstated by Fa, can help to understand how Bai Juyi’s text must have enabled later readers to identify with his experience of reclusive dwelling:

Ah, even an ordinary man, if he builds himself a house, fits it with bed and mat, and lives there awhile, cannot help putting on an air of boastfulness and pride. And now here I am, master of a place like this, with all these objects offering me understanding, each after its own kind—how could I be anything but happy with my surroundings and at peace within, my body at rest, my mind content! Long ago Huiyong, Huiyuan, Zong Bing, Lei Cizong, eighteen men in all, came to this mountain, grew old and died here without ever going home. Though they lived a thousand years ago, I can understand what was in their hearts, because I am here too.

噫！凡人豐一屋，華一簣，而起居其間，尚不免有驕穩之態，今我為是物主，物至致知，各以類至，又安得不外適內和，體寧心恬哉？昔永、遠、宗、雷輩十八人同入此山，老死不返。去我千載，我知其心以是哉！⁴⁰

Since the painted landscape has no readily apparent relationship with the calligraphed excerpt of Bai Juyi’s “Record,” it cannot be merely understood as an illustration accompanying its opposite text. Nevertheless, the inscription provides some context for the painting. Bai Juyi’s “Record,” which Fa invoked with his short excerpt, makes clear that

⁴⁰ Bai Juyi 白居易, “Caotang ji” 草堂記, *Bai Juyi wenji jiaozhu* 白居易文集校注, annotated by Xie Siwei 謝思煒 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 255; the English translation is largely based on Burton Watson, *Po Chü-i: Selected Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 159-160. The monks referred to in the text are Huiyong 慧永 (n.d.), Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416), Zong Bing 宗炳 (375-443), and Lei Cizong 雷次宗 (386-448).

Bai's thatched hut had meaning beyond Bai himself and that Bai Juyi was speaking, through his "Record," to different literary audiences as well. Undoubtedly, Fa must have aimed to establish a parallel between Bai Juyi's and his own site of reclusion. It comes to no surprise that Fa omitted to paint a house or hut – he practically never painted elements that indicate human presence. Rather, he must have aimed at underscoring the wild and reclusive character of Yellow Hill.

Once this invocation is understood for what it is, a pattern of systematic borrowing on the part of Fa throughout his album becomes apparent. In the third leaf, a cluster of low mountains enshrouded in mist at the foot of which grow several trees is shown. By means of the accompanying inscription, Fa used the painting again to celebrate his own reclusive dwelling at Yellow Hill:

Wang Mojie [Wang Wei] sent a letter to Pei Di, saying: "During the night, I ascended Huazi Ridge [from where I could see] the waves of the Wang River and the moon above and below [reflected in the water]. In the distance, light flickering, and outside of the forests, on in the alley, the chilly dogs howled like leopards. The village was filled with the nightly noises of husk rice and mortar and, in turn, with few and scattered rings of bells in between. At this time sitting alone, I thought about times long past when we joined hands to compose poetry, walked narrowly [illegible] by the clear waters. Now waiting for the arrival of spring when grasses and trees will again grow lush, when the spring mountains [with their green colors] can be seen, when small fish jump out of the water and white gulls spread their wings, when dew moistens the green riverbank, and when pheasants crow in morning wheat fields. Then, spring will not be far! At this moment, can you accompany me, travelling together?"

王摩詰致書裴迪曰：「夜登華子岡，輞水淪漣，與月上下；遠火明滅，林外深巷寒犬，吠聲如豹；村墟夜舂，復與疏鐘相間。此時獨坐，多思曩時，攜手賦詩，步仄□□，臨清流也。當待春中，草木蔓叢，春山可望，輕鱗出水，白鷗矯翼，露濕青皋，麥隴朝雉。斯之不遠，倘能從我遊乎？」

Fa Ruozen's inscription is a slightly altered excerpt from the famous letter "In the hills: a letter sent to flourishing talent Pei" ("Shan zhong yu Pei xiucai Di shu" 山中與裴秀才迪書) that Wang Wei had sent to his close friend Pei Di 裴迪 (fl. ca. 713–741).⁴¹ In that letter, the famous Tang poet described his estate at the Wheel River (Wang chuan 輞川) within a wintry landscape. But more than that, Wang Wei's letter is also a monument to friendship as it invites Pei Di to join the author when spring time has come and to visit his villa. Unfortunately, it is not clear for whom Fa Ruozen painted his album, so it can only be speculated if the album was meant to be given to somebody else. However, one of the studio names of Fa's Hall to be Bequeathed (Yitang 詒堂), which he built in 1682 at Yellow Hill, Cottage for Friends (Youlu 友廬), indicates that he perceived of his reclusive abode at Yellow Hill as a place where social interactions were to take place with close friends.⁴² Fa Ruozen thus also drew a parallel between Wang Wei's mountain estate at the Wheel River—the place so intimately connected with Wang Wei's friendship with Pei Di—and his own Cottage for Friends at Yellow Hill.⁴³

Unlike Xu Fang, who lived in the cultural heartland of China and thus could find plentiful examples of famous men who had populated, lived, visited, been buried, and commemorated in the environs of Suzhou, Fa Ruozen did not live in a region that was culturally

⁴¹ For the original text and a translation, see Paul Rouzer, trans., *The Poetry and Prose of Wang Wei* (Boston and Berlin, Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2020), 240-241.

⁴² For the building and completion of the *Hall to be Bequeathed*, see Fa Ruozen, "Yitang cheng ershou" 詒堂成二首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 470.

⁴³ For a study on the collaborative nature of *The Wheel River Collection* (*Wangchuan ji* 輞川集) coauthored by Wang Wei and Pei Di, and thus as a collection that focused on individual sites of Wang Wei's retreat, see Ding Xiang Warner, "The Two Voices of *Wangchuan Ji*: Poetic Exchange between Wang Wei and Pei Di," *Early Medieval China* 10-11, no. 2 (2005): 57-72.

significant. While Dong Yining described places that had long been cherished within the cultural memory of a transregionally circulating and operating class of literati who, by means of their education, could refer to the same canon of learning and thus recognize the importance of places throughout the empire, Fa lived at the culturally somewhat insignificant margins of the empire. Hardly had any famous men ever lived in Jiaozhou or more specifically at Yellow Hill.⁴⁴ Fa thus had to come up with a different strategy to make Yellow Hill culturally significant. His Kurokawa album demonstrates that he turned to famous literary figures of the past and enlisted their reputation and their writings about their respective dwellings as a means to establish parallels of his home with that of his more illustrious literary counterparts. This is once more exemplified in leaf 7 of the same album. It shows a flat marshland typical for the areas closer to the Jiaozhou Bay. In the inscription, Fa Ruozhen drew on the archetype of reclusive living, Tao Yuanming:

Tao Yuanming often heard the sounds of water in the fields; leaning on his stick to listen he sighed: “The autumn rice fields are already in bloom; green color saturates the eyes of those present. At this time when we open mind and body [to take in the scene] and wash away the brambles [in our heart], this water is close be the gentleman, my teacher.” Written in the seventh month, amidst rain.

陶淵明常聞田間水聲，倚杖聽之，嘆曰：「秋稻已秀，翠色染人，時剖胸襟，一洗荊棘，此水近吾師丈人矣。」七月雨中。

The text is a short anecdote not taken from Tao Yuanming’s collected writings, but from the collection of anecdotes entitled *Talks, Words, and Discourses* (*Yuyan tan* 語言談), compiled

⁴⁴ A notable exception is Su Shi who had been an official in neighboring Gaomi from 1074–1077; see Kong Fanli 孔凡禮, *Su Shi nianpu* 蘇軾年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), 302-358.

by the late Ming writer Zhang Xianyi 張獻翼 (1534–1604).⁴⁵ Fa’s album appears to have some relation to the text in that it shows watery fields or marshland. In short, this story also served Fa Ruozhen as a way to construct a parallel between the reclusive life style of Tao Yuanming, who had given up his government position and retired at home where he looked after his fields and family. Other leaves of the album have similar meaning when Fa Ruozhen writes about places of seclusion used and visited by Sima Qian (leaf 4) and Su Shi (leaf 6). A little bit less known, probably, than the aforementioned famous writers is the reference in the album’s last illustrated leaf to Xi Yu 習鬱 (fl. ca. 25-50 AD), an attendant of the first emperor of the Eastern Han dynasty Liu Xiu 劉秀 (5 BCE-57 CE), and Shan Jian 山簡 (253–312), the son of Shan Tao 山濤 (205–283, one of the so-called Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove). Fa recalls Xi’s place of retirement:

Xi Yu, palace attendant during the Han, created a pond [for fishing] on the southern slope of Mount Xian [in Xiangyang county, Hubei province]. Next to the pond, there was a high dyke on which he planted bamboos and large catalpas. Lotus greened the pond’s shores, and water-chestnuts and prickly waterlilies covered the water’s surface. Whenever Shan Jian came to that place, there was not a single time he would not get roaring drunk, and he would say: “This is my Gaoyang Pond!” Children of Xiangyang often sang [about this]. I have inscribed this also during the seventh month.

漢侍中習郁于峴山南作池，池邊有高堤，種竹及長楸，芙蓉綠岸，菱芡覆水，山簡每臨此，未嘗不大醉，曰：「此是我高陽池也！」襄陽小兒常歌□□，又七月題。

⁴⁵ Zhang Xianyi 張獻翼, *Yuyan tan* 語言談, in He Fuzheng 賀復徵, ed., *Wenzhang bianti huixuan* 文章辨體彙選, *juan* 776, 16b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

Shan Jian had been a general stationed at Xiangyang during the Jin dynasty. Whenever at leisure, he would get drunk at the Xi Family Pond (Xijia chi 習家池), also called Gaoyang Pond (Gaoyang chi 高陽池), and once exclaimed that the pond was his pond.⁴⁶ Ever since, the lake was associated with drunkenness, reclusion, and the beauty of nature, and was celebrated in Tang poetry by writers such as Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689/691–740) and Du Fu.⁴⁷ Fa Ruozhen, who was well-versed in Tang dynasty poetry, certainly must have been aware of the acknowledgment that authors like Du Fu and Meng Haoran bestowed on the Xi Family Pond as a place of relaxation and of reclusion.

To some extent, Fa's album resonates with the album leaf *Mountain Retreat* (*Shanzhuang tu* 山莊圖) that Shi Lin 施霖 (fl. ca. 1630–1660) contributed to a collaborative album that was made for Zhou Lianggong between 1654 and 1655 (fig. 4.11). In contrast to Fa's album leaves, Shi Lin actually depicted a mountain retreat. The Nanjing-based artist Weng Ling 翁陵 (d. ca. 1668) inscribed the album with the “Essay on Enjoying One's Aspiration” (“Lezhi lun” 樂志論) by the Han-dynasty scholar and official Zhong Changtong 仲長統 (180–220):

If I might have for my dwelling a spacious house and fertile fields, backed by hills and verging on a stream, surrounded by waterways and ponds, dotted with bamboo and trees, fruit orchard in front, and a scattering garden behind. With boat and carriage to save me the trouble of walking and wading, with servants to spare me the toil of my four limbs; my parents might have all delicacies for food, and my

⁴⁶ See Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, *Xin jiaoben Jinshu bing fubian liuzhong* 新校本晉書并附編六種 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1987), 2: 1229-1230.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Meng Haoran 孟浩然, “Gaoyang chi song Zhu Er” 高陽池送朱二, in *Meng Haoran shiji jianzhu* 孟浩然詩集箋注, annotated by Tong Peiji 佟培基 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013), 354. Du Fu also alluded to the story of Shan Jian's drunkenness in his poem “Early Winter” (“Chu dong” 初冬); see Owen, trans., *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 4: 37.

wife and children might lack the trials of exertion. When my friends congregate I could set out wine and food for their enjoyment, and on feast days make offerings of steamed lamb and pork. I would loiter in the garden or wander through woods; splash the clear water or chase cool breezes; angle for the swimming carp or shoot at the high-flying goose; recite poetry below the altar for rain sacrifices and return to the high hall; or I would compose my mind in an inner chamber, mediating on Laozi's mysterious emptiness; practicing breath control, I would seek to become an Adept; or on daily basis with enlightened friends, I would discuss metaphysics and books, contemplate Heaven and Earth, and consider the human state; I would pluck the classic melody of the Nanfeng, playing a lovely tune in the augmented-re [or *shang*] mode; I would take my ease above the world, looking with detachment on all between heaven and earth: untouched by the censure of my fellows, I would live out my allotted term of life. Then soaring to the heaven, I would be outside the bounds of the universe. Why should I desire to have entry into the king's palace? ...

使居有良田廣宅，背山臨流，溝池環匝，竹木周布，果蔬樹前，場圃居後。舟車足以代步涉之艱，使令足以息四體之役。養親有兼味之膳，妻子無苦身之勞。良朋萃止，則陳酒肴以娛之，嘉時吉日，則烹羔豚以奉之。躊躇畦苑，游戲平林。濯清水，追涼風，釣游鯉，弋高鴻。風於舞雩之下，詠歸高堂之上。安神閨房，思老氏之玄虛，噓吸精和，求至人之髣髴。日與達者論道講書，俯仰二儀，錯綜人物。彈南風之雅操，發清商之妙曲。逍遙一世之上，睥睨天地之間，不受當世之責，永保性命之期。如此則可以凌霄漢，出宇宙之外矣，豈羨入帝王之門哉！...⁴⁸

Xiaofan Ami Li has emphasized that the “Essay on Enjoying One’s Aspiration” is written in the subjunctive voice in which Zhong Changtong “envisages his ideal life after retirement from political office.”⁴⁹ Painted and inscribed around 1654 or 1655, this must have been a suitable way for Shi Lin and Weng Ling to wish Zhou Lianggong—who was serving as an official at that time—a peaceful retirement. While Shi Lin’s album leaf therefore also shows a place of retirement like Fa Ruozhen’s more abstract visions presented in his album, it is

⁴⁸ The transcription of Zhong Changtong’s “Essay” is followed by the signature line “The elder gentlemen Le [Zhou Lianggong] ordered Weng Ling to inscribe [this album leaf]” 櫟翁先生命翁陵書. For the slightly changed translation of Zhang Changtong’s essay, see James R. Hightower, “The *Fu* of T’ao Ch’ien,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 17, no. 1/2 (June 1954): 217-218.

⁴⁹ Xiaofan Ami Li, “Playful You in the Zhuangzi and Six Dynasties Literati Writing,” *British Journal of Chinese Studies* 8, no. 2 (2019): 10-11. 1-28, <https://doi.org/10.51661/bjocs.v8i2.9> (last accessed October 31, 2022).

important to differentiate the two works: Shi Lin wished Zhou Lianggong to attain his aspirations of living in retirement. Fa Ruozhen, on the other hand, was advertising his own reclusive dwelling to whomever the album was meant to reach. Shi Lin's leaf is a generalizing vision of Zhou Lianggong's future while Fa Ruozhen's album is an attempt to accumulate cultural value for Yellow Hill by integrating it into an invented literary topography of Jiaozhou's environs.

The aesthetically restrained Kurokawa album reveals its intrinsic interest only in conjunction with Fa's inscriptions; however, it says much about Fa's art. In his album, Fa went far beyond the customary and recognized practice of conjugating art-historical styles and demonstrating art-historical prowess to create something more personal and creative. While Fa Ruozhen started the painted part of his album in leaf 3 with an inscription mentioning Wang Wei, the figure head of the "Southern School" as declared by Dong Qichang, the individual leaves are painted without stylistic hints to the past. The album therefore cannot be seen as a painterly exercise that seeks a positioning within the lineage of literati painting as Dong Qichang had conceived it. Neither did Fa Ruozhen use art-historical precedent known and employed by his contemporaries such as Lu Hong's 廬鴻 (fl. 713–742) *Ten Views from a Thatched Hut* (*Caotang shizhi tu* 草堂十志圖) to show different aspects of his site of reclusion (fig. 4.12).⁵⁰ Neither do the inscribed texts follow a chronological or any other recognizable systematic order. Interestingly, it appears that this album may have been

⁵⁰ Fa Ruozhen's contemporary Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715) was clearly aware of Lu Hong's art-historical precedent when he painted *Ten Records of a Thatched Hall* for a certain Master Jiweng; for a recent discussion of this painting, see Whiteman, *Where Dragon Veins Meet*, 167-174. For Dong Qichang's use of Lu Hong's painting for his own artistic projects that aimed at representing reclusion, see Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 47-49.

less perceived as a “painterly” than as a “literary” project: it was literary history and literary works that Fa referred to primarily. This indicates Fa’s broader concern for literary matters. Artistic style was not of importance for Fa, rather it was the way how he used the album to construct a literary topography that had less to do with the actual appearance of Yellow Hill than with Fa’s desire to affiliate his Studio of Reclusion with that of famous writers of the past. Through his album, Fa’s album sought an identification with famous literati recluses of the past.

Yellow Hill as a social hub for local literati

A month after painting the Kurokawa album, Fa did another album of landscapes, this time with sixteen leaves and now in the collection of the Tianjin Art Museum (fig. 4.13). The Tianjin album is an interesting outlier among Fa Ruozen’s work as it includes human figures, boats, and simple habitats in a number of the leaves. The inclusion of these motifs may prompt questions of authenticity, but the album compares well with other paintings by Fa, and the quality is high. For example, the pine trees in leaf 6 or the cloud-like mountain masses in leaf 15 are very much in the hand of Fa Ruozen and can stylistically be closely compared to paintings like *Painting to the Essay on the Outreaching Canopy Pine* and *Mount Tiantai* (figs. 1.7 and 2.32). Furthermore, the calligraphy on the last two inscribed leaves stylistically conforms to Fa Ruozen’s handwriting. According to his colophon, Fa Ruozen made the album for his close friends, the brothers Tan Biti 談必揚 (1611–1690) and Tan Bida, who hailed from a Jiaozhou literati family and had both passed the county level examinations in the early Qing:

Tan Yiruo [Tan Biti] and his brother [Tan Bida] are my relatives by marriage. Now we are all getting old in the empty mountain and our acquaintances have become fewer and fewer. As our villages are distanced by one hundred *li*, we hardly have time to get together, so much so that they only came twice in three years to visit me. [After having been served] with some unfiltered rice wine and wild celery for several days, they departed. Can anyone who has feelings bear such [separation]? At the moment of parting, I made sixteen stanzas to commemorate our meeting. Each poem is accompanied with a painting. My poems and paintings are not well done. [This album] is only to commemorate our old brotherhood so it will not be forgotten. Hereafter, our white hair will become [even] thinner and our allotted time diminishes. How many days and months are there for us? I have to remain on this [illegible] way in the human world, but with whom else can I discuss this? I heave deep sighs! Inscribed by your younger brother Ruozhen at Yellow Hill's "Hall to be Bequeathed" while in his early seventies during the eighth month of the *renwu* year [1682].

談暘若伯仲，兒女姻也。年老山空，故人落落。遠村百里，聚散無時。三年之內祇來再晤，濁酒泥芹，數日復別，未免有情，誰能堪此。臨別以十六章識之，復一章一圖，詩畫不工，聊將老兄弟之意於不忘耳。過此以往，白髮鬢，歲不我與，日月幾何，得留此□道於人間者，其誰與言之，為太息太息。壬戌八月，七十初，弟若真識於黃山之詒堂。⁵¹

Although Fa's inscription states that sixteen poems had been written to complement the albums' individual leaves, there are no verses accompanying the paintings as the album is constituted today. What is known is that Tan Bida had arrived in the company of Yang Xiu at Yellow Hill in the fourth month of that year.⁵² Shortly after that, Tan Bida had to "leave to go to the city" [Jiaozhou?]. On that occasion Fa Ruozhen wrote a sequel of fifteen transmitted poems.⁵³ Since, according to the colophon to the painted album, Tan Bida appears to have left Yellow Hill in the eighth month, it is likely that Tan Bida returned after

⁵¹ I acknowledge the help of Wu Guohao 吳國豪 and Cai Chunxu 蔡春旭 with deciphering this colophon.

⁵² Fa Ruozhen, "Tan Baifu lai shan tong Yang Zhongyu niantong qishiliu" 談白復來山同楊仲玉年同七十六, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 454.

⁵³ Fa Ruozhen, "Songbie Tan Baifu rucheng shiwu shou" 送別談白復如城十五首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 464-465.

this trip to a city. The colophon to the Tianjin album mentions sixteen poems while the sequel in Fa's poetry collection only contains fifteen poems; additionally, these are also dated approximately four months before Fa did his Tianjin album. Thus, it is questionable whether the sequel of published poems corresponds to the poems that Fa mentioned in his Tianjin colophon. However, the poems seem to be related to the album in some way or the other. A poem taken from the sequel of fifteen is informative:

此生搖落散江湖，
十二黃山一病夫。
尚許明年春色早，
重來畫作洛陽圖。

I fell down from this life and have been drifting among
rivers and lakes,
Twelve [paintings] of Yellow Hill and one sick man.
I promise you that in the early days of next spring,
I will paint *The Luoyang* [*Gathering*] when you come
[to visit me] again.⁵⁴

The explanatory note to the poem reads: “[We go] outside to look at the twelve paintings of Yellow Hill” 出看黃山十二圖. Stating that he had returned to Jiaozhou after a failed official career, the poem thus confirms that the “sick man” Fa Ruozhen was producing images of Yellow Hill when Tan Bida was visiting. And while the sequel of fifteen poems (and not sixteen as Fa said in his colophon), the number of paintings (sixteen in the album versus twelve mentioned in the poem) as well as a different dating (fourth month vs. eighth month) all suggest that Fa had painted yet another album of Yellow Hill that is now lost, the information gleaned from these sets of poems can help to explain the surviving album.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 212: 465.

For example, from the explanatory note to the first poem of the sequel of fifteen it can be known that Yang Xiu was present when Tan Bida left.⁵⁵ Nowhere does Fa Ruozhen's sequel mention the presence of Tan Bida's younger brother Tan Biti, but the first poem talks about the presence of "two, three people" 兩三人. Read in conjunction with the album's colophon, this possibly indicates that a group of four, Tan Bida, Tan Biti, Yang Xiu, and Fa himself had come together at Yellow Hill. This is valuable information since a close inspection of leaf 1 of the album reveals the presence of four people: three are leisurely seated in the lower right corner of the leaf, while the fourth person is seen walking with a staff in his left hand, partly hidden by a formation of rocks. Is this Tan Bida leaving for the city while Fa Ruozhen, Tan Biti, and Yang Xiu remain behind at Yellow Hill?

In leaf 2, the arrangement of trees growing diagonally through the lower picture plane as if aligned along a straight line evokes a similar composition already found in leaf 10 of the Kurokawa album (cf. fig. 4.7). This suggests again that the leaf was meant to represent in some way Fa's Yellow Hill. Under the covering of some trees, a house appears in the lower left corner of the leaf – Fa Ruozhen's Hall to be Bequeathed (aka Studio of Reclusion or Cottage for Friends) that he had completed only two months earlier? The theme of a pictorial record of the Tan brothers' visit to Yellow Hill can further be explored in leaf 8. Showing three roofed houses that appear under a protective cover of trees at the foot of a hill, the scene might well be a depiction of Fa Ruozhen's Hall to be Bequeathed alongside his two libraries that he had built at Yellow Hill, the Jade Books Pavilion (Yushu ge 玉書

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 212: 464.

閣) and the Hall for Inspecting Antiquity (Jigu tang 稽古堂). The album's last leaf shows two standing men, one appearing to be leaving while the other remains behind. Maybe, the scene then is the scene of departure that Fa describes in his inscription to the album. Tan Biti's wife had died at the beginning of autumn, which may well have been the reason for his departure.⁵⁶ The pain felt by Fa upon the prospect of this separation (“Can anyone who has feelings bear such [separation]?”) resonates with the themes of separation, mortality, age, and loss that Fa expressed in his inscription and that seemingly find a visual outlet in this leaf.

Having constructed imaginary connections with famous historical writers and having established a literary topography for Yellow Hill in his Kurokawa album, the Tianjin album provides insight into how Fa Ruozhen's Yellow Hill served as a place of sociability and local hub for literati activities. It is an important piece of evidence that draws attention to Yellow Hill's overlapping but not contradictory functions as a place of sociability and a place of reclusion. The donkey rider in leaf 11 and the wood gatherer in leaf 12 are all familiar motives standing in for the recluse, thus allowing the album to convey a sense of seclusion, as well. In leaf 3, a single seated person is shown contemplating a cliff. Fa again makes use of the Mi style to paint what appears to be a transformative, fluid rock – such an essential part of Fa's larger hanging scrolls as well. There appear to be also other hints at classical ideals, maybe of reclusion, when he paints boats in leaf 10, but these allusions

⁵⁶ Fa Ruozhen, “Chuqiu Tan Yiruo furen wang, feng wei yizhang” 初秋談暘若夫人亡，奉慰一章，*Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 472.

remain less determinable. Overall, the use of ink and brush in this album make its appreciation very easy.

The album also draws attention to the fact that Fa occasionally painted figures. Fa Ruozhen's surviving work otherwise does not appear to comprise images featuring human figures. However, that does not mean that Fa never painted human subjects. In his poem to Tan Biti cited above, Fa had promised to paint a *Luoyang* [*Gathering*] painting for Tan Biti if the latter were to visit again. With this title, Fa Ruozhen referred to a painting showing gathering friends that goes back to the Song dynasty painting *Nine Old Men Club* [*Gathering*] in the *Huichang* [*Period*] (*Huichang jiulao tu* 會昌九老圖) (fig. 4.14). The literary precedent for this painting is the Society of Nine Old Men of Luoyang (Luoyang jiulao hui 洛陽九老會), alternatively also known as Society of Nine Old Men of Xiangshan (Xiangshan jiulao hui 香山九老會). This society had been founded by the poet Bai Juyi in 845 (during the Huichang period, 841–846) at a temple in Luoyang 洛陽 (Henan province) who had invited eight other politically frustrated scholars to join the club.⁵⁷ In the painting, nine scholars are shown divided into three scenes: three scholars are seated in a pavilion above water where they are looking at an object placed in front of them on a table; this scene is followed by one in which two scholars sitting in a boat are playing chess (*weiqi* 圍棋; Jap.: *go*); in the last scene, four scholars seated around a table examine a hanging scroll held up by a servant. Indeed, Fa Ruozhen appears to have made a number of paintings that show the gathering of friends. Unfortunately, these are all but lost. However, the documentation of

⁵⁷ Ouyang Guang 歐陽光, *Song Yuan shishe yanjiu congkao* 宋元詩社研究叢稿 (Guangzhou: Guangdong gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), 152-153.

these paintings—which he came to call *The Five Elders*—underlines to what extent Yellow Hill and paintings created in relation to this place served the local Jiaozhou literati community to cement their relations.

The Five Elders of Yellow Hill

Shortly after returning to Jiaozhou in 1680, Fa appears to have painted his first *Five Elders of Yellow Hill* (*Huangshan wulao tu* 黃山五老圖), the whereabouts of which are unclear today. Two poems out of a set of three inform about the circumstances of its making:

- I.
黃山之北楊子居，
去我黃山三里餘。
十日不來封草徑，
山廬冷落滿床書。
- North of Yellow Hill is the residence of Yang [Xiu],
It is over three *li* away from my Yellow Hill.
If he doesn't come for ten days, grass blocks the
footpath,
My mountain cottage unfrequented, my bed filled with
books.
- II.
傾倒泥尊恰半壺，
蒼蒼短髮漫狂呼。
須裁五尺吳江水，
畫作黃山五老圖。
- Bottoming up my earthen jar, only half of the ewer is
filled,
With ash-white short hair, at leisure we madly shout.
I ought to cut five *chi* of the waters of the Wu river,
[On which] I paint *Five Elders from Yellow Hill*.⁵⁸

In the first poem, Fa described the remoteness and wilderness of Yellow Hill: if his friend Yang Xiu would not visit in ten days, the path connecting their residences would be unpassable. Written shortly after his final return from Beijing to Jiaozhou in 1680, the poem

⁵⁸ Fa Ruozhen, “Yang Zhongyu lai tong Tan Baifu zhugong jie nian qishi yu san shou” 楊仲玉來同談白復諸公皆年七十餘三首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 427.

also contains a lament on frustrated hopes about finding renewed success in Beijing in the 1670s: the first line's "residence of Yang" (*Yangzi ju* 楊子居) and the last line's "bed filled with books" (*manchuang shu* 滿床書) refer to the long poem "Chang'an Thoughts on Antiquity" ("Chang'an guyi" 長安古意) by Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰 (ca. 634–ca. 684/685), where one of the last couplets reads:

寂寂寥寥揚子居，	Silent and alone, Master Yang dwelt [in Chang'an],
年年歲歲一床書。	Year after year, his whole bed filled with books. ⁵⁹

According to William Nienhauser, Lu Zhaolin here made clear "his own frustrations [of] not having found political success, comparing himself to the great literatus, Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 B.C.E.–18 C.E.) of the Han."⁶⁰ This appears to mirror Fa's own experiences in Beijing closely.

For our purposes, the second poem is of greater interest. At first, it describes a get-together on Yellow Hill at which elderly men were playing drinking games which became noisy. The third and fourth lines then turn to the making of a painting called *Five Elders from Yellow Hill*: With the three characters "water of the Wu river" (*Wujiang shui* 吳江水), Fa cites from Zhang Han's 張翰 (fl. around 302) "Song about Nostalgia for the Wu River" ("Si wujiang

⁵⁹ Translated in William H. Nienhauser, "Chang'an on My Mind: A Reading of Lu Zhaolin's 'Chang'an Thoughts on Antiquity,'" *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (2010): 81.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

ge” 思吳江歌), thus evoking the city of Suzhou.⁶¹ Based on the fact that Fa used the verb *cai* 裁, which refers to the cutting done by a tailor, Fa appears to mean that he needs to cut five *chi* (approximately 1.5 meters) of Suzhou silk which he would have used to make *Five Elders from Yellow Hill*. Having mentioned Yang Xiu in the first poem, he presumably was one person featured in that painting, but who were the others? An answer to that question can be gauged from another poem written seven years later, in 1687, when Fa Ruozhen either created another *Five Elders* or amended his earlier painting of 1680:⁶²

龐眉皓齒髮全疏， 恰得龍眠興有餘。 禿筆書空懶視草， （黃山） 長竿釣去坐忘魚。 （仲玉） 掛杖渾身皆是胆， （暘若） 辭官徒步不登車。 （九芝） 猶憐司馬偏年少， （五玉） 也老南山學種蔬。	Enormous eyebrows, white teeth, the hair is sparse on everyone's head, Coincidentally, [this painting] attained a bit of Longmian's insight. Wielding a worn-out brush in the air, [I, Huangshan] am reluctant to proofread imperial memorials, ⁶³ Fishing with a long pole to renounce the world, a seated [Zhongyu] forgets about fish. ⁶⁴ Hanging up his [climbing] cane, [Yiruo's] entire body still exhales courage, Having quit his post, [Jiuzhi] is on foot, not riding in a carriage. And though lovely military expert [Wuyu] is still young, He also ages on Southern Mountain while learning how to grow vegetables.
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⁶¹ The line in question reads: “In the waters of the Wu River, perch fish are full and round” 吳江水兮鱸正肥. Zhang Han's poem is recorded in Gong Mingzhi 龔明之, *Zhong Wu ji wen* 中吳紀聞, *juan* 3, 15b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁶² Since the chronological ordering of Fa's poetry must have been done by the influential early Qing book editor from Jiaozhou, Zhang Qianyi 張謙益 (1650–1733), the dating of the poems might also not always be correct, thus making it possible that the 1680 and 1687 poems were written around the same time and refer to the same painting.

⁶³ Justifying his retirement from an imperial official position.

⁶⁴ That is to say, Zhongyu cares not about fame, wealth, and station.

(作五老圖狀李龍眠白描) (I made *Five Elders from Yellow Hill* imitating [the sitters] in the fine-line style of Li Longmian).⁶⁵

This poem contains a high amount of information that tells much about Fa Ruozen and his art. First, we know that the five elders were Fa Ruozen himself as well as his friends Yang Xiu (sobriquet: Zhongyu), Yang Xiu's younger brother Yang Bo 楊珀 (b. 1623, sobriquet: Wuyu), Tan Biti (sobriquet: Yiruo), and Fu Zhongling 傅鐘靈 (b. 1616, sobriquet: Jiuzhi). The poem also describes Fa Ruozen's lost painting. Not only did Fa describe how the individual sitters must have been depicted in the painting, but he also indicated that he used the style of the Song dynasty painter Li Gonglin. *The Nine Old Men of the Huichang Period* is occasionally associated with Li Gonglin (cf. fig. 4.14). Fa had promised a *Luoyang* [*Gathering*] to his friend Tan Biti in 1682, suggesting that he was familiar with this work, or at least the tradition that goes back to this work.⁶⁶ Indeed, paintings in the tradition of *Nine Old Men Club* in which scholars are shown to gather in a garden setting continued to be popular into the Ming dynasty: paintings like *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* (*Xingyuan yaji tu* 杏園雅集圖) attributed to Xie Huan 謝環 (1377–1457) and *Nine Old Men* (*Jiulao tu* 九老圖) by Huang Biao 黃彪 (fl. around 1594) speak for this (figs. 4.15 and 4.16). It is thus possible that Fa's lost painting could have looked similar to these paintings.

⁶⁵ See Fa Ruozen, "Qiumiao de Tan Yiruo, Fu Jiuzhi, Yang Zhongyu, [Yang] Wuyu guo huangshan, zuo *Wulao tu*, ni Xinghuazhou bu juan shishou" 秋杪得談暘若、傅九芝、楊仲玉、五玉、過黃山，作五老圖，擬杏花洲補卷十首, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 545-546.

⁶⁶ There are other works that portray the gathering in the collections of the Liaoning Provincial Museum and the National Palace Museum; for a discussion, see Scarlett Jang, "Representations of Exemplary Scholar-Officials, Past and Present," in Cary Y. Liu and Dora C.Y. Ching, eds., *Arts of the Sung and Yuan: Ritual, Ethnicity, and Style in Painting* (Princeton, NJ: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1999), 53-55.

However, the poem also indicates that Fa had used Li Gonglin's fine-line or "plain-drawing" (*baimiao* 白描) manner, a style of painting that "features subtle, calligraphic brushwork in which the slightest inflections of the artist's arm, hand, and fingers produce linear patterns unobscured by ... brilliant colors and the spectacular variety of ink tonalities."⁶⁷ Most indicative for Li Gonglin's fine brush line is his *Five Horses* (*Wuma tu* 五馬圖) which only recently resurfaced in an exhibition held at the Tōkyō National Museum in early 2019 (fig. 4.17). The fine lines associated with this style continued to be popular in the seventeenth century and were used for example by the foremost figure painter of Fa Ruozen's time, Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1599–1652), in his *An Elegant Gathering* (*Yaji tu* 雅集圖) (fig. 4.18).⁶⁸ Fa may have seen works attributed to Li Gonglin in the imperial collection while serving in Beijing, or he may have consulted painting manuals. Fa's friend Song Luo had recorded Li Gonglin's *Five Horses* in the Zhuang 莊 family collection in Piling 毗陵 (Wujin county, Jiangsu province), and maybe Fa saw the work there.⁶⁹

Returning to Fa's *The Five Elders*, it is important to note that he painted the work when his four friends came to Yellow Hill for a visit.⁷⁰ Recording the gathering of friends at a

⁶⁷ Harrist, *Painting and Private Life*, 20. The style has also been described as the embodiment of the philosophy of literati painting; see Richard Barnhart, "Li Kung-lin and the Art of Painting," in *Li Kung-lin's Classic of Filial Piety* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 19.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of this commemoration of a fictive gathering of historical figures, see Anne Burkus-Chasson, "Between Representations: The Historical and the Visionary in Chen Hongshou's *Yaji*," *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 2 (June 2002): 315-330.

⁶⁹ Song Luo 宋犖, *Junlang erbi* 筠廊二筆, *juan* 2, 30b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁷⁰ This is indicated by the title of the suite of ten poems from which the description of the painting is taken: "I did *Five Elders* when, at the end of autumn, I received [the visit of] Tan Yiruo, Fu Jiuzhi, Yang Zhongyu, and [Yang] Wuyu who passed by Yellow Hill..." 秋杪得談暘若、傅九芝、楊仲玉、五玉、過黃山，作五老圖...; see Fa Ruozen, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 545.

particular place, the painting is part of a long tradition of such works done throughout the history of painting in China. A historical precedent more pertinent for Fa's painting might be another Song dynasty painting, the anonymous album *Five Old Men of Suiyang* (*Suiyang wulao tu* 睢陽五老圖) that was painted sometime between 1051 and 1056 (fig. 4.19). Here, the five high Northern Song officials Du Yan 杜衍 (978–1057), Wang Huan 王渙 (d. in the Northern Song), Bi Shichang 畢世長 (b. 963), Feng Ping 馮平 (d. in the Northern Song), and Zhu Guan 朱貫 (b. 968) are depicted in old age in fine line and frontal pose, a style that is reminiscent of even earlier, Tang dynasty figure painting. Originally a handscroll that is now mounted as five individual album leaves, the work commemorated the officials' gathering after their retirement in Suiyang 睢陽 (Henan province). Immediately after its completion, it attracted considerable attention when famous literati like Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), Fan Zhongyan, Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, and others wrote poems and colophons for the album.⁷¹ Paintings in the tradition of *Five Old Men of Suiyang* continued to be popular in the Ming and Qing period as is attested to by the late Ming or early Qing *The Elder Hermits of Xianshan* (*Xianshan yilao tu* 峴山逸老圖) (fig. 4.20).

⁷¹ For discussions of that painting, see Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1973), 165-170; Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th–14th Century* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 44-47; Wang Lianqi 王連起, "Song ren 'Suiyang wulao tu kao' 宋人「睢陽五老圖」考, *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊, no. 1 (2003): 7–21; Itakura Masaaki 板倉聖哲, "Suiyou-Goro zuzo no seiritsu to tenkai: Hokuso-jidai tisikijin no kaiga hyosho" 睢陽五老圖像の成立と展開——北宋時代知識人の絵画表象, *Bijutsushi Ronso* 美術史論叢 24 (2008): 47-71. For a Chinese translation by Huang Liyun 黃立芸, see Itakura Masaaki 板倉聖哲, "Suiyang Wulao tuxiang de chengli yu kaizhan: Beisong zhishi fenzi de huihua biaoxiang" 睢陽五老圖象的成立與開展——北宋知識分子的繪畫表象, in Shanghai bowuguan 上海博物館, ed., *Zai du Suiyang Wulao: Yishushi de weidu* 再讀睢陽五老——藝術史的維度 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2017), 48-69.

The theme of five old men having retired to a place in the province resonates well with Fa Ruozhen's *The Five Elders*. Based on the poem, the painting's content, the depicted individuals' postures as well as the painting's style are known. The poem thus provides evidence showcasing that Fa's repertoire exceeded the landscape genre. Indeed, that Fa must have been a far more versatile painter than he is conventionally thought of is attested to by another handscroll, his *Chrysanthemums and Rocks* (*Jushi tu* 菊石圖), which Fa painted in 1694 and in which he moved away from the landscape genre in order to paint "rocks and flowers" (fig. 4.21).⁷² Fa Ruozhen then can be shown to have worked in many genres and one can only wonder at the extent of loss that his oeuvre has undergone.

Apart from saying much about Fa's versatility as a painter of which today no tangible traces remain, the documentation available about *The Five Elders* allows to reconstruct how Fa celebrated the community of five Jiaozhou literati who came together frequently and who were united in their interests in cultural and literary matters by means of his art. Fa's *The Five Elders* is similar to paintings of "elegant gatherings" that underscored "the ideological impetus for the production of such paintings" by commemorating "the association of allied men and celebrated the political and social order that defined and supported their alliance."⁷³ That the work was indeed an attempt to reinforce the bonds of friendship between the individuals depicted and to give memorable form to these is attested to by a recorded colophon that Fa Ruozhen wrote on the painting and in which he praised one of the five members of the group, Tan Biti, who was seventy-seven:

⁷² Unfortunately, the painting's inscription or possible colophons are not published and documentary evidence in Fa Ruozhen's poetry does not exist. It is thus not possible to contextualize this painting properly.

⁷³ Burkus-Chasson, "Between Representations," 315.

燕頷稜嶒一部鬚，	With a full beard protruding from the swallow jaw, ⁷⁴
儘堪據馬作長呼。	[You] are still strong enough to ride the horse and emit long roars.
非羞一劍酬元老，	It is not that you begrudge the sword to reward the elder statesman,
竟買千山醉酒徒。	But you buy a thousand mountains to intoxicate the drinkers.
雁阜城頭餘戰血，	Remains of battlefield blood on the city walls of Yanfu,
龍且河上解兵符。	Expounding on military strategies on the river [where] Long Ju [had suffered defeat].
縱然早入非熊夢，	Even though you early on had entered the [emperor's] dream of “not a brown bear,” ⁷⁵
不肯輕留渭水圖。	You did not easily leave us with a painting of [you fishing by] the Wei River. ⁷⁶

In his poem, Fa Ruozhen praised his friend Tan Biti, who had passed the imperial examinations at the county level (*xiuca* 秀才 or *zhusheng* 諸生), and who had helped the Qing general Ke Yongsheng 柯永盛 (d. 1675) to “pacify rebels” (*pingkou* 平寇) in Jiaozhou and its environs and thus to establish Qing authority.⁷⁷ In the first couplet, Fa praised the military looks and energetic allure of the aging Tan. The second couplet remains a bit unclear. The sword to reward the elder statesman is a reference to the story of Ji Zha 季札

⁷⁴ With the “swallow jaw” (*yanhan*, lit.: a swallow’s mouth), Fa uses an allusion to the Han dynasty general and diplomat Ban Chao 班超 (32–102), whom his admirers described as having a “mouth of a swallow and the neck of a tiger” (*yange hujing* 燕頷虎頸); see Fan Ye, *Xinxiao Hou Hanshu zhu*, 1571.

⁷⁵ A reference to the story of the Lord of the West who was to go out for a hunting trip and asked an oracle what he would capture. The oracle divined: “What you will capture will be neither a horned dragon nor an unhorned dragon, neither a tiger nor a brown bear. What you will capture will be the assistant of the Hegemon to the King” 所獲非龍非虜，非虎非熊；所獲霸王之輔；see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 1477-1478; for the English translation, see William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Grand Scribe’s Records* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 5.1: 36-37.

⁷⁶ Fa Ruozhen, “Ti *Wulao tu*” 題五老圖, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 546.

⁷⁷ Sun Baotian 孫葆田, ed., *Shandong tongzhi* 山東通志, *juan* 142, 107a, in *ZGFZK*.

(dates unknown, the 4th son of King Shoumeng 壽夢 [d. 561 BCE], the first king of the State of Wu in the Spring and Autumn Period [770–476 BCE]). As an ambassador, Ji Zha travelled north and made a stopover at the Lord of Xu who admired Ji Zha's sword. Since Ji Zha had to travel further, he did not present the Lord of Xu with his sword. Upon his return, Lord of Xu had died and Ji Zha presented his sword at his grave, arguing that he had promised to give it to him in his heart and that not giving it to him would be betraying his heart.⁷⁸ Tan Biti thus was not opposed to being presented with a sword for his services, but he preferred to retreat into the mountains (next line) rather than to dwell on his military exploits. In the next couplet, Fa alludes to the battles that Tan had fought close to Jiaozhou. Yanfu 雁阜 is a small city in the north of Zhucheng county in Shandong neighbouring Jiaozhou while the river where Long Ju 龍且 (d. 204 BCE), a general in the army of the Western Chu who had suffered a major defeat (and death) at the hands of general Han Xin 韓信 (d. 196 BCE), refers to the Wei River in Weifang, Shandong.⁷⁹ Written as a colophon to his *The Five Elders*, it is possible that Fa had painted five individual album leaves and inscribed each individual leaf with a poem that commemorated the person depicted. Unfortunately, if other poems were written, they have not survived.

So far, this discussion has focused on the style and appearance of a lost figure painting; but it is equally important to realize that the painting again draws attention to the fact that Fa conceived of Yellow Hill as a hub for the local Jiaozhou scholarly community. This

⁷⁸ Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 1459; for the English translation, see Nienhauser, ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records*, 5.1: 13.

⁷⁹ For the story of Long Ju, see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 2621; for an English translation, see Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian of China* (Taipei: Taiyuan caise yinzhuang youxian gongsi, 1971), 1: 221.

becomes apparent in his 1680 poem on the creation of *The Five Elders* where he calls the image *The Five Elders of Yellow Hill* (*Huangshan wulao tu* 黃山五老圖); it is again highlighted by the title of the suite of ten poems written in 1687 in which he mentions the creation of *The Five Elders* at Yellow Hill. Being the only one among his friends to have passed his *jinshi* degree and to have worked for the imperial administration must have elevated his social status among his literati friends, thus making Yellow Hill the hierarchically logical gathering place for the friends. The reconstruction of events that lead to Fa's *The Five Elders* emphasizes the importance that Yellow Hill played as a site for literati activities and gatherings and demonstrates that this place was of importance in the production of paintings that centered around the local of Yellow Hill. Painting thus served as a tool to ascertain and leave tangible proof of their community.

Snow Coloring the World White

The importance of Yellow Hill as a site where memories of his friends had accumulated is perhaps best illustrated with Fa's *Snow Coloring the World White* (*Xuese jietian bai tu* 雪色界天白圖), previously in the collection of Wong Nan-p'ing and now in the collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 4.22).⁸⁰ After Fa's expressively written frontispiece title, the scroll opens with a low snowy mountain range bordering a body of water. The work's uncharacteristically fine and delicate brushwork is unusual for Fa Ruozen. It is a result of the handscroll format and relatively small scale which he used seldomly. At first, *Snow*

⁸⁰ The painting bears a collector seal by Wong Nan-p'ing reading "Collected Treasure of Nan-p'ing" (*Nanping zhen cang* 南屏珍藏).

Coloring the World White is thus more reminiscent of certain Wu School paintings than of Fa's large hanging scrolls which he painted at the same time. More in line with Fa's characteristic painting methods are the trees prominently placed along the riverbank. Similarly painted trees had appeared in the handscroll *Mount Tiantai*. After the first half of the scroll, the painting shows Fa's more typical manner. An obvious change in brushwork and style occurs when Fa starts to use darker shades of ink, more assertively applies strokes, omits trees, shifts proportions, aggrandizes the mountain, and—seemingly—starts to work on the transformation of the rock formations into clouds. The shift from a melodious winter landscape to a monumental mountain mass that occupies the handscroll's entire height (and beyond) underlines and puts into spotlight Fa's signature style from the 1690s. Stylistically and rhythmically connecting to his larger hanging scrolls, the latter part of the handscroll therefore seems to evoke Yellow Hill. The inscription to the painting confirms that the painting was done in response to the visit of a family member to Yellow Hill:

It was during the first month of the *gengwu* year (1690), when I was aged seventy-eight *sui*, that I received the visit on a snowy day of my worthy son-in-law [Zhang] Chengsi and other gentlemen who had come to Yellow Hill and [gathered?⁸¹] at the Hall of Double Respect, upon which I proceeded to make *Snow* [*Coloring the World White*] to record the event.

庚午正月僕年七十有八，雪中得誠思賢婿偕諸君子過黃山，□又敬堂即作雪圖紀事。

⁸¹ While the calligraphed character on the scroll is illegible, the printed text in Fa's poetry collection of this text uses the word "gathering" (*ji* 集). The calligraphed character on the scroll, however, cannot be *ji*; the character remains illegible. For the printed preface, see Fa Ruozhen, "Gengwu zhengyue zishou shi'er shou (youxu)" 庚午正月自壽十二首有序, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 581.

While the painting's inscription only mentions the visit at Yellow Hill of Fa's son-in-law Zhang Chengsi and other "gentlemen," the preface to a sequel of twelve poems signals that a large party with many attendants had in fact taken place at Yellow Hill at the occasion of Fa's seventy-seventh birthday (seventy-eight *sui*). The preface to the poetry sequel lists Fu Zhongling, Yang Xiu, Yang Bo, Qiu Zongsheng 丘宗聖 (courtesy name Xueshan 學山, 1626–1696), Zhou Xingshan 周星山 (n.d.), Bi Xiangxian 畢象先 (n.d.), Zhou Zezong 周則仲 (n.d.), Zhou Hanxian 周翰先 (n.d.), Fa's two sons-in-law Xue Meiye 薛梅埜 (n.d.), and Zhang Chengsi 張誠思, the local censor Jia Fuqing 家撫卿 (n.d.), Fa's sons Fa Zhang and Fa Mei 法枚 (b. 1660) as well as his nephews Fa Tan 法檀, Fa Sen 法森, and Fa Chen 法琴 as the attendants of this rather large birthday party at which Fa Ruozhen himself was ill.⁸² One of Fa's closest friends is absent from this list: Tan Biti, which is, however, explained by Tan's illness.⁸³

Following the shorter inscription after the painting are six poems out of the sequel of twelve that Fa wrote at the occasion of his birthday. The poems are not organized according to a recognizable pattern and do not appear in the same order in which they are published in Fa's poetry collection.⁸⁴ They address various friends and relatives, provide context to the party that took place at Yellow Hill as a result of which the painting was painted, and also offer insights into Fa Ruozhen's state of mind. One poem, for example, gives a sense of the feast

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ See the explanations to the third poem discussed below.

⁸⁴ In the following, the numeration of the poems reflects the order in which they appear in the colophon to *Snow Coloring the World White*. The number in brackets indicates the order in which the respective poem appears in Fa's poetry collection. The poems are not strictly translated here in the order in which they appear in *Snow Coloring the World White* and have rather been grouped by themes and categories of addressees.

that took place despite a chronic foot illness that plagued Fa Ruozen again on his birthday in 1691:

II. (I.)

兩三兄弟髮蒼蒼，
揖我嘉賓讌草堂。

不盡椒花浮酒艷，

初啣柳葉剝魚嘗。
憐饑埜老投書去，

畏凍歸鴉避雪忙。

惟我經年脾病懶，

猶貪疏水卧焚香。

By twos and threes, all brothers with hoary hair,
I greeted my distinguished guests and banqueted them
in the thatched hut.

With countless peppers,⁸⁵ our ale glimmered in bright
colors,

We begin by savoring with a taste of Willow Leaf fish.
Pitying the hungry wild elders, we planned on
presenting a [plea] letter,

Wary of freezing weather, [even] returning crows
hurry to escape the snow.

It's only me who is lazy from years of an ill thigh
bone,⁸⁶

And still harkens for frugal fare, reclining amidst
burning incense.

The poem conveys the sense of a festive, relaxed atmosphere in which Fa's birthday party took place. The winter is cold, his guests are hungry, and he tries to host them. However, the poem also paints Fa Ruozen as elderly and unable to partake in the joys of feasting. The theme of illness reoccurs in the following poem, reducing the festive atmosphere and thus offering a glimpse on Fa's thoughts facing old age and probably the advent of death. The poem also revisits Fa's *The Five Elders*:

⁸⁵ A food with the meaning of abundance.

⁸⁶ While the character *pi* 脾 usually means "spleen," Fa Ruozen most likely meant *bi* 髀 for which *pi* is an alternate character; *bi* refers to thigh bones and it is known that Fa Ruozen suffered of an unspecified foot illness.

III. (II.)

曳杖登臺興不孤，

環山萬樹繞晴湖。

新開茅屋傳燈火，

舊藉家醅減酪酥。

大半病從詩思苦，

此身生賴藥鑪扶。

有書招我河東叟，

再補黃山五老圖。

Ascending the mountain terrace with a dragging cane,
elated since I am not alone,

Surrounding mountains are filled with myriad trees
that circle around the lake on a sunny day.

The newly constructed thatched hut for passing on the
light [of Buddha],⁸⁷

Old reed mats under [cups of] house wine, I reduce
curd foods.

Most likely, my illness comes from poetry and bitter
thoughts,

This body and life rely on the support of the medicine-
heating pan.

Letters beckon me, the old man from east of the river,
Once again, I amend *The Five Elders from Yellow
Hill*.

The aforementioned *The Five Elders* must have remained in Fa's possession at Yellow Hill and must have been periodically taken out and amended on social occasions like Fa's birthday party. The poem thus provides evidence that the painting continued to play an important role in the community of scholars that had gathered around Fa Ruozhen. Revisited on social occasions, it must have served to foster social bonds between the depicted sitters. Since the explanatory note to this poem reads: "At the time Tan Yiruo was ill and could not come" 時談暘若病未至, it can be inferred that the painting served as a memorabilia of Tan's earlier presence at Yellow Hill and the literati community that it embodied. This, in turn, points to the importance of memories that had accumulated at Yellow Hill as well as Fa's attempts to establish Yellow Hill as a central point in the literati geography of Jiaozhou.

⁸⁷ Designates the newly built Hall of Double Respect (Youjing tang 又敬堂).

In the following poem, Fa addressed two of his sons-in-law, Xue Meiye and Zhang Chengsi:

I. (VII.)

翩翩年少烹談經，	The elegant young men [Meiye and Chengsi] are fond of discussing the classics, ⁸⁸
並轡乘龍丁卯亭。	Together holding the reins, they ride the dragon to the Dingmao Pavilion. ⁸⁹
月上芙蓉千葉碧，	Moonlight shines above the lotus, thousands of green leaves,
潮橫芰草萬峰青。	The tide overflows water caltrop, myriads of green peaks.
神魚島出蜃樓市，	The city of the clam-monster emerges from the island of the divine fish, ⁹⁰
天馬山高玉女屏。	The peak of the Heavenly Horse is higher than the screen of the Jade Maidens. ⁹¹
許我松陰留荷畚，	[Meiye and Chengsi] allowed me to keep my scoops and hoes in the pine's shadow,
穆陵長掛老人星。	The star of the God of Longevity is hanging over the Muling [Pass]. ⁹²

⁸⁸ Due to the grammar of this line, the character *xi* 烹 (dawn) is most likely a typo and should read *xi* 喜 (be fond of, to like).

⁸⁹ Probably referring to Xue Meiye and Zhang Chengsi having passed the regional examinations in the *dingmao* year (1687).

⁹⁰ *Shenlou* 蜃樓, also referred to as *haishi shenlou* 海市蜃樓, is a figure of speech meaning castles in the air, or a mirage or illusions. The *shen* is a clam-monster, a fabulous creature that has the reputation of producing offshore castles and pavilions from its breath-vapors. The *shenlou* is closely associated with the coastal area of Shandong. In the *Shiji*, Sima Qian records: “From the age of Kings Wei and Xuan of Qi and King Zhao of Yan, men were sent from time to time to set out to sea and search for the islands of Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou. These were three spirit mountains which were supposed to exist in the Gulf of Bohai. They were not very far from the land of men, it was said, but the difficulty was that, whenever a boat was about to touch their shores, a wind would always spring up and drive it away. In the past, people said, there had been men who succeeded in reaching them, and found them peopled by fairy spirits who possessed the elixir of immortality. All the plants and birds and animals of the islands were white, and the palaces and gates were made of gold and silver. Seen from afar, the three spirit mountains looked like clouds but, as one drew closer, they seemed instead to be down under the water. In any event, as soon as anyone got near to them, the wind would suddenly come and drag the boat away, so that in the end no one could ever reach them” 自威、宣、燕昭使人入海求蓬萊、方丈、瀛洲。此三神山者，其傳在勃海中，去人不遠，患且至，則船風引而去。蓋嘗有至者，諸僊人及不死之藥在焉。其物禽獸盡白，而黃金白銀為宮闕。未至，望之如雲；及到，三神山反居水下。臨之，風輒引去，終莫能至； see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 1369-1370; for the English translation, see Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty II* (Hong Kong and New York: A Renditions Columbia University Press Book, 1993 [rev. edition]), 14.

⁹¹ Probably allusions to the Heavenly Horse Peak and the Jade Maiden Screen, two places with Daoist connotations.

⁹² The Muling Pass (*Mulingguan* 穆陵關) is located near Linyi 臨沂 (Shandong province).

Poems like this are typically written at the occasion of social events. In this poem, Fa praised his two sons'-in-law for their scholarly achievements. The note to the poem ends with a note of reminiscence and regret, reading: “Meiye’s home is in Dongdao [Shandong province] and Chengsi’s home is by Bolu [Mountain]. Now there is nobody of whom one can ask about the burial location that they previously divined at Dongdao” 梅埜家東島，誠思家博陸，其東島舊卜壽域，今不可問矣。⁹³ This may be a veiled complaint about the tumult of the dynastic transition that had uprooted so many families throughout China; the idea of family graves being lost certainly must have resonated with Fa Ruozhen, whose family also had to change the site of their family tombs due to the disturbance of their original burial grounds in 1638.

The colophon’s fifth and sixth poems return to the birthday celebrations at Yellow Hill:

V. (IV.)

挑來桃餽故徐徐，

薄暮蟾蜍到草廬。

得句輕紈翻白雪，

Bringing “leftover peaches” on a pole, [Qiu Zongshan] arrived at the latest,⁹⁴

At dusk, the moon arrives to the thatched hut.

Upon seizing the [poem’s] line, the light silk [fan] flutters like white snowflakes,

⁹³ Bolu Mountain (*Bolushan* 博陸山), Zhang Chengsi’s home, is located in Changyi 昌邑 (Shandong province), north of Jiaozhou, adjacent to the Laizhou Bay and bordering Weifang. Dongdao 東島 was, according to Fa’s note, the home of Xue Meiye. According to the preface to a series of twelve poems on Xue Meiye’s mountain villa, Xue Meiye’s home was at Muling near Linyi in Shandong; Dongdao must therefore also be at Muling; see Fa Ruozhen, “Ti Xue Meiye shanzhuang shier shi (youxu)” 題薛梅野山莊十二詩有序, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 487.

⁹⁴ “Leftover peaches” refer the story of Mizi Xia 彌子瑕, a courtier favored by the ruler of Wei, Duke Ling (534–493 BCE). Mizi Xia’s look were so charming that he could get away with anything (until his looks faded), such as presenting a half-eaten peach to the ruler to have him partake in the fruit’s taste. For Mizi Xia’s story, see Bret Hirsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 20–21. Fa was probably just referring to the gift of peaches, a symbol for longevity (*shoutao* 壽桃), by a close friend. Since Fa’s birthday was in February, it is likely that he means confectionary peaches rather than fresh ones.

無錢握粟換青魚。	Having no money, I hold a shaft of grain to trade for meat-fish delicacies. ⁹⁵
商量埜外移民策，	We discussed political strategies to migrate people into the wilderness,
補綴床頭荒政書。	We also amended letters on famine relief policies laying by the bed's headboard.
但得山南諸盜息，	I just hope that [when] the robbers on the southern side of the mountain are pacified,
閒來履道結同居。	We can again walk idly on the correct road and live as neighbours. ⁹⁶

The poem again describes the birthday celebrations, a present made to Fa Ruozhen by his relative Qiu Zongsheng, as well as some scholarly projects pursued by them. Similar to the winter atmosphere evoked by this poem, the sixth poem on the colophon of *Snow Coloring the World White* starts with plum blossoms, thus stirring up the longing for an end to the winter:

VI. (V.)	
柴關深閉散梅花，	The wooden gate is tightly closed, plum blossoms are dispersing,
寶馬聯鑣踏落霞。	Joining in pairs, the precious horses tread on fallen rosy clouds. ⁹⁷
海上仙人酬墨史，	The Sea-Side Immortal [prefect of Bolu] presented me with an ink stick,

⁹⁵ While *qingyu* 青魚 should be translated as “black carp,” it appears that it is Fa’s idiosyncratic way, dictated by the poetic requirement of rhyming, for writing *zheng* 鯖, a composite character consisting of both *qing* and *yu*. The character *zheng* refers to a story contained in the “Miscellaneous Notes on the Western Capital.” In that story, the five Han dynasty dukes Wang Tan 王譚, Wang Gen 王根, Wang Li 王立, Wang Shang 王商, and Wang Feng 王逢 had invited Lou Hu 婁護 and Feng Bien 豐辯 to come to their banquets. Lou Hu and Fang Bian brought food back from these gatherings and mixed the food. Consequently, *wuhou zheng* 五侯鯖 had become a way to refer to the best delicacies; I translate it above as “meat-fish delicacies.” Fa thus is suggesting to change something simple (a shaft of grain) against something very exquisite (fish-meat delicacies). For the original story, see Ge Hong 葛洪, *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記, *juan* 2, 1b, in *ZGJBGJK*.

⁹⁶ The explanatory note to this poem reads: “Qiu Xueshan arrived late and presented me with a fan inscribed with a poem” 丘學山後至惠詩扇; Fa referred to Qiu Zongsheng 丘宗聖 (1626–after 1696), a *juren* degree holder from Zhucheng.

⁹⁷ Meaning the dispersed and fallen plum blossoms.

山中宰相寄丹砂。

須調石澗青精飯，
且剝春園赤菜芽。

又是兒童爭爆竹，

荒村驚動楚人家。

The Mountain-Surrounded Prime Minister [prefect of Qingzhou] sent me some cinnabar [seal] paste.

I ought to cook “green essence” food in stoneware,⁹⁸
And peel the red sprouts of vegetables from the spring garden.

And again it is the children who wrangle over firecrackers,

Disturbing my family of the wilderness in the remote village.⁹⁹

These two last poems are especially helpful to recapitulate what is known about Fa Ruozhen and Yellow Hill and allow to situate *Snow Coloring the World White* among Fa’s body of surviving works. While the poems give further details of the birthday celebrations such as presented birthday gifts and foods consumed, they also underscore the role of Yellow Hill as a place of social interaction and reclusion. Fa had developed this theme already in his albums of the 1680s.

If the hypothesis is accepted that *Snow Coloring the World White* is a further evocation of Yellow Hill, than the obvious stylistic change occurring at the middle of the handscroll can be explained as a marker indicative of reclusion and the entrance to a different world.

Despite the absence of human figures populating the pictorial space, the scroll can be read in a similar manner to other seventeenth-century handscrolls that portray reclusion. An

⁹⁸ The character *hu* 澗 (cook) is probably erroneous and should read *huo* 鑊 (pot, cauldron). “‘Green essence’ food” is a reference to Du Fu’s poem “Presented to Li Bai” (*Zeng Li Bai 贈李白*) where the corresponding couplet reads: “Of course I had ‘green essence’ food / to make my complexion fine” 豈無青精飯，使我顏色好。 For the poem and its translation (from which I borrow in turn), see Owen, trans., *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 1: 22-23. Stephen Owens explains: “‘Green essence’ food was part of the Daoist dietary regimen in which rice was steamed in a broth made from the leaves, stalks, and husks of the grain”; see *ibid.*, 23FN1.

⁹⁹ Since the poem’s explanatory note reads, “[The prefect of] Bolu presented me with ink and [the prefect of] Qingzhou sent his wishes” 博陸惠墨，青州致祝 it is reasonable to treat the Sea-Side Immortal as the prefect from Bolu and the Mountain-Surrounded Prime Minister as the prefect from Qingzhou, two prefectures that have a border with Jiaozhou.

example is Zhao Zuo's *Streams and Mountains without End* (fig. 3.4). According to Zhao's own inscription, the painting was, "painted in the sixth month of the *bingchen* year [1616], [while] escaping summer heat at the Hut of Vegetable Fragrance" 丙辰六月避暑菜香庵寫此.¹⁰⁰ The Hut of Vegetable Fragrance (Caixiang an 菜香庵) belonged to Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558–1639).¹⁰¹ The hut appearing at the end of the scroll can be interpreted as part of Chen Jiru's reclusive mountain estate at Mt. She 佘山 (in present-day Shanghai). However, at its beginning, the scroll starts with the depiction of a village, thus representing a world in which humans are living and going about their daily activities. Over the course of the scroll, a journey into the wilderness is depicted; for example, at some point a man shouldering a long pole is seen under a group of trees headed towards the left and about to pass over a bridge (fig. 3.4a). At the scroll's end, the traveler is shown to have arrived at Chen Jiru's site of reclusion.

With the poems in Fa's colophon indicating both the reclusive wilderness setting of Yellow Hill and the arrival of birthday guests, *Snow Coloring the World White* can be read in a similar manner: while the painting starts with what appears to be a still traversable world, the shift in artistic style occurring in the middle of the composition cannot be neglected. Using his idiosyncratic destabilizing manner that merges the solidity of rock formations with the fluidity of clouds, the second half of the painting then can be explained as the arrival at Yellow Hill. The painting merges accounts of the travel and arrival of guests (poem II.) with

¹⁰⁰ For the transcription and translation, see Sturman and Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse*, 284.

¹⁰¹ For a translation of the passage in Chen Jiru's chronological biography (*nianpu* 年譜) confirming this, see Jamie Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru (1558–1639): The Background to, Development and Subsequent Uses of Literary Personae* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 97; for further biographical information see *ibid.*, FN52.

the place of reclusion (poems V. and VI.) and therefore offers a vision of transition from worldly affairs to a sphere of reclusion and literati sociability. The difference is that Fa omitted people populating his composition – as was his habit in most of his paintings. *Snow Coloring the World White* then exemplifies the importance that Yellow Hill had both as a site of reclusion and as a site for social interactions where the local literati society, after the turmoil of the dynastic transition, could again reconvene.

Conclusion & Coda

But *Snow Coloring the World White* is not only testimony to the status of Yellow Hill within the literati infrastructure of early Qing Jiaozhou. Overlappingly, the painting also integrates themes of family remembrance discussed in the previous chapter, thus underlining the multiple layers of mnemonic importance that Yellow Hill carried. In the third poem translated above, Fa Ruozhen had mentioned a thatched hut. Fa referred to the Hall of Double Respect (Youjing tang 又敬堂) which his son, Fa Zhang, had finalized in 1689 at Yellow Hill, one year before Fa painted *Snow Coloring the World White*.¹⁰² This is also where Fa's birthday party took place.

With its name, the Hall of Double Respect referred to the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) where, in chapter 4.8, Confucius is reported to have said (in the translation of Edward Slingerland): “The Master said: ‘In serving your parents you may gently remonstrate with them. However,

¹⁰² For the completion of the Hall of Double Respect in 1689, see Fa Ruozhen, “Le Zhang er Youjing tang cheng” 樂樟兒又敬堂成, *Huangshan shiliu*, in *SKCM-ji* 212: 570.

once it becomes apparent that they have not taken your criticism to heart you should be respectful and not oppose them, and follow their lead diligently without resentment”” 子曰：「事父母幾諫。見志不從，又敬不違，勞而不怨」。¹⁰³ Fa Zhang’s hall thus also signifies the son’s filial piety for his father Fa Ruozhen. This shows that *Snow Coloring the World White* functioned as an evocation of Yellow Hill, a site that had accumulated mnemonic importance for Fa Ruozhen in many regards. Not only was it the site at which his friends had come to visit him over the years. It was also the site at which he had been rescued by his mother. Fa’s residency at Yellow Hill had propelled the site into the family memory by serving as a place for reunions. *Snow Coloring the World White* therefore highlights how Yellow Hill had turned into a site at which Fa Zhang had built his own study and thus continued his father’s practice of filial residence at Yellow Hill.

As the painting’s inscription as well as the preface to the suite of twelve poems translated above make clear, there were a number of Fa’s relatives present when he proceeded to paint *Snow Coloring the World White* at the occasion of his birthday. The fourth poem inscribed in the trailing colophon to the painting shows how Yellow Hill played a role in transmitting the family memories to the following generations at Yellow Hill:

IV. (III.)

朱楹白壁綴春暉，	Vermilion pillars and white walls, decorated by spring’s sunlight,
羸馬駝車傍雪霏。	The frail horse is burdened [to draw] the car among falling snow.
結客少年分酒限，	Making friends with the youngsters, we share the limited ale,

¹⁰³ Edward Slingerland, trans., *Confucius: Analects, with Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), 35.

携孫老眼看燈幃。	I bring my grandchildren to see the illuminated pavilion.
雖饑餓腹調烹鹿，	Even though we have an [urgent] craving, yet empty-bellied we still carefully season and boil some deer,
（櫟兒寄鹿脯）	（It is the dried deer meat my son Fa Yun has sent），
不掃荒厨剝斷薇。	Not sweeping the barren kitchen, I peel the cut-off fiddlehead [edible].
却笑痴聾多白髮，	Yet, I laugh at myself, being foolish, deaf, and having much white hair,
清樽別榻自依依。	Complacently, I recline on a couch with a goblet of clear wine.

In his poem, Fa describes again the charms of a modest family party that took place at his “illuminated pavilion,” that is his dwelling and temple erected at Yellow Hill. The pavilion has become a sanctuary among a generally hostile world alluded to by the frail horse. To this sanctuary, he has also brought his grandchildren. Describing the beauty of his dwelling and the temple at Yellow Hill, the spring’s sunlight (*chunhui* 春暉) of the first line that illuminates the pillars and walls is not only a descriptor of natural beauty. It also refers to maternal love as described by Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751–814) in his famous “Song for the Traveler” (*You zi yin* 遊子吟) that celebrates motherly love for a son about to travel far away:

慈母手中線，	The thread in his mother’s hand,
遊子身上衣。	Sews clothes for the traveler.
臨行密密縫，	Close together, these tight stiches,
意恐遲遲歸。	Fearing a late return.
誰言寸草心，	Who can say that the inch-long heart of grass
報得三春暉。	Requites three months of spring’s rays? ¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Meng Jiao 孟郊, “You zi yin” 遊子吟, *Meng Dongye shi ji* 孟東野詩集, *juan* 1, 21a-21b, in *ZGJBGJK*. For the English translation, see Shiamin Kwa and Wilt L. Idema, eds. and trans., *Mulan: Five Versions of a Classic Chinese Legend, with Related Texts* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2010), 19FN25.

Accordingly, the topic of motherly love and the memory thereof, so prominent in some of Fa's large hanging scrolls, is not missing in Fa's *Snow Coloring the World White*. Taking his grandchildren to his temple and dwelling at Yellow Hill, Fa must have aimed at transmitting the memories of his mother to his grandchildren and thus at building a historical consciousness and heritage among his family members. That he did so also through painting is evidenced by works such as *Rising Peaks and Piling Cliffs* which he painted for his grandson Yinjin (fig. 2.26), and by *Snow Coloring the World White*.

Snow Coloring the World White therefore exemplifies how Yellow Hill and paintings thereof had become a way for Fa Ruozhen to reflect upon his own identity as a scholar and filial son, and how he meant to reconstitute local literati society in post-conquest early Qing Jiaozhou by drawing on intermingling memories. Having used mostly painting albums and poems to construct an imaginary literary topography, Yellow Hill had become a place at which like-minded men of the conquest generation could reflect on shared historical memories and at which Fa Ruozhen could identify himself with famous historical recluses. At the same time, *Snow Coloring the World White* demonstrates how Fa cared about the perpetuation of family memory as an important factor in the constitution of the Fa lineage and extended family. *Snow Coloring the World White* showcases how one work could be used to foster a sense of literati community both among literati friends and Fa's offspring by catering to differently shared memories. It shows that painting played a vital role in the process of social reconstruction among the conquest and post-conquest generation.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BJTSGCZBNP</i>	<i>Beijing tushuguan cang zhenben nianpu congkan</i> 北京圖書館藏珍本年譜叢刊
<i>GGZBCK</i>	<i>Gugong zhenben congkan</i> 故宮珍本叢刊
<i>GJZBCK</i>	<i>Beijing shi wenwu ju tushu ziliao zhongxin cang guji zhenben congkan</i> 北京市文物局圖書資料中心藏古籍珍本叢刊
<i>QDSWJHB</i>	<i>Qingdai shiwenji huibian</i> 清代詩文集彙編
<i>QDSWJZBCK</i>	<i>Qingdai shiwenji zhenben congkan</i> 清代詩文集珍本叢刊
<i>QDSKQS</i>	<i>Qinding siku quanshu</i> 欽定四庫全書
<i>SKCM-ji</i>	<i>Siku quanshu cunmu congshu: jibu</i> 四庫全書存目叢書：集部
<i>SKJH-ji</i>	<i>Siku jinhui shu congkan: jibu</i> 四庫禁燬書叢刊：集部
<i>SKQS</i>	<i>Wenyuange siku quanshu</i> 文淵閣四庫全書
<i>XJCSHK</i>	<i>Huadong shifan daxue tushuguan cang xijian congshu huikan</i> 華東師範大學圖書館藏稀見叢書匯刊
<i>XXSKQS</i>	<i>Xuxiu siku quanshu</i> 續修四庫全書
<i>ZGFZK</i>	<i>Zhongguo fangzhi ku</i> 中國方志庫
<i>ZGGDBHCK</i>	<i>Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan</i> 中國古代版畫叢刊
<i>ZGJBGJK</i>	<i>Zhongguo jiben guji ku</i> 中國基本古籍庫
<i>ZGGJZBNCK-TJ</i>	<i>Zhongguo guji zhenben congkan: Tianjin tushuguan juan</i> 中國古籍珍本叢刊——天津圖書館卷
<i>ZGSHQS</i>	<i>Zhongguo shuhua quanshu</i> 中國書畫全書

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FIGURES

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